



CABINET – 3RD FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT: ROWAN PLACE RHYMNEY – SURRENDER OF LEASE ON 70 ROWAN PLACE AND TRANSFER OF LEASE TO 29 ROWAN PLACE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to the surrender and transfer of the lease of 70 Rowan Place to the Council and transfer of the lease to a fully refurbished flat at 29 Rowan Place at nil cost to the leaseholder of 70 Rowan Place.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cabinet has approved the principle of demolishing one block of flats at Rowan Place subject to obtaining Ministerial consent. The block nos. 69-72 is unoccupied but no.70 is subject to a lease with 94 years unexpired. The leaseholder has informally accepted a proposal to move from no.70 to a newly refurbished flat at no.29 Rowan Place. This will result in the Council securing full control over the block which will enable the demolition to proceed. A formal decision is required to accept a surrender and transfer of no.70 to the Council and transfer a leasehold interest in no 29 at nil cost to the leaseholder of no.70.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards. It is a Welsh Government requirement that WHQS is achieved by 2020. The properties in Rowan Place are being fully refurbished internally and externally and there are proposals to improve the environmental quality of the estate.
- 3.2 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”.
- 3.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property and Places” has the following aim:-
“To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations”.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Cabinet considered a report on the 16th December 2015 relating to the demolition of 1 block of flats at nos.69-72 Rowan Place. The benefits of the demolition were recognised and the proposal was supported accepting that Welsh Ministers’ approval would be necessary. Confirmation has now been received that the Council does not require Welsh Ministers’ consent to demolish the flats as this is not considered to be a disposal.

- 4.2 The report indicated that although the block of flats is currently unoccupied there is a lease on no. 70. The leaseholder has informally accepted a proposal to move from no. 70 to a newly refurbished flat at no. 29. This would be effected by the surrender of the current lease of no 70 to the Council and transfer a leasehold interest in no 29 to the leaseholder of no. 70. This would benefit the leaseholder by securing a newly refurbished flat and would benefit the Council by securing full control over the block enabling the demolition to proceed.
- 4.3 No. 70 Rowan Place was bought at auction in April 2013 and has undergone some improvements internally. The leaseholder has had the property rewired, a new gas boiler and central heating system has been installed and all the rooms have been plaster boarded. A new white bathroom suite has been installed, the wall tiles have been removed but not replaced, however the floor has been tiled. The kitchen has been removed and some new units fitted. Renovations have currently ceased pending agreement on the transfer.
- 4.4 Externally the block is in a poor condition and requires major repairs.
- 4.5 There are 94 years unexpired on the lease in relation to no. 70.
- 4.6 The flat at no. 29 Rowan Place has been fully refurbished internally and externally. The flat is situated on the first floor and provides the same accommodation as no. 70 namely entrance hall, 2 bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and bathroom. A new kitchen and bathroom has been installed.
- 4.7 Unless a voluntary agreement can be reached with the leaseholder to transfer to no. 29 it will not be possible to proceed with the demolition.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An EqIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and the lower level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqIA has not been carried out. The proposal to offer a lease on no. 29 Rowan Place will result in the loss of 1 lettable flat but this is a location where currently there is a high level of voids. The Upper Rhymney Valley is generally a low demand area.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be a net cost saving to the Council if the demolition is able to proceed. The detailed terms of the transfer of the lease will be dealt with by officers under delegated powers in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly from the report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 No comments have been received which result in the need to change the substance of the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet approves the principle of the surrender of the existing lease on 70 Rowan Place and the transfer of the lease terms to 29 Rowan Place to reflect the unexpired term of the existing lease and with the same ground rent at no cost to the leaseholder. The detailed terms of the transfer will be dealt with by officers under delegated powers in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To reach a voluntary agreement to give full control over block 69-72 to enable the Council's objective of demolition to proceed.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Housing and Local Government Acts. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: P G Davy, Head of Programmes

Email: davypg@caerphilly.gov.uk, Tel: 01443 8664208

Consultees:

Cllr Dave V Poole	-	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Cllr Carl Cuss	-	Local Ward Member
Christina HARRY	-	Corporate Director Communities
Nicole Scammell	-	Acting Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer
Shaun Couzens	-	Chief Housing Officer
Gail Williams	-	Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report – 16 December 2015 – Rowan Place, Rhymney – Proposed Demolition of Flats – Block 69-72