

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS**  
**24th January, 2011**

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

**J90. NO. 11 ELDON ROAD, EASTWOOD**

In accordance with Minute No. 304 of 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2007 and J138 of 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2010, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above property which was in need of substantial investment exceeding the current threshold of £20,000.

The report set out the options that had been considered with regard to the property which included:-

Retain and Invest  
Disposal to a Registered Social Landlord  
Demolition  
Open Market Sale

Consultation had taken place with local Ward Members on the options set out above with the option of disposal being supported.

Resolved:- That the disposal of No. 11 Eldon Road, Eastwood, be approved.

**J91. ROTHERHAM AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing proposals for reconfiguration of the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy highlighting key implications for customers living within the Borough.

Currently the Aids and Adaptations (A&A) Team operated the statutory function of the Council to administer the Disabled Facilities Grant and arrange relevant adaptations to properties within the Borough. The proposed reconfigured Policy would clarify the Council's position in terms of both legislative and non-legislative practice.

The Policy was principally aimed to help people remain in their own homes through the provision of equipment and adaptations. However, adaptations were a last resort and, as such, all alternatives would be reviewed. The Council must therefore decide whether the applicant's needs could best be met through:-

- Adaptations within reasonable cost boundaries
- Issue of equipment or
- Re-housing to an alternative adapted accommodation

The main proposals were:-

- Eligibility for Customers requesting an Adaptation  
Eligibility was constrained by law. The Policy framework would enable the Council to provide a fair and consistent approach to a customer's request whilst easing pressure on existing housing stock. Generally customers must either be the named owner or named tenant to be eligible or, in the case of children, the parent or guardian must be the named owner or tenant. It had been identified that a risk to offering people who were not named would be potential abuse of the system. Accordingly, the Policy would define immediate family and added stipulations including:-
  - o The family member must have been in residence at the property for a minimum of 2 years
  - o The main carer of the family member must be the qualifying owner/tenant
- Agency Fees  
There was a 10% fee for every major adaptation to cover the costs of the A&A Team. Through the Personalisation agenda customers may choose to arrange for the works themselves, however, initial visits and input would be required from the A&A Team.

It was proposed that where a customer chose to arrange works themselves that an administration charge of 5% be applied, deducted directly from the grant.

If the customer required further input from the A&A Team then the full 10% would be charged.

- Decisions (Customer Choice)  
Due to the budgetary limitations combined with the demand for adaptations, the Team would look at all reasonable and practicable solutions to ensure public monies were spent in a cost effective manner whilst maintaining the adaptation meets the customer's requirements.

For non-Council properties, if there was more than 1 adaptation solution deemed as both reasonable and practicable by the Adaptations Officer, then the most economical would be pursued. If the customer decided that they would prefer an alternative solution, then the cost of the proposed solution could be used towards the cost of the preferred option with the remainder to be met by the customer.

For Council properties the A&A Team would pursue the most reasonable and practicable solution. If the solution was refused by the applicant, it would be treated as such and the job cancelled.

- Grounds for Refusing an Adaptation
  - o Under Occupancy - If a customer was under occupying a property adaptations would not be considered unless:-
    - There were no suitable adapted properties within Council stock
    - There were suitable adapted properties within Council stock but the likelihood of availability within a 12 month period was very low
  - o Mutual Exchanges
    - A customer residing in an adequately adapted property could not mutually exchange to a property that did not have the specifically assessed adaptive requirements of the customer
    - Must be authorised by the Housing Occupational Therapist as suitable, reasonable and appropriate to meet the customer's needs
    - If 2 adapted properties were to be exchanged, both must meet the needs of both households
  - o Reports not submitted
    - All work needed to fall within the remit of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. All relevant paperwork required for all parties. Where adherence to the relevant Act had not occurred an adaptation would be cancelled
    - Proof of ownership or occupation required. If could not be provided then an adaptation would be refused
    - Where a customer had been means tested and required to contribute funds but declined to do so, an adaptation would be refused
    - Consent required by the landlord or owner where the property was not owned by the Council. If consent was not granted an adaptation would be refused
  - o Split Households
    - Where a disabled child (under 16 years or a child in full-time education under 19 years) was concerned, adaptations would only be considered on 1 property, that being the property where the parent with parental control resided. When deciding on who had parental control the following would be taken into account:-
      - Who the child resided with primarily
      - Any Court Orders in place
      - Who Child Benefit was paid to.

It was noted that the report was also to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Adult Independence, Health and Wellbeing on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2011, for information.

Discussion ensued on adaptations in Council properties and the proposed inability of tenants to pay the cost of additional costs over and above the solution by the Adaptations Officer. There could be future maintenance costs that the Council would become liable for or it could be purely for cosmetic reasons. It was felt that there should be flexibility on this issue and such cases considered by a senior officer for decision.

Resolved:- [1] That the reconfigured Rotherham Aids and Adaptations Policy be approved for implementation.

[2] That the possibility of Council tenants paying the difference between the Adaptations Officer's recommended adaptation and their preferred adaptation be investigated further.

**J92. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 30TH NOVEMBER 2010**

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which detailed the projected year end outturn position as at 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010, for the Neighbourhoods department within the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate compared to the original and revised budgets for the period ending 31st May, 2010.

The original budget of £4,322,000 was revised to take into account agreed in-year savings of £272,000 to contribute to the Council-wide pressures leaving a revised budget of £4,050,000.

The latest position currently showed a projected surplus of £41,000 by the end of March, 2012. It should be noted that winter pressures being experienced at the moment may have an adverse effect on the balance..

Resolved:- That the report be received and noted.

**J93. 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 Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

**J94. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (HIP) 2010/11**

Consideration was given to a report which set out details of the progress on the 2010/11 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and Non HIP Capital Schemes for the period to 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

For 2010/11 a revised HIP of £50.379M was approved on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 (Minute No. 88 refers). As at 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, spending totalled £30,293M, 60.13% of the revised approved Programme.

The Programme was divided into 2 sections between the schemes managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. (totalling £26.545M) and those managed by the Council (totalling £23.833M). To date 2010 had incurred expenditure of £19.723M (74.3%) and the Council £10.571M (44.35%).

Resolved:- That the contents of the report be noted.

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

**J95. NEW COUNCIL HOUSES**

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that, at short notice, a further National Affordable Housing Programme 2008/11 funding opportunity to support more new homes had been received.

Bids must meet specific criteria i.e. to achieve planning approval, procurement of a construction partner, start on site in February, 2011 and meet Level 4, Code for Sustainable Homes.

A development proposal had been formulated and agreed by the Homes and Communities Agency. In order to deliver a competitive bid, an innovative construction solution was proposed which minimised development costs and provided accelerated delivery timescales. The EVOLVE construction solution, offered exclusively by Bramall Construction, was identified as offering an opportunity to achieve the outcomes.

The grant bid enabled a pilot scheme of 5 family homes to be built using Bramall Construction's EVOLVE modular construction solution.

Urgent approval was required in order to comply with the terms of the HCA's funding i.e. that a constructor be procured to enable a start on site by 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2011. Failure to do so would result in the grant funding being withdrawn.

Resolved:- (1) That the bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for the provision of new Council homes at Whitehill Road, Brinsworth, as detailed within the report, be supported.

(2) That the use of the Whitehill Road site for this purpose, as identified in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report submitted, be supported.

(3) That the contract be awarded to Bramall Construction Ltd. for the construction of 5 family homes using the EVOLVE prefabricated construction solution.

(4) That the agreement of the Mayor be sought to exempt this decision from the provisions of the call-in procedure on the grounds that failure to comply with the terms of the HCA'S funding would result in the withdrawal of grant funding.

**(DUE TO THE URGENCY OF THE ABOVE, THE APPROVAL OF THE MAYOR WAS SOUGHT TO EXEMPT THE MINUTE FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALL-IN PROCESS. APPROVAL WAS GRANTED ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2011)**