

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

23rd August 2011

ROXBORO HOUSE – FUTURE USE

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder – Housing, Local Environment and Health |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing Services |
| Wards Affected | Central Ward |
| Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 As part of the Older Persons Housing Strategy the resulting review of sheltered housing recommended that Officers undertake a comprehensive investigation into options for the future of Roxboro House.
- 1.2 The decision of the Council on 20th September 2010 gave approval for Officers to investigate potential options for retention, disposal and redevelopment. Officers have investigated these options and established that, amongst the preferred housing providers Officers have consulted, there is no current interest in development of the building. Officers have also undertaken a further cost analysis of retaining the building and this continues to be unfeasible. The remaining option is disposal.
- 1.3 All parties involved in discussions throughout Officers' investigations unanimously agreed that Roxboro House could never be suitable for older people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) Roxboro House be declared surplus to requirements of the Council's housing stock with effect from 19th September 2011;**
- 2) Worcestershire Property Services be authorised to progress the disposal of the complex and management arrangements of the complex when closed; and**

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- 3) **Statutory Home Loss Payments (as required by the Land and Compensation Act 1973) and Disturbance Allowances be duly authorised for those tenants who have been affected and who have been re-housed in alternative accommodation as a result of the closure of Roxboro House;**

and to **RECOMMEND** that

- 4) **as a consequence of 3) above, budgetary provision be made from the Housing Revenue Account to fund the costs of Home Loss Payments and any Disturbance Allowance (estimated to be £74,400).**

3. **KEY ISSUES**

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has a duty under the Land and Property Act 1973 to pay Statutory Home Loss compensation to tenants who have had to move to alternative accommodation as part of the closure of Roxboro House.
- 3.2 The Housing Act 1985 (Part II S.26) allows local authorities to give financial assistance, known as disturbance allowance, towards removal costs to residents. Each affected resident will be consulted about their requirements and the allowance mutually agreed.
- 3.3 The total cost of the above is estimated at £74,400.
- 3.4 Upon closure of Roxboro House, management for the security and maintenance of the building will transfer from the Housing Services Team to Worcestershire Property Services. There will be an ongoing cost liability for security and maintenance.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 As discussed in 3.2 to 3.3 the following legislation needs to be adhered to:
- a) Land and Property Act 1973 ~ Home Loss Compensation;
- b) Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996 (as amended) 2004 ~ Disturbance Allowance;
- c) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act ~ Displacement.

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- 3.6 Officers have discussed the report with the Legal Services Manager and, should the recommendations be approved, Officers will operate in accordance with this legislation.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.7 During consultation on the review of sheltered housing a comprehensive scheme investigation was undertaken of Roxboro House. The results showed that this property was not conducive to the future needs and aspirations of older people. The main areas for concern were the age of the building, access, limited parking, high maintenance issues and predominantly undesired bed-sit accommodation.
- 3.8 The decision of the Council on 20th September 2010 gave approval for Officers to investigate potential options for retention, disposal and redevelopment.
- 3.9 Officers have conducted soft market testing and enabled a number of organisations to view Roxboro House and to express an interest. Officers have found organisations are not willing to commit to this project until the property is declared surplus.
- 3.10 The recommendation enables the Council to deliver one of its key priorities Enterprising Communities; namely EC2, Better utilisation of our Council housing stock.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 Following the decision of the Council to investigate the options, monthly consultation meetings have been held with residents to update them on the progress of investigations. This encompassed an opportunity for residents to raise questions and concerns with Officers. A number of Housing Options surgeries have been offered to residents to provide advice and support.

Residents have been accompanied to visit alternative sheltered housing schemes within the Borough. Also residents have had the opportunity to access independent advice and support from the Borough Tenants Forum Chair. This has resulted in engagement with residents who were proving hard to reach. The Borough Tenants' Forum has also been consulted. Officers have undertaken a door to door consultation exercise to establish residents' support needs and to address their concerns.

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- 3.12 Officers have analysed vulnerability of all residents and identified individual needs which Officers are addressing accordingly. Dedicated Officers are working together to ensure they support residents in their housing options choices.
- 3.13 Currently there are 12 residents living at Roxboro House. Of these, 6 are bidding for properties.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 If a decision is not made to declare the building surplus this will have a large impact on the current residents. In the consultations and update meetings to the residents the main message Officers are receiving is that residents would like the decision to be made as soon as possible.
- 4.2 If the decision is delayed the condition of the building will deteriorate and the Council will have to continue to maintain the building. This will incur a cost.
- 4.3 If the Council decides the building should be retained, the upgrade works have been estimated at £400,000.

5. APPENDICES

None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previously agreed committee papers:

- **26th August 2009** - Older Persons Housing and Support Strategy and Action Plan.
- **28th July 2010 Executive Committee** – Review of Redditch Borough Council’s Sheltered Housing Stock
- **9th August 2010 Full Council** – Review of Redditch Borough Council’s Sheltered Housing
- **8th September 2010 Executive Committee** - Review of Redditch Borough Council’s Sheltered Housing Stock
- **20th September 2010 Full Council** - Review of Redditch Borough Council’s Sheltered Housing Stock – Customer Feedback Update.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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