

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, 5th September, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Ellis, Falvey, Foden, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Read, Sims, Swift, Wallis and Wright.

Together with Mr. B. Walker (co-opted member) and Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Waste and Emergency Planning)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodson, Havenhand, Jepson and P. A. Russell.

**17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**19. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no issues to report.

**20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY, 2012**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman, with the inclusion of Councillor Foden in the list of Members submitting their apologies for that meeting.

**21. RECYCLING - COLLECTION OF CARDBOARD**

Further to minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Waste and Emergency Planning held on (i) 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 (Minute No. L31) and on (ii) 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 (Minute No. L7), consideration was given to a report presented by the Waste Manager concerning the new arrangements for the co-mingling and co-collection of cardboard and paper.

The report stated that the new collection arrangements had been introduced in mid-March, 2012, so that cardboard is no longer collected from the green dustbins and is instead collected with paper as part of the dry recyclables ('blue bag') collection.

The Select Commission discussed the progress of the revised collection service, which has now been operating for several months.

The following issues were raised during the discussion on this item:-

- a correction was made to the table on the collection of biodegradable

waste, included in the report, to state: 'Kerbside Paper and Cardboard';

- the cost of the additional 'blue bags' used for the collection of paper and cardboard had been included in the budgeted costs; such bags were available to the public on request;
- reference was made to the recycling of plastic, which was not currently collected from households in Rotherham;
- contamination of cardboard, from garden and green waste placed in the green bins;
- several comments were made about the good quality of the service being provided;
- there appeared to be very few problems concerning cardboard littering streets at the time of collection;
- reference was made to the fluctuating prices of the various recyclable materials and the implications for the Council's budget;
- the collection schedules and ensuring that all households in the Borough area received the collection service.

Resolved:- That the report be received and its contents noted.

## **22. HM GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: HIGH INCOME SOCIAL TENANTS, PAY TO STAY**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Social Housing Officer and the Housing Income Manager concerning the HM Government consultation entitled "High Income Social Tenants, Pay to Stay" which had commenced on 13th June, 2012 and will end on 12th September, 2012.

The report stated that in November 2011, the Government had launched its strategy for housing, "Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England". As well as tackling empty homes and fuel poverty and encouraging the building of new homes, this strategy highlights reforms to social housing that afford landlords greater flexibility and options in allocating and managing their housing stock. The Government suggests that households on high incomes who occupy social housing is an issue which can only be addressed through further reform and proposes the introduction of a 'Pay to Stay' scheme whereby social landlords could charge higher rents to tenants on high incomes. The consultation process was inviting views on how this policy should be delivered.

A copy of the Council's draft response to the consultation was appended to the report submitted.

The Select Commission discussed the following issues:-

- whether the new arrangements are to be mandatory or discretionary; this issue is to be clarified during the Autumn, 2012;
- the development of successful, vibrant communities;
- the overall majority of Members were critical of the Government's strategy for housing, but some expressed agreement with the principle that very high earners living in social housing should pay higher than social rents;
- Select Commission Members would have the opportunity to submit their comments and responses to the consultation, on an individual basis before the deadline, to the Social Housing Officer.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and the details of the consultation be noted.

(2) That the draft consultation response, as now submitted, be noted.

(3) That this Select Commission agrees to the consultation response being submitted to the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods for approval and subsequent submission to the Government Department for Communities and Local Government by the due date of 12th September 2012.

**23. HM GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - IMPROVING LISTED BUILDING CONSENT (REPORT ATTACHED)**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Principal Planning Officer and the Conservation Officer, stating that on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2012, the HM Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport had published a consultation document entitled "Improving Listed Building Consent", which proposed changes to the way planning and heritage assets are dealt with. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2012. The report summarised the consultation and included a copy of this Council's response.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following issues:-

- the Government's overall intention of simplifying the Listed Building Consent system;
- there are some 750,000 Listed Buildings in England, generating 350,000 applications each year for Listed Building Consent;
- Members were critical of the very short timescale allowed for the submission of responses to this consultation;
- there were concerns that the aim of significantly reducing the need to

gain Listed Building Consent would consequently lead to a reduction in opportunities for public involvement in the Listed Building Consent system.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and the details of the consultation be noted.

(2) That the response, now submitted, which has been provided to the HM Government Department for Culture Media and Sport, be noted.

**24. IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION - WORK PROGRAMME**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, discussion took place on the Select Commission's work programme for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year.

With regard to Minute No. 14 of this Select Commission's meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 (Effect of Budget Savings on Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Schedules), it was noted that the appointed review group would begin its meetings during October 2012.

Members were informed that two specific issues would be dealt with in the next part of the work programme, which are:-

(i) Agreements made in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, including the impact upon school places and the changes to the Section 106 system (a joint review with the Improving Lives Select Commission);

(ii) Housing issues:- including repairs and computer systems used for lettings.

Resolved:- (1) That the details of the Select Commission's work programme be received.

(2) That a progress report about the forthcoming reviews on (i) Section 106 Agreements; and (ii) Housing issues be submitted to the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission.

(3) That every endeavour be made to include up-to-date financial information in the review reports.