

## **CABINET**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012 at Worksop Town Hall**

Present: Councillor S A Greaves (Chair),  
Councillors J Evans, J A Leigh, S May, D R Pressley, A Rhodes and  
G J Wynne.

Advisory Members: Councillors H M Brand and C Palmer.

Liaison Members: Councillors B Barker, H Burton and C Wanless.

Officers: D Armiger, G Blenkinsop, S Brown, L Dore, M Hill, M Ladyman and  
R Theakstone.

Also present: Councillors J Sanger, Mrs A Simpson and Mrs K Sutton.

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting).

#### **24. QUESTION TIME - PUBLIC**

Council Procedure Rules were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow questions from the public; there was one member of the public present and one question was asked:

*Will the District Council consider granting Worksop and Retford local democracy enjoyed by other Parish and Town Councils and let them have their own Town Councils?*

The Leader of the Council replied that he had not considered personally that there was a demand for this or heard from anyone else of a desire for an additional layer of bureaucracy in the District.

*While I was canvassing at the last election, it was evident to me that Harworth and Bircotes residents benefit from having a Town Council and that Worksop and Retford residents could also benefit from having an input into decisions made about their towns.*

The Leader of the Council replied that he was not against the structure of Parish and Town Councils and that the Members of the District Council with Wards in Worksop and Retford do a good job of representing their towns.

*The problem with District Councillors, who are fine people, is that not all of them live in the place they represent and are therefore not looking at issues from Worksop or Retford residents' points of view – local issues are not considered.*

The Leader of the Council replied that an expression of interest had been made through Parish Councils Liaison Group for a local review of governance and that any response to that would be taken into consideration. However, he was not personally aware of any desire for a Town Council in either Worksop or Retford and that the District Councillors of these towns were doing a good job in representing residents.

#### **5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K H Isard.

## 26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

### (a) Members

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

### (b) Officers

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

## 27. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> JUNE 2012

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 be approved.

## 28. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

## 29. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

**RESOLVED** that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

## **SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC**

### **Key Decisions**

## 30. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – HOUSING – COUNCILLOR A RHODES

### (a) Strategic Tenancy Strategy (Key Decision No. 325)

Members were asked to approve commencement of formal consultation on the Strategic Tenancy Strategy. The Localism Act 2011 recommends that Local Authorities produce a Tenancy Strategy and that this is approved by November 2012. The Council recognises that social housing is a scarce resource and the Act gives discretion to use the reforms in it to manage its stock and enable better targeting to those in most need. Consultation will include interested parties, e.g. tenants groups, registered providers, along with a series of Member workshops, discussion forums and other events.

#### Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

##### Flexible Tenancies

In order to make best use of our stock in meeting the needs of the district we have the option to reserve the right to use flexible tenancies in the following circumstances:

##### i. Under occupancy

‘Under-occupation’ is defined as living in a home that has more bedrooms than a household requires, re-use of the property to a household that requires it.

##### ii. Occupation of fully adapted

Re-use of adapted properties where the disabled person is no longer resident. The principle is that once unsuitability arises, the flexible tenancy would not be renewed on expiry.

##### iii. Management of Stock

To be used in specific areas and property types to generate turnaround where there is a need and clear demand for general needs accommodation.

## Tenants Income

To be used where a tenant's income is likely to exceed an agreed threshold during the course of their tenancy. The rationale for this is that the tenant has the financial ability to secure their own housing outside of the councils stock although it would need to be constantly monitored and could act as a disincentive to gaining employment.

Members could decide to approve some or all of the above options in order to utilise our stock in a more targeted way, but will need to consider suitable thresholds to be applied.

## Affordable Rents

When considering how to make best use of our stock the Council has the option to use affordable rents in the following circumstances:

- i. New build
- ii. Acquired properties for e.g. disposals from another RP
- iii. Relets – In this case the Council will determine what percentage of relets will be made flexible.

Members could decide to approve some or all of the above options and will need to balance the opportunity to broaden housing diversity and choice for residents, with the opportunity to generate additional funds to support new-build and acquisition programmes within the district.

However, the option to apply affordable rents particularly to relets could result in similar neighbouring properties paying different rents.

## Succession

As succession can result in under occupation in general needs stock Members could choose to make best use of its stock by reserving the right to:

- i. Limit the right of statutory succession to only the spouse/partner of the deceased tenant.
- ii. Use its discretion to grant additional rights of succession where appropriate
- iii. Use its discretion to engage with any successor if the council feels the accommodation succeeded to is unsuitable.

Members could choose not to limit succession rights. The risk to this option is increasing under occupation and therefore not making best use of our existing stock.

## Vulnerability

The Council may take into account any vulnerable households or applicants they have when determining the approach to the new reforms. Vulnerability can include older people with support or care needs; adults with learning difficulties or disabilities etc. This approach will support these household and clients types by not applying the new reforms including using flexible tenancies.

## Consultation

In order to progress this matter it is proposed that the Council undertakes a consultation exercise with interested parties.

The consultation will include a series Member workshops and discussion forums along with other opportunities for engagement with parties within the Council, as well as A1 Housing. In relation to external bodies, information will be placed on the web site and there will be targeted discussions with tenants groups as well as all registered providers that operate within the District.

Feedback from this process will enable Cabinet to determine the most appropriate way to approach each element of the new Strategic Tenancy Strategy. A report will be

brought back to Cabinet in due course setting out the outcome of this exercise and putting forward the detail of the new Strategic Tenancy Strategy.

**RESOLVED** that Officers undertake a consultation exercise with interested parties concerning the options to be included within the new Strategic Tenancy Strategy and that the outcome of this exercise, along with the final strategy, is reported back to Cabinet in due course for approval.

**31. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – REVENUES, CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES – COUNCILLOR S MAY**

(a) **Developing the Council's Anti-Poverty Agenda (Key Decision 324)**

Members' approval was sought for the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan and to agree commencement of a consultation programme with partners. Anti-Poverty issues are part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-13 within 'Quality Housing and Local Environment' and 'Involved Communities and Locality Working'.

The strategy brings together much of the existing work to combat poverty in the District by the Council and identifies challenges and opportunities for further development. As there are many causes and impacts of poverty, a co-ordinated response is required and therefore the views and ideas of partners will be sought to help to tackle poverty issues in the District.

Draft copies of the Strategy and Action Plan were appended to the report.

**Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations**

Cabinet can accept, amend or reject the proposals contained within this report. Given the priority placed upon this work by the Corporate Plan 2012-2013, Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposals.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The draft Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan be approved.
2. A programme for consultation take place with partners and that the documents be brought back to Cabinet in October after this process for final consideration and referral to Council.
3. Regular reports be presented back to Cabinet on the progress on developing the Strategy and the actions arising from that work.
4. Thanks be recorded to the Cabinet Member - Revenues, Customer and Support Services, Members from the Select Panel Scrutiny Review into Poverty Issues and the Senior Manager Support Services for their work towards development of the Council's Anti-Poverty Agenda.

**Other Decisions**

**32. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COUNCILLOR S A GREAVES**

(a) **Forward Plan – July to October 2012**

Members were presented with the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the coming four months.

**Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations**

The report is for noting.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan for the period July to October 2012 be approved.

(b) Equality and Diversity Update

Members were provided with an update on the progress of equality and diversity matters against the Council's equality objectives. The Council is required under The Equality Act 2010 to identify equalities objectives over a four year period.

An appendix to the report provided details of objectives progressed to date which included some action still to commence.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

There is a statutory duty to produce and publish equality objectives for the next four years. The Objectives have been previously approved by Cabinet and are reflected in the Corporate Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the progress against the Equality Objectives is noted and that Cabinet is provided with updates on progress as part of the overall equality updates.

(c) Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership

Members were provided with an update on Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership, which is non-statutory and comprises representatives from public, private and the voluntary/community sectors. The aim of the Partnership is to improve the way services work together and to ensure that community needs are met. A copy of the Partnership's structure was appended to the report.

The report provided information on the meeting in April 2012 of the Partnership Board and a copy of a presentation given at that meeting by Nottinghamshire Police Chief Superintendent was also appended for Members' information.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council does not need to be part of or facilitate a Local Strategic Partnership but it is good practice to do so.

**RESOLVED** that the summary progress report be noted and that further update reports be presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

33. REPORTING MINUTES

(a) Joint Employee Council – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Employee Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012 be received.

(b) Information Technology and Access Sub-Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Information Technology and Access Sub-Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012 be received.

**SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE**

**Key Decisions**

None.

**Other Decisions**

**34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

As there was no other business to be considered, the Chairman closed the meeting.