

CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS
13th December, 2010

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Goulty and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

J83. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

J84. SHELTERED HOUSING WARDEN AND CARE ENABLER MERGER - PETITION WINDY RIDGE AND MASONS AVENUE

The Director of Independent Living reported receipt of a petition, containing 28 signatures, from residents of Windy Ridge and Masons Avenue, Aughton, requesting the continued receipt of service from their Warden.

The petition was in light of proposed changes involving the merging of the Sheltered Housing Wardens and the Home Enabling Service. Currently Windy Ridge and Masons Avenue was covered by a single Warden who had chosen to remain in the new merged Service. The Warden would be given the option to remain working across both areas as part of a small team if she so wished providing the Service could accommodate the request.

At the request of residents, a meeting had been held at both sites on 24th November, 2010, where they had raised the issues of loss of Resident Warden, concern that someone different would call each day and that they did not want the Service to alter.

Resolved:- (1) That the petition be noted.

(2) That the points raised by the petitioners be clarified in writing.

[Exempt under Paragraph 1 of the Act – information relating to individuals]

J85. SHELTERED HOUSING WARDEN AND CARE ENABLER MERGER - PETITION - WHITFIELD ROAD AND STEADLANDS

The Director of Independent Living reported receipt of a petition, containing 52 signatures, from residents of Whitfield Road and Steadlands, Rawmarsh, requesting that the Warden Service continue in its present form.

The petition was in light of proposed changes involving the merging of the Sheltered Housing Wardens and the Home Enabling Service. Currently both schemes were covered by a single Warden who had chosen to accept voluntary severance.

The petition raised the issues of:-

- Cessation of the Warden Service
- Concern over how the current Warden knew their "current whims"
- Concern that the new proposed Service would not deliver the same level of care
- Organising of social events
- Concerns that residents were not being consulted

Whitfield Road and Steadlands had already been through the consultation process and their individual concerns captured.

Resolved:- (1) That the petition be noted.

(2) That the points raised by the petitioners be clarified in writing.

[Exempt under Paragraph 1 of the Act – information relating to individuals]

J86. HOUSING STAFF REVIEW

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the need to review Housing staff structures in light of significant reductions in the funds available to finance regeneration activity.

In recent months transformational changes to the Housing and Regeneration Sector had been set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review and in Government consultation documents. The changes would have significant implications for Rotherham and was clear that the staffing structures required adaption to fit within reduced budgets and a changing agenda.

The review would need to take into consideration the recent reviews of Asset Management and Regeneration Services and the resultant new working arrangements.

It was noted that a meeting was to be held later in the week with Trade Unions.

Resolved:- (1) That a structural review be undertaken to ensure that a sustainable and fit for purpose operating structure was developed.

(2) That following the outcome of the review, a further report be submitted setting out new staffing arrangements and how the new structure would be financed.

[Exempt under Paragraph 4 of the Act – negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter]

J87. LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY FOR NEW BUILD COUNCIL HOUSING

Further to Minute No. 56 of 20th September, 2010, the Director of Independent Living submitted a summary of the consultation responses regarding the above.

174 customers completed and returned the survey/questionnaire. The consultation had also included individual meetings with the Strategic Housing Partnership, Credit Crunch Group, RotherFed, Ward Members and the Chair of the Rotherham Older Peoples' Forum. A news article and 2 advertisements had been published in the Rotherham Advertiser and information available on the internet.

The feedback was mixed with marked differences received from those within individual meetings and that of surveys/questionnaires.

The main points were:-

- Lettings to Council Tenants - Majority of feedback from meetings supported the proposals to let new build properties to existing Council tenant transfers with a good tenancy record in the previous 2 years. 55% of the survey responses disagreed with the proposal
- 51% of survey respondents supportive of the employment quota. Respondents in meetings showed much less support
- Equalities Impact Assessment - potentially discriminatory against good tenants living in other types of tenures and the employment quota could be seen as potentially discriminatory against those not in work such as older people and people with disabilities

There were a number of additional issues raised:-

- Local Connection - some feedback indicated preference should be given to households with a local connection
- Newlands Avenue, Maltby - an undertaken given to the Tarran residents that they would get priority to move back onto the estate
- Home visits to verify applications and to check property standards
- Reference/checks

Discussion ensued on whether the Local Lettings Policy applied to the first tenant only or to subsequent lettings. Such Policies were normally reviewed every 6 months and could be removed if required.

Resolved:- (1) That the feedback be noted.

(2) That a Local Lettings Policy for New Build Council Housing be reviewed after 12 months with a view to a further 12 months extension is so required.

(3) That the report be submitted to 19th January, 2011 Cabinet for referral for adoption to the 2nd February, 2011 Council meeting.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

J88. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (HIP) 2010/11

The Acting Finance Manager submitted proposed revisions to the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) for 2010/11.

The 2010/22 HIP of £42.415M was approved on 15th March, 2010 (Minute No. J156 refers) to match the estimated available resources. The Programme was split between schemes managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. and the Council. It was proposed that the revised Programme managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. should total £26.545M and that of the Council should total £23.833M.

The revised Programme was now £50.378M, a summary of which was set out in the report submitted.

Resolved:- That the revised 2010/11 Housing Investment Programme of £50.378M be approved.

[Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council)]

J89. KIRSTY EVERSON, DIRECTOR OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Cabinet Member offered his best wishes for the future to Kirsty who was due to leave the Council on the 24th December, 2010.