

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

**Venue: Council Chamber, Town
Hall, Moorgate Street,
Rotherham**

Date: Thursday, 13 January 2005

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Questions from members of the public and the press.
4. Declarations of Interest.

FOR INFORMATION

5. Progress Report - Furnished Homes (Pages 1 - 3)
- report by Community Services Manager
6. Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Progress Report (Pages 4 - 18)
- report by Anti-Social Behaviour Manager

FOR MONITORING

7. Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure (Pages 19 - 38)
8. Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004/07 (Pages 39 - 76)
- report by Head of Neighbourhood Development and Equalities and Diversity Officer, Neighbourhood Development
9. ALMO Indicative Inspection (Pages 77 - 111)
- report by Service Improvement Manager, Neighbourhoods

10. Minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member of Housing and Environmental Services held on 6th, 13th and 20th December, 2004 (Pages 112 - 124)

MINUTES - FOR INFORMATION

11. Minutes of Scrutiny Panel held on 16th December, 2004 (Pages 125 - 127)
12. Minutes of Asylum Seekers Working Party held on 1st December, 2004 (Pages 128 - 131)
13. Minutes of Sustainable Development Action Group held on 10th December, 2004 (Pages 132 - 134)
(attached)
14. Minutes of Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 26th November and 17th December, 2004 (Pages 135 - 144)
15. Exclusion of the Press and Public
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
16. Cemeteries and Crematorium Service Improvement Plan (Pages 145 - 168)
- report by Manager and Registrar, Crematorium
(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act - proposed purchasing costs for the provision of work/negotiation of terms)

**The Chairman has authorised consideration of the following item for
consultation purposes**

17. Housing Rents and Budgets 2005/06 (Pages 169 - 178)
- report of Head of Finance and Accountancy
(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Local Authority/expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority)

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Thursday, 27 January 2005**

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor Atkin

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Hall

Councillors:-Burke, Clarke, Hodgkiss, Jackson, McNeely, Nightingale, Rushforth, P. A. Russell, Vines,
The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright), Mr. D. Alderson, Mr. D. Willoughby, Mr. J. Carr, J. Lewis, Sgt. B.
Bell and Mr. S. Hawkins

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	13th January 2005
3.	Title:	Progress Report - Furnished Homes
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

In April a report "Furnished Home Scheme Feasibility Report " was presented and approved by Scrutiny Panel for Housing and Environmental Services. The recommendations were to review the furnished scheme in six months. This report will outline the critical success factors, funding including income and expenditure, customer satisfaction and operational aspects.

6. Recommendations

- **That the Furnished Home Scheme be adopted with provision of 100 additional units during 2005/2006.**
- **That the Furnished Home Scheme be monitored for value for money and customer satisfaction with a further report to be provided after a further twelve months in operation.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 The feasibility report informed us that furnished accommodation schemes have been established in other authorities for approximately five years. The Homelessness Strategy identified that one of the main reasons tenancies fail is due to the lack of support, in particular for young single people who find it difficult to set up a tenancy, due to lack of furniture. Evidence shows that there is less chance of a tenancy failing if furniture, carpets and decoration are in place

7.2 The furnished scheme was introduced in May 2004 with a target to establish a one stop furnishing service and to introduce one hundred units by 31st March 2005. The properties set up this year have been furnished on demand. In total, during the seven months of operation there has been ninety-nine furnished homes introduced, only two properties have terminated.

7.3 The scheme is a long-term investment so it essential that the customer understands how the scheme works. A Furnished Service Standards leaflet has been developed. This provides information about the types of packages available, service standards to be expected and it also sets out the expectations from both the customer and the furnishing service prospective. Mechanisms have also been adopted to enabled individual items of furniture to be returned, this would prompt a reduction in the charge.

7.4 To ensure the scheme is value for money we have tested five furniture suppliers. We have found prices to be comparable, with only one supplier to be cheaper, however, the quality of their furniture did not meet our standards. A formal agreement will be written, which will incorporate delivery timescales and costs. We are currently developing genuine working relationships, where trust is embedded and all parties understand integrated procedures. The suppliers also work with other authorities, allowing innovation and good practice to be transferred and embedded into our scheme.

7.5 Initially all new furnished homes were decorated throughout, this approach was changed in July 2004 with an alternative of issuing between £200 - £300 of decoration vouchers. The reasons for the change was that the decoration contractor could not keep up with demand, decoration costs were outweighing predicted spend and customers preferred to take ownership and decorate their home themselves. We found that new tenants were decorating over a newly emulsion walls. The decoration costs were between £1200 to £1600 per property, this was more than we had estimated. The new approach has enabled each of the furnished charges to be reduced by at least £9. The charges are now more affordable ranging from £14.17 for a one-bed part furnished to £37.16 to a three bed fully furnished property.

7.6 We aim to deliver a quality customer focused furnished service. A furnished focus group meeting was arranged to collect factual information, such as customer satisfaction levels, lessons to be learnt, choice and aspirations, value for money and service delivery. Unfortunately, none of the invited attended the meeting. The reasons given were they had forgotten, or that is was due to the bad weather conditions on that day. In view of the lack of engagement a postal customer satisfaction survey was subsequently undertaken. However, only seven surveys were returned, all of which thought the furnished scheme was excellent value for

money and rated the overhaul service as good. A customer commented "Whoever thought of this scheme deserves a medal!" A further satisfaction survey will be undertaken during January 2005.

7.7 Management focus - Operational cost saving has been made with the implementation of security marking "Micro dots", working with second hand dealers and undertaking regular Inventory Checks. The furniture is robust and meets the Fire Safety Standards. Admin processes, have been developed such as stock control, income and expenditure and mapping of furnished stock, monitoring client group by family make up and ethnicity. The family types have been 46 singles, 41 families and 12 elderly, with 96 being of White Origin, 2 Pakistani and 1 Other.

7.8 Marketing - Various marketing initiatives have included; a virtual DVD Rom - used at Rotherham Show, newspaper articles in the local press and "Openhouse", weekly staff briefings, launch of the Furnished Show Home, poster displays, letters to new tenants, roadshows and awareness raising presentations have been made to the Voluntary Sector and Neighbourhood Offices.

8. Finance

Funding was established through a prime pump funding grant of £40,000 and unsupported credit approval of £200,000. A five-year business plan projected expenditure for the first year to set up 100 units of £232,960, and operational costs of £47,213. Expenditure is on target, with open book accounting principles. The cost is offset from a predicated income of £120,000 generated by the furnished charge.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Risks that the furniture could be stolen or damaged have been minimised with the introduction of management procedures, incorporating Inventory Checks and Security Marking of furniture.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Furnished Homes contribute to the sustainability agenda, which is a driving principle of the Council. The scheme improves the performance framework in relation to rent loss through dwelling becoming vacant and the reduction in usage of bed and breakfast for homeless applicants. The scheme supports the Almo Excellence Plan, Objective 3, " Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, customer focussed service", and the Programme Area performance Plan, Objective 5.1 "Strengthen joint arrangements for research, commissioning and procurement of specialist accommodation services.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- The Homelessness Act 2002.
- "ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services" – Audit Commission March 2003
- Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Report
2.	Date:	13 January 2005
3.	Title:	Housing Related Anti-Social Behaviour in Rotherham
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhood Services

5. Summary

On 14 November 2002 the Environment Scrutiny Panel determined to undertake a review of anti-social behaviour from a housing perspective, under the theme of tenancy management. Subsequently a Scrutiny Review Group was formed to examine in more detail the issue of housing related anti-social behaviour. In April 2003 a report was produced along with a fifteen-point action plan. The Environment Scrutiny Panel has been updated on three previous occasions in relation to the progress of each action point. This report outlines progress to date.

6. Recommendations

- **That the Scrutiny Panel take note of the report and the proposals for sustainable actions of tackling anti-social behaviour in Rotherham.**
- **That reports in future on housing related anti-social behaviour, tenancy and estate management to be made within reports of the ALMO Excellence Plan.**

7. Proposals and Details

Anti-social behaviour causes serious problems for tenants and residents alike and therefore threatens the cohesion of our communities. Neighbourhood Services, within the Safer Rotherham Partnership, must play its part in preventing and tackling such behaviour.

Since the Scrutiny review of housing related anti-social behaviour there have been significant steps taken to address the concerns of the review group. Actions to address the recommendations of the group have been progressed to also address changes in legislation and the move of the Council to work on a Neighbourhood basis. In addition the introduction of the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) is critical in ensuring anti-social behaviour approaches are considered in more detail. The recent Indicative ALMO Inspection has been critical in advising where future improvement can be made.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit now fulfils, across all tenures the following roles:

1. Determination and corporate lead on strategies to address anti-social behaviour with key linkages and involvement with the Safer Rotherham Partnership.
2. The investigative, surveillance and legal actions required to remedy the most serious cases of anti-social behaviour cases.

In Appendix 1, highlighted are the current positions as recommended by the Scrutiny Group however given the legislative and organisational changes a new action plan in relation to anti-social behaviour is currently being actioned. This action plan is being advised from a number of partners and will form the strategic direction in how the Council deals with anti-social behaviour across all tenures. It is being completed as part of the ALMO Excellence Plan. It will be intended to report against this action plan in the future.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour can contribute to a spiral of decline in neighbourhoods. Costs of managing such areas invariably rise as a result.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Tackling anti-social behaviour and multi-agency working is vital in order for an impact to be made in our communities.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Housing Related Anti-Social Behaviour in Rotherham, Report of the Environment Scrutiny Panel April 2003.

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Appendix 1Housing Related Anti-Social Behaviour – Actions

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
1.	This Working Group recognises the importance of a strategic multi-agency and co-ordinated approach to housing related anti-social behaviour as part of a wider response to all forms of anti-social behaviour and requests that a strategic review be undertaken as a matter of priority by the key partners involved in addressing related housing anti-social behaviour in the Borough	Housing Services and partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Rotherham Partnership has undertaken a strategic review with the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group producing a draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for all the Borough • Action plan for draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy in production. • Key indicators set by the Safer Rotherham Partnership have been met 	ASB Task Group

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
2.	<p>Given that housing related anti-social behaviour can affect all housing tenures the future strategy for housing related anti-social behaviour should be cross-tenure and work should be undertaken to identify the costs involved in supporting a multi-tenure approach, as part of the Council's budget planning process for 2004/05 and taking account of the view of the Working Group that the costs of a</p>	<p>Housing Services, all relevant agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Performance</u> SRP target of 5 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and to increase by 50% the number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts served by March 2005. Achieved 12 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in force and 300 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have been issued. • Structured into the new Neighbourhood Agenda will ensure tackling anti-social behaviour will be undertaken across all housing tenure. • The Anti-Social Behaviour Team is now located in the 	<p>Helen Nixon</p>

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
	<p>multi-tenure approach should, in the main, be borne from the Council's general revenue fund, with a proportionate contribution from the Housing Revenue Account</p>		<p>core enforcement service in Neighbourhood Services and is addressing anti-social behaviour across all housing tenures and neighbourhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Working with the Police will provide a more focused approach • Medium term financial bids have been made to mainstream the Warden Service with aim to provide a cross borough wide Warden coverage. 	

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
3.	<p>An audit be undertaken, over the next six months, to take account of the nature and extent of housing related anti-social behaviour in Rotherham, the activities undertaken by Council services including those services provided by Education, Culture and Leisure Services and other agencies, to deal with anti-social behaviour in order to examine whether resources being committed are appropriate and targeted and that the strategic review is based on robust information.</p>	<p>Housing Services and partner agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence gathering for anti-social behaviour whether it is tenant or estate management and broader anti-social behaviour is recognised as being an area for improvement across the Council and with other partner agencies. • Joint neighbourhood working with the SY Police including problem solving has highlighted need for better co-operation from partners for information sharing. <p>Crucial in this will be to have a shared</p>	<p>Helen Nixon</p>

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
4.	It is important that there are well structured and clear communications between services and all agencies at both a strategic level and at a service delivery level and, to this effect, information exchange protocols be developed	Housing Services and partner agencies	<p>definition including categories of anti-social behaviour. These will be embedded in the future Safer Rotherham Partnership Strategy and are included in the recently published policies and procedures on anti-social behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council leads the SRP Anti Social Behaviour Task Group • Working and communication protocols in place. • The ASB Unit currently taking cases on for a fixed fee. 	Helen Nixon

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Liaison Officer currently working with Youth Offending Service to work closer with RSL's who use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. 	
5.	The Head of Housing Services be requested to take steps to re-engage housing associations, registered social landlords and private landlords as part housing association and landlords forums with a view to promoting practices to tackle anti-social behaviour, information exchange and building on current examples of engagement	Housing Services, Housing Associations, Registered Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme commenced in June 2004 Piloted in two geographical areas – Brinsworth and Eastwood / Springwell Gardens.. 	Rob Pearce
6.	The Working Group supports a review of the Council's housing tenancy agreement with particular emphasis on highlighting the rights and responsibilities of Council house tenants and emphasising the potential effect of breaches in the terms of the	Housing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft produced and now with Legal Services as part of the consultation process. Central Government have indicated that 	Barry Deakin

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
	agreement; steps be taken to ensure that proper arrangements are in place to enforce the tenancy agreement		<p>they want to see a tenancy agreement that covers all Social Landlords in 2005 this target may have to be revised pending further guidelines from Government Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory tenancies - Task completed on 13 October 2003- Now at the monitoring stage 	
7.	Current proposals being developed for the introduction of a mediation service and introductory tenancies in respect of Council housing be welcomed as a positive step; housing associations be encouraged to “buy-in” to the mediation service; introductory tenancies and the mediation service be reviewed after the first year to assess effectiveness and for the Head of Housing and Building Works to explore the possibility of	Housing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation- now set up and initial task completed April 2004 • Full compliment of volunteers in place from April 2004 via Rotherham Mediation Service. • Work is in progress to 	Barry Deakin

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
	extending the mediation service as a multi-tenure service as part of the strategic review		develop a wider mediation service with other agencies including South Yorkshire Police.	
8.	For the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit based in the Housing Service to function more effectively a review of accommodation arrangements be undertaken as a matter of priority	Housing Services, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit	Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has moved and are under Neighbourhood Services, Neighbourhood Standards Section.	Helen Nixon
9.	In view of anticipated forthcoming legislation designed to provide more measures and different approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour, as currently contained in the Government White Paper "Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour", the Leader of Rotherham MBC and the Chief Executive be requested to write on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, together with local	Leader and Chief Executive, Rotherham MBC	All new legislation is raised and discussed at the Safer Rotherham Partnership, Anti Social Behaviour Task Group.	Scrutiny Advisor

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
	<p>Members of Parliament, highlighting the concerns expressed by the Council and the people of Rotherham over the incidence of anti-social behaviour and requesting that more Government funding be directed to all agencies involved with tackling anti-social behaviour</p>			
10.	<p>In recognising the value of the work of Neighbourhood Wardens, an examination be undertaken to pursue all funding sources, including Council funding, which could provide a match to external funding, to enable an expansion of the service</p>	<p>Housing Services, Neighbourhood Wardens Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium term financial plans have been made for 2005/6 and 2006/7 to address the finishing of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and to mainstream the Neighbourhood Warden Service • Specific project bids have been made to supplement the current warden service using Objective 1 and Single 	<p>John Parks</p>

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
11.	<p>The Working Group welcomes consideration by South Yorkshire Police in respect of seconding a Police officer to the Housing Service Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and urges that a positive decision and subsequent deployment of an officer be taken as a matter of priority; other ways of developing joint working, such as the use of shared facilities, should also be explored</p>	<p>South Yorkshire Police</p>	<p>Regeneration Budget funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One seconded Police Officer working within the unit. • Additional Neighbourhood Renewal Funding available but to date South Yorkshire Police have not been able to resource the post. 	<p>Helen Nixon</p>
12.	<p>In view of the recent publication of research into anti-social behaviour, notably a recent research study “Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Mixed Tenure Areas” commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other available research, an examination be undertaken of good practice in tackling anti-social behaviour to inform the development of</p>	<p>Housing Services, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit</p>	<p>Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy has recognised this and work is currently taking place on the action plan with Social Services, Youth Offending and South Yorkshire Police.</p>	<p>Helen Nixon</p>

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
	a local strategy including support for rehabilitating perpetrators			
13.	The Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel be requested to give consideration to undertaking a scrutiny review into anti-social behaviour which falls outside the remit of this review	Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel	Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel shortly to publish a remit of the review.	Scrutiny Advisor
14.	The outcome of this review be taken into account as part of the work of the Best Value Review of Community Safety	Team Leader, Best Value Review of Community Safety	Revised timetable from Scrutiny Advisor is January 2004	Scrutiny Advisor
15.	Progress on the Housing related Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan attached as Appendix 3 be reported to the Environment Scrutiny Panel in six months' time	Environment Scrutiny Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New action plans being developed as part of the ALMO Excellence Plan. • Reports in future on housing related anti-social behaviour, tenancy and estate management to be made along with the Excellence Plan. 	Scrutiny Advisor

Ref. No.	Scrutiny Review	Lead Agency (ies)	Update Information	Action By
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate reports will be made on the finalisation of the full Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the Council led by the Safer Rotherham Partnership. 	

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Housing and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	13 January 2005
3.	Title:	Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

The Audit Commission has identified weaknesses with the existing Decoration Allowance Policy for empty properties. The policy has been revised to address the Audit Commission's concerns and contribute to the delivery of a three star repair and maintenance service.

6. Recommendations

CABINET MEMBER APPROVES THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REVISED DECORATION ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE AND TIME TABLE FOR EVALUATING THE SERVICE

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 The Audit Commission has identified the need to revise the Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure to ensure that allowances are allocated equitably and performance and satisfaction are systematically evaluated. The proposal is to introduce revised policies and procedures to address these concerns and review the outcome periodically.

The Decoration Allowance Policy is vital to the commitment to deliver a quality service, and complements the “Houseproud” Empty Property Guarantee. The policy contributes to the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods by providing a home and service that customers feel they have a stake in.

The current policy and guidance for issuing decoration allowances is limited. The lettings policy states that £25.00 can be offered for each habitable room. It gives no guidance in what circumstances an allowance may be offered. Over time the £25 figure has also been used as a guide by officers using an allowance where decorations have been disturbed by improvement programmes. There has been no identification of the duty that the local authority has under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to replace like with like and/or compensate for decorations damaged during repair work.

The current system of payment to the customer lacks choice. All payments are made using Focus Vouchers. This arrangement was negotiated with a 10% discount for the authority by RBT Procurement. The vouchers can only be redeemed at Focus DIY stores and there have been complaints from customers about the accessibility of stores.

Benchmarking has taken place with House Mark, the Institute of Housing Good Practice Unit and 10 Social Housing Providers, including three star ALMO'S. Best practise has been used to produce a revised Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure Guide (Appendix 1). The main features of the revised procedures are that it:

- Ensures an equitable service by defining a decoration standard for voids, and provides guidance in what circumstances an allowance can be paid.
- Expand the allowance to non-habitable rooms such as hall and stairways.
- Recognise that some rooms are more expensive to decorate than others, and set a sliding scale of allowance to match this.
- Explains the obligations that arise from the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Improves the accessibility of the scheme by expanding the choice of payment methods to include cheques and a credit on the rent account.

- Includes a decoration allowance leaflet to improve the customer's awareness of the service.
- Introduces a decoration allowance contract with the customer which clarifies the responsibility of the customer improves the audit of the service.
- Allows for future improvement of the service by introducing service standards and customer satisfaction survey, identify customers needs and aspirations.

The revised Policy and Procedure will be monitored on a six monthly basis to audit the equitable distribution of allowances and satisfaction with the service. The outcome of the evaluation and satisfaction surveys will be presented to the Learning from Customers Group to inform improvement to the service.

8. Finance

8.1 The Decoration Allowance budget for empty properties and to compensate for damage caused by repair work in 2004/05 is £50,000. The total value of allowances paid in the first six months was £23,460 with all but £645 being allocated to customers taking new tenancies. If the same rate of expenditure were to continue to the end of the year the budget would be 94% spent.

On average decoration allowances are allocated to 36% of all new tenants. Where allowances are issued the average amount given is £66.32 to decorate approximately three habitable rooms. This is clearly inadequate.

A Decoration Allowance budget of £75,000 has been provisionally allocated in the draft Annual Maintenance Plan for 2005/06. This figure is based on the maximum amount per room for voids remaining at £25.00 and allocation rate remaining at 36%, a reduction in voids due to stock reduction and the revised policy resulting in an average of four rooms per dwelling receiving an allowance.

Bench marking revealed the amount of £25.00 per room being offered was equal lowest with one other authority, other social landlord's standard rates were significantly higher. The highest was over twice the amount currently offered to our customers. Bench marking would suggest that this figure should be raised. However, the exact financial impact of the revised policy is not known. It is recommended that the policy be evaluated in March 2005, so that an assessment can be made whether or not a sustainable rise in the allowance can be made for the start of the new financial year.

Potential savings which may be used to increase the Decoration Allowance budget further for 2005/6 are currently being investigated. The potential savings will be completed in time to incorporate in the final Annual Maintenance Plan for 2005/06. This will allow the evaluation to more accurately predict whether the budget can be increased to a level which would sustain a rise in the amount payable per room.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Increases in payment amounts and other improvements in the service, may increase the percentage of new tenancies receiving an allowance leading to an overspend. This risk will be alleviated by the reduction in stock and positive impact of the Decent homes Programme. Evaluation of the service will also result in greater accountability and give better information on which to base future affordable improvements in the service.

The increased methods of payment will mean that fewer vouchers will be issued and consequently less discount will be received. This will be offset against a higher level of customer satisfaction.

The introduction of the contract and regular evaluation will reduce the risk of fraud and improve performance management.

Guidance on the duties under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 will ensure compliance and avoid litigation and damage to the council's reputation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Adoption of the policy will complement the "Houseproud" Empty Property Guarantee. It will help deliver a flexible service, which is equitable and responds to need. It will support the strategy to deliver a three star repairs and maintenance service.

The policy will strengthen the process for letting empty properties and improve satisfaction with the landlord service. This will help improve performance on HES 68 and BV 74 respectively. It also helps create sustainable tenancies and will support performance on HES5 by helping to reduce the number of tenancies which fail in the first twelve months.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
ALMO Indicative Inspection 2004
Repairs and Maintenance inspection 2004

Consultation has been undertaken with the Repairs and Maintenance Policy Panel, Vacant Property Policy Panel, Estate Management Policy Panel and with Tenant and Leaseholder representatives at an Estate Management Consultation day on the 21 October 2004. The customer representatives' response was mixed varying from agreement to widen the choice of payment and amount paid to a significant number who believed the allowance should be scrapped. All views were considered and the policy has been revised in line with the sustainability agenda and the Audit Commissions guidance.

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HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**DECORATING ALLOWANCE SCHEME
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

December 2004

Contents	Page
1. Summary	3
2. The Benefits	3
3. Decorating Allowance Scheme Policy	3-5
3.1 Voids	3
3.2 Occupied Properties	4
3.2.1 Responsive Repairs	4
3.2.2 Programmed/Improvement Works	4/5
3.2.3 Right to Appeal	5
DECORATION ALLOWANCE PROCEDURE	6-14
4. Guidance to Visiting Officers	6-8
4.1 Assessment Guidance	6
4.2 Void Properties	6/7
4.3 Occupied Properties	7
4.3.1 Responsive Repairs	7/8
4.3.2 Programmed/Improvement Works	8
5. Guidance to Neighbourhood Offices	9-10
5.1 Issuing Decoration Allowances – Customer Choice	9
5.1.1 Vouchers	9
5.1.2 Cheques	9/10
5.1.3 Rent Credit	10
5.2 Decorating Allowance Scheme Contract	10
6. Lost of Stolen Vouchers	10-11
6.1 Lost or Stolen Voucher(s)	10
6.2 Replacement of Voucher(s)	11
6.3 Lost or Stolen Cheque	11
6.4 Replacement of Cheque	11
7. Post Inspection	11-12
7.1 First Inspection	11
7.2 Standard of Work	12
7.2.1 Satisfactory	12
7.2.2 Unsatisfactory	12
7.2.3 Second Post Inspection	12
7.2.4 Recharge	12
8. Appeals Process	12-13
8.1 Amount of Allowance Awarded	12
8.2 Unsatisfactory Inspection	13
9. Decorating Voucher Scheme Survey	13
10. Storage and Security of Vouchers	13
11. Audit	14
11.1 Voucher Stock Log	14
11.2 Ordering Vouchers	14
12. Review of Decorating Scheme Procedure	14
Appendices Page	15

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DECORATING ALLOWANCE SCHEME

1. SUMMARY

This Decoration Allowance Scheme has been created to ensure that the Council:

- Has an equitable decoration allowance standard for empty properties that complements the Houseproud guarantee.
- Contributes towards damaged decoration following major improvement works;
- Meets its legal duty to make good any damage to decorations following repair or else pay compensation for failing to make good decorations.

Its aim is to ensure that both existing and prospective customers are dealt with fairly and consistently across the borough.

2. THE BENEFITS

The benefits of the revised policy are:

- Improved guidelines on when, where and how much allowance can be offered to ensure that the same standard of service is applied consistently across the borough
- Customers will not suffer any loss when having repair or improvement work carried out to their home
- Customers will be offered one of three choices of how they receive their allowance.
- The sustainability of tenancies will be improved by making it easier and quicker for customers to overcome the disruption of improvements.
- The revised scheme based on benchmarking for best practice and consultation with customers, demonstrates our continuous commitment to the improvement of service standards.

3. DECORATING ALLOWANCE SCHEME POLICY

3.1 VOIDS

The “Houseproud” Empty Property standard, guarantees the standard of a home that every customer can expect when signing the tenancy agreement. The decorative standard and fair and equitable allocation of decorating allowances is an important part of that standard.

The decoration allowance will be set annually and applied consistently across the borough. The amount for this financial year can be found at **Appendix A**.

Decorating allowances will be paid to transfer applicants. However, the amount payable will depend on the condition of the decoration in the outgoing property. The decorating allowance on the outgoing property will be offset against the decorating allowance on the new property. It should be noted that, in some cases, this process could lead to no allowance being paid.

Decorating allowances will not apply to new tenancies created by mutual exchange.

3.2 OCCUPIED PROPERTIES

3.2.1 Responsive Repair

The council has a legal duty under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, to make good or compensate for damaged decorations following responsive repair work. Responsive Repairs are detailed under the Right to Repair.

Each customer is entitled to have their decoration reinstated or else be entitled to damages for having to decorate themselves. Not all repairs will cause damage, but where they do, an allowance will be made based on the cost of replacement taking into account the value of the decorations.

The principal of reinstatement means that a standard allowance rate cannot be provided. However, on an annual basis a guide to help officers negotiate a fair and consistent rate will be produced. A guide for the 2004/05 financial year can be found at **Appendix B**. NB. It must be stressed the figures are a guide only.

If an allowance cannot be agreed, the customer should be informed of the appeals process.

Examples of responsive repair work that may result in compensation being paid can include:-

- Electrical re-wiring following electrical fault
- Central heating replacement following total loss of heat from existing system (where system cannot be repaired).
- breaking into chimney breast to inspect a flue
- Broken bathroom fittings and associated re-tiling
- Insecure external windows/doors
- loose or detached banister/handrail
- leaking roof
- Repairing a defective Damp Proof Course

3.2.2 Programmed Works/Improvement

Programmed improvements are defined by case law as being:-

“Works executed which result in the delivery of something different in quality to that which was originally let”.

The Council has no legal responsibility to provide a decoration allowance following an improvement to a home. As a good landlord the council feels that it should help customers where decorations have been disturbed following programmed/improvement works. Not all improvement works will cause damage or require the full decoration of a room. The amount will be negotiated with the customer. The maximum amount to be offered per room will be the same as for an empty property and allowances are listed in **Appendix A**.

Examples of programmed works can include:-

- Central heating replacement
- Window/door replacement
- Kitchen replacement
- Bathroom replacement
- Damp proof course
- Plastering*
- Installing a Damp Proof Course for the first time

* Most damage to plasterwork is discovered during routine redecoration by a customer. In such circumstances, compensation for damage to decoration is not appropriate. However, if the Council has to make good plasterwork as a result of damage caused during repair work, then the customer should be compensated by way of a decoration allowance. Officers will need to determine whether replastering was necessary following a responsive repair or programmed repair and refer to the Allowance Table at **Appendix B**.

3.3 RIGHT OF APPEAL

The customer shall have the right of appeal if they disagree with the decoration amount being offered as a sitting customer. The right of appeal is clearly set out under this Policy under Section 8.

DECORATION ALLOWANCE PROCEDURE

4. GUIDANCE TO VISITING OFFICERS

To ensure that the assessment of standards of decoration are consistent across the Borough the following procedure will ensure that Visiting Officers follow strict procedural guidance which removes impartiality against their own taste and style

4.1 ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE:

- All decoration, whether old or new, must be intact – no major tears or strips of wallpaper should be missing.
- Condition should relate to the standard in which the paper/paint has been applied and not to taste and colour.

4.2 VOID PROPERTIES

When a property becomes vacant, as part of the initial property inspection, the visiting officer must assess:

- The property's current decorative standard (using the guidance above)
- The possible damage that may occur as a result of future repairs listed on the Void Repair Schedule (some repairs will disturb decorations and mean that a decoration allowance will be required).



Digital photographic evidence of affected rooms should be taken and stored electronically on the neighbourhood office computer system. (Photographic evidence may be required to pursue enforcement action if the customer does not use the allowance to complete the work. It may also be necessary to pursue a recharge against the outgoing customer.)

Rooms that do not qualify for an allowance at time of inspection, but will qualify once void repair works are completed, need not be photographed.

For example:

Void Inspection:

Kitchen	decorative standard good – no work to be issued. No allowance
Living room	decorative standard in poor condition – few strips missing - no work to be issued. Allowance £25.00 
Hall/stairs	wallpaper poor condition – tears along handrail and bottom of stairs – new banister and handrail to be fitted. Allowance £25.00 
Bedroom 1	good decorative standard - fitted wardrobes to be removed and skirting reinstated. Allowance £25.00

Visiting Officers will need to keep a clear audit trail, indicating why an allowance is being paid. This should be done by recording the amount payable for each room on the void inspection form.

Decorating allowances for void properties should be awarded to affected rooms at the standard rate identified at **Appendix A**.

Once documentation is complete, the void paperwork should be returned to the neighbourhood office to continue with both the Void and Decoration Allowance procedure.

4.3 OCCUPIED DWELLINGS

4.3.1 Responsive Repairs

As the Council has a legal obligation, the Customer should be informed that whilst Operatives will endeavour to minimise any damage during repair work, any decorations that are disturbed as a result of the repair, will be reinstated by means of a decoration allowance.

Examples of responsive repairs which could cause damage to decoration are:-

- electrical re-wiring following electrical fault
- central heating replacement following total loss of heat from existing system (where system cannot be repaired).
- breaking into chimney breast to inspect a flue
- broken bathroom fittings and associated re-tiling
- insecure external windows/doors
- loose or detached banister/handrail
- leaking roof
- repairing a defective Damp Proof Course

The legal definition of what is a repair or improvement is not always straight forward. For instance work to eradicate dampness will tend to be a repair although old case law states that a damp proof course, where there previously wasn't one, will be improvement. Corroded metal window frames being replaced with modern double glazing has been held to be a repair as there was no other way of repairing other than replacement. Where there is doubt about the classification of the intended work, it will be the duty of the officer commissioning the work to clarify with legal services whether the work is a repair or improvement in advance of ordering it.

It is not possible to specify the exact amount that should be paid per room because in each case the extent of damage to customer decorations and value of those decorations will value vary from room to room and house to house.

If a customer claims damage has occurred, a Visiting Officer will attend and negotiate a compensatory payment based on the cost of replacement, taking into account the value of the decorations. The principal that the allowance should reflect the actual cost of replacement means a standard rate cannot be offered. However, to help give consistency in negotiation with customers, a guide is give in **Appendix B**. It must be stressed this is



only a guide, the true amount may be much more or much less for different properties depending on the extent of the damage and type of decorations.

It is essential that the condition and type of decorations are recorded by the visiting officer as part of the audit trail to justify the amount paid. This shall be recorded by digital camera and stored in the appropriate property file.

Once documentation is complete, associated paperwork should be returned to the neighbourhood office for the Neighbourhood Office to continue with the Decoration Allowance procedure.

4.3.2 Programmed/Improvement Works

The Council has no legal responsibility to provide a decoration allowance following an improvement to a home. As a good landlord the council feels that it should help customers where decorations have been disturbed following programmed /improvement works.

The legal definition of what is an improvement or repair is not always straight forward. For instance work to eradicate dampness will tend to be repair although old case law states that a damp proof course, where there previously wasn't one, will be improvement. Corroded metal window frames being replaced with modern double glazing has been held to be a repair because there was no other way of repairing other than replacement. Where there is doubt about the classification of the intended work, it will be the duty of the officer commissioning the work to clarify with legal services whether it is a repair or improvement before ordering it.

Not all improvement works will cause damage or require the full decoration of a room. The amount will be negotiated with the customer. The maximum amount to be offered per room will be the same as that for empty properties it is listed in **Appendix A**.

Where it is reasonable to predict the extent of disturbance the customer shall be awarded the allowance prior to the work commencing. For instance, a property undergoing a full decent homes improvement may take 10-12 weeks. It would be unreasonable to make a customer wait so long to redecorate their home if they can reasonably start decorating completed rooms while the improvements are taking place in other parts of the home. In such cases the customer must be allocated the full allowance so that they can start reinstating their home as soon as is reasonably possible.

Therefore, at the initial assessment of any property, the Visiting Officer should clearly identify and inform the customer of the possible disruption and how it may affect their decoration as a result of the improvements and issue the customer with a decoration allowance to the correct value (**Guide at Appendix A**). The customer can then redeem this allowance at their nearest Neighbourhood Office by choosing their preferred option of payment – cheque, voucher or rent credit.

DECORATION ALLOWANCE PROCEDURE

5. GUIDANCE TO NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICES

5.1 ISSUING DECORATION ALLOWANCES – CUSTOMER CHOICE

To receive a decoration allowance, the customer should hand over the original Decoration Allowance Form, which has been duly signed by the Visiting Officer. Photocopies should not be accepted without first checking that an allowance has not been issued previously. The customer has the opportunity at this point to decide how they wish to receive the allowance. The options are: Cheque, voucher or credit to the rent account.

5.1.1 VOUCHERS

Take the number of vouchers required and sign/date the Voucher Stock Log to confirm that the voucher serial number(s) respond with the voucher(s) actually being taken from the stock pile. Complete the customer details.

Date stamp each voucher with a 4 week expiry date.

Sign the audit column to confirm that the next voucher on the stock pile corresponds with the Voucher Serial Number on the Stock list and replace the vouchers/log to secure storage.

You will now need to fill out a decorating allowance scheme contract (go to Section 5.2 below)

Once the Contract has been completed you can hand over the voucher(s) and the original Contract to the customer, and then hand copy Contract over to the Neighbourhood Champion who will undertake the post-inspection.

5.1.2 CHEQUES

Where customers exercise their option to receive their decoration allowance by cheque, they should first be informed that the process will take approximately 7 working days. If they instruct you to proceed, the procedure below should be followed:-

A cheque requisition form should be completed (**Appendix C**).

- Name of customer
- Address of customer
- Amount payable
- Reason for raising cheque: *decoration allowance issued following damage to decoration at (ADDRESS) following repair to (DETAIL REPAIR).*
- Signature of Officer processing requisition.

You will now need to fill out a decorating allowance scheme contract (go to Section 5.2 below).

For the cheque to be raised and posted out to the customer you must then E-mail the requisition to : P2P-HES

Print off a copy of the cheque requisition and attach it to the copied Contract and hand it over to the Neighbourhood Champion who will undertake the post-inspection.

5.1.3 RENT CREDIT

If a customer chooses to have the value of the decoration allowance credited to their rent account, you should explain about the Decorating Allowance Scheme Contract and ask the customer to read and sign only if they agree to be bound by its terms. (Go to Section 5.2 below)

To credit the rent account, you will need to add the rent details and the amount to a cash adjustment sheet. The correct code adjustment is **Code 13** – Decoration Allowance. The adjustment sheet should be processed as soon as reasonably possible.

When the adjustment appears on the rent screen, print off a statement and attach it to the copy Contract and hand it over to the Neighbourhood Champion who will undertake the post-inspection.

5.2 DECORATING ALLOWANCE SCHEME CONTRACT

Input the customers name and address (to which the allowance is payable). You should also input the date by which the work is to be completed. We currently allow 12 weeks for decoration to be undertaken.

Room allowances should be inputted on Page 2 of this Contract. **Place a cross (X) in the column(s) of any room allowances not being given.**

The total value of the vouchers issued along with the voucher serial numbers should be inputted. Explain the Contract to the customer and ensure they only sign if they agree to abide by the conditions.

Once the customer has signed the Contract, you should make an appointment with them for approximately 12 weeks time, for a Neighbourhood Champion to call and inspect the decoration.

Finally, take a copy of the Contract and hand the copy over to the customer as their receipt. Attach the original contract to the original Visiting Officers Inspection Sheet and hand to the Neighbourhood Champion who will undertake the post-inspection.

6. LOST OR STOLEN VOUCHER/CHEQUE

6.1 LOST OR STOLEN VOUCHER

If a customer reports that their decorating vouchers have been lost or stolen, staff should fax a letter (**Appendix D**) to the approved supplier's local branches advising them of the circumstances.

The letter attached at Appendix E details:-

- Decorating Voucher Serial Numbers
- The name and address of the customer
- Police Incident Number (if stolen)

6.2 REPLACEMENT OF VOUCHER(S)

Lost or stolen vouchers should not be replaced unless:-

- (a) the vouchers have been recovered and have not been exchanged for goods
- (b) the 4 week expiry date has passed and the decorating vouchers have not been exchanged for goods.

The customer should be advised to come back after 4 weeks waiting period has elapsed to collect a new set of vouchers and advised that we will contact them if the lost or stolen vouchers are recovered.

6.3 LOST OR STOLEN CHEQUE

If a customer reports that their decorating allowance cheque has been lost or stolen, the following procedure should be followed. It should be noted that a Council cheque is crossed "payee only" and should, theoretically, only be able to be cashed by customer it was issued to.

- telephone P2P-HES to find out if the cheque has been cashed.
- if the cheque has not been cashed, ask for it to be STOPPED.
- If the cheque has been cashed, details of the date, time and place the cheque was cashed should be obtained and the incident reported to the Police as a criminal offence.

6.3 REPLACEMENT OF CHEQUE

Replacement cheques will be issued after four weeks after checking that the cheque has not been cashed and P2P-HES have to put a STOP on the cheque.

The customer should be advised that if the cheque has been cashed, there will be a minimum of four weeks and maximum of 12 week waiting period whilst police investigations are completed. If Police investigations do not result in recovery of the money/identify the perpetrator, then the decision to re-issue a cheque allowance will lie with the Neighbourhood Manager who assess each case on an individual basis.

7. POST INSPECTION

7.1 FIRST INSPECTION

The date of the post inspection should be organised with the customer when the vouchers are issued. The maximum time allowed for decoration is 12 weeks.

Inspection of decoration should reveal whether the standard is satisfactory or unsatisfactorily. (See Section 4)

7.2 STANDARD OF WORK

7.2.1 SATISFACTORY

If the decoration is deemed satisfactory, sign off the Décor Allowance Contract and file the paperwork in the relevant tenancy file.

7.2.2 UNSATISFACTORY

If the decoration is unsatisfactory, then you now need to inform the customer of the reason for your decision, allowing a period of time for the customer to make improvements. At this point you may allow a further period to allow the customer to make good any problem areas.

7.2.3 SECOND POST INSPECTION

At this point, if the improvement works have been completed, you should sign off the Contract as Satisfactory.

If the improvement works/standard of decorating is still not deemed satisfactory, you must inform the customer at that interview that the recharge procedure will be put into place and that they:

- will receive an 'unsatisfactory letter' (**Appendix F**) within the next few days detailing which rooms are deemed unsatisfactory and why, and that they have an opportunity to appeal

7.2.4 RECHARGE

If no appeal is received within 14 days of the letter being sent out to the customer, you must process an SD3 Recharge (**Appendix G**) for the amount of allowance required to be repaid.

8. APPEALS PROCESS

A customer has the right to appeal. Under this Procedure, the customer may appeal against the following:-

8.1 AMOUNT OF ALLOWANCE AWARDED

A customer can appeal against the amount awarded. If negotiations between the Visiting Officer and the customer do not result in a mutual agreed amount, the customer has the right to appeal to the Neighbourhood Manager who will investigate and give a written decision within 10 working days.

The Neighbourhood Manager will review the case in consultation with the Performance and Quality Unit seeking independent advice on the complaint and possible remedies. If an agreement cannot be reached between the two parties, then the customer will be informed of their right to complain through the Council's People and Services First Complaints Service.

8.2 UNSATISFACTORY INSPECTION

The Decorating Voucher Contract allows the customer 5 working days to appeal at the point they receive the 'Unsatisfactory Letter'. The Contract also states that the customer has the right to request an inspection from the Neighbourhood Manager, whose decision is final and not open to further appeal.

The Neighbourhood Manager should take the Decorating Voucher Contract, which includes details of the post inspection, along with them to the property. The Manager's decision should be made verbally, at the time of inspection, followed by a confirmation letter (**Appendix H/H1**) within 5 working days.

If the customer is not satisfied with the Manager's decision, they can make a complaint in writing to the Council's Performance and Quality Unit, Neighbourhoods, Eastwood Depot, Chesterton Road, Rotherham or fill out a Complaints Form located at any Neighbourhood Office. Alternatively, they can direct their complaint via e-mail to complaints@rotherham.gov.uk, or via the Council's website address which is www.rotherham.gov.uk where they can complete a complaints form online.

9. DECORATING SCHEME SURVEY

Each Area Team should, on a quarterly basis, issue Decorating Scheme Survey Forms (**Appendix I**) to all customers who have been issued allowances and whose contract has been closed and is ready to file away in the tenancy file.

The completed Forms should be returned to the Performance & Quality Unit who will produce the findings on a quarterly basis. The findings will also be fed into the Learning from Customer initiative and any improvements will be made as part of the review process.

10. STORAGE AND SECURITY OF VOUCHERS

Area Teams will be responsible for the storage and security of decorating vouchers issued to their management area. Decorating Vouchers must be kept in secure storage (e.g. Cash Office Safe or lockable secured cupboard), at all times.

All Vouchers are supplied in denominations of £20 and £5.00. At time of receipt the Neighbourhood Office will arrange for the voucher serial numbers to be inputted onto the Computerised Voucher Stock Log (**Appendix J**). This document should be saved on the computer system at each office under a Folder entitled Decorating Vouchers. The Log will be a continuously updated document, as vouchers are used and replenished.

A copy of the Voucher Stock Log should be printed out each time it is updated and kept with the Vouchers in secure storage.

11. AUDIT

11.1 VOUCHER STOCK LOG

On a monthly basis, the Voucher Stock Log details should be inputted onto the Computerised Voucher Stock Log. Please use following procedure:-

An example: for vouchers issued in October 04:

In Microsoft Excel:

Click on **File** and open the folder called **Decorating Vouchers**

Open the file called October 04

Input customer details against vouchers used and **Save**

Click on **file** and **save as:** Nov 04

Delete all used vouchers and leave only next voucher serial numbers to be used.

Click on **File** and **save.**

Print off the Nov 04 Voucher list and keep with vouchers in secure storage.

You should now e-mail the October 04 Voucher Log to the Central Finance Unit.

Every six months an audit check will be undertaken to ensure that voucher(s), cheques and rent credits are being issued correctly and stock balanced.

11.2 ORDERING VOUCHERS

If you need to replenish your voucher stock pile, please ensure that you do so, by e-mail to the Central Finance Team, giving at least 2 weeks notice. Each area should be aware of the possible future demand of vouchers to ensure stocks do not deplete. Once new vouchers are received, the serial numbers should be inputted onto the existing Computerised Voucher Stock Log.

12. REVIEW OF DECORATING PROCEDURE

An annual review of this procedure will be undertaken. The review will take into consideration:-

- New procedures in procurement
- Consistency of application
- Information from Customer Satisfaction Survey (Learning from Customers)
- Budgetary Controls
- Value for Money

APPENDICES

A	Void & Programmed Improvement Allowances
B	Responsive Repair Allowances
C	Cheque Requisition Form
D	Decorating Scheme Contract
E	Lost/Stolen – Letter to Supplier
F	1 st Inspection – Unsatisfactory Letter
G	SD3 Recharge Form
H	Appeal Inspection – Unsatisfactory Letter
H1	Appeal Inspection – Satisfaction Letter
I	Decorating Scheme Survey
J	Computer Voucher Stock Log
K	Decoration Allowance Leaflet

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	13th January 2005
3.	Title:	Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-07
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

A Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with customers and stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that people from BME communities have access to suitable and appropriate housing.

6. Recommendations

THAT THE BME HOUSING STRATEGY BE NOTED.

THAT COPIES OF THE STRATEGY ARE CIRCULATED TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP, ALL PROGRAMME AREAS, ALL MANAGERS WITHIN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES.

7. Proposals and Details

The Council must by law carry out its functions in a way that eliminates unlawful discrimination and which promotes equality of opportunity and good race relations.

The process of compiling the strategy provided a foundation for consultation with stakeholders, interested parties and community groups from BME communities in Rotherham.

The aim of the BME Housing Strategy is to explain and set out what the authority and our partner organisations are seeking to achieve in terms of race equality in housing.

The Council's introduction of a specific BME Housing Strategy will help us to do the following:

- provide a framework for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage
- provide clarity to the authority, its partners and service users on what they are seeking to achieve in the field of race equality
- demonstrate to BME communities the authority's commitment to race equality
- set out a number of measurable objectives and performance targets that can be monitored in order to determine how far progress has been made
- set up a BME housing strategy and monitoring group, involving stakeholders and BME tenants to scrutinise the housing strategy and provide a forum for consultation

The BME Housing Strategy also includes an action plan. This sets out targets against performance for the Local Authority and some of our key partners.

This is Rotherham's first BME Housing Strategy and will evolve and is further developed over time in response to the changing needs of BME communities

8. Finance

The cost involved in the production and distribution of the BME Housing Strategy and associated publicity will be met from existing resources.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The process of developing, promoting and implementing the strategy must be flexible and adaptable in order to respond to the changing needs of black and minority ethnic communities.

This version of the BME Housing Strategy has been produced as a separate document. However, it does not exist in isolation and must link into a number of other plans and strategies including the broader Housing Strategy and the ALMO Excellence Plan.

A failure to make these links will put this strategy at risk of missing its basic aim of providing equality in housing. In addition, there is a risk that the strategy may fail to deliver improvements to our services that the BME community desires.

We plan to mitigate this risk by continually reviewing the strategy, in consultation with stakeholders and through a process of regular reporting to Cabinet on progress against the Action Plan.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The introduction of the BME Housing Strategy is expected to contribute towards:

Regeneration

- Providing sustainable neighbourhoods
- Providing an excellent environment

Equalities

It will:

- provide a framework for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage
- provide clarity to the authority, its partners and service users on what is being tackled in the field of race equality
- demonstrate the Council's commitment to race equality

The process of compiling the strategy has been assisted by consultation carried out with representatives of BME communities.

Sustainability

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from black and minority ethnic communities within a framework of empowerment and Best Value
- To provide services that are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture
- To recognise the diversity of local communities and to foster good relations between the communities
- To take positive action to address existing disadvantage and encourage a more inclusive society.

Health Implications

There are a number of housing related issues that affect BME communities to a greater extent than the remainder of the population.

There is an accepted link with housing and health and by addressing the housing issues it is expected there will be a positive effect on some of the health and social inequalities, which affects these communities.

Safer Rotherham

The BME Housing Strategy addresses key community safety issues including tackling racial harassment and crime reduction.

Human Rights Issues

The BME Housing Strategy is about tackling inequalities and promoting equal opportunity. It does this through the main aims of the strategy:

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from black and minority ethnic communities within a framework of empowerment and Best Value
- To provide services that are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture
- To recognise the diversity of local communities and to foster good relations between the communities
- To take positive action to address existing disadvantage and encourage a more inclusive society

The Council's Priorities

The BME Housing Strategy is a tool to assist the Council in meeting the legal obligations to eliminate disadvantage, promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

It will, therefore, contribute to the cross cutting issues of sustainable development, equalities and diversity, regeneration and crime and disorder as described above.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- (i) Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-2007
- (ii) Community Consultation Event
Silverwood Miners Welfare Institute – 24th May, 2004
- (iii) Community Consultation Event
Unity Centre, St. Leonard's Road, Rotherham
20th July, 2004

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Rotherham BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan

Prepared by:
Jackie Heeney and Andrew Petrie
Sadeh Parhai Ltd.
2004



CONTENTS

1.	Foreword	1
2.	Introduction	3
3.	Background Information	4
4.	Objectives of the Strategy	7
5.	Relationship to Structures, Strategies and Plans	9
6.	Legislative Requirements	10
7.	Key Concerns and Issues	11
Appendix 1	Document References	13
Appendix 2	Action Plan	14

1 Foreword

Rotherham Housing Services has made a strategic commitment to identify the housing needs and requirements of Black & Minority Ethnic households and to develop a strategic approach to tackling these needs.

Our clear intention is to develop a strategy that addresses local Black & Minority Ethnic needs whilst contributing to regional and national priorities. This document has been influenced by the Government's agenda for building and maintaining sustainable communities, by housing market conditions at a regional and sub-regional level and by local housing issues

We recognise that Rotherham is a diverse community and that we have a particular responsibility to ensure our services are equally accessible to all. We need to support Black & Minority Ethnic individuals and groups who may be isolated and therefore more prone to social exclusion and more vulnerable to racist abuse and attacks. We have a responsibility to challenge the 'everyday racism' that Black & Minority Ethnic households and communities often have to put up with.

Rotherham is a multicultural town with a diverse Black & Minority Ethnic population, characterised by communities from different cultures, religions and with different languages. This Strategy sets out the priority housing needs of Rotherham's Black & Minority Ethnic communities and how housing providers in the Town can address these needs. It represents the outcome of extensive consultation and discussion around practical ways in which these needs can be met and demonstrates a strong commitment towards achieving this.

On behalf of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council we would like to thank all the partners who have contributed to the development of this document and look forward to seeing the effective delivery of the outcomes.



Sue Ellis
Cabinet Member
Housing & Environmental Services



Tom Cray
Executive Director
Housing & Environmental Services

1.2 Vision

Our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy and Action Plan seeks to contribute towards the achievement of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) mission, which is as follows:

Rotherham Borough Council exists to provide community leadership – representing, serving and involving people and organisations throughout the Borough – so that the quality of life for everyone is improved.

The Council will seek to ensure that everyone benefits from high quality services that respond to the needs and priorities of all those who live, learn and work in Rotherham.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan also seeks to contribute towards the aim of the Council's Vision to make Rotherham a prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work.

In addition, our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan seeks to:

- Ensure housing services are accessible to all
- Ensure provision is based on both identified needs and informed choice
- Realise the potential of everyone in Rotherham to take up opportunities and influence the future of the area in which they live and work
- Promote Rotherham as a place where people from all backgrounds want to live, responding to the future needs and aspirations of existing communities and attracting new people into the area
- Celebrate diversity, taking account of and responding to particular needs of all groups and individuals whilst promoting cohesive communities

2 Introduction

2.1 Why we need a Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy

The foreword clearly indicates our commitment to meeting the local needs of people from our Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

We have a legal obligation to provide services in such a way that they contribute towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good race relations. Legislative requirements are detailed in section 6 of the Strategy. The development of our local strategies, sensitive to differences in the needs and preferences of local communities, will achieve these aims.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan is essential to ensure we meet these requirements.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan sets out how RMBC will realise its vision ensuring that all communities will wish to live in the Rotherham area and have access to suitable and appropriate housing. The first part of the Strategy outlines the objectives that RMBC is working towards. These are, in broad terms, what the Strategy is seeking to achieve. An Action Plan is then presented providing a range of actions that work towards achieving the objectives outlined above. Many of these actions will have corresponding Indicators that can be used to measure progress against the action and, taken together, against the Strategy as a whole.

It should be noted that this Strategy is concerned primarily with equality in relation to colour, race, and nationality, ethnic or national origins. Unless stated otherwise, where we refer to 'groups' or 'communities' we are referring to all those that are covered by the above categories. However, the principles underlying the Strategy and the good practice suggested can be applied to any group who may be disadvantaged or have differing needs.

3 Background Information

3.1 Context

Both nationally and locally Black and Minority Ethnic communities face discrimination in accessing services. Nationally, over two-thirds of the BME population live in the 88 most deprived wards (Census 2001). This deprivation is linked to factors such as low income and lack of access to employment and training opportunities, amongst others. Housing is one of many factors, therefore, that is important in improving the situation and life chances of disadvantaged communities.

3.2 Rotherham's context

This draft Strategy has been developed in response to the recommendations of the REC's 'Barriers to Accessing Housing Services Report', findings of surveys carried out locally', (e.g. the Housing Needs Survey and the Holmes Housing Market Renewal Survey) and feedback received from the consultation process described in paragraph 3.3.

The 2001 Census¹ puts the population of Rotherham at just over 248 000. In terms of ethnicity, the large majority of the population class themselves as 'White'. The table below shows the proportion of the population by ethnicity for both Rotherham and the UK – using the five broad ethnic group headings.

Table 1 – Rotherham and England Population by Ethnic Group (%)

	Rotherham	England
White	96.89	90.92
Mixed	0.49	1.31
Asian/Asian British	2.23	4.57
Black/Black British	0.16	2.30
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	0.23	0.89

Clearly Rotherham has a relatively small non-White population compared to England. The largest ethnic group is Pakistani at 4704 people (1.9% of the population).

With regard to religion in Rotherham, the most common religion is Christianity (79.4%) with Islam the second most common (2.2%).

The Black and Minority Ethnic population in Rotherham has a younger age profile than the White population with a higher proportion of young people generally. However, there are differences between groups, for example the Black British population has the lowest proportion of population under 24 years old.

In relation to housing, the Asian/ Asian British population in Rotherham has a higher level of owner occupation than all other ethnic groups (73%). The White and

Chinese/Other communities have similar levels (68% and 66% respectively), as do the Black/Black British and Mixed population (55% and 53%).

The proportion of the Asian/Asian British population living in council accommodation is significantly lower than the level for the population as a whole - 9% compared to 21.5%.

With regard to types of housing, a larger proportion of the Asian community live in a house or bungalow with larger proportions of the Black and Chinese/other communities living in a flat, maisonette or apartment.

There are a number of housing related issues that affect minority ethnic communities to a greater extent than the White population. Table 2 shows the levels of overcrowding and having no central heating for different communities.

Table 2 – Extent of No Central Heating and Overcrowding (%)

	White	Mixed	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Chinese/ Other
No Central Heating	3.1	4.7	11.2	3.5	4.2
Overcrowding	5.0	10.9	23.1	14.1	20.7
No Central Heating and Overcrowding	0.2	1.9	4.5	0.7	2.3

Clearly these issues affect Black and Minority Ethnic communities to a greater extent than the White population. The proportion of 'non-white' ethnic groups living in accommodation classed as overcrowded is significantly higher than the district average. This is particularly true of the Asian community where 23% are living in overcrowded accommodation.

Settlement patterns of BME communities in Rotherham show the largest concentration of BME communities to be in the Central, Park, Broom, Boston and, to a lesser extent, Herringthorpe.

3.3 The Consultation Process

An initial draft of our Strategy and Action Plan was developed in April 2004. This draft was widely circulated for comments and in advance of the first of two consultation events, held on 24th May 2004 at the Silverwood Miners Welfare Centre in Rotherham.

The purpose of the first event was to involve stakeholders in developing the Strategy and was attended by over 70 delegates from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Interpreters were also in attendance and the event was introduced by Zafar Saleem the Council's Equalities and Diversity Manager. Following an opening address by Councillor Sue Ellis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services, 'the purpose of the day' speech was delivered by Tom Cray, Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services.

The day was split into two sessions. In the first session, delegates formed groups identifying potential barriers and improvements to previously identified key areas of

the service. In the second session, delegates formed groups to consider the key areas of the draft Strategy in detail.

The draft Strategy and Action Plan was revised to take account of feedback from the event.

The second consultation event was held on 20th July 2004 at the Unity Centre, Rotherham. This event was again well attended with delegates from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and was held in a workshop format to review the key areas of the revised draft Strategy and Action Plan. The draft was again revised to take account of feedback from the event.

Following the events, the draft Strategy and Action Plan was again widely circulated and revised in the light of further comments and amendments.

¹ Census and other data in this section taken from *Rotherham's Ethnic Minority Communities: An Analysis of Data from the 2001 Census*, 2003

4 Objectives of the Strategy

In this section we have identified initially some of the key issues that are required to take the work forward. We then go on to present four key objectives for the Strategy.

4.1 Key Priorities and Actions

Achieve Vision – The key priority for this Strategy is to work towards the vision set out at the start of this document. All of the subsequent objectives and actions are intended to contribute to this Vision.

Appointment of an Equality & Diversity Officer – The appointment of an Equality & Diversity Officer is needed to take forward many of the actions outlined in this Strategy and Plan and to ensure the implementation of others. The Officer will have responsibility for producing or amending policies, monitoring their implementation and producing quarterly data and annual reports on performance against the Strategy. The Officer will also have responsibility for providing support to services other than Housing, in delivering their agreed actions, emphasising the value of the Strategy and Action Plan in capturing and recording all progress in relation to equality and diversity.

Reporting on Equality Performance – The responsibility of the Performance & Quality Team, this report would measure progress against the Strategy and Action Plan. Monitoring data, as well as local contextual data, would be presented. Monitoring data would be analysed and presented to ensure services were reaching all sections of the community. Progress against each action would be updated, and the Action Plan reviewed where appropriate. It is recommended that monitoring takes place quarterly and a report published annually. Performance measured would include both legislative and locally identified requirements.

Community Engagement Strategy – The issues of equality and community engagement are often closely linked. The production of a Community Engagement Strategy would clarify the position of RMBC Housing Services with regard to how it engages with, consults with, and, informs communities and individuals. Many of the actions outlined in this plan depend on timely and appropriate communication and engagement with communities. There are actions around community engagement in this document, and although these do not form a comprehensive approach, these actions and objectives should inform any Community Engagement Strategy that is produced. This strategy should be integrated within RMBC's Communication and Consultation Strategy and Community Empowerment Strategy.

4.2 Strategic Objectives:

- **Leadership** - Rotherham MBC Housing Services is committed to prioritising and, wishes to benefit from, the development of a framework to ensure the inclusion of Black & Minority Ethnic communities and the reduction of inequalities across all it's functions and activities and thereby contribute to the Corporate Vision of Rotherham as a 'prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work'.

- **Policies and Procedures** - All policies and procedures will seek to eliminate inequality and unlawful discrimination, recognise and capitalise on the rich resources BME communities offer and, promote community cohesion, good community relations and equal opportunities.
- **Service Delivery** - To ensure services are provided that support and meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.
- **Community Engagement** - To ensure that local residents from all communities are able to influence and shape the delivery of Housing Services in Rotherham and that all decisions are open and transparent and accountable to all Rotherham communities

5 Relationship to Structures, Strategies and Plans

The BME Housing Strategy is an example of how Housing Services is striving to achieve the Council's corporate objectives. The Strategy is based on existing sound and reliable data and enhances the Council's Corporate Housing Strategy.

The Strategy has important links to and complements wider key strategies including those listed below:

- Rotherham MBC Corporate Housing Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Race Equality Scheme
- Rotherham MBC Community Empowerment Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Community Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Draft Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Rotherham MBC Corporate Equality Plan
- Rotherham MBC Compact BME Code of Good Practice
- Rotherham REC Barriers to Accessing Housing Services
- Transform South Yorkshire Prospectus
 - Rotherham MBC Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area Development Frameworks
 - Rotherham MBC Housing & Environmental Services Performance Plan
- Rotherham MBC Community Cohesion Draft Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Consultation and Communication Strategy

The BME Housing Strategy has been informed by these strategies as well as other research undertaken in the area, for example the Housing Needs Survey and the Housing Market Renewal Research into the Housing Needs and Aspirations of BME Communities in Holmes, carried out by Sadeh Lok Housing Group with RBA Research. More detail is provided in paragraph 7 and Appendix 1 is a list of document references.

6 Legislative Requirements

The **Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)** places a duty on public authorities to tackle unlawful discrimination and promote good race relations between people of different races. Local authorities and other public bodies have duties under this Act and would seek to carry these out through the work they undertake.

The duties set out in the Act and Code relate as much to policy, planning and the delivery of services as employment issues. Under the general duty to promote race equality public bodies must consider the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

There is a specific duty for public bodies to publish a Race Equality Scheme which

- states the functions and policies that have been assessed as being relevant to the general duty to promote race equality; and
- sets out arrangements for meeting the duty by:
 - (i) monitoring policies for any adverse impact on race equality;
 - (ii) assessing and consulting on, the likely impact of proposed policies;
 - (iii) publishing the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring;
 - (iv) making sure that the public have access to information and services;
 - (v) and training staff on the general duty

Under the specific duty on employment, public bodies must monitor existing staff, and applicants for jobs, promotion and training by their racial group. They also need to monitor and analyse, by racial group: grievances; disciplinary action; performance appraisals (when they lead to benefits or penalties); training and staff leaving the organisation. They are required to publish the results of these ethnic monitoring results every year and also to review their Race Equality Scheme every three years.

Rotherham MBC has produced a Race Equality Scheme which goes into detail on how this duty is to be met by the authority as a whole.

7 Key Concerns and Issues

There are a number of issues faced by BME communities in Rotherham that this Strategy will seek to address. These include:

- Ensuring BME communities have access to information, support and guidance on all aspects of housing service provision. This must be in appropriate languages and formats and available in different locations.
- Ensuring all staff have an awareness and understanding of issues facing BME communities and their needs and aspirations.
- Ensuring there is a clear policy on racial harassment and support for victims.
- Develop partnership working with community and voluntary sectors as well as other statutory bodies, to ensure the housing needs and aspirations of BME communities are met.
- Ensure that staff working within Housing Services reflect the communities of Rotherham.

Some of the key concerns and issues identified in Rotherham REC's report 'Barriers To Accessing Housing Services', which the Strategy seeks to fully or partially address, include the following:

- Lack of language skills
- Loneliness and isolation
- Discrimination and racial harassment
- Low incomes
- Lack of knowledge of available services
- Diet.
- Few opportunities to acquire property
- Access to public sector housing
- Severe overcrowding
- Negative images
- Meeting religious, cultural and social needs

The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder research undertaken in the Holmes area identified further issues relevant to the Strategy. Some of the key ones include:

- Although over a third of BME households felt that racism and discrimination needs to be tackled, (28% of White residents also gave this answer) other issues were more important priorities such as crime.
- There is a higher level of owner occupation, particularly amongst the Asian community, with 50% owner occupied and a further 15% saying their property is owned by a family member. With regard to aspirations in this community, 86% would choose owner occupation.
- BME residents were more likely to highlight problems with the repair and maintenance of their homes.
- Asian residents were particularly likely to say they need more bedrooms and were more likely to consider themselves overcrowded.
- Of the BME households that said they were likely to move away from the area, over half gave a housing related reason for doing so. Reasons given included wanting a bigger house.

These issues, and others that impact on BME communities, are explored further and addressed through the implementation of this Strategy and its Action Plan which is presented at Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 1**DOCUMENT REFERENCES**

The following documents have been referred to and used to inform the development of our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan:

- Rotherham MBC Race Equality Scheme, RMBC (2002)
- Rotherham's Ethnic Minority Communities: An Analysis of Data from the 2001 Census, RMBC (2003)
- Rotherham's Corporate Housing Strategy 2003-2006: Defining the Future, RMBC
- Rotherham Housing Services Race Equality Improvement Plan
- Manchester City Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2003
- Middlesbrough Borough Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-2006
- Sunderland Housing Group's Racial Equality Strategy 2002-2006
- Chesterfield Race Equality Scheme 2002-2005, Chesterfield Borough Council
- The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Corporate Equalities and Diversity Policy Framework, (2003)
- Blackaby, B. & Chahal, K. (2000) Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategies: A Good Practice Guide, Chartered Institute of Housing
- ABCD (Wolverhampton New Deal for Communities) Equalities Strategy and Action Plan (2004), unpublished.
- Rotherham REC's Barriers to Accessing Housing Services report

South Yorkshire Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Research into the Housing Needs and Aspirations of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Holmes, Rotherham

Action Plan

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.1	Develop a BME Housing Strategy that recognises and understands the benefits and needs of all the diverse communities and individuals in Rotherham	Dec 2004	Andrew Leigh	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy consultation held (July 04) • Draft Strategy Produced (Aug 04) • Strategy approved by Cabinet (Sept 04) • Equality targets agreed and set (Dec 04) • Strategy implemented (Jan 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BME Housing Strategy in place

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.2	Establish a Cabinet Member Champion to lead on equality issues	August 2004	Zafar Saleem	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Member identified (Aug 04) Cabinet Member attends Corporate Equalities Group (Aug 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Terry Sharman appointed
1.3	Appoint Housing Equality and Diversity Officer	July 2004	Odette Stringwell	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and Selection process (June 04) Appoint successful candidate (June 04) E & D Officer in post (July 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mahmood Hussain appointed

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.4	Establish a Performance Management Framework to ensure that the BME Housing Strategy is delivered	Apr 2005	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA Equalities monthly reports (Jan 05) Quarterly reports to PAMT (Jan 05) Monthly reports to BME Hsg and Monitoring Scrutiny Group (Feb 05) Bi-annual progress reports to Cabinet Member (April 05) 		▪
1.5	Strategy is informed by up to date information on ethnicity, faith, gender and disability	Dec 2005	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline review completed (Feb 05) Strategy is reviewed in the light of new data (July 05) Findings are integrated into BME Housing Strategy (Dec 05) 		▪

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.6	All stakeholders are informed on progress against the implementation of the BME Housing Strategy on an annual basis	Sept 05	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BME Housing and Monitoring Scrutiny group established (Feb 05) Annual report is delivered to all stakeholders detailing progress against performance indicators <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the action plan impact that the Strategy is having (Sept 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
1.7	BME Housing Strategy is reviewed and updated annually by all stakeholders	Dec 2005	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder forums are in place to ensure full consultation and review (Feb 05) Progress reports are established to all stakeholders (Sept 05) Position Statement is available to inform review (Sept 05) Annual Review complete (Nov 05) BME Housing Strategy revised (Dec 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Key Objective 1 Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.8	Equalities and Diversity Training is provided to all staff and members to ensure that everyone has a better understanding and are responsive to the diverse needs in the communities they serve	Dec 2005	Alan Swann (HR)	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Training programme established (Mar 05) All Member training completed (Dec 05) All staff training completed (Dec 05) 		▪
Key Objective 2 Policies and Procedures – Eliminate inequalities and unlawful discrimination and promote community cohesion, good community relations and equal opportunities through the development of policy and procedures which embrace equalities and diversity.							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome

Key Objective 1 Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.1	Recruitment is carried out compliant to with the Race Relations Amendment Act	Mar 05	Odette Stringwell	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment process reviewed (June 04) ▪ Process updated and implemented (July 04) ▪ Programme of quality checks established (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment process reviewed and implemented
2.2	Ethnic origin of all employees is recorded	Aug 04	Odette Stringwell	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current level of information (July 04) • Information on all employees is collected (Aug 04) • 100% accuracy of data on ethnicity of workforce (Aug 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethnic origin is recorded against all employees

Key Objective 1 Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.3	Policies and Procedures which support recruitment, retention and progression of all staff are revised	June 05	Alan Swann	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment strategy revised and updated to take into account diversity issues (Mar 05) Strategy developed which balances the needs of existing staff with open recruitment and equal opportunities (May 05) Develop staff mentoring schemes (June 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
2.4	Establish a code of conduct for staff to work towards eliminating racial discrimination from all employment and training practises	Dec 04	Odette Stringwell	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recruitment, training and development processes to ensure they comply with RMBC Race Equality Scheme (Nov 04) Code of Conduct for all staff implemented (Dec 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of conduct for staff implemented

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.5	Impact assessments carried out on all policies and procedures	Mar 07	John Mansergh	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline position on all policies and procedures (Oct 04) All policies and procedures have impact assessments (Mar 06) Legislative requirements addressed by all policy and procedures (Mar 07) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline completed in line with the equality standards
2.6	Equality Group established to scrutinise legal requirements	Mar 06	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality group established (Aug 04) 100% of legal requirements complied with (Mar 06) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equalities group re-established

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.7	Develop Racial Harassment policy to ensure that all incidents are dealt with effectively	Mar 05	Myriam Berrada	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policy developed (Nov 04) Policy approved by Cabinet (Jan 05) Establish and implement PMF to ensure that it is being delivered (Mar 05) Train staff on new policy (Dec 05) 		▪
2.8	Conditions of tenancy include the provision for taking action specifically for racial harassment	Mar 05	Richard Walker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current conditions of tenancy (Feb 05) Specific tenancy condition included (Mar 05) 100% of racial harassment and racist incidents are dealt with effectively (Mar 06) 		▪

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.9	All staff are trained on and are aware of the definition of a racist incident and the policy around racial harassment	Dec 05	Myriam Berrada	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme established (Mar 05) • Definition training is included (Mar 05) • 100% are trained and are aware (Dec 05) 		▪
2.10	Establish a racist incident and racial harassment complaint service standard	Mar 05	Myriam Berrada	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Standard developed in conjunction with all stakeholders which covers time-limits, action against perpetrators, victim feedback (Mar 05) 		▪

Key Objective 1 Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.11	Communicate policies around racial harassment to all customers	Mar 05	Myriam Berrada	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Racial harassment policy leaflet developed (Dec 04) • Racial harassment policy is part of the tenants handbook (Mar 05) • Open House article produced to inform tenants of the policy (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft leaflet produced
2.12	Reduce levels of racial harassment through staff development	Mar 2007	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baseline figures (Mar 05) • Reduce levels by 10% (Mar 07) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Key Objective 1		Leadership – An Effective framework for inclusion of BME communities and reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services is developed					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.13	All contractors and consultants are committed to the BME Housing Strategy	Dec 2005	Gary Whitaker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a database of consultants and contractors (Mar 05) Review equality policies for all consultants and contractors (Mar 05) BME Housing Strategy is named as part of the contract to ensure it is adhered to (Jul 05) Mechanisms for ensuring compliance are established (July 05) Test satisfaction with service users to ensure consistency of service (Dec 05) Introduce penalties for non-compliance with strategy (Dec 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
2.14	Provide procurement opportunities for BME owned businesses and increase ethnic diversity of consultants and contractors	Mar 2006	Gary Whitaker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an approved list of BME consultants and contractors (Mar 05) Open event/information day to raise awareness of procurement opportunities for BME owned businesses (Sept 05) Increase BME consultants/contractors from 0% to 3% (Mar 06) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.1	Establish location of existing BME communities	June 05	Steve Holmes	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mapping exercise undertaken (Mar 05) ▪ Information from areas and datasets collated (June 05) ▪ Clear information on location of communication available (June 05) 		▪
3.2	Ensure needs and necessary support for the Rotherham Asylum Project Team and NASS contract holders are considered throughout the Strategy	Jan 2005	Andrew Crowley	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation programme with local organisations established (Mar 05) • Consultation informs the strategy and complements work of the Rotherham Asylum Team and NASS contract holders (Mar 05) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.3	Information is gathered to establish the needs and aspirations of BME communities concerning housing requirements	Dec 05	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish information gathering framework (Feb 05) Establish learning forum to ensure that information is used to feed into service improvement (Mar 05) BME Housing Strategy and Corporate Housing Strategy has been informed by using the information (Sept 05) Revised Strategy implemented (Dec 05) Widen choice of properties available (Dec 05) – Angela Smith 		▪
3.4	Identify appropriate types of accommodation for victims of domestic violence	May 05	Angela Smith	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current appropriate types of accommodation (Mar 05) Identify opportunities for development (Mar 05) Identify opportunities for other housing provision e.g RSL (Mar 05) Development programme established and implement (May 05) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.5	Provide translation services and produce information in community languages and suitable formats	Mar 05	Myriam Berrada	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current information reviewed (Jan 05) • Literature produced in community languages (Jan 05) • Translation services in place (Mar 05) • Monitoring systems implemented to measure use of and take up of these systems to ensure value for money (Mar 05) 		▪
3.6	Provide an outreach service in community settings to advise and deal with housing enquiries and concerns	Dec 05	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify scope of the service based on customer needs and requirements (June 05) • Establish mechanisms for rolling out the service ie. Surgeries (July 05) • Develop programme (July 05) • Advertise outreach service in appropriate areas (Aug 05) • Develop measures to ensure that they are being uses effectively (Dec 05) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.7	Provide homelessness advice to all communities to ensure that their needs are understood and addressed	June 2005	Angela Smith	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mechanisms for monitoring provision of advice by ethnicity (Mar 05) Findings are fed into service improvement (June 05) 		▪
3.8	Increase the amount of choice and suitability to BME homeless applicants	Mar 2006	Angela Smith	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase area choice to BME homeless applicants from 1 to 4 (Mar 06) Establish baseline figure for BME homeless lettings (Mar 05) Increase by 10% (Mar 06) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.9	Ethnic origin of all service users, applicants for housing, complainants and other instances where individuals come into contact with housing is recorded and monitored	Mar 05	Jasmine Speight	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms established to record information (Feb 05) Monitoring mechanisms are established (Mar 05) 100% of service users have been asked about their ethnic origin (Mar 05) Information is used to improve service delivery (Mar 05) 		▪
3.10	Carry out satisfaction surveys of service users to test that services are being delivered equally and to assess satisfaction levels	Dec 05	Jasmine Speight	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System developed for testing satisfaction against ethnic origin, age and gender (Mar 05) Information analysed (July 05) Report to Members (Sept 05) Targets are set to ensure a consistent service is delivered to all service users (Sept 05) Report finding and action to customers annually (Dec 05) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.11	Develop a Community Engagement Strategy, with emphasis on BME communities and other 'hard to reach' groups to enable everyone to influence and shape the delivery of the service	April 06	Steve Holmes	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Strategy developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and customers (Jan 06) Strategy approved by Members (Mar 06) Community Engagement Strategy implemented (April 06) 		▪
3.12	Contribute towards the funding and organisation of community events which celebrates diversity and promotes harmony	Dec 05	Mahmood Hussain	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual events programmed (Mar 05) Annual events organised and attended by a mix of racial groups (Apr 05) Satisfaction with event is 85% (Dec 05) 		▪

Key Objective 3 Service Delivery – Services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.13	Use the existing VAR and REMA database of community organisations, groups and networks more effectively	July 05	Angela Smith	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish database of groups (Mar 05) Establish links and contacts within those groups (June 05) Develop a programme of consultation and communication with these groups (July 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
3.14	Improve decision making process and information at Area Assemblies	April 05	Steve Holmes	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current Area Assembly protocols (Feb 05) Implement mechanisms to ensure that decisions are open and transparent (Mar 05) Area Assembly Panels receive regular information (Apr 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	13th January 2005
3.	Title:	Recommendations from the Indicative ALMO Inspection and the ALMO Excellence Plan All Wards affected
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

To report the recommendations for service improvement from the Indicative ALMO Inspection and to discuss the ALMO Excellence Plan, that will achieve the step change.

6. Recommendations

**SCRUTINY MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO NOTE THE RECOMMENDATIONS
AND THE ALMO EXCELLENCE PLAN**

7. Proposals and Details

The recommendations from the Indicative ALMO Inspection Report have been included in the ALMO Excellence Plan to drive forward and monitor the service improvement of housing management and repairs services into an ALMO structure with the objective of delivering an excellent customer service through Neighbourhood Management.

The objectives have been divided into five key points:

- ALMO is established and in place by 31 March 2005.
- Tenants are at the heart of our decision process and play a principal role in shaping future service delivery.
- Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, customer focused service.
- The ALMO has a long term strategy for the delivery of neighbourhood management beyond the delivery of decent homes
- Ensuring our services demonstrate value for money to our customers, through the application of competition and procurement

8. Finance

All issues related to finance to deliver the plan is covered in current budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to keep to the milestones in the plan will hamper the implementation of ALMO in April 2005, and the two star rating from the ALMO Inspection in November 2005, resulting in not receiving the £233 million to Deliver Decent Homes by 2010. These risks are being managed through weekly updates from the Lead Task Managers, at the ALMO Development Board Meeting. Any risks are identified at an early stage.

The above risks are linked to:-

The Programme Area Risk Register

The CMT Risk Register

The Service Risk Register

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The plan will help shape the ALMO structure, reorganise service, and deliver excellent customer service through Neighbourhood Management. It includes recommendations from the Repairs and Maintenance Inspection in February 2004, the Indicative ALMO Inspection report in December 2004 and areas of weakness identified in the Best Value Review of Housing Management in December 2003.

The priorities in the plan have been identified within the Programme Area Performance Plan and the Neighbourhoods Service Business Plan which also link with the Corporate Plan and Strategic Partnerships and Public Service Agreements.

The plan is used to monitor and record progress. It is regularly updated to reflect the milestones and measures achieved and ensure that there is a continual improvement in the delivery of customer service.

The updated Plan is reported weekly at the ALMO Development Board and monitored through a performance management frame work. It is reported to a wider audience through Foundations and Open House Newsletters.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Plan was discussed at PAMT on 27 May 2004 and approved. It was passed at the ALMO Project Board meeting on 15 July 2004.

Cabinet for Housing and Environmental Svices. Minute No. 37 of 30th July 2004

Reported to Environmental Scrutiny Panel. Minute No. 49 of 23rd September 2004.

Programme Area Performance Plan and Neighbourhoods Service Business Plan
Corporate Plan

**Contact Name : Janet Greenwood, Service Improvement Manager,
Neighbourhoods, extension 2206, janet.greenwood@rotherham.gov.uk**

Recommendations from the Audit Commission Indicative ALMO Inspection which is Incorporated in the ALMO Excellence Plan

2.5 ALMO Excellence Plan

Implement Learning from Customers principles across the Programme Area including all levels of customer feedback ensuring they deliver clear, discernable user benefits (AC ALMO Recommendation)

Milestones/Measures

- Review current Learning from Customers process (Dec 04)
- Gaps identified and forum revised (Dec 04)
- Systems implemented to capture all customer feedback (Dec 04)
- Ensure systems for testing QA is incorporated (Dec 04)
- Learning from Customers Action Plan Developed (Jan 05)
- Service User benefits are identified and reported to all stakeholders on a monthly basis (Mar 05)

2.6 ALMO Excellence Plan

Routinely collect information including diversity, about customers and analyse to improve customer information, identify and address barriers to access and improve overall satisfaction (AC ALMO Recommendation)

Milestones/Measures

- Framework implemented to capture customer profile (Dec 04)
- Framework implemented for reporting the monitoring of service usage to Cabinet (Mar 05)
- All surveys monitor ethnicity (Mar 05)

3.2 ALMO Excellence Plan

Improve Income Collection, dealing with debt recovery, by developing effective systems to profile rent arrears and target remedial action, including debt counselling, income maximization, money advice and advocacy (AC ALMO Recommendation)

Milestones/Measures

- Appoint Former Tenant Arrears Debt Collection Agency (Jun 04)
- Increase take up of Direct Debit for rent payment, including additional monthly DD cycle (increase take up to 16.5% of all rent payments) (Dec 04)
- Develop strategy for effective, customer-focused income collection and debt recovery, in line with corporate policy, with revised procedures, performance management framework, and action plan (Mar 05)
- Review and revise clawback processes for HB, and develop more effective working relationship with HB service (Mar 05)
- Roll out ARBA (automated rent recovery module) (Mar 05)
- Level of write-offs reduced (Mar 05)
- Reduce the level of FTA to 0.98% (Mar 05)
- BV66a / HES66b Top Quartile (Mar 05)
- 15% pay by DD/SO Set top quartile targets 05 Best in Class (Mar 06)

3.4 ALMO Excellence Plan

Improve Tenancy and Estate Management services raising customer satisfaction from 26% (Mar 04) to 50% (Mar 05)

Measures/Milestones

- **Establish Stakeholder group to review tenancy and estate management procedures (Oct 04)**
- **Review of tenancy management with action plan and performance management framework, reported and implemented (Dec 04)**
- **Review of estate management with action plan and performance management framework reported and implemented (Jan 05)**
- **Review the gardening service to vulnerable customers (Feb 05)**
- **To improve customer satisfaction from 26% (Mar 04) to 50% (Mar 05)**

3.11 ALMO Excellence Plan

Improve services and information delivered to Leaseholders and Right to Buy Customers

Measures/Milestones

Leaseholders

- Develop Leaseholders service policy, procedure and action plan (Dec 04)
- Leaseholders News section in every Open House (Dec 04)
- Review service charges for tenants and leaseholders (Jan 05)
- Additional services programme identified and rolled out to broaden choices for leaseholders (Jan 05)
- Gas servicing offered to leaseholders (Feb 05)

Right to Buy

- Develop customer satisfaction survey for RTB's and feed findings into service improvement (Nov 04)
- Tri-annual RTB impact assessment established (Dec 04)
- Develop RTB procedure manual (Dec 04)
- Revise RTB handbook and distribute (Dec 04)
- RTB Service Standard including historical performance information (Jan 05)

3.12 ALMO Excellence Plan

Customers are delivered receipts for all business transactions

Measures/Milestones

- Scope areas for receipting (Dec 04)
- All customer transactions are receipted at Neighbourhood Offices (Mar 05)

3.13 ALMO Excellence Plan

Delivering a one contact customer focused approach to Aids and Adaptation

Measures/Milestones

- Targets for delivering equal service to public and private sector established (Dec 04)
- Establish Adapted Properties register and make available to all staff (Feb 05)

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys carried out with findings fed back into service improvement (Dec 04)
- Develop Service Standards (Dec 04)
- Review carried out on Aids and Adaptions based on Best Value principles: (Mar 05)
 - Service delivers Value for Money
 - Develop PMF
 - Carry out BPR
 - Budgets assessed in line with demand
 - Establish one council adaptation team
- Home Improvement Agency developed which eligible for funding (Mar 05)

3.15 ALMO Excellence Plan

**Develop a value for money Access and Accommodation Strategy .
(AC ALMO Recommendation)**

Measures/Milestone

- Investigate and evaluate potential of free-phone number including benchmarking (Nov 04)
- Complete customer consultation re office accommodation, opening hours and service accessibility (Dec 04)
- Access and Accommodation Strategy and action plan reported and agreed by ALMO Board.(Jan 04)
- Implement revised local opening times (Mar 05)
- Offices are DDA compliant (Nov 05)

3.22 ALMO Excellence Plan

Develop clear service standards and informative service information in conjunction with customers (AC ALMO Recommendation)

Measures/Milestones

- Review current service standards and customer information (Dec 04)
- Consult with customers and stakeholders on all standards (Jan 05)
- Implement clear and measurable service standards across the Programme Area (Feb 05)
- Performance against standards reported to customers (Mar 05)

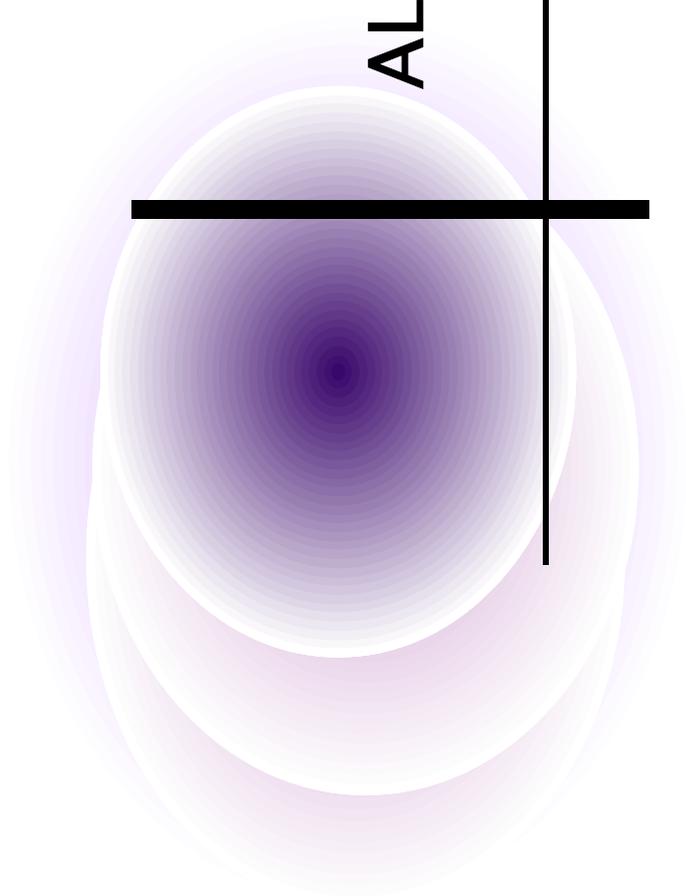
4.8 ALMO Excellence Plan

SLA's are in place following review and consultation with customers to ensure VFM and that it addresses customers needs (AC ALMO Recommendation)

Measures/Milestones

- Programme of reviews in place in consultation with the customer (Sept 04)
- Managed through ALMO project group (SLA Template – SMART, reference to service quality and customer care and are clearly articulated) (Dec 04)
- Agree period for review and renegotiation (Dec 04)
- Review completed, addressing VFM and customer needs (Apr 05)
- SLA's for all services procured (Nov 05)

ALMO Excellence Plan



ALMO EXCELLENCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The improvement plan is designed to achieve step change improvements that are **specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic** and timed to coincide with the government and corporate agenda. They are outcome based and while having a lead officer are service owned to achieve maximum delivery.

The plan will shape the ALMO structure in 2005 and reorganise our service to deliver an excellent customer service through Neighbourhood Management. It will do this by acting on the recommendations of the Repairs and Maintenance Inspection in February 2004 and the ALMO Indicative inspection in September 2004, developing the areas of weakness identified in the Best Value Review of Housing Management. Other pieces of work such as 'Preparing for an Indicative ALMO inspection' has focused our work on gaps in the service. The Audit Commission have published Key Lines of Enquiries (KLOE's) and Core Data Sets have been invaluable in providing clear standards to aim for if we are to achieve Excellence. Customers will be at the heart of our decision making, so that the service meets their needs and expectations.

The improvements within this plan include other priorities and plans identified within the Programme Area Performance Plan and **Housing Services Business Plan*** which link with the Community, Strategy, Corporate Plan, Strategic Partnerships and Public Service Agreements.

Each key outcome is broken down into a range of tasks, with a task manager identified to deliver the changes.

The plan is used as a monitoring tool to record progress and is regularly updated and amended as service provision evolves and improves. Some action points have been amalgamated and others discarded or introduced over time to reflect these changes.

Key Objectives:

- **ALMO is established and in place by 31st March 2005,**
- **Tenants are at the heart of our decision making process and play a principle role in shaping future service delivery**
- **Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, customer focused service**
- **Ensuring our services demonstrate value for money to our customers, through the application of competition and procurement**

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Key Objective 1 ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.1	Establish an Arms Length Management Organisation	April 05	Jim McAusland	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board established (Dec-04) • Demonstrate tenant support (Jan-05) • Section 27 approval sought (Jan-05) • Management Agreement between Council and ALMO (Mar-05) • ALMO live date (Apr-05) • ALMO Inspection to achieve 2 star rating (Nov-05) • Draw down funding (Jan-06) 	PAPP 3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Board established ▪ Specialist Consultancy in Place ▪ Leadership in place ▪ Method of recruitment agreed

Key Objective 1 ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.2	Restructure Housing Services based on Neighbourhood management principles.	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Going Local Pilot Project, and Eastwood NM Pathfinder to enable implementation of good practice across Neighbourhood Management service area. (Dec 04) Draw Neighbourhood Management Area boundaries in line with Area Assemblies, create seven management teams, and allocate staff resources (Dec 04) Develop ALMO Access & Accommodation Strategy, incorporating 1st Stop Shop principles (Mar 05) Revise and distribute the tenants handbook (Mar 05) Achieve Top Quartile Customer Satisfaction rating - 83% (Mar 05) Complete a systematic best value review, of all housing services (other than R&M) provided through the ALMO/Neighbourhood Management structure. (Mar 05) 	R & M Sip 2.4 PAPP 2.1 PAPP 4.6 PAPP 2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in place to Restructure from the top down Boundary lines drawn around the 7 Area Assemblies

Key Objective 1 ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.3	Review Neighbourhood Management arrangements to scope delivery	Mar 05	Tom Cray	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish corporate task group (Sept 04) • Corporate audit of area assembly (Nov 04) • Update statistical profiles for each assembly (Nov 04) • Baseline assessment carried out (Nov 04) • Produce 7 neighbourhood plans (Nov 04) • Develop neighbourhood standards (Mar 05) • Principles for multi-agency approach agreed (Oct 04) • Area Assemblies role reviewed (Jan 05) • Agree vision for neighbourhood management (Nov 04) • BVR of neighbourhood management (Feb 05) • Community planning framework strengthened (Feb 05) • Report to LSP Chief Exec Group (Dec 04) • Report to LSP Board (Jan 05) • Report to Cabinet (Feb 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate task group established

Key Objective 1		ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005					
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.4	Robust budget monitoring and management systems are in place to ensure that money is spent appropriately and systems are in place to forecast overspends (AC R&M Recommendation)	Mar 05	Jim McAusland	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review budget management arrangement (Nov 04) Identify training issues for Budget holders (Jan 05) Financial commitment accounting in place (Dec 04) Robust mechanisms in place for recharges to HRA (Dec 04) Commissioning costs for all aspects of Neighbourhoods is available (Dec 04) Evaluation of the HRA carried out to identify VFM and efficiency gains (Dec 04) Cost centre based information developed (Dec 04) Support Budget Holders to enable systems to be in place to demonstrate VFM and monitor (Dec 04) Robust budget commitment process implemented and at local level (Dec 04) Budgets for strategic housing authority and ALMO are separated (Dec 04) Devolved and cost centre arrangements for new management areas established (Dec 04) Management fee agreed (Jan 05) Financial management arrangements reviewed (Mar 05) Define new accounting arrangements (Mar 05) Compliance with key dates in Business Planning cycle (Mar 05) 	R & M Sip 3.2	

Key Objective 1 ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.5	Develop effective Investment Plan for future Capital Programmes	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment plan for Decent Homes and all other capital programmes in place (Feb 05) Deliver BV184 Target (Mar 05) Conduct rolling Stock Condition Survey and update (Apr 04 to March 09) HES 12 (performance on capital spend) 100% (Mar 05) Develop decanting procedures for customers having Decent Homes and/or other major improvement works carried out (Mar 05) Develop and report alternative strategy for non-decent homes (Mar 05) 		

Key Objective 1 ALMO is established and in place by 31 st March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
1.6	Implement a succession strategy for Neighbourhood Management delivery beyond achieving Decent Homes Targets to support Neighbourhood Renewal	Apr 05	Allison Palmer	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Strategy in place including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Delivery of new style of Neighbourhood Management b. Delivery of Decent Homes c. Gearing up for Neighbourhood Management d. Full Delivery of Neighbourhood Management (Mar 05) e. Contract (Obtain Draft Templates) (Mar 05) • Build up understanding and capacity of vision for neighbourhood management (Apr 05) • Confidence in Council as community leader developed (Apr 05) • Potential benefits through ALMO identified (Apr 05) 	ALMO Plan 1.1	
1.7	Produce a 'Fit for Purpose' Housing Strategy	Nov 04	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Housing Strategy (Aug 04) ▪ Strategy in place 'Fit for Purpose' (Nov 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Development Framework developed • HMR Pathfinder Strategy submitted to ODPM • Fit for Purpose Strategy now with Audit Commission – awaiting decision

Key Objective 2 Tenants are at the heart of our decision making process and play a principle role in shaping future service delivery.						
Outcome Measure : BV75 achieves top quartile by March 2005						
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans
2.1	Improve and widen tenant and resident participation (AC R&M Recommendation)	March 2005	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce community empowerment strategy and action plan – to include increase in customer involvement from BME and other excluded groups (Jan 05) Review Consultation and Communication strategy action plan (Jan 05) Review Tenant Policy Panels, including Repairs and Maintenance Panel (Dec 04) Carry out monthly Customer Satisfaction Survey (Dec 04) Benchmarking with other LA's/ALMO's established (Dec 04) Implement a Tenant Consultation Panel (Jan 05) Increase tenant newsletter to bi-monthly (Jan 05) Develop local neighbourhood compacts (Mar 05) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
						Completed Task Outcome

Key Objective 2		Tenants are at the heart of our decision making process and play a principle role in shaping future service delivery.					
Outcome Measure : BV75 achieves top quartile by March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.2	Develop effective mechanisms for neighbourhood plans and the Councils Community planning processes and empower local residents to influence and shape service delivery	Jan 05	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Neighbourhood Plans (Oct 04) Neighbourhood Structure in place to manage through the Community Planning process (Dec 04) Review role of the Area Assembly Staff (Jan 05) 		
2.3	Identify key strategic and policy issues that need to be addressed by the strategic housing authority	Mar 05	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear scope of functions delivered by the Council (Sept 04) SLA's developed for retained services being accessed by the ALMO in place (Dec 04) Project plan for reviewing Policy and Strategies (Dec 04) All policies and strategies reviewed (Mar 05) 	PAPP 1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope agreed

Key Objective 2		Tenants are at the heart of our decision making process and play a principle role in shaping future service delivery.					
Outcome Measure : BV75 achieves top quartile by March 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.4	Equalities and Diversity is embedded into Neighbourhood Management and all services are designed to promote community cohesion (AC R&M Recommendation)	Dec 05	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff, members and tenant representatives are trained on Equality and Diversity issues and achieving the standard (Dec 04) • Deliver a SMART BME Strategy and action plan (Nov 04) ▪ Corporate equalities policy in place (Oct 04) ▪ Monthly monitoring of satisfaction of BME is in place, feeding into service improvement (Dec 04) ▪ Corporate Equalities Action Plan delivered against to achieve Level 1 (Mar 05) Level 2 (Mar 06) ▪ Monitoring arrangements for CRE Code of Practice is strengthened with data collected acted upon (Mar 05) ▪ Review all policies and procedures in line with equality and diversity issues (Oct 04) ▪ Action plan for developing representative workforce (Mar 05) ▪ Service Standard for monitoring and dealing with racist incidents (Mar 05) • BV164 (compliance with code of practise) Achieved (Mar 05) 		•

Key Objective 2		Tenants are at the heart of our decision making process and play a principle role in shaping future service delivery.					
Outcome Measure : BV75 achieves top quartile by March 2005							Completed Task Outcome
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
2.5	Implement Learning from Customers principles across the Programme Area including all levels of customer feedback ensuring they deliver clear, discernable user benefits (AC ALMO Recommendation)	Mar 05	Dave Roddis	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review current Learning from Customers process (Dec 04) ▪ Gaps identified and forum revised (Dec 04) ▪ Systems implemented to capture all customer feedback (Dec 04) ▪ Ensure systems for testing QA is incorporated (Dec 04) ▪ Learning from Customers Action Plan Developed (Jan 05) ▪ Service User benefits are identified and reported to all stakeholders on a monthly basis (Mar 05) 	▪	
2.6	Routinely collect information including diversity, about customers and analyse to improve customer information, identify and address barriers to access and improve overall satisfaction (AC ALMO Recommendation)	Sept 05	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Framework implemented to capture customer profile (Dec 04) ▪ Framework implemented for reporting the monitoring of service usage to Cabinet (Mar 05) ▪ All surveys monitor ethnicity (Mar 05) 	▪	

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.1	Continue Business Process Re-engineering, as part of the best value review of housing services, to streamline the delivery of customer focused services and to deliver positive customer facing outcomes and value for money	Mar 05	Janet Greenwood	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a template for all pilot studies that clearly sets out performance against objectives, service benefits, VFM and customer satisfaction (Dec 04) Undertake BP Mapping on remaining services carried out by the ALMO (Dec 04) All key processes and service procedures are tackled through BPR (Mar 05) BPR rolled out (Mar 05) KPI's are developed to measure efficiency (Mar 05) Benchmarking framework in place (Mar 05) 	Linked to 4.5 of the ALMO Plan, R & M 2.3		
3.2	Improve Income Collection, dealing with debt recovery, by developing effective systems to profile rent arrears and target remedial action, including debt counselling, income maximisation, money advice and advocacy (AC ALMO Recommendation)	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint Former Tenant Arrears Debt Collection Agency (Jun 04) Increase take up of Direct Debit for rent payment, including additional monthly DD cycle (increase take up to 16.5% of all rent payments) (Dec 04) Develop strategy for effective, customer-focused income collection and debt recovery, in line with corporate policy, with revised procedures, performance management framework and action plan (Mar 05) Review and revise claw back processes for HB, and develop more effective working relationship with HB service (Mar 05) Roll out ARBA (automated rent recovery) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Company 'Rossendales Debt Collection Agency' employed 	

Key Objective 3	<i>Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service</i>						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
					module) (Mar 05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of write-offs reduced (Mar 05) • Reduce the level of FTA to 0.98% (Mar 05) • BV66a / HES66b Top Quartile (Mar 05) • 15% pay by DD/SO Set top quartile targets 05 Best in Class (Mar 06) 		

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service					
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.3	Working with 'Safer Rotherham Partnership' to reduce and tackle Anti Social Behaviour in Rotherham	Apr 05	Bob Crosby	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and Develop the Policy and Procedures action plan for tackling ASB (Sept 04) Action plan to develop working partnerships with RSL's (Oct 04) Procedure for dealing with ASB in introductory tenancies (Nov 04) Customer Satisfaction carried out including Quality of Life questions with findings fed into service improvement (Nov 04) Progress recommendations from Sheffield Hallamshire (Nov 04) Implement a robust SMART ASB Strategy with clear definition (Dec 04) Develop ASB PMF based on locality including PI's, cross cutting data analysis and targets for reducing ASB (Dec 04) Programme of publicity established and rolled out for ASB (Dec 04) Refine ASB categories in line with Home Office report, including customer consultation (Dec 04) Review and refine the Domestic Violence Arrangements to inform the policy (Jan 05) Referencing, monitoring and analysis system in place for all ASB cases (Jan 05) Multi-agency approach to ASB established with clear protocols (Jan 05) Diversionsary strategy for Youth Nuisance (Feb 05) Develop clear ASB service standards in conjunction with customers (Feb 05) Review ASB based on BV principles (Police to lead) and develop SIP (Mar 05) GIS Mapping exercise carried out to identify 'hotspot' areas with action plan (Mar 05) Cost benefit analysis carried out on joint working with police (Apr 05) CCTV Strategy in place (Apr 05) Develop clear mediation service guarantee (Apr 05) Customers are involved in monitoring ASB on an area basis (Apr 05) System in place to monitor ASBO effectiveness (Apr 05) 		
Version 13 - Updated 22 nd November 2004							

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.4	Improve Tenancy and Estate Management services raising customer satisfaction from 26% (Mar 04) to 50% (Mar 05)	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Stakeholder group to review tenancy and estate management procedures (Oct 04) Review of tenancy management with action plan and performance management framework, reported and implemented (Dec 04) Review of estate management with action plan and performance management framework reported and implementing (Jan 05) Review the gardening service to vulnerable customers (Feb 05) To improve customer satisfaction from 26% (Mar 04) to 50% (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking for Flytipping done Estate Management Policy Panel and staff, Streetpride 	
3.5	Develop an effective, value for money, responsive approach to providing the Neighbourhood Warden service	Mar 05	Bob Crosby	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop response to targets and service standard with Streetpride and Env Servs with baseline data. Long term financial strategy for Neighbourhood Wardens (Dec 04) Consult residents to determine the roll out of Neighbourhood Wardens (Dec 04) Medium Term Financial Strategy for community warden service (Dec 04) Integrate Neighbourhood Warden service (Mar 05) Undertake a wider review of caretaking that will underpin our approach to grime issues (Mar 05) Clear Service Standards in place for Neighbourhood Wardens (Feb 05) VFM Caretaking/Community Safety service charge (Mar 05) 			

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service					
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005							
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
3.6	Deliver a 3 star – excellent' repairs and maintenance service (AC R&M Recommendations)	Nov 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<p>Implement remaining recommendations from R&M Inspection (Feb 04):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonus-related pay structure replaced with salaried pay scales, linked to introduction of multi-skilling (May 04) • Reduce 10 week access process for gas servicing to 3 weeks (Jan 05) • Evening and Weekend Appointment system in place for all none-emergency repairs (Mar 05) • KPI 2004/05 targets achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BV 72 – 97% HES 73 – 13 days BV 185 – 77% HES 7 – 99% HES 8 – 85% • Hand held technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implemented for Decent Homes survey work (Apr 04); - Pilot for R&M (Sep 05). • R&M achieves ISO9001 (Sep 05) 	R & M Sip 2.1 R & M Sip 3.1 ALMO Plan 5.2 PAPP 4.1 PAPP 4.4 PAPP 4.7	

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.7	Develop and implement a multi-agency single assessment process to promote independent living	Apr 05	Bob Crosby	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce furnished homes scheme (Apr 04) Increase furnished homes scheme to 100 and ensure VFM and customer satisfaction (Mar 05) Implement Personal Housing Care Plans for people moving into Sheltered Housing (Jan 05) Review and refine the support provided to vulnerable households during the course of their application and after care arrangements (Nov 04) Housing Needs Study action plan implemented (Feb 05) Sheltered Housing Action Plan implemented (Dec 04) Develop the Choice Based Lettings procedures including risk assessment processes and introduce refined service standards. Introduce Choice Based Letting Scheme (Apr 05) Implement Younger Persons Strategy (Mar 05) Rothercare PMF implemented (Apr 05) 	R & M Sip 2.6 R & M Sip 2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake value for money exercise within supporting people framework 	
3.8	Produce a long term strategy and action plan, linked to the Investment Plan, to manage the repair and maintenance needs of Rotherham's housing stock	Feb 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce suite of documents comprising all policies and procedures relating to repairs and maintenance (Dec 04) Revise former Annual Maintenance Plan to become seven year Stock Maintenance Plan, supporting the Decent Homes Investment Plan and informed by the Sustainability Model (Feb 05) 	ALMO 1.1, 1.5,2.3,2.4, 3.5		

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.9	Performance Management Arrangements developed to enable ALMO to be monitored	Mar 05	Dave Roddis	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Performance standards and measures identified in conjunction with customers (Jan 04) Performance management arrangements in place (Mar 05) Reporting arrangements for LA agreed (Mar 05) ALMO requirements developed (Sept 05) 			
3.10	Attain Charter Mark accreditation for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Management Repairs and Maintenance Environmental Health Waste Management 	Mar 06	Dave Roddis	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core group established (Dec 04) Charter Mark Action Plan established following gap analysis (Dec 04) Action Plan delivered against (Sept 05) Application submitted (Dec 05) Charter Mark accreditation achieved (Mar 06) 	R&M 2.9		

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service					
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005							Completed Task Outcome
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	
3.11	Improve services and information delivered to Leaseholders and Right to Buy Customers	Feb 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<p>Leaseholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Leaseholders service policy, procedure and action plan (Dec 04) Leaseholders News section in every Open House (Dec 04) Review service charges for tenants and leaseholders (Jan 05) Additional services programme identified and rolled out to broaden choices for leaseholders (Jan 05) Gas servicing offered to leaseholders (Feb 05) <p>Right to Buy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop customer satisfaction survey for RTB's and feed findings into service improvement (Nov 04) Tri-annual RTB impact assessment established (Dec 04) Develop RTB procedure manual (Dec 04) Revise RTB handbook and distribute (Dec 04) RTB Service Standard including historical performance information (Jan 05) 		
3.12	Customers are delivered receipts for all business transactions	Mar 05	Janet Greenwood	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope areas for receipting (Dec 04) All customer transactions are received at Neighbourhood Offices (Mar 05) 	3.16	

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service					
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005							Completed Task Outcome
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	
3.13	Delivering a one contact customer focused approach to Aids and Adaptation	Apr 05	Bob Crosby	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for delivering equal service to public and private sector established (Dec 04) • Establish Adapted Properties register and make available to all staff (Feb 05) • Customer Satisfaction Surveys carried out with finding fed back into service improvement (Dec 04) • Develop Service Standards (Dec 04) • Review carried out on Aids and Adaptations based on Best Value principles: (Mar 05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service delivers Value for Money - Develop PMF - Carry out BPR - Budgets assessed in line with demand - Establish one council adaptation team • Home Improvement Agency developed which eligible for funding (Mar 05) 		

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.14	Translation services provided for all customer requests, receipts and other key information.	January 2005	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language line available at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhood offices (Sept 04) - Rotherham Connect (Sept 04) - On-site with operatives (Oct 04) ▪ All repairs literature translated including repair receipt (Oct 04) ▪ All other ALMO service literature translated (Jan 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language line available at all neighbourhood offices, R Connect and operatives trained 	
3.15	Develop a value for money Access and Accommodation Strategy . (AC ALMO Recommendation)	Nov 2005	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate and evaluate potential of free-phone number including benchmarking (Nov 04) ▪ Complete customer consultation re office accommodation, opening hours and service accessibility (Dec 04) ▪ Access and Accommodation Strategy and action plan reported and agreed by ALMO Board.(Jan 04) ▪ Implement revised local opening times (Mar 05) ▪ Offices are DDA compliant (Nov 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report agreeing non pursued approved 15/11/04 	

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.16	Ensure that the service is E-government compliant	March 2006	Janet Greenwood	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an E: government strategy and action plan (Dec 04) ▪ Action plan monitored and reported monthly to Programme Area Management Team (Jan 05) ▪ Revise internet reporting facility for the whole service (Mar 05) ▪ All customer transactions are compliant with e:government (Mar 06) ▪ Increase internet reporting uptake 0% (Mar 04) to 2% (Jun 05) to 5 % (Mar 06) ▪ BV157 is compliant (Mar 06) 		▪	

Key Objective 3		<i>Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service</i>						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.17	Ensure that current IT systems are effective and up to date to aid service improvement through the provision of detailed financial and management information and to improve the way we deal with vulnerable customers (AC R&M Recommendation)	Mar 05	Janet Greenwood	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call centre IT systems has access to vulnerable data at point of accessing the property database (Dec 04) New IT packages are implemented (Dec 04) All staff trained on new IT packages (Mar 05) IT systems are up to date v34 (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
3.18	Revise current offer procedures to reduce levels of refusals for empty properties and improve void turn round times (AC R&M Recommendation)	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise current offer procedures (Dec 04) Revise Houseproud standard (Dec 04) Implement 'Buddy Scheme' (Dec 04) Reduce refusals levels from 33.25% (Mar 04) to 20% (Mar 05) Reduce HES 68 (average void relet time) from 22.84 days (Mar 04) to 20 days (Mar 05) 			

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.19	Review the system of decoration allowances. (AC R&M Recommendation)	Jan 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review current Decoration Allowance procedure, including allowances (Dec 2004) ▪ Report and implement Decoration Allowance policy, procedures and action plan with service standard (Jan 04) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
3.20	Deliver the PDR process consistently to ensure staff contribute towards service targets and objectives (AC R&M Recommendation)	Feb 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry our PDR's for whole Neighbourhood Management workforce, including Clear performance targets for service delivery at individual level (Feb 05) • Six monthly review programme (July 05) • Annual review (Feb 06) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
3.21	Address sickness levels through robust monitoring and reporting (AC R&M Recommendation)	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilise new corporate technology to produce robust sickness monitoring information for action and reporting purposes (Jan 05) • Reduce sickness level for 'Neighbourhoods' from 16.5 days (Mar 04) to 11 days (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	

Key Objective 3		Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, accessible and customer focused service						
Outcome Measure: 3* ALMO by November 2005								
Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome	
3.22	Develop clear service standards and informative service information in conjunction with customers (AC ALMO Recommendation)	Mar 05	Dave Roddis	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review current service standards and customer information (Dec 04) ▪ Consult with customers and stakeholders on all standards (Jan 05) ▪ Implement clear and measurable service standards across the Programme Area (Feb 05) ▪ Performance against standards reported to customers (Mar 05) 		▪	

Key Objective 4 Ensuring our services demonstrate value for money to our customers, through the application of competition and procurement.							
Key:- Red - Not on Target, Amber - On Target, Green - Complete							
Task Ref.	Action	Target date	Task Manager	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure/ Milestone	Links to Other Plans	Completed Task Outcome
4.1	Review value for money options for procurement of repairs and maintenance services. (AC R&M Recommendation)	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clear and transparent process for market testing (Sept 04) Complete a soft market test of the construction industry to identify the most appropriate procurement strategy (Jan 05) ALMO Project Board to agree procurement strategy (Mar 05) Issue of OJEU notice (April 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy for soft market test approved (Sep 04)
4.2	Review value for money of all services (other than R & M) which will be delivered by the ALMO.	Mar 05	Simon Bunker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish work groups for each service, to review VFM (ie. income management, estate management, tenancy management, voids and allocations, leaseholder arrangements) establishing a VFM template and benchmarking criteria. (Nov 04) Value for money reviews complete with action plans, reported to ALMO Project Board (Jan 05) Improve budget information and invoice processing to demonstrate Value for Money (Mar 05) 	PAPP 2.3 PAPP 3.3 PAPP 3.5 R&M 3.1 ALMO 4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking criteria agreed
4.3	Contractual arrangements between LA and RBT reviewed and agreed	Mar 05	Jim McAusland	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cessation and renegotiation to facilitate ALMO established (Mar 05) New business opportunities identified (Mar 05) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Key Objective 4 <i>Ensuring our services demonstrate value for money to our customers, through the application of competition and procurement.</i>						
4.4	Leadership of LA strategic functions is established	Apr 05	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All actions in housing strategy are consistent and progressed (Dec 04) LA strategic role is adequately resourced (Apr 05) Service improvement plan for Strategic and Enabling in place (Apr 05) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
4.5	Establish Risk Management register for LA and ALMO incorporating regular review and monitoring arrangements	Nov 05	Dave Roddis	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of monitoring and review established (Sept 04) Risk Assessment Template established (Nov 04) Existing risk register reviewed and separated (Nov 05) Corporate issues migrated (Nov 05) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management register for HES in place Monitoring agreed (monthly), review (quarterly) – PAMT, report to Cabinet (quarterly)
4.6	Identify and resolve implications for LA democratic and governance arrangements	Dec 04	Andrew Balchin	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of LA constitution and political structure fed into (Dec 04) Scheme of delegation amended (Dec 04) Roles of members adequately separated (Dec 04) Members community leadership role identified (Dec 04) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
4.7	Reduce overall costs and deliver a value for money Repairs and Maintenance Service through increasing programmed and reducing emergency repairs	Mar 06	Gary Whitaker	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HES9 (% of programme/responsive repairs – 55/45 (Mar 05), 60/40 (Mar 06) Reduce emergency from 27% to 17% (Mar 05) to 10% (Mar 06) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Key Objective 4 Ensuring our services demonstrate value for money to our customers, through the application of competition and procurement.					
4.8	<p>SLA's are in place following review and consultation with customers to ensure VFM and that it addresses customers needs (AC ALMO Recommendation)</p>	Nov 2005	Mick Dobson	On Target	<p>Programme of reviews in place in consultation with the customer (Sept 04)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed through ALMO project group (SLA Template – SMART, reference to service quality and customer care and are clearly articulated) (Dec 04) • Agree period for review and renegotiation (Dec 04) • Review completed, addressing VFM and customer needs (Apr 05) • SLA's for all services procured (Nov 05) <p>ALMO Plan 1.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of reviews established

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
MONDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors Hall and Kaye.

Apologies were received from Councillors Jack.

121. WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Head of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating Members on the consultation exercise currently underway.

To date 12,000 responses had been received with 1,700 indicating a wish to be further involved in the consultation process. A further letter and information pack had accordingly been sent seeking their views on the Best Practical Environmental Option (BPEO) criteria. This could be done by returning a completed form through the post or by attending a drop-in session held on the 23rd, 24th or 25th November, 2004.

A stakeholder consultation day had recently been held to outline the Strategy options being considered by Rotherham and to get views on the BPEO. Stakeholder attendees included Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, the Environment Agency, and the Local Strategic Partnership. Also a Health Impact Assessment Seminar and Workshop had been held on 1st December, 2004, in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust.

A further report would be submitted in January, 2005, setting out the proposed Strategy. It was suggested that the report be submitted to the January meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

Resolved:- (1) That the consultation initiatives being undertaken to inform the development of the Municipal Waste Management Strategy be noted.

(2) That a presentation be made to the January meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

(3) That the Cabinet Member's appreciation be placed on record for the work of Gill Charters, Waste Management Co-ordinator, who was leaving the Authority to take up a post at Sheffield City Council.

122. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs stated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

123. BUDGET ISSUES ROTHERHAM MBC AND GERSHON

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report which had been submitted to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee on 26th November, 2004 including a LGIU briefing on Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review.

Discussion ensued on the document with particular reference to the Programme Area. The following issues were raised:-

- Productivity by the addressing of staff sickness rates and the increase of mobile working technology
- That the Gershon agenda be considered when setting annual budgets
- That lobbying take place for a reduction in the number of inspections
- "Going Local" and the Local Lettings Policies be flagged up as examples of business process redesigning

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – provision of work/supply of goods or services)

124. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS IN 2005/06 BUDGET - NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report setting out proposals to meet the 2.5% Base Budget efficiency savings indicated by the Gershon Review in respect of the general fund elements of the Neighbourhoods Programme Area.

Appendix 1 outlined the savings suggested whilst Appendix 2 provided details of the risks and service implications associated with the proposals.

Resolved:- That the report be noted and work on the proposed savings continue.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – provision of work/supply of goods or services)

**1CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
13/12/04**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
MONDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors Hall, N. Hamilton, Jack and Kaye.

Apologies were received from Councillors (none).

125. 2ND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2004/05

The Performance and Development Officer submitted the Programme Area's performance monitoring report for the 2nd quarter of 2004/05.

At the end of the quarter 40 (89%) Key Performance Indicators were achieving their control target with action in place to ensure all the year end targets were achieved. 5 were not achieving their quarterly control targets. At the same stage last year, 78% of the Indicators were on target.

When compared with All England figures, 7 Indicators were in the top quartile as opposed to 6 in the last quarter. The Indicator that had moved into the top quartile related to waste sent for landfill and reflected the significant investment made to the recycling infrastructure.

The areas of significant improvement related to improvements in performance on rent collection, Capital Programme spend and consumer protection visits. All had had extra performance management controls put in place during the quarter which had led to better results. This provided evidence of the approach to performance management.

Resolved:- That the report and progress made be noted.

126. HOUSEMARK REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Performance and Development Officer submitted a report which detailed Housemark's external validation of Neighbourhoods Programme Area Performance Management Framework which took place between 9th August and 9th September, 2004.

The review had been recommended by the Housing Inspectorate and focused on all aspects of performance management within Neighbourhoods, looking at both housing and environmental services. It was structured around the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) developed by the Audit Commission. KLOEs were a list of key lines of enquiry that detailed what would be covered in inspections and the standard expected of excellent and fair housing services.

There had been an initial desktop review, and 17 interviews with key strategic, managerial people and a workshop involving operational staff.

The workshop was used to test the application and understanding of the Performance Management Framework at an operational level within the organisation. A meeting was held with tenant representatives in order to discuss the understanding and ongoing involvement of service users in performance management procedures and initiatives.

Their overall impression was that of an organisation with a clear understanding of the strategic importance of performance management which was strongly committed to applying the regime set out by the Performance Management Framework in order to achieve and sustain improvements in services and standards.

Resolved:- That the report and progress made be noted.

127. VOID PROPERTY MONITORING 1ST TO 26TH NOVEMBER, 2004

The Head of Housing Services submitted an update on void property re-let performance and associated issues for the period 1st to 26th November, 2004.

The number of voids as at 26th November, 2004, had decreased by 45 from the start of the period to 217. The majority of voids, 162, were voids currently excluded from HES68 and included properties such as those awaiting renovation and disposal. The number of voids that met the criteria to be included within HES68 had decreased during the period to 55.

Overall performance against the Indicator was 16.93 days, an improvement of 0.77 days from the last period.

The performance on allocating open access properties had continued with 3 open access properties being let in the period. The overall performance if all open access properties were removed from the Indicator would be 17.21 days.

The current level of performance would place the Authority in the top quartile of all England ALMO's and move it into first place ahead of South Lakes Housing which was on 17 days.

Local Performance Indicator HES14, introduced in 2003/04, measured the average time taken to let a void from when 1 tenancy terminated until the next 1 started as defined by dates entered onto the open house management system. It did not include all those properties excluded from HES68. Performance based on the Indicator was 13.34 days during the period.

There had been 124 terminations in the period of which 109 met the criteria to be included in HES68 and 146 lettings. The cumulative figures for the year were 1,189 terminations and 1,235 lettings. In addition there had been 62 new tenancies created by mutual exchanges since April,

**3CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
13/12/04**

2004. The number of available to let properties at the end of the period was 24.

The amount of rent income lost on voids up to 26th November, 2004, had improved from 1.12% at the last report to 1.08%. This performance continued to place the Authority in the upper quartile for Metropolitan Authorities.

It was noted that the Furnished Tenancy Scheme had now furnished 98 dwellings as at 10th December, 2004, and was on tract to reach the target of 100 by 31st December, 2004.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

128. WESTMINSTER BRIEFING

Resolved:- That the Cabinet Member (or substitute) and one Member from the Environment Scrutiny Panel be authorised to attend the Westminster Briefing "Local Environmental Quality: Developing Coherent Waste Minimisation and Recycling Strategies" to be held at Westminster on 20th January, 2005.

129. PETITION - HIGH HAZELS CRESCENT, CATCLIFFE

Pursuant to Minute No. 71 of 6th September, 2004, the Head of Housing Services submitted a report on the investigations that had taken place into the allegations of anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance.

A meeting had been held with the Estate Management Team, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, South Yorkshire Police and an Elected Member where agreement had been reached that there would be co-ordinated action involving the parties aforementioned.

Visits had been made to 60 of the 63 petitioners to explain what action could be taken to resolve the problems. It was explained that evidence was needed and monitoring sheets provided. It transpired that a lot of the information related to incidents that had happened some time ago which one of the named youths having been in prison since June. Other information related to incidents that had been seen by a third party whose name or address was not known.

All of the people named in the petition had been visited regarding the allegations as well as written to reminding them of the terms of their Tenancy Agreement and of possible action to enforce the tenancy conditions. Their tenancy files had been checked with no evidence found of problems in the past except for one tenant about whom there had been complaints regarding noise.

The families of the youths had been informed about their behaviour to which there had been a good response. Surveillance had been

undertaken and the estate found to be very quiet with no evidence of youth nuisance.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and action taken be noted.

(2) That the Head of Housing Services submit a further report should there be further concerns raised.

130. LEASEHOLDERS' GUIDE AND PROGRESS WITH LEASEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

The Head of Housing Services submitted an updated comprehensive Leaseholder Guide together with measures already taken to improve leasehold services and suggested proposals for improvement of the services offered to leaseholders.

A leaseholder was someone who had purchased their flat or maisonette from the Council on a long lease under the terms of the Right to Buy provisions. At present the Council managed 336 leasehold properties. This trend was unlikely to change in the immediate future as the increase in property values had made the purchase of a flat an attractive proposition.

The Guide explained the rights and responsibilities of both the Council and the leaseholder and was written in a style that mirrored best practice. A copy of the draft document had been circulated to members of the Leaseholder Forum and discussed at their meeting on 24th November, 2004. Amendments had made and a draft copy would be sent to all leaseholders for comment. The final version would be delivered before the end of March, 2005.

A whole section of the Guide was devoted to leasehold management service standards and, where appropriate, measurable timescales. It contained information about services available to all residents and explanatory leaflets were already available. It was felt that a further leaflet devoted to service charges would be helpful as this was a complicated and frequently misunderstood subject. There was also a need to develop a leaseholder section within the Neighbourhoods' internet site as research had indicated that this was quite common to many local authorities.

Work was currently progressing on a number of issues including:-

- A leasehold procedure guide for staff
- Introduction of a pilot communal area cleaning and/or caretaking contract funded by a weekly service charge to both leaseholders and tenants
- Offering leaseholders the Council's gas servicing contract
- Opportunity for leaseholders to participate in the Tenants Contents Insurance scheme
- Offering leaseholders improvement work to the Decent Homes

**5CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
13/12/04**

Standard

- Ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Review of service charge setting procedures.

The service charge was a key issue for leaseholders and the method of its collection. An information pack was to be sent out before Christmas which included the Leaseholder Guide, tenants' contents insurance, gas servicing and a questionnaire asking whether they wanted the way the service charge was dealt with changing to an annual system. It was proposed to run a pilot project in 1 part of the Borough looking at options for the cleaning and management of the blocks. A letter had been sent to the residents of the area concerned who had been responding by telephone.

Resolved:- (1) That the updated Leaseholder Guide and current leaseholder issues in general be noted with a further report being submitted in due course.

(2) That progress reports be submitted regarding the issue of service charges.

131. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

132. PETITION - PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF HOUSES AT MALTBY

The Democratic Services Manager reported receipt of a petition, containing 10 signatures, objecting to the proposed demolition of properties on Chadwick Drive, Maltby.

The Head of Housing Services submitted a copy of a letter dated 3rd December, 2004, which had been set to residents regarding the recent meeting of the Tarran Steering Group where it had been reported that there had been a miscalculation in the valuation of the properties.

It was noted that a report was to be submitted to the Cabinet Member on the 10th January, 2005.

Resolved:- (1) That the petition received.

(2) That investigations take place and a further report submitted in 1 month.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided

by the Council/proposed purchasing costs for property)

133. THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND GENERAL FUND BUDGET PRESSURES FOR 2005/06

Further to Minute No. 133 of 6th December, 2004, the Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund budget pressures for 2005/06.

As part of the Corporate budget process, Programme Areas had been asked to identify budget pressures for the financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07. Issues had been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and broadly prioritised as A, B or C list items within the MTFS. The appendix to the report listed all the items currently identified as pressures on the General Fund elements of the Neighbourhoods Programme Area and indicated whether they had been included on the A, B or C list.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Neighbourhood Services submit a report on the statistics regarding bring sites and kerbside recycling.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act - provision of goods/services)

134. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER - DONCASTER ROAD, DALTON

Resolved:- That the Head of Housing Services submit a report on the above to the 10th January meeting.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
MONDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors N. Hamilton and Jack.

Apologies were received from Councillors Hall and Kaye.

135. CREMATION METAL RESIDUES

The Head of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on options available for the disposal of metal residues as a result of the cremation process in accordance with waste management legislation.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management had recently conducted research into the matter of disposing of metal residues separated from cremated remains following the cremation process. This followed a statement from the Environment Agency that the current method of disposing of metals within the crematorium grounds was illegal. Advice had now been obtained by the Institute from Counsel and the Environment Agency with the following options now available to the crematoria:-

1. Not to separate the metal from cremated remains following a cremation. This would create practical problems as the existing plant used for refining remains into powder could not deal with refining metals. There would be obvious difficulty in the remains therefore being scattered onto open ground at the Crematorium or elsewhere.
2. To routinely return separated metals to the bereaved families. This would be an unacceptable practice because it would be upsetting and place a burden of disposal of metals residue upon the bereaved.
3. To recycle the metals in an environmentally friendly way in accordance with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's Guiding Principles.

Option 3 would be the sensible approach which had been confirmed by an unanimous vote at the Joint Burial and Cremation Authorities Conference. It was proposed to undertake local consultation in January with key stakeholders at the Cemetery and Crematorium Liaison Group where consideration would also be given to the most appropriate means of informing the bereaved.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management had provided a model form for completion by applications for cremation but it may be more appropriate to issue an environmental statement to all applicants

with information on how to opt out of the scheme should they so wish.

A list of questions and answers about the scheme, provided by the Institute, was attached as Appendix 1.

Resolved:- (1) That the research of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management be noted and their proposed scheme to recycle metal products following cremation.

(2) That the Rotherham Crematorium express an interest in joining the scheme to be administered by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

(3) That, prior to joining the scheme, a consultation exercise with funeral directors and other key stakeholders be held to introduce the scheme to explore means of informing applicants for cremation of the procedure for recycling metal residues. The views of the Cemetery and Crematorium Liaison Group be reported to the Cabinet Member for final consideration.

136. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

137. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Manager and Registrar presented the Service Improvement Plan for the Cemeteries and Crematorium Service which aimed to position Rotherham as a provider of high quality and effective bereavement service.

It was the intention to use the Plan as the basis for consultation during soft market testing with potential private sector organisations who may wish to enter into a partnership with the Council to provide bereavement services. It would also provide an opportunity for the Authority to obtain an insight into how service providers might approach the delivery of the service in question or how they might address particular local circumstances that may impact on the services or proposals more generally.

The timetable for the procurement was set out in Appendix 2.

It was noted that the Plan was to be submitted for consideration to the Environment Scrutiny Panel on 13th January, 2005.

Resolved:- (1) That the Service Improvement Plan be noted.

**3CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
20/12/04**

(2) That the Service Improvement Plan be approved as a key document to be used as consultation during soft market testing, seeking potential partners to assist in the delivery of Bereavement Services in Rotherham.

(3) That the projected timetable for exploring partnership arrangements in the delivery of Bereavement Services in Rotherham be noted.

(4) That a further report be submitted upon completion of the soft market testing exercise.

(5) That investigations take place into the effect, if any, the possible partnering arrangement may have with RBT with a further report being submitted thereon.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act – proposed purchasing costs for the provision of work/negotiation of terms)

138. PILOT FAMILY MEDIATION SERVICE

The Head of Housing Services presented a report on the pilot Family Mediation Services which had been operating within the Homelessness Team since April, 2004.

For the first 3 months, the Service had been operated on an appointment basis arranged through the Homelessness Team. From July, 2004, that approach had been changed to 2 drop in sessions per week. In total 13 people had actually participated fully in the mediation process, with 2 of the cases being successfully resolved.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the results of the pilot Mediation Service to date be noted.

(2) That the Family Mediation Service be continued with a further report submitted after 12 months of operation.

(Exempt under Paragraph 7 of the Act – financial/business affairs of a company other than the Council)

139. PETITION - UNAUTHORISED WORK IN COUNCIL CEMETERIES

Further to Minute No. 117 of the Cabinet Member meeting held on 29th November, 2004, the Manager and Registrar submitted a report regarding the issues raised by petitioners relating to their dissatisfaction with action being taken to enforce the Council's policy over lawned graves in Maltby Cemetery.

The action being taken was necessary to ensure that visitors to the Cemetery could have access without having to negotiate the kerbstones, planting and channels that had been formed in the lawn areas. A complaint had been received recently from a wheelchair user who had

been unable to negotiate around the grave that she visited because of obstructions.

Following an audit of the grave spaces, 43 letters had been sent out to owners of the rights of burial within the graves concerned.

Resolved:- (1) That the intended action to remove obstructions from lawned areas early in 2005 be noted.

(2) That the Ward Members and Kevin Barron, M.P., be notified when the work commences.

(3) That the leaflet provided upon the purchase of a grave be updated and amended to clearly state what was and was not allowed in a cemetery.

(Exempt under Paragraph 4 of the Act – services provided by the Council)

140. HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PATHFINDER DESIGN CODING

The Housing Market Renewal Team Leader presented a report setting out the progress being made against the current programme and identified future issues.

The Programme was geographically targeted at 5 areas of Rotherham which each had an Area Development Framework, one of which was for the Town Centre. It was now considered to be difficult to achieve the anticipated outputs within the original time frame for the latter. Detailed discussions had commenced with the Chair and Director of the Transform SY Board to ensure deliver of required expenditure and outputs in Rotherham. They had given a commitment to support the scheme financially in future years.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted .

(2) That a meeting be held between the Cabinet Members for Economic and Development Services and Housing and Environmental Services to discuss the matter further.

(3) That a letter be sent to the Chair and Director of the Transform SY Board seeking confirmation of their commitment to support the scheme financially in future years.

(4) That when the 4 Steering Groups are established Ward Members should be kept informed by invitations to meetings and receipt of minutes of meetings.

(5) That the Forward Plan include the key decisions that need to be made with regard to the Pathfinder to emphasise to Members the importance of their engagement.

**5CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
20/12/04**

(Exempt under Paragraph 9 of the Act – negotiation of terms for the supply of goods/services)

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 16th December, 2004

Present:- Councillor Atkin (in the Chair); Councillors Clarke, Hall and McNeely. together with Mr. D. Alderson (Housing Tenant Panel), Mr. D. Willoughby (Housing Tenant Panel) and Mr. J. Lewis (Rotherham Chamber)

Apologies were received from Councillors Burke, Hodgkiss, Nightingale and Vines.

83. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no members of the press and public present at the meeting.

84. SPECIAL MEETING

It was noted that a special meeting of the Scrutiny Panel was to be held on 13th January, 2005. The scheduled meeting on the 27th January would discuss the budget 2006/08 and the Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made.

86. 2ND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Performance and Development Officer submitted the Programme Area's performance monitoring report for the 2nd quarter of 2004/05.

At the end of the quarter, 40 (89%) Key Performance Indicators were achieving their control target with action in place to ensure all the year end targets were achieved. 5 were not achieving their quarterly control targets. At the same stage last year, 78% of the Indicators were on target.

When compared with the All England figures, 7 Indicators were in the top quartile as opposed to 6 in the last quarter. The Indicator that had moved into the top quartile related to waste sent for landfill and reflected the significant investment made to the recycling infrastructure.

The areas of significant improvement related to improvements in performance on rent collection, Capital Programme spend and consumer protection visits. All had had extra performance management control put in place during the quarter which had led to better results. This provided evidence of the approach to performance management.

The Chairman commended the staff concerned for their hard work which showed in the excellent figures.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and progress made be noted.

(2) That the Panel's comments be conveyed to the staff concerned.

87. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES HELD ON 15TH AND 29TH NOVEMBER, 2004

The Panel noted the decisions made under delegated powers by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services held on 15th and 29th November, 2004.

88. BUDGET 2005/06/GERSHON SAVINGS

The Executive Director of Resources gave a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2005/06. Copies of the Pressures and Growth Bids from the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the new Council Priorities were circulated for Members present.

The presentation focused on:-

- The Context of the Budget 2005/06
- Revenue Budget 2004/05 – A Reminder
- Budget 2004/05 by Programme Area – A Reminder
- One-Off Grant and Savings
- Revenue Budget 2005/06
- Priorities for Expenditure
- “A” List Growth Bids/Unavoidable Pressures
- “B” List Growth Bids
- “C” List Growth Bids
- Other Bids/Pressures/Uncertainties
- Options to Bridge the Gap
- Programme Area Gershon Proposals
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2006/07 Projections
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2007/08 Projections

A question and answer session ensued with the following points raised:-

- At the present time, the Authority was collecting 99% of the Council Tax
- There were reserves set aside to ensure the Council was able to manage all risks.
- The Commutation Adjustment Fund was not a way topping up balances. It was money that had a clear role associated with it for emergencies. At the end of the financial year it could be rolled forward or reinvested.
- The interest accrued from the accounts was used to pay the interest on other loans.
- The “A”, “B”, and “C” growth lists had been derived from the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Corporate Management Team

had attempted to prioritise them. Members had to decide which fit the Council's priorities and which they wished to fund.

- Potential for the Commutation Adjustment Fund to fund the establishment of neighbourhood centres and one-stop-shops in conjunction with other agencies.

The Executive Director agreed to supply all Members with a brief simple explanation of the Commutation Adjustment Fund.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that copies of the presentation had not been circulated with the agenda. There had been a commitment that the Scrutiny process would be involved in the budget process earlier than in previous years but that had not appeared to have happened. The presentation had focused on the budget for the Council as a whole and not the Neighbourhoods Programme Area.

Resolved:- (1) That the Executive Director of Resources be thanked for her presentation.

(2) That all Members be supplied with:-

an explanation of the Commutation Adjustment Fund
the Gershon Guidance criteria and the rules that apply.

89. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 18TH NOVEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2004, were noted with the addition of Councillor Russell in the list of apologies.

90. MINUTES OF PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER, 2004

The Panel noted the minutes of a meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 12th November, 2004.

It was noted that Councillor Hall was to present the Fly Tipping Review to the Cabinet meeting on 12th January, 2005.

**THE ASYLUM SEEKERS WORKING PARTY
01 DECEMBER 2004**

Present:- Councillor Terry Sharman (in the Chair); Councillors Ellis and Boyes.

Apologies: Councillor Maurice Kirk and Councillor Glyn Robinson

B6 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

Agreed:- That the minutes of the Working Party held on 29th September, 2004, be approved as a correct record.

B7 PRESENTATION BY LIBRARY OUTREACH WORKER

Margaret Holland presented a progress report on work carried out by the Asylum Seeker Outreach Worker.

The report submitted set out in detail the work undertaken in the creation of groups of asylum seekers who speak the same language in order to support and sign post individuals and advise them on supporting each other.

Also submitted was evidence to support the training that had been organised by the postholder.

It was recommended that funding of the post, which was from the holding account of the Asylum Project Team, be made available for a further 12 months due to the continuing need for the work as evidenced by the successes already achieved.

Discussion took place on:-

- The work ongoing in respect of courses and placements, the aim being to move towards employment opportunities;
- The qualifications situation to enable asylum seekers to access courses and the difficulty in equating some of those held by asylum seekers to U.K. equivalents;
- The need for relevant services to co-operate and integrate in order to promote employment opportunities for asylum seekers.

A structure for the way forward was desirable which could be accessed by involved agencies.

Agreed:- (1) That the work of the Asylum Seeker Outreach Worker be supported.

(2) That the post of Asylum Seeker Outreach Worker be funded for a further 12 months, from April, 2005 to March, 2006.

(3) That the Social Inclusion and Project Development Manager submit a report on the service provided by Libraries to the next meeting with updates submitted on a 6 monthly basis.

B8 POST 2005 ACTION PLAN

Andrew Crowley reported that the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees had entered into post-2005 contract discussions which required the development of a local response.

The report submitted set out the Consortium's stated intentions about the post-2005 contract within the local context.

The challenges for Rotherham involved the procurement of suitable properties for asylum seekers, consultation and effective management.

Andrew Crowley expanded upon the various issues which formed the broad basis of early negotiations with NASS for a post-2005 contract.

Subsequent discussion made particular reference to:-

- The length of the new contract which had yet to be finalised;
- The suitability of providers.
The contents of a letter received from the Home Office relating to progress on the NASS Accommodation 2005 Programme was considered along with the response of the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium which set out issues of concern.

Andrew Crowley commented upon the concerns raised and the work being done in Rotherham on issues such as dispersal and the need for all Programme Areas to have input as part of the consultation process, bearing in mind the impact of the new programme.

- Financial implications which were not yet clear. The budget situation for Rotherham compared with other authorities was outlined.
- The implications of the new contract for ALMO.
- The process for decision making and financial control i.e. accountability. Consideration was given to the make up of the negotiation team. The structure of the executive needed to be made clear.

Andrew went on to refer to the draft Strategy for consulting with communities and undertook to consult as considered appropriate.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the item be included on future agendas of this Working Party for updates on development and progress.

B9 CONTINGENCY FUND

Andrew Crowley reported on proposals for spending the balance from the Asylum Programme which was expected to be £178,000 at the end of the contract in October, 2005.

The Working Party was concerned that, at the end of the contract, NASS may demand the return of any balances. The Team Leader had contacted the Lead Officer for the Consortium who had confirmed that any balances from the contract were the responsibility of the Local Authority. Contractually NASS did not require the repayment of the money.

The balance had been created because the Asylum Team had cost less than anticipated and was also the result of a prudent approach to financial management. It should be noted that the current discussions now being undertaken by the Consortium in preparation for a post-2005 contract recognised that NASS would want to ensure Value for Money.

The Asylum Programme currently supported annually a number of developments in other Programme Areas. These included the Library Worker and the Welcome Centre. It was suggested that these could be supported for an additional year from April, 2005. There was also some small expenditure associated with pump priming the dispersed properties for new refugees.

There were pressures from within the Asylum Project Team arising from staffing costs associated with the restructure in Neighbourhoods as well as inflation increases for the utilities. Although not large, the costs of restructure need to be worked out and accommodated in the budget.

A number of new services and developments were also outlined, such as the need for a Community Development Worker, which Andrew Crowley outlined along with the need to address the issue of support for destitute adults with community care and other areas of need which would require Local Authority support.

In the event of the contract being extended, it was considered prudent to keep any balance to fund any additional service which may not be possible to fund from the new contract.

Discussion took place on several areas for which funding was required and the need to allocate funds for relevant specific projects.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the Working Party be kept informed of developments regarding

use of Asylum Programme budget.

B10 WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH ALL RIGHTS EXHAUSTED

Agreed:- That this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

B11 WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE ILR PROJECT

Agreed:- That this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

B12 UPDATE FROM EDUCATION, CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

There were no items of interest to report since the last meeting.

B13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Wednesday, 2nd February, 2005, commencing at 9.30 a.m.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP
FRIDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Wyatt (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Hall and Sharman.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Hodgkiss and Kaye.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER, 2004 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st November, 2004, were agreed as a true record with the addition of Councillor Hall to the list of those present.

22. SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT - A WAY FORWARD

Dawn Roberts presented the handouts circulated with the agenda.

Before her departure, Sarah Tyler had started preparing a paper setting out the Authority's current position in relation to sustainability.

Procurement was high on the agenda at the moment and was perhaps not reflected strongly in the paper but needed to be dealt with in terms of taking it forward. The Authority had not made any real progress with regard to green procurement in terms of translating into practice.

Clearly the Local Authority had a duty to improve the quality of life, the power of wellbeing and a requirement increasingly to embed sustainability and measure the impact of what it did.

The background paper had yet to go through the formal processes of officers and Members.

Discussion ensued on the handouts.

- Framework document – Felt it should be a short and succinct document that signposted the relevant Strategies. It would contain high level indicators, what would like to be achieved and whether they had been. User friendly, strategic, document clearly setting out the focus in relation to sustainable development and Rotherham's perspective on it.
- Sustainability issues had to be included in the base budget.
- Develop the Framework alongside the Corporate Plan.

Agreed:- (1) That consultation take place with officers on the draft Framework with a report being submitted to the next meeting of this Group.

(2) That Dawn Roberts report to the next meeting of this Group on the implementation of EMAS and the Council's progress towards internal targets.

23. MEMBERS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORWARD PLAN

The Group considered the forward plan for 2005, subject to confirmation, as follows:-

11 th February Submission	Environmental Engagement Index Survey Draft Green Spaces Strategy Framework Position Statement EMAS – internal targets
8 th April	Sustainability Appraisal of LDF and Update Draft revision of Environment/Sustainability Strategies
17 th June	Outcome and feedback from Environmental Index Sustainability and Procurement – Update on Targets/Progress
9 th September	1 st Annual LDF Monitoring Report – Update

Agreed:- That the forward plan be noted.

24. CARBON TRUST PROJECT UPDATE

The Group received an update on the above.

It was noted that the baseline would be completed and a draft action plan developed by 19th January, 2005.

A meeting of sector local authorities and the Carbon Trust was to be held in the Town Hall on 25th January, 2005.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

25. LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROJECT

David Wilde submitted a progress report for the period October-November, 2004.

It was noted that the Schools Waste Action Club was awaiting the outcome of a funding bid.

26. UPDATE REPORT FOR INFORMATION - ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The Group noted a report submitted by David Rhodes on the above.

Inspections were taking place that day with a meeting being held at 4.00 p.m. with the Inspector.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. The Chairman reported that a Sustainability Summit was to be held in Manchester in January, 2005.
2. Andrew Towleron reported that the Regional Energy Forum was held in Leeds and met 4 times a year. It brought together the key players in energy across the region to discuss a strategic approach to energy. There was also a strong input from Yorkshire Forward.

Agreed:- That Councillor Wyatt (or substitute) be authorised to attend the above Forum.

3. Dawn Roberts reported receipt of a document published by the PTE regarding rail transport sustainability. Discussions would be held with EDS as to how it fit in with the Local Transport Policy and other transport issues.

28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- (1) That a further meeting be held on Friday, 8th April, in the Town Hall, commencing at 10.30 a.m.

(2) That meetings be held on 8th April, 10th June and 9th September, 2005.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
26th November, 2004

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Clarke, Doyle, Hall, License, G. A. Russell, R. S. Russell, Sangster and Whelbourn.

Also in attendance was Councillor Ellis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services, for item 69 below

An apology for absence was received from Councillor St.John.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

69. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Further to Minute No. 73 of the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel held on 18th November, 2004, the Committee considered the submitted report presented by the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods setting out the local and national context in which the Council's proposals for neighbourhood development was set.

The report put forward proposals for the development of neighbourhood management and provided a summary of the steps that would be needed to be taken to establish effective arrangements. It also recognised the importance of creating the right conditions for neighbourhood management to develop and to develop confidence in the Council's commitment to lead.

An action plan had been produced, submitted as an appendix, the first six months of which would enable a proper insight to be gained of where the Council was and an understanding of how far its partners were prepared to go in joining force with the Authority to tackle certain issues. A corporate task group had been established to ensure that the actions were taken forward.

The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services elaborated on the action taken and proposals.

It was noted that the report had been presented to, and received by, Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on the 2nd September and 10th November, 2004 respectively.

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- consultation
- elected Member involvement

- area assembly input
- programme area restructuring
- identifying skills fit for purpose and managing change timescales

- risks and uncertainties relating to :-
 - co-ordination and understanding
 - service delivery
 - reputation
 - sustainability

- option appraisals
- area resource coding

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That, as far as scrutiny is concerned, progress reports and option appraisals be submitted to this Committee.

(3) That consideration be given to establishing area resource coding.

70. EVALUATION OF SCRUTINY IN ROTHERHAM

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Scrutiny indicating an opportunity to consider a self evaluation framework of scrutiny activity. Also submitted was the Centre for Public Scrutiny's published framework.

It was hoped that such evaluation would be able to :-

- demonstrate evidence of achievement
- identify areas for improvement
- highlight potential barriers to improvement

Whilst some evaluation was carried out through Scrutiny's annual report, it was thought timely to utilise more objective measures and identify the way in which scrutiny adds value to the Council's work overall.

General discussion ensued and the following issues were raised :-

- need for a facilitator to ask questions and extract answers
- format of questionnaire with a view that multi-choice style would be easier to answer and analyse
- self evaluation exercise should not just be limited to scrutiny

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

8F PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 26/11/04

(2) That a further report be submitted, early in the new year, on proposals for a suitable questionnaire format for the evaluation process.

71. BUDGET ISSUES - ROTHERHAM MBC AND GERSHON

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Scrutiny highlighting the need to consider scrutiny's input into the budget process. This would include consideration of the current financial position and priorities and pressures for the coming year.

Also submitted was an LGIU briefing on Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised :

- need to raise the spectre of Gershon in budget meetings
- need for an all Member seminar on the impact of Gershon on the Budget
- need for budget information not data at scrutiny panel meetings, such information to cover performance of the budget and be available well before the meeting

It was noted that individual scrutiny panels had determined dates for budget consideration and also that the Audit Commission had requested attendance at such scrutiny panel budget deliberations.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That an all Member seminar be requested on the impact of Gershon on the Budget and consideration be given to input from the LGIU and inviting representatives from other local authorities.

(3) That the meeting of this Committee scheduled for 10th December, 2004 be postponed until Friday, 17th December, 2004 at 2.00 p.m. to facilitate consideration of the Budget following such considerations by all the individual scrutiny panels.

(Note: the start time of the meeting was subsequently amended to 9.30 a.m.)

72. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th November, 2004 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

73. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBERS CONSULTATION

ADVISORY GROUP

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Members Consultation Advisory Group held on 27th October, 2004 be noted.

74. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

- (a) Councillor License reported a successful session of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Working Party
- (b) Councillor Hall reported that witnesses had been interviewed as part of the Wardens review

- (c) Councillor Stonebridge reported :
 - that the LSP Review Group had held its second meeting and issues had been identified
 - that progress had been made on a Member to Member protocol

75. CALL-IN

There were no formal call in requests.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
17th December, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Clarke, Doyle, Hall, Hussain, R. S. Russell, St.John, Sangster and Whelbourn.

Also in attendance were Councillors Ali, Binnie, Havenhand, Jack and Walker for item 77 below.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors License and G. A. Russell and also from Councillors Darby and Kirk for item 77 below.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

77. FUTURE PLANNING MODEL FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

John Gomersall, Executive Director, Social Services, presented the submitted report relating to the above which had been considered by the Cabinet Member for Social Services at a meeting on 26th November, 2004.

The report set out proposals for changes to the existing planning structure in order to simplify and improve decision making across Health and Social Care.

Following the review of Rotherham's Mental Health Services it was recommended that the commissioning process be looked at as it had developed into a confusing mix of provider and commissioning arrangements.

At the Health and Social Services away day last year, a new planning structure was discussed which was based on the Children and Young Peoples model. This model was broadly supported with a few suggested amendments. The amended model was submitted with the report.

It was necessary to consider the impact on the PCT and Social Services as they were both commissioner and provider of services. Clear structures and reporting mechanisms needed to be established. Effective performance management needed to be embedded into any future planning structure.

John Gomersall outlined the make up, terms of reference and role of the following :-

- Executive Groups for the Boards
- Adults Board
- Learning Disability Board
- Mental Health Board

- Health Service Capacity Board
- Task Groups
- Chair and Chief Officers' Group
- Health and Social Well-being Partnership
- Rotherham Children and Young People's Board

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- Elected Member input
- Young persons perspective
- Board memberships
- Powers of the Boards
- Selection criteria for Board memberships
- Co-optees
- Government's relationship and arrangements
- Budgets
- Frequency of, and venues for, meetings
- Need for an all Member seminar
- Induction training

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and the proposals be welcomed particularly for the clarification of issues/arrangements for health.

(2) That further reports be submitted when budget issues arise.

78. BUDGET PROCESS PRESENTATION

The Chairman referred to the presentations on the budget process that had been given to each of the individual scrutiny panels and invited the Head of Corporate Finance to update the Committee on any developments since the preparation of the presentation.

The Head of Corporate Finance outlined developments and referred to :-

- CMT away day and Gershon savings when the rules were not known. Need to review and re-visit in the light of receipt of the rules
- allocation of pay and price increases to programme areas
- schools budgets
- 2½% savings
- final settlement was due in mid January
- issue of population changes was not in the original settlement

- issues subject to further negotiation
- implications of the employer's increased pension contribution
- risks of building extra monies into the base budget
- best known position had been reported to Cabinet/ CMT on 13th December, 2004

The Chairman and respective chairs of the Scrutiny Panels outlined the issues that had arisen out of the budget presentations at their meetings.

Many common themes had arisen out of the respective discussions at the Scrutiny Panel meetings and the detailed lists were to be analysed and pulled together in one over arching report of issues for further consideration.

The Head of Corporate Finance responded to issues raised.

Particular reference was made to the following :-

- budget timetable/timescale issues for comment
- scrutiny suggestions/recommendations not taken on board
- Commutation Adjustment Reserve
- Invest to Save Bids
- Gerson Savings and rules
- use of savings from closure of swimming pools
- closing down of accounts
- performance
- establishment of post of Parish Council Liaison Officer
- Domestic Violence Co-ordinator posts and safety issues
- Funding for the Off Road Motorcycling Prevention Officer

The Head of Corporate Finance undertook to work through the lists and liaise with Corporate Management Team.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That Cath Saltis prepare a comprehensive report on the issues raised in the Scrutiny Panels with a view to reporting back to Corporate

Management Team and Cabinet. Such report to include a request for further funding to facilitate the post of Off Road Motorcycling Prevention Officer being made a permanent post.

79. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

Further to Minute No. 178 of the meeting of this Committee held on 26th March, 2004, the Committee considered the half yearly progress report on the above as submitted and presented by Michael Walker, Planning and Quality Principal Officer. Also in attendance was John Mansergh, Performance and Development Officer, Neighbourhoods who elaborated on issues relating to Neighbourhoods.

It was also noted that the report covered the first half of 2004/05 and performance on handling complaints across the Council had risen markedly. Serious consideration was being given to the lessons learnt from the complaints received and a summary of both performance and improvements made was detailed in the report. Also summarised in the report were a number of developments to improve the Council's approach to complaints which had been progressed through the Complaints Officer Forum.

The report covered :-

- key points arising
 - (a) the overall number of complaints received were marginally less than last year
 - (b) handling of complaints had improved
 - (c) types of complaints received were spread across categories
- lessons learnt from the complaints received
- learning from suggestions received through the Corporate Suggestions procedure
- other developments including recommendations acted upon

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- Neighbourhoods best practice
- Audit trails
- CPA assessment

5F PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 17/12/04

- Access to services inspection
- surgery system

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the concerns regarding the surgery system be taken on board.

(3) That support be given to the proposal that further work needs to be taken forward by Complaints Officers and RBT, as follows:-

(a) to ensure an effective approach to handling complaints following the establishment of a One-Stop Shop

(b) to assess any issues involved in Social Services difficulties in processing Stage 1 Complaints

(4) That support be given to the proposal that a corporate 'Learning from Customers' workshop be held with managers and staff from all programme areas in early 2005, building on the process used within the Neighbourhoods Programme Area and including renewed consideration of how we use customer suggestions.

80. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th November, 2004 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

81. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor St. John reported on a very good one day scrutiny session by the Lifelong Learning Opportunities Scrutiny Panel regarding Education exclusions

(b) Councillor Atkin reported :-

- that the review of wardens and caretakers was ongoing
- that the review of bereavement services was to commence in the next two months
- that there was to be a presentation on the Waste Management Strategy to the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 27th January, 2005

(c) Councillor Doyle reported that the Working Party on Learning Disabilities would not be meeting until the new year.

(d) Councillor R. S. Russell reported :

- that there was to be an update in the new year on off road motorcycling
- that the benefits take up review was to commence in January, 2005

(e) Councillor Sangster reported :

- that a questionnaire was to be sent to tenants at the end of February, 2005 as part of the Housing Estates review
- that the next meeting of the Health Services Working Group was scheduled for 14th January, 2005
- that the Health Services Working Group had examined the proposals to utilise the former medical centre at St. Ann's as a drug treatment centre, including analysing the petition received. It was found that health officials had done everything they should have and that a large proportion of the names included in the petition were not from the area. The Working Group had found no grounds to oppose the proposals. A liaison group was to be formed.

(f) Councillor Stonebridge reported:

- briefly on the Cabinet/CMT away day held on 14th December, 2004 which overall had been useful. However there were issues regarding the scrutiny function and the need for this Committee to meet Cabinet/CMT was reiterated.
- that issues had been identified from a further meeting of the LSP Review Group
- that there was a potential need in the new year to look at the use of consultants following concerns regarding the quality of service provided

82. CALL-IN

There were no formal call in requests.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 8, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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