

## CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

**Venue:** Town Hall,  
Moorgate Street,  
Rotherham. S60 2TH

**Date:** Monday, 21st February, 2011

**Time:** 10.30 a.m.

### A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are likely to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) to the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of a meeting of the Sustainability Partnership held on 26th January, 2011. (copy attached) (Pages 1 - 5)
  - to note the contents of the minutes.
4. Employability Partnership Project with Cluj, Romania. (report attached) (Pages 6 - 11)  
Lee Viney, Assistant Economic Strategy Officer, to report,
  - to update the Cabinet Member with progress on the joint project with Cluj-Napoca(Romania) working on engaging with people from the Roma and Disabled communities and assisting them back into employment.
5. Land to the rear of No. 22A West Park Drive, Swallownest. (report attached) (Pages 12 - 15)  
Sharon Langton, Principal Estate Surveyor, to report.
  - to seek approval to declare the above-mentioned asset surplus to the requirements of the Department of Asset Management.
6. South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide. (report attached) (Pages 16 - 21)  
Noel Bell, Planner, to report.
  - (i) to feed back the key findings of the public consultation for the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide and the resulting changes made to the document.
  - (ii) to seek authority to use the document as a best practice guide pending future consideration to its adoption (all or in part) as a Supplementary Planning Document.
7. Proposed Environmental Improvements, Land Adjacent to Heritage Court, Outgang Lane, Laughton Common.  
Andy Newton, Implementation Officer, to report.  
NOTE: item to be deferred until 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

**Date of Next Meeting**  
**Monday, 7th March, 2011**

**Members:**

**Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment**  
**Councillor Walker, Senior Adviser**  
**(Councillor Pickering, Chair, Planning Board;**  
**Councillor Dodson, Vice-Chair, Planning Board**  
**Councillor Whysall, Chair, Regeneration Scrutiny Panel**  
**Councillor Swift, Vice-Chair, Regeneration Scrutiny Panel)**

**SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP**  
**Wednesday, 26th January, 2011**

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair): The Mayor, Councillor McNeely:  
 Councillor Pickering.

together with:-

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Martin Aizlewood | RFT   |
| Karl Battersby   | Strategic Director, Environment and<br>Development Services, RMBC                       |
| Bill Cooper      | Green Spaces Development Manager, RMBC  |
| Janet Johnson    | Chief Executive, Groundwork Dearne Valley<br>Projects, Customer Interface Officer, RMBC |
| Hugh Long        | Property Environmental Manager, RMBC  |
| David Rhodes     | Sheffield City Council  |
| David Wilde      | Voluntary Action Rotherham  |
| Nikky Wilson     |   |

**51. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from:-

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Councillor J. Austen | RMBC  |
| Jo Abbott            | NHS Rotherham                               |
| Carolyn Barber       | Ecologist, RMBC                             |
| Andrew Denniff       | Rotherham & Barnsley Chamber of<br>Commerce |
| Alice Rodgers        | Maltby Environment Forum                    |

**52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER, 2010**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Sustainability Partnership held on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 were received and the contents noted.

**53. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**54. SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

David Rhodes reported that the Terms of Reference had last been reviewed in September, 2009, and referred to recent changes in membership and other changes which meant that these were now out of date.

It was therefore proposed, in conjunction with officers from the Chief

Executive's Directorate, to review the Terms of Reference.

**It was agreed:-** (1) That the Terms of Reference and Membership be revised and circulated to existing members for comment.

(2) That an update be provided for the next meeting.

**55. ROTHERHAM ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

David Rhodes reported that there had been significant changes to this and it had not yet been formally signed off by either the Strategic Leadership Team or the Local Strategic Partnership.

Reference was again made to changes to the national indicators and to lead officers.

It was therefore proposed to revise the Strategy and Plan and report through the various Boards and groups.

It was suggested that a timescale needed to be included and for input from the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel to be sought.

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, pointed out the budget difficulties.

**It was agreed:-** (1) That the Strategy and Plan be revised and submitted to the various Boards, Groups etc and the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel.

(2) That an update be provided at the next meeting.

**56. FOOD GROWING IN PARKS - PILOT PROJECTS UPDATE**

Bill Cooper, Green Spaces Development Manager, reported on the following pilot projects:-

Clifton Park Walled Garden:- development work had been undertaken by the Horticultural Officer with community groups and schools looking at using the walled garden for growing food. Planting beds were being prepared.

Cottage Garden at Thrybergh Country Park:- this was partially enclosed but not totally secure. The aim of the project was for people with learning disabilities to work with a ranger to grow produce to use in the café. It would also be used for other environmental activities. Funding from the Wentworth South Area Assembly had provided a poly-tunnel and raised beds.

Rosehill Victoria Park, Rawmarsh:- this pilot proposed to establish planting beds to the rear of the park working with the Area Partnership

and youth club to explore the potential for growing vegetables. However posters placed within the park had not stimulated any interest and reservations had been expressed in connection with issues like dog fouling and theft of produce and by the Friends group about the location and the site not being secure.

Members present raised and discussed the following:-

- Could produce grown at Clifton Park be used in the museum café?
- Could the proposed tree planting at Newhill Park include trees for the different cultures? Funding for this particular project was for fruit trees only.
- opportunities to be explored re: educating people to grow fruit and vegetables with flower borders.
- the issue of security at sites and the fencing off of sites.
- opportunities for exemplar planting in parks which was both edible and ornamental.
- a virtual garden and other information.
- the waiting list of allotments in some areas of the borough.

Other issues raised included:-

Newhill Park:- the Chairman thanked VAR for securing funding for the development of a fruit orchard at this site.

Forthcoming Food Conference: there would be a traditional garden designer speaking about the potential for growing food.

## 57. ROTHERHAM IN ROOT

Nikky Wilson reported on the forthcoming Community Food Conference to be held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2011 at 6 pm at The Hub, Canklow, to promote, encourage and support people to grow more food locally.

There 60 different people had been booked on the event.

The programme out line included different speakers:- (1) a landscape designer; (2) Andy Wright from the Youth Service (who had worked on a project in Maltby with young people growing vegetables and using them in the café); (3) someone keeping hens (including hen).

It was explained that LABGI money left over had been transferred to VAR and this was being used for the conference which was an opportunity to promote and announce that funds were available for small groups to set up small garden projects.

A request was made for any hardcopy handouts to be provided for Elected Members as they would be unable to attend this event due to a prior commitment. Karl Battersby agreed to check his diary and if available open the conference.

It was confirmed there would be a schools representative from Coleridge Food for Life Project, at the conference. Unfortunately the South Yorkshire Time Change Project Officer whose role was to support schools in this area had been put back due to the sustainable schools initiative being shelved. There were discussions with Council representatives about supporting ECO Schools accreditation based around sustainable development education, which was a national/international award that so far had escaped the Government changes.

Groundwork Dearne Valley commented that they had found it difficult recently because that initiative had been removed. They had work ready to do but schools found it difficult to timetable it in.

#### 58. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Mayor, Councillor McNeely, emphasised the importance of involving children in sustainability and asked that the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children be asked to find a way to encourage schools to become more involved in sustainability.

**It was agreed:-** That David Rhodes/Deborah Fellowes would liaise with Partnership members re: future agenda items.

#### 59. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following issues were raised:-

- (i) Continuation of the Sustainability Partnership

Reference was made to the review of the Local Strategic Partnership, restructuring of partner organisations, loss of the theme boards etc.

Reference was also made to the fact that Government priorities did not include environmental considerations or sustainability.

Karl Battersby reported that there was some discussion about replacing the Achieving Theme Board by an Enterprise Board (the local vision of the Local Economic Partnership). There was some thought that sustainability was essential and cross cutting and should have a direct relationship with that Board. Further discussions would take place.

- (ii) Vehicle Poster Competition

Hugh Long reported on the huge success of this competition which schools had taken part in. The Mayor had chosen the posters. There would be 28 vehicles with children's names on, and five full-size posters. The competition winners would also be invited to tea with the Mayor.

(iii) Green Bin Cardboard trial

Hugh Long reported on the success of this trial over the Christmas and New Year period. The results from the first load had revealed a very low level of contamination (between 1% and 1½%) and would thus generate some revenue. Consideration would therefore be given to continuing the scheme Dec 2011/Jan 2012.

**60. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

**It was agreed:-** That the next meeting of the Sustainability Partnership be held on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at 2.00 p.m. – Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Meeting:</b>        | <b>Cabinet Member for Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>     |
| <b>2. Date:</b>           | <b>21<sup>st</sup> February 2011</b>                         |
| <b>3. Title:</b>          | <b>Employability Partnership project with Cluj (Romania)</b> |
| <b>4. Programme Area:</b> | <b>Environment and Development Services</b>                  |

**5. Summary**

To update the Cabinet Member with progress on the joint project with Cluj-Napoca (Romania) working on engaging with people from the Roma and Disabled communities and assisting them back into employment

**6. Recommendations**

- To note the report.
  - To endorse continued work on the project
  - To request regular updates on the progress of the project and issues of interest which arise from it.
-



## 7. Proposals and Details

During July 2009, Cluj – Napoca Council contacted Rotherham MBC, with whom they already had linkages, to ask if we would work with them as a partner on an European Commission funded project for supporting people back into employment; from the disabled and Roma communities. A further Romania partner, Arad, would also be involved.

It was agreed that the proposal needed further investigation and two RMBC officers visited Romania to discuss the prospective bid in more detail.

Following these discussions it was agreed that RMBC would be a partner in this project and a Partnership agreement, to submit and further develop the project was signed by all parties.

There has subsequently been a delay in implementing the project, due to some questions over whether the funding would be available to deliver it. However, these issues have now been resolved and the project is scheduled to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, with a lifetime of 3 years. The title of the project is “Together for a secure beginning!”

The overall objective of the project is “to develop an integrated social and professional inclusion model for Roma people and persons with disabilities.” This is underpinned by three more focused objectives of:-

- 1) Ensuring access to information, mediation and to professional counselling services for 3415 Roma persons and 1585 disabled persons, over 36 months in the North Western and Western regions of Romania
- 2) Facilitating access to professional training programmes (qualification/re-qualification) for 900 Roma and disabled persons
- 3) Informing up to 72 public and private managers, NGO representatives and local public administration employees regarding the issues faced by Roma and disabled persons.

Details of the project have still to be agreed, and a scoping meeting between all partners is scheduled to be held within the first two months of the project start. However, it seems likely that during the lifetime of the project the Romanian project team will make annual visits to Rotherham to look at relevant activity being delivered in the Borough and surrounding area. Identified “experts” from Rotherham will then undertake twice yearly visits to Cluj and/or Arad to hold seminars and moderate workshops on this activity, ensuring sharing of experience and good practice on both sides.

A number of Rotherham experts, people and organisations, have been identified as potentially working on the project. A list is below, although it is expected this will be revised as the project progresses and areas of particular interest are identified.

Simeon Leach – RMBC, EDS (Project Co-ordinator)  
Peter Butters – Phoenix Enterprises  
Bev Booker – RMBC, CYPs  
Anne Ferguson – Speak up  
Neil Baxter – Bramalls & Chair of Work and Skills Board  
TBC – Job Centre Plus

## **8. Finance**

Funding for the project will come from the European Regional Development fund (ERDF), with Cluj-Napoca as the Accountable Body for the project. Potentially up to £156,000 of funding may be available, dependent on exchange rates and the ability to evidence that level of expenditure on the project.

The activity will be of nil cost to Rotherham MBC as the costs of all eligible activity can be claimed from the project subject to provision of required levels of receipts and evidence of spend. Cluj-Napoca is the main project sponsor and as such has overall control and responsibility for the project budget.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The main financial risk to RMBC is that activity claimed for under the project may be ineligible to receive European funding support. Project management by the Regeneration Team, in EDS, will ensure this is not the case.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The project will meet the following priorities of the Community Strategy:-

- Maximise employment opportunities for all by supporting disadvantaged people into work.
- Improve access and remove barriers to employment.
- Increase the number of young people in education, employment or training.
- Support people on incapacity benefits to manage their condition and get back into employment where possible through the Condition Management Programme (CMP) and Pathways to Work.
- Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion or belief. (All themes)

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

A project summary provided by the Cluj-Napoca Council is attached as Appendix 1

A copy of the signed Partnership agreement for the project is available on request.

Colleagues in Finance and Chief Executive's were consulted on this report.

Cllr. Hussain will be kept informed of project progress in his position as Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion. This paper will be taken to his Delegated Powers meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011 for information.

### **Contact Name:**

Simeon Leach

Regeneration Manager

Tel: 01709 82 3828

E-mail: [simeon.leach@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:simeon.leach@rotherham.gov.uk)

## **Title of project : Together for a secure beginning!**

Project ID 63444

Funding application no. 96 "Together on labour market"

AP 6 Promoting social inclusion

DMI 6.2. "Improving access and participation of vulnerable groups on labour market"

**Project duration:** 36 months

**Main partner:** Social Work and Medical Services Directorate

### **Parteners:**

Partner 1 - Development and Social Work Directorate of Arad

Partner 2 - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Partner 3 - Resource Centre for Roma Communities Foundation

Partner 4 - ASISTMED Family Aid Association.

**General Objective:** Developing an integrated social and professional inclusion model for Roma people and persons with disabilities.

### **Specific objectives:**

1. Ensuring access to information, mediation and to professional counseling services for 3415 Roma persons and 1585 disabilities persons, in 36 months in the North Western and Western regions of Romania.
2. Facilitating access to professional training programmes (qualification/re-qualification) for 900 Roma persons and persons with disabilities, in 36 months, in the North Western and Western regions of Romania.
3. Informing a number of 72 public and private managers; NGOs' representatives, local public administration employees regarding the issues faced by Roma people and disabled people, in 36 months, in the North Western and Western regions of Romania;

### **Project activities:**

- Providing individual professional training offers regarding the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including the development of basic competencies and their certification through informing activities for Roma people and disabled persons;
- Activities for developing the professional potential of vulnerable persons and for identifying and developing employment opportunities, including professional training;
- Work groups, assistance and counseling;
- Studies and expertise aiming at evaluating the impact and efficiency of measures and of support interventions offered to persons facing the risk of social exclusion;
- Developing and promoting different forms of cooperation between employers, union organizations, NGOs and other relevant actors of the labour market with the purpose of identifying and promoting employment opportunities for vulnerable groups;
- Transnational activities for improving access and participation of vulnerable groups on labour market, as well as with the purpose of changing the social attitude regarding vulnerable groups, especially regarding the work environment, including information and promotion campaigns for employers and their employees, local communities and decision factors.

### **Anticipated results**

- 3415 Roma persons benefit from information, mediation and professional counseling;
- 1585 disabled persons benefit from information, mediation and professional counseling;
- 300 Roma persons benefit from professional training courses;
- 200 disabled persons benefit from professional training courses;
- 240 Roma persons benefit from certified competencies;

- 160 disabled persons benefit from certified competencies;
- 500 Roma persons and disabled persons benefit from subventions during the training course;
- 10 % of persons participating in integrated programmes within the project find a job in 6 months;
- 500 subventions given to employers who employ persons who take part in integrated programmes within the project;
- 72 public and private managers, NGO representatives, employees of public authorities benefit from information on the issues faced by persons belonging to vulnerable groups regarding their access to labour market;
- 132 participants to seminars and workshops;
- 3 organized conferences;
- 1 Centre of Information and counseling for promoting employment opportunities for vulnerable groups established;

**Target group:**

- Managers - 30
- Disabled persons - 1585
- Roma persons- 3415
- Employees of civil society organizations - 18
- Employees of public/private agencies which provide social and employment services for vulnerable people - 24

**Procurements within the project:**

- Office rental
- 1 building
- professional training and employment services
- Event planning services (conferences, seminars): conference/seminar room rental, translation and interpretation, sound system, catering
- Publicity services
- audit services
- 1 impact study
- 1 IT application
- Furniture for the Information and Counseling Centre for promoting employment opportunities
- 18 laptops
- 2 computers
- 1 server
- 11 cameras
- 2 projectors
- 1 video-conference equipment
- 2 scanners
- 4 xerox-machines
- 4 printers
- 2 telephones/fax-machines
- 17 mobile phones
- 10 recorders
- 2 tripod video-cameras
- 2 dvd-players
- 2 TVs
- 2 leasing contracts for 2 cars

**Indicators**

| ID | Indicators (output)  | Value |
|----|--|-------|
| 1  | Number of participants in qualification/re-qualification programmes for vulnerable groups                        | 500   |
| 2  | Number of participants in qualification/re-qualification programmes for vulnerable groups of which: Roma persons | 300   |

|   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 3 | Number of participants in qualification/re-qualification programmes for vulnerable groups, of which: disabled persons | 200  |
| 4 | Number of persons who have benefited from counseling/orientation – access on labour market                            | 5000 |
| 5 | Number of FSE participants - disabled persons   | 1585 |
| 6 | Number of FSE participants – Roma persons   | 3415 |

| ID | Additional Indicators (output)  | Value |
|----|---|-------|
| 1  | Public and private managers, NGO representatives, employees of public authorities benefit from information on the issues faced by persons belonging to vulnerable groups regarding their access to labour market; | 72    |
| 2  | Participants to seminars and work-shops   | 132   |
| 3  | Conferences   | 3     |

| ID | Additional Indicators (result)   | Value |
|----|--|-------|
| 4  | Information and Counseling Centre for promoting employment opportunities | 1     |

## 1 Coordinator

### Responsibilities:

- Takes part regularly in the meetings of the project team
- Ensures and organizes experience exchanges and study-tours for the members of the implementation team with the purpose of promoting good practice models
- Coordinates the activities of the experts
- Assures the management of the project at the partner from England with the guidance of the project manager
- Takes part in promoting the project and in the press conference and the press release within the press conference which announces the objectives, activities, anticipated results of the project and the partners involved

### Conditions:

- university diploma

## 2 Experts from Rotherham will be involved in the activities held during the Romanian implementation team's visit in Rotherham

### 3 Experts from Rotherham will hold seminars and moderate workshops in Cluj and Arad

Responsibilities: moderates workshops, shares experience and good practice models, supportive counseling for counselors involved in activities with the vulnerable groups.

### Conditions: - university diploma in social studies

- relevant experience in fields related to the project

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| <b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b> |
|--|

|           |                     |  |
|-----------|---------------------|--|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Meeting:</b>     | <b>Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment</b>   |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Date:</b>        | <b>21 February 2011</b>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Title:</b>       | <b>Rationalisation of the Property Portfolio: Land to the rear of 22A West Park Drive, Swallownest</b><br><br><b>Ward: 11 Rother Vale Ward</b> |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Directorate:</b> | <b>Environment and Development Services</b>  |

**5. Summary**

To seek approval to use delegated powers to declare the above-mentioned asset surplus to the requirements of the Department of Asset Management.

**6. Recommendations**

- 1. That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment use his delegated powers to declare the asset surplus to requirements of Department of Asset Management.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The subject grass/scrub land extends to approximately 2.435 acres in total and is crossed-hatched in red on the attached plan at Appendix 1. The asset was retained for future investment and as such has been managed through an agricultural tenancy since 1986.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration has advised that although the land falls within the residential allocation on the UDP, in this particular instance, this option would not be supported, as the site has been earmarked for local shopping and commercial purposes.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration has further stated that at the time of the new residential development to the west and south of the site, it was noted that the site would be best developed as a local retail centre, along with incidental greenspace under the electricity pylon that crosses the site on the eastern boundary. Additionally the high capacity electricity lines which cross the site would make it a poor environment for residential accommodation.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration has advised that a small supermarket; or a number of convenience shops with offices above would appear to be the most appropriate form of development for this site. The site has been left undeveloped with a view to providing for retail needs within the immediate locality. Any retail proposal would be expected to be limited to a scale appropriate to serving the local area.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed that there are no matters in the Council's freehold title to the land which would affect a disposal of the site.

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, on behalf of the Director of Asset Management Department, and has agreed in principle to declare the asset surplus to requirements, subject to the approval of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment.

## **8. Finance**

If the asset is declared surplus to requirements the asset will be transferred to the Property Bank and consideration will be given to its future use as per the normal Council procedures. A disposal of the asset will provide a substantial capital receipt for the Council.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

There are no risks associated with declaring the land surplus to requirements.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

A disposal of the site on the open market for retail purposes supports the council's strategy of sustainability helping to develop and stimulate local economic growth, providing local employment opportunities and services, and reducing the need to travel, therefore helping to reinforce Rotherham neighbourhoods and communities.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services.

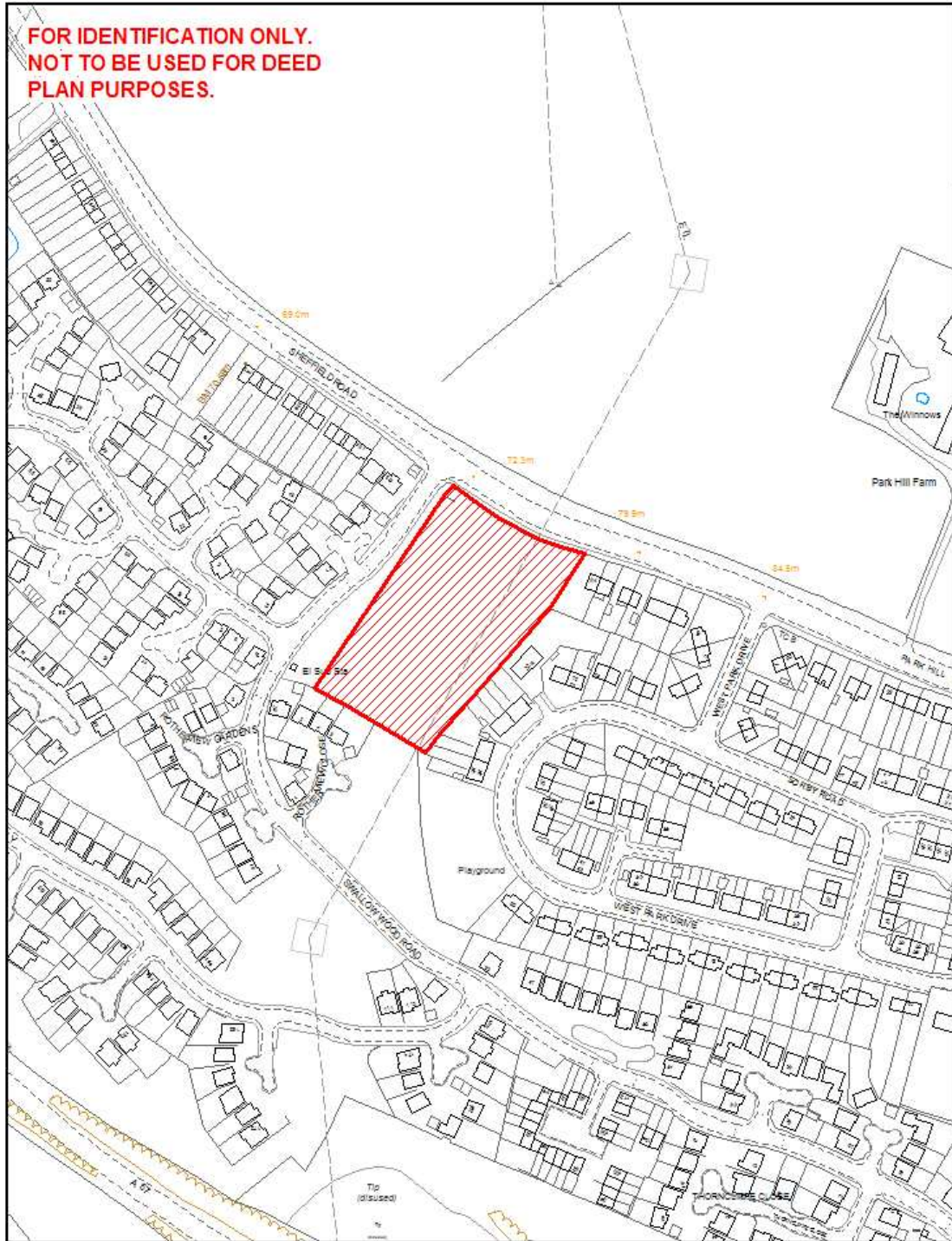
If this property is declared surplus to requirements, it will be placed into the Property Bank and the normal consultations carried out.

Appendix 1 – Site and location plan

**Contact Name:** Marcus Rudkin, Trainee Valuer, Asset Management  
Service, ext. 54040, [marcus.rudkin@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:marcus.rudkin@rotherham.gov.uk)

Ian Smith, Director of Asset Management, ext 23850, [ian-EDS.smith@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:ian-EDS.smith@rotherham.gov.uk)





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**LAND REAR OF  
22A WEST PARK DRIVE  
SWALLOWNEST**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Rotherham MBC<br/>Strategic Director: Adam Wilkinson<br/>Environment &amp; Development Services<br/>Bailey House, Rawmarsh Road<br/>ROTHERHAM S60 1TD</p> |  |
|--|--|

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

|           |                     |   |
|-----------|---------------------|---|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Meeting:</b>     | <b>Delegated Powers</b>                         |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Date:</b>        | <b>21 February 2011</b>                         |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Title:</b>       | <b>South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide</b> |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Directorate:</b> | <b>Environment &amp; Development Services</b>   |

**5. Summary**

The purpose of this report is to feed back the key findings of the public consultation for the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide and the resulting changes made to the document. Authority is also sought to use the document as a best practice guide pending future consideration to its adoption (all or in part) as a Supplementary Planning Document.

**5. Recommendations**

That the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide be approved for use as a best practice guide.

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## **6. Proposals and Details**

The South Yorkshire Residential Design guide is aimed principally at housing developments of over 10 units, with its purpose being to update the existing 'Better Places to Live in South Yorkshire' (2002) design guide to provide robust urban and highway design guidance (including technical standards) for planning applicants, agents, developers and designers. It also strongly complements the government endorsed 'Building for Life' assessment approach.

As such, it will represent best-practice guidance across South Yorkshire, and will be used by Rotherham Council to promote and appraise the quality of new housing proposals. The guide will help to improve housing design quality, protect the character of existing urban areas, ensure resident's amenity is protected, and help to meet the Council's priorities for good quality housing in attractive, safe and prosperous neighbourhoods.

The document is the result of cooperation between the four South Yorkshire local authorities and Transform South Yorkshire (TSY), the sub-regional housing and regeneration housing pathfinder.

The benefit of a South Yorkshire wide guide is that it more consistently raises the standards expected of and delivered by residential developers. This brings greater certainty for investors. The house-building industry has been engaged in producing the guide to ensure the requirements are not overly onerous and are deliverable.

Within the 23 April 2010 Local Development Framework Steering Group it was resolved (following a dialogue led by the Planning Services Manager on the document's scope and aims) that Rotherham would act as a facilitator in the public consultation process on the guide. This has now been completed and the feedback gained has resulted in significant amendments being made to the document (see below).

It is proposed to use the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide as a best practice guide and, following adoption of the LDF Core Strategy, consideration will be given to it being adopted (all or in part) as a Supplementary Planning Document.

## **7. Finance**

All costs incurred in the preparation of the documentation were funded externally by Transform South Yorkshire. The only potential costs to Rotherham MBC are those arising from the printing and distribution of the design guide. These will be contained within approved budgets.

## **8. Risks and Uncertainties**

Transform South Yorkshire, the sub regional Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder are funding production of the revised design guide. Without this support it is unlikely that Rotherham Council would be able to produce guidance to a similar standard, weakening the Council's position in relation to housing design standards.

Without an updated document (which may ultimately be adopted), there is a danger that design issues will not be adequately addressed, which could result in lower quality residential development with long term financial implications and negative consequences for the Borough's economic competitiveness and quality of life for new and existing residents.

Planning Officers could rely solely on the policies of the Unitary Development Plan in the consideration of major residential development proposals. However, the guidance provided by the Unitary Development Plan is inevitably limited in detail and has been generally superseded by modern design standards. Without the design guide, opportunities to secure developments that are acceptable in design terms may be prejudiced due to the limitations of the existing Better Places to Live document, and the fact that it has no real weight in determining planning applications.

Having an up to date guide will facilitate delivery of statutory functions more effectively, encourage greater collaborative working and address common issues that are encountered in assessing development proposals. The guidance is intended for use by local planning and highways officers in their promotion, assessment and management of the development process. This joint approach to development management will enable a consistent approach to development control resulting in greater clarity and certainty for the development industry.

The guide is also intended for use by architects and house builders in the sub-region, as a source of inspiration and a guide to desirable design outcomes which will be acceptable to each local authority. As such, it is intended to minimise delays by promoting positive, transparent and responsive partnership between the local planning authorities and the development industry. Nonetheless, (until its adoption and attachment to Core Strategy policy), the provisions of the design guide will not directly form the basis for refusal of a planning application, but will as necessary be referred to in pre-application discussions and officer reports.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide will:

- Further the Corporate objectives of the Corporate Plan
- Contribute to the Community Strategy Strategic Themes of Rotherham Achieving and Rotherham Safe, as well as the overarching theme of Sustainable Development
- Contribute to the corporate cross-cutting agendas of:
  - Sustainable Development - contributing to economic, social and environmental well-being
  - Regeneration – providing sustainable neighbourhoods of quality, choice and aspiration

It will in addition make positive contributions to a Safer Rotherham through making crime and disorder less likely. As part of the 'Building for Life' assessment one of the questions asks 'are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?' It is intended to continue to seek the advice of South Yorkshire Police as a consultee on proposals for residential development.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

During production of the guide there were 3 stakeholder workshops which were held with Local Authority, house-builder and Registered Social Landlord representatives who are active in the South Yorkshire area. These representatives provided input into the aims and objectives of the guidance.

There was a round of internal Council consultations on the first draft document during 2009. Following another period of internal consultation during March 2010,

changes were made before a period of statutory public consultation and engagement which ran for a six week period between 14 June 2010 and 23 July 2010. During this period the consultation, a press release was produced, the document was available online and hard copies were made available at Rotherham's Central Library and Town Centre Customer Service Centre. All parish councils, statutory consultees, developers and agents on the combined councils' databases, (totalling over 430 contacts), were notified of the consultation and their views sought. Officers also held a targeted consultation workshop for residential developers and agents with over 200 representatives invited. Additional Rotherham specific measures included a members seminar held on 15 July 2010 and discussions at the 5 July Access Group and 12 July Volunteer Board of Rotherfed.

Following the six week public consultation period, officers of the four authorities held a series of clarification meetings with housebuilder representatives who had raised issues with the document during the consultation period (see below).

Overall there were around 20 detailed representations made during the consultation, as well as the discussions that took place at the workshops and post-consultation clarification meetings with developers. Subject to a number of suggested changes the public sector respondents (including Natural England, Yorkshire Forward, Homes and Communities Agency, SYPTE) and the Civic Trusts were supportive of the guide. The Environment Agency and South Yorkshire Police suggested that there needed to be stronger reference to flood resilient design and 'Designing out Crime' respectively. This has been addressed in the final document by providing links to other sources of information and by including a new section on security.

Responses from the private sector agents and house-builders suggested a wide range of amendments to the guide which have largely been taken on board. The developers were more critical of the guide, suggesting it would have a negative effect upon viability and could constrain development due to certain design requirements and standards, although no robust evidence was presented to support these views. Whilst this has to be accepted to a degree, there is strong evidence (refer to appendix 1 to this report) that good design offers a wide range of other benefits, that it can add value to a development and can help to reduce long term costs (e.g. the costs of crime or damage to the environment). Developers' cost appraisals do not take account of these issues due to their focus on maximising short term private profit, and the current viability issues are partly the reflection of a short-term downturn in the economy.

Further investigation of these concerns revealed that the key issues were the cumulative effect of some of the design requirements (particularly Lifetime Homes, Wheelchair Housing and increased internal space standards) being introduced at a time when the housing market is weak, building regulations have been strengthened in respect of the Code for Sustainable Homes and when viability is a real issue for the industry. In response, the design guide makes it clear that whilst meeting these standards is desirable and represents best practice, they are not mandatory unless the council has an adopted policy in place requiring it.

Further targeted engagement with the private sector representatives revealed that they were concerned that the document would be interpreted too stringently by planning officers and that every guideline would be required for every development. This is not the intention of the document which is meant as a *guide*, it uses Building

for Life (BfL) as a flexible design quality benchmark to be met. The Home Builders Federation has signed up to BfL and most private sector respondents recognise the value of it. The guide has been amended to be clearer and to better distinguish between 'essential' and 'desirable' guidelines.

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## Appendix 1

Research has been undertaken into the economic, social and environmental value of good residential design by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and others. This research shows that good design does not necessarily cost more, and can result in widespread benefits particularly when measured across the lifetime of the development.

### The Beneficiaries of value from good residential design

| Stakeholders           | Short term value   | Long term value  |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Investors</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for greater security of investment</li> <li>• Higher rental returns</li> <li>• Increased asset value (on which to borrow)</li> <li>• Reduced running costs</li> <li>• Competitive investment edge</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy maintenance if high quality materials</li> <li>• Maintenance of value / income</li> <li>• Reduced maintenance costs (over life)</li> <li>• Better re-sales values</li> <li>• Higher quality long term tenants</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Developers</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quicker permissions (reduced cost, more certainty)</li> <li>• Increased public support</li> <li>• Higher sales values and profit</li> <li>• Distinctiveness and product differentiation / development</li> <li>• Increased funding potential</li> <li>• Allows difficult sites to be developed at higher densities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better reputation</li> <li>• Increased confidence</li> <li>• Trademark value</li> <li>• Future collaborations more likely</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Residents</b>       |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happier tenants / residents</li> <li>• Reduced maintenance / management costs</li> <li>• Reduced utility bills</li> <li>• Better health</li> <li>• More efficient and adaptable space</li> <li>• Security of investment</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Local Authority</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regenerative potential to encourage new development and improve image and reputation of area</li> <li>• Reduced public discord and time spent on planning negotiations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced expenditure on crime, health, management, maintenance, etc</li> <li>• More time for pro-active planning</li> <li>• Increased economic vitality and viability</li> <li>• Increased tax revenue</li> <li>• Meet sustainability targets</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Communities</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to safety, attractiveness and functioning of neighbourhood</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better security, less crime,</li> <li>• Safer streets- fewer road accidents</li> <li>• Less pollution, better health</li> <li>• Better quality of life</li> <li>• Less stress</li> <li>• More inclusive accessible public space</li> <li>• Civic pride and sense of community identity</li> <li>• Higher property prices in area</li> </ul> |