Rotherham Strategic Housing Forum

DRAFT minutes of meeting on 2nd October 2015

Attended by:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation / department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dave Richmond</td>
<td>RMBC Housing, Asset Management and Neighbourhoods</td>
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<td>(Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda Harper</td>
<td>RMBC Children and Young People Services</td>
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<td>Mike Shires</td>
<td>RMBC Economic Development</td>
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<td>Matt Finn</td>
<td>RMBC Community Protection</td>
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<td>Sandra Tolley</td>
<td>RMBC Housing Options</td>
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<td>Bronwen Knight</td>
<td>RMBC Planning</td>
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<td>Malcolm Chiddey</td>
<td>RMBC Public Health</td>
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<td>Hannah Upstone</td>
<td>RMBC Strategic Housing</td>
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<td>Jane Davies-Haire</td>
<td>RMBC Strategic Housing</td>
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<td>Janine Moorcroft</td>
<td>RMBC Adult Services</td>
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<td>Claire McGonigle</td>
<td>Action Housing</td>
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<td>Frederick Crawshaw</td>
<td>Great Places</td>
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<td>Raymond Kinsella</td>
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<td>Chris Little</td>
<td>Guinness</td>
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<td>Claire Holt</td>
<td>HCA</td>
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<td>Patrick Cahill</td>
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<td>Steve Ruffle</td>
<td>RotherFed</td>
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<td>Dominic Blaydon</td>
<td>Rotherham CCG</td>
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<td>Tony Stacey</td>
<td>South Yorkshire Housing Association</td>
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<td>Shafiq Hussain</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Rotherham</td>
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Apologies received from:

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<tr>
<td>Nigel Graham</td>
<td>Guinness</td>
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<td>Lisa Jones</td>
<td>HCA</td>
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<td>James Bromfield</td>
<td>Johnnie Johnson</td>
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<td>Clive Collings</td>
<td>South Yorkshire Police</td>
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<td>Graham Orr and Chris Clegg</td>
<td>Together Housing</td>
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<td>Commissioner Julie Kenny</td>
<td>RMBC</td>
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<td>Graeme Betts</td>
<td>RMBC Adult Services</td>
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<td>Tom Bell</td>
<td>RMBC Strategic Housing</td>
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<td>Simeon Leach</td>
<td>RMBC Economic Development</td>
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<td>Michael Holmes</td>
<td>Policy and Partnerships</td>
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<td>Terri Roche</td>
<td>RMBC Public Health</td>
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1. Welcome and introductions

Dave Richmond thanked everyone for attending, introduced the agenda, and provided some background and context for the new Strategic Housing Forum including:

- Current RMBC governance arrangements
- Recent ‘health-check’ inspection of Rotherham housing services
- Rotherham Together Partnership

**Action:** Linda Harper agreed to raise the issue of whether there should be a housing representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The group discussed the draft terms of reference. The main amendment was that meetings should be increased to quarterly, and representatives from the National Landlords Association and developer / house building sector to be included.

**Action:** JDH to update and circulate final version with the minutes.

2. Selective Licensing – presentation by Matt Finn followed by Q&A / discussion

Presentation slides will be uploaded on website.

In response to questions Matt confirmed the following:

- Little London is not included in the Maltby Selective Licensing zone
- More information can be found on the website
- There are still some landlords that RMBC doesn’t know about but Matt is confident the blanks will be filled in due to the high take-up rate in a short space of time
- Although it may appear that landlords with large numbers of properties may experience financial pressure, the repayment period is adjusted accordingly. The license lasts for five years and is paid upfront over year one. If a landlord has more than ten properties they can pay over two years.
- There is no evidence that as a result of Selective Licensing, landlords are selling their stock / no significant increase in turnover
- Where properties are inspected, dialogue takes place with the NCA if specific concerns are raised to ensure agencies are joining up their intelligence
- There is no restriction to prevent landlords passing the cost onto tenants via rent increases, but we have received no reports that this is a problem in Rotherham
Information from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health suggests that Selective Licensing has led to positive outcomes for areas – reduced turnover and reduced empty properties

3. Housing Strategy – presentation by Jane Davies-Haire followed by group discussion

Presentation slides circulated with minutes.
Link to current housing strategy: Rotherham's current housing strategy

Group discussion on issues to be addressed in new housing strategy instalment covering the period 2016-19.

Protecting Rotherham’s limited and decreasing social rented housing stock

Tony Stacey reiterated the scale of the problem, noting the following:

- The Comprehensive Spending Review is likely to wipe out social rented housing programme.
- Receipts from the scale of high value Council housing (to pay for the discounts that housing associations will have to offer under the extended RTB) are to be ring-fenced, meaning that Sheffield City Region authorities will need to sell off more stock.
- Social rent reductions represent 1% cuts annually but significantly more when indexed.
- Unrealistic expectation that 95% of housing association expenditure should be on new stock, SYHA for example spends approximately 60% on care and support
- There will be serious implications for health and social care
- Tony hopes that the Council will take a strong position on affordable housing policy ensuring that new supply is ‘genuinely’ affordable

Bronwen Knight later confirmed that the 25% affordable housing policy remains in place, onsite provision wherever possible.

Opportunity to reduce fraudulent Right to Buy (RTB) sales by for example conducting face to face interviews

Polarisation of communities

- It was noted that Councils being forced to sell off their higher value homes, will lead to further polarisation of communities as the better homes in the better areas will go first. We need to ensure we are not inadvertently creating less diverse communities.
• The group agreed on the importance of RMBC and housing associations to work closely together to mitigate against the impact on social housing.

• It was noted that since the review of the allocations policy, and the dramatic reduction of numbers on the Housing Register, there have been higher numbers of ‘direct homes’ in lower demand areas. Do we need to review our nomination processes?

• Raymond Kinsella also noted that we need to look at the town centre offer – what can we do to attract economically active households into the town centre?

• Sandra Tolley explained that the introduction of a fourth priority band on the Housing Register will help to ensure that a proportion of social rented homes go to economically active households / people unsuitably housed in the private rented sector etc.

• General theme of the discussion – we need to ensure the new housing strategy promotes the interests of those who are economically active as well as the most vulnerable people.

Attracting developers, businesses and people to live in Rotherham

• The group discussed the need to market Rotherham in a positive way in order to attract developers, business and employees. Raymond Kinsella, whose organisation manages amongst other things hospital trust accommodation, noted a recent trend that overseas medical staff are sometimes choosing to live outside of the borough, which will inevitably have knock-on effects on the health service if these people then choose to work elsewhere.

• **Action**: JDH to explore incentives for key workers

• Bronwen Knight noted that the Local Plan is in the final stages (publication of Sites and Policies document on the Council’s website, alongside the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, on 28th September) and 99 sites have been designated for housing, offering a wide range of good quality, attractive and deliverable opportunities.

• The new housing strategy is an opportunity to set out the Council’s vision and promote new housing development opportunities.

• Bronwen went on to note that some of these sites are green belt sites. Growth and in particular affordable housing growth is concentrated in sites around the town centre (town centre masterplanning underway), but there are also opportunities for family and executive style housing out in the Bassingthorpe area.

• It was also noted that Rotherham is one of the top three contenders for a national High Street award.
Specialist housing

- Dave Richmond noted that specialist housing is likely to be the main focus for new Council housing – for older people, young people, people with physical and learning disabilities and mental health conditions. Blue sky workshop to look at partnership working between Housing, Health and Adult Services on older people housing provision arranged for 12th October.

- Janine Moorcroft explained that she has been exploring options to promote independent living as an alternative to traditional residential care. One example is Sharing Lives – similar to fostering but for adults with support needs rather than children.

4. All other business

Each person was invited to set out their organisation / team’s current key issues and what they would like to get from this Forum. Some overlap with the housing strategy discussion.

Dominic Blaydon, CCG
Current areas of focus, looking forward to working in a more genuinely joined up way on the following:

- Development of specialist older people accommodation, particularly extra care
- Hospital discharge, intermediate care provision, managing chronic diseases within communities
- Corporate parent responsibility shared with RMBC and looking to develop a specific health offer for young people leaving care including, potentially, education / apprenticeship opportunities

Malcolm Chiddey, Public Health
- Emphasised the importance of greenspace and health / wellbeing implications – not to be overlooked

Tony Stacey, SYHA
- Reiterated earlier comments on the importance of working together to mitigate the effects of Government policy on social housing provision
- Ensuring housing is playing a central role in integration of health, adult social care and housing – great to have colleagues from Health and Social Care around the table
- Advised of Sheffield City Region housing event in Sheffield on 21st October (flyer circulated with minutes)
Sandra Tolley, Housing Options
- Positive feedback and optimistic about this Forum – good to be looking at support and sustainability and not just ‘bricks and mortar’.

Janine Moorcroft, Adult Services
- Good to hear a consensus from all organisations on the key issues we need to work together to tackle, movement away from ‘silo’ working.

Claire McGonigle, Action Housing
- The diversity of organisations around the table is key to the Forum’s success.
- Would be good to have more housing associations at future meetings.
- Action Housing has submitted a bid to the HCA’s Platform for Life fund to convert Rawmarsh Library into specialist accommodation for young people with support needs – awaiting HCA decision.

Claire Holt, HCA
- Welcomed the opportunity to be involved and agreed it’s a very interesting time to be part of this Forum.
- Grant funded programme - significant movement away from social rented housing towards low cost home ownership and starter homes.

Linda Harper, CYPS
- Positive feedback on the Forum – vibrant and well attended. Exciting opportunity to work together – integration of housing and CYPS on medium and longer term strategic planning.
- Linda has produced a ‘Sufficiency Strategy’ in response to Ofsted feedback that Rotherham has insufficient (children) care provision and leaving care accommodation.
- Aiming for executive style 4-5 bedroom homes for children and care leavers.
- Also looking at potential extra care / intergenerational / health care hubs
- Linda offered to conduct consultation on the new housing strategy with parents / carers / young people groups

Pat Cahill, RotherFed
- Reiterated the importance of engaging public opinion and consulting on what Rotherham needs
- Flyer circulated to advertise ‘Celebrating Community Involvement event’
- Tuesday 20th October 2015 at 1pm, Springwell Gardens Community Centre (for more info or to book a place, please contact RotherFed on 01709 368515 or info@rotherfed.org

Shafiq Hussain, VAR
- Explained that he represents and provides services and support to a wide range of community and voluntary sector organisations, not specifically housing.
- Noted the increased focus on ‘mitigation’ - advice, homelessness, food banks, etc
Chris Little, Guinness
- Noted that housing associations will need to work more closely with house builders in the future, and suggested including private sector representative in future meetings.

Raymond Kinsella, Great Places
- Confirmed that despite all the challenges discussed, his organisation remains committed to Rotherham and will play its part in working through the solutions.

Frederick Crawshaw, Great Places
- Noted the importance of attracting people to Rotherham (new low cost home ownership housing etc) and making strategic links to the transport and education offer. To be discussed further at next meeting.

Matt Finn, Community Safety
- Noted private rented sector increasingly important and suggested National Landlords Association representative to be invited in future.

5. Next Strategic Housing Forum meeting

Likely to be in January 2016
Proposed agenda items include:

- Launch of new housing strategy
- Invitation for John Healey to attend
- Transport and infrastructure offer
- Speaker from Health and Wellbeing Board
- Membership – other RSLs

Jane Davies-Haire
Strategic Housing Manager
12th October 2015