OPEN

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

21st February 2002

PRESENT:-

Labour Group
Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Lauro (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Dunn, Ford, Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Rose, Shepherd (substitute for Councillor Carroll), Stone, Taylor and Whyman.

Conservative Group
Councillors Hood and Mrs. Walton (substitute for Councillor Lemmon).

In Attendance
Councillors Bell and Rose (Labour Group), Councillor Bale (Conservative Group), representatives of the Tenants Advisory and Consultation Team and Clive Mitchell (District Audit).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Carroll (Labour Group) and Councillor Lemmon (Conservative Group).

CS/86. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th January 2002 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CS/87. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

The Chair introduced Carole Warburton, the Council's Public Relations Officer who had recently joined the Authority. He also welcomed Clive Mitchell of District Audit who was present to observe the proceedings of the Committee. Comments were submitted on the subject matter of reports included on the Agenda.

CS/88. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Exit Strategy – Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park: Progress Report

Under Minute No. CS/70 of 10th January 2002, the Overview Committee was asked to consider further the proposals for future management and development of the Urban Forest Park. The Overview Committee had met on 21st and 30th January 2002 and an outline was given of the issues explored at each of those meetings. Councillor Bell, Chair of the Overview Committee presented the report and it was proposed to submit a final report to the April meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

That the progress being made by the Overview Committee in exploring issues around the future management and development of the Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park be noted.

CS/89. **TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The Committee was asked to consider the involvement of tenant representatives more fully in the process of recruiting staff to the Housing Division. Members of the Tenants Advisory and Consultation Team (TACT) had to date been involved informally in meeting candidates for management posts in the Housing Division.

The Tenants Compact provided for tenants to have the opportunity of being involved in policy and decision-making. It was suggested that more formal involvement of TACT in the recruitment process would achieve this objective and provide a customer based focus to the process. Tenants feedback could be submitted to the interview panel to assist their assessment of each candidate against the appropriate elements of the Person Specification. The tenants nominated by TACT would receive appropriate training before being involved in any recruitment exercise.

A number of Members commented on this proposal, expressing their support for TACT and the valuable role it undertook. There was however some disquiet at this proposal. Members commented on their own limited involvement in the recruitment process and felt that further information was required before this matter could be determined.

RESOLVED:-

That the matter be deferred to enable further research and that a report be submitted to a future Meeting of the Committee.

CS/90. **CHANGES TO THE MAXIMUM LIMIT FOR DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

The Committee's approval was sought to increase the maximum amount for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. The maximum amount of financial assistance that could be granted was prescribed by Order by the Secretary of State. From 21st January 2002 the maximum Grant limit had been increased from £20,000 to £25,000. The Divisional Environmental Health Manager currently had delegated powers to approve mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants to the maximum amount.

RESOLVED:-

That the maximum limit for mandatory Disabled Facility Grants be increased to £25,000 with effect from 21st January 2002 and that the Divisional Environmental Health Manager be delegated authority to determine grant applications up to the new maximum limit.

CS/91. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

(Note: At 6.15 p.m. Councillors Mrs. Mead, Bale and Rose joined the meeting.)

It was reported that in November 2001, a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Planning Group was established, comprising Members and tenants. The Group's remit was to develop the HRA Business Plan and the Council's strategic housing objectives. The work plan for the Group was appended to

the report together with those objectives developed to date. The Group was to look at all objectives during its April meeting, test these against service priorities and against the range of options available to the Council. The Group had established a communication strategy which included feedback to the Committee, use of the Council's website, public folders and tenants meetings.

Details were sought of the Working Group's composition and information provided on the tenant participation objectives particularly in relation to the election system for tenants.

RESOLVED:-

That the progress made and future work plans of the Housing Revenue Account Business Planning Group be noted.

(Note: At 6.30 p.m. Councillor Ford left the Meeting.)

CS/92. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th January 2002 were received.

LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF CHURCH STREET & HALL FARM ROAD (Paragraph 9)

The Committee considered the disposal of an area of land in its ownership.

ROSLISTON FORESTRY CENTRE (Paragraph 9)

The Committee noted a progress report and considered a long-term management contract for the Rosliston Forestry Centre.

PROPOSED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL HOUSING 2002/03 (Paragraph 9)

The Committee approved a strategy for planned maintenance, refurbishment and improvement of the Council's housing stock for 2002/03.

R.W. SOUTHERN
CHAIR