Dear Member

MULTI STOREY FLATS TASK GROUP – 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

The first meeting of the Multi Storey Flats Task Group will be held at 5.30pm on 23 September 2010 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Andrew Gabbitas  
Executive Director

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Chairman – to appoint a Chairman of the Task Group for the 2010/11 municipal year.

2. Apologies – to receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest.

To receive declarations of –

(a) personal interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) prejudicial interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

4. Introductory Presentation by Steve Shanahan, Head of Housing Services.


6. Programme of Work.

7. Dates of Future Meetings, Presentations and Site Visit – please bring your diaries to the meeting.
Membership of the Task Group: Councillors Butlin, Galsworthy, Mrs Hotten, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Srivastava and Mrs Watson.

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Elizabeth Routledge, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533522 or e-mail Elizabeth.routledge@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the Scrutiny Unit (01788 533591 or e-mail Scrutiny@rugby.gov.uk)

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.
Multi Storey Flats Review – 23 September 2010

Briefing Paper

1. Background to the review

A proposal for a review of the future of multi storey flats in the borough was submitted to the work programme workshop on 1 April 2010 by the Customer and Partnerships Committee and the Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder. The rationale for the proposal was that “the future of the flats needs careful consideration. They are unsuitable for families who need houses with garden space. Maintenance costs are high and when they become unfit for purpose, the space needs to be used in the best way to fit the current demographics.”

A draft one page strategy for this review was agreed by the Customer and Partnerships Committee on 24 June 2010 and a copy is attached for consideration by the task group.

2. Purpose of the meeting

Apart from the election of a chair, the key tasks for this first meeting of the task group will be to:

- receive an introductory presentation from the Head of Housing Services
- review the one page strategy in the light of what is learned from the presentation
- agree a provisional programme of work for the task group.

3. Programme of work

Task group members were advised that the Head of Housing Services wished to arrange a series of induction sessions in order to appraise members as quickly as possible of the key considerations in this review.

The following meetings are now confirmed:

Tuesday, 5th October 2010          5.30pm          Committee Room 1
Task Group Briefing

Monday, 18th October 2010          2.00pm          Committee Room 2
Task Group Briefing and Site Visit

Debbie Dawson, Scrutiny Officer, September 2010
MULTI STOREY FLATS

ONE-PAGE STRATEGY

**What is the broad topic area?**
To consider the future role of the council’s multi-storey flats at Rounds Garden and Biatt Place (five blocks in total).

How does the accommodation contribute to meeting housing needs in the borough and contributing to a sustainable Rugby?

Could the land on which the flats are sited be used more effectively to meet the housing needs profile of the borough?

**What is the specific topic area?**
Is the maintenance of the multi-storey flats a viable economic concern in light of the current HRA subsidy and rent restructuring formula regime or any future potential move to self-financing HRA from April 2011?

What are our current policies concerning allocations to multi-storey flats and how effective are they?

Do the flats contribute effectively to corporate priority 2: meet the housing needs of our residents, now and in the future

**What is the ‘unreasonable’ ambition of the review?**
That, regardless of the homes on the sites, the sites provide desirable homes for people where they choose to stay, and where they can stay as their circumstances change at a cost that they can afford to meet.

**How well do we perform at the moment?**
What information is provided from the structural surveys?
What are the flats’ contributions to reducing CO2 emissions
What is the feedback from the tenants of the flats?
Are they easy to let; and do people stay once they take up the tenancy?
Why do people refuse tenancies that they have bid for under the UChoose scheme?
Are the flats affordable for the tenant and for the council as a landlord, including heating, maintenance and service changes?

**Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?**

For example:

- Tenants
- Rugby and District Tenants’ Association and other Tenants Associations
- Expert witnesses
- Other social landlords
- Maintenance contractors
- Mayday (who lease the top-three floors of Ashwood Court)
**What other help do we need?**

Co-opt an expert from a specialised housing organisation or tenants’ association?
Some training and facilitation support for meetings
Consultation with potential funders and regeneration and funding advisors such as the Homes and Communities Agency
Research help
Internal support from officers from the Housing service, from finance officers in Resources, from systems support in CIS. Potentially from planners in Planning and Culture.

**How long should it take?**

6 months-a year. Are there any potential deadlines that need to be met in the medium or long term?

**What will be the outcome?**

A report to Cabinet to make recommendations on the medium- to long-term future of our multi-storey flats.