

## MEMBERS CONSULTATION ADVISORY GROUP

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

**Date:** Thursday, 1 December 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. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of meeting held on 21st July, 2005 (copy attached). (Pages 1 - 4)
5. Consultation Position Statement (Pages 5 - 12)  
- report attached - Dawn Price, Consultation Officer
6. Annual Review of Consultation  
- report at the meeting by Dawn Price, Consultation Officer
7. Annual Plan of Consultation (Pages 13 - 51)  
- report attached - Dawn Price, Consultation Officer
8. Consultation and Community Involvement Framework (Pages 52 - 86)  
- report attached - Andy Towleron, Policy and Research Manager
9. Quality of Life Survey  
- report at the meeting by Andrew Towleron, Policy and Research Manager
10. Reachout 13 - Progress  
- report at the meeting by Dawn Price, Consultation Officer
11. Budget Consultation  
- report at the meeting by Andrew Towleron, Policy and Research Manager
12. Any Other Business
13. Date of next meeting  
- to be agreed

**MEMBERS CONSULTATION ADVISORY GROUP**  
**Thursday, 21st July, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair); Councillors Littleboy and Swift.

**13. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2ND MARCH, 2005**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March, 2005, be agreed as a true record.

**14. CONSULTATION POSITION STATEMENT**

Andrew Towlerton, Policy and Research Manager, reported that one of the key priorities in the Corporate Plan was to strengthen the method of consultation and involvement of communities. A Position Statement was being developed that would outline the current methods of consultation, what mechanisms were used, Inspections and evaluation of Performance Indicators. It would show how effective the Authority was in its consultation and arrive at recommendations on how it could be improved.

Each Programme Area's Consultation Officers should notify the Corporate Consultation Team of any consultation to be undertaken in order for it to be logged on the Consultation Plan. The Team offered guidance, help and assistance for the consultation to be conducted through agreed protocols. Training for officers on consultation would be developed through the induction process. It was hoped to produce a toolkit to take officers step by step through the process for all Programme Areas. Discussion ensued on the toolkit and what should be included.

Agreed:- (1) That the draft Position Statement be submitted to the next meeting.

(2) That training for officers on speaking to audiences be included in the toolkit.

**15. ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSULTATION AND ANNUAL CONSULTATION PLAN**

Andrew Towlerton, Policy and Partnership Manager reported that there were two key documents in the process of preparation.

The Annual Review of Consultation was a document which looked at all the consultation which had taken place in the previous year, what mechanisms were used and how the outputs had been used to inform policy making. The final documentation would be available shortly.

The Annual Consultation Plan outlined all future major consultation exercises that would take place and was compiled from forms submitted by Programme Areas. It would be updated on a quarterly basis and

would be submitted to the Group. It would be broken down by Ward.

Agreed:- That the Annual Consultation Plan be submitted to this Group for monitoring purposes.

## **16. BACKGROUND TO REACHOUT AND ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Miles Crompton, Research Co—ordinator, reported that, together with Dawn Price (Consultation Officer), a draft tender document was currently being written for the future of Rotherham Reachout.

It had become apparent that Reachout was increasingly being used for performance management information which had never been the intention. The most appropriate method for the collation of that information was via a customer satisfactory survey. It was, therefore, the intention to change the format of consultation and in future there would be two surveys of the Citizens Panel and one user satisfaction survey.

As part of the new tendering exercise, the refreshment process would begin to ensure there was a turnover of members on the Panel. The Panel should be refreshed on an annual basis. There was under representation in certain groups and some Panel members had not returned their surveys. However, it was noted that Rotherham had one of the highest response rates in the country.

The user satisfaction survey would be a random sample of the population completely independent of the Panel. There were many requests for one off questions about Council services which could all be included in the survey. Increasingly the Government was requesting local authorities to ask those questions and currently there was no mechanism in Rotherham to do so.

Discussion ensued on the recruiting of young people onto the Citizens Panel. Dawn Price reported that a young person was someone of eighteen years of age and would, therefore, be included on the electoral register. It may be that the method of getting the survey to them could be changed and include the website, e-mail or text alert which would work alongside the E-Government agenda.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

## **17. FINDINGS FROM REACHOUT 11**

Dawn Price, Consultation Officer, submitted a report summarising the findings from the 11<sup>th</sup> Rotherham Reachout survey the key themes of which had been:-

- Community Involvement
- Extended Schools
- Equality and Diversity (PCT question)

- Older People's Services
- Streetpride

The response rate had been 65%.

Discussion ensued on the findings.

Agreed:- That a copy of the full report be supplied to Members of the Group.

## 18. ROTHERHAM REACHOUT 12 AND 13

### **Rotherham Reachout 12**

Dawn Price, Consultation Officer, reported that the draft report for Rotherham Reachout 12 had been received the previous week. The key themes had been:-

- Rotherham Show
- Crime
- Healthy Eating
- Hospital Outpatient Appointments
- Fixed Penalty Fines
- Community Cohesion
- Rotherham Reachout

A brief resume was given of the response for each of the above.

### **Rotherham Reachout 13**

Dawn Price reported that the following were being developed for potential inclusion in the next edition:-

- Town Centre and the feeling of Neighbourhood
- Use of Culture and Leisure Services
- Information Advice (PCT question)
- Awareness of Skin Cancer (PCT question)
- Local Development Framework
- Safer Streets (in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police)

It was noted that the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel was to consider at its meeting later that day the possible inclusion of Local Government and Local Electoral Turnout in Reachout 13.

The content of Reachout 13 would be finalised shortly.

Agreed:- (1) That a postcode split of Rotherham Reachout be supplied to Members of the Group.

(2) That as part of the refresh process of Rotherham Reachout, consideration be given to the urban/rural split.

(2) That a copy of the draft Rotherham Reachout 13 be supplied to Members of the Group.

**19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

As it was coming to the end of the existing Rotherham Reachout Panel, it was felt consideration should be given to some way of thanking its members for their work over the last three years. Various suggestions were made.

Agreed:- That it be included on the agenda for the next meeting of this Group to enable further consideration to be given to the matter.

**20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on

## Rotherham MBC Consultation Position Statement

### 1. Introduction

This Position Statement examines the Council's consultation structures and approaches, and makes recommendations on how these can be refined and enhanced. It is based on a thorough examination of national and local policies and trends; statistical and performance data; findings from surveys and inspections and 'best practice' from other local authorities and agencies notably the Audit Commission.

### 2. What do we mean by consultation?

There is no nationally agreed or commonly used definition of consultation.

Rotherham MBC, in its Consultation Strategy, defines consultation as a "two way process where views are actively sought and considered before decisions or plans are made". This is similar to the Audit Commission's definition of consultation which is "a process of dialogue that leads to a decision".

In general terms, consultation can be used to describe many forms of public or stakeholder involvement. The process should be a continuous exchange of views and information, and building on existing consultations where possible. The consultation process should ensure that service users, residents and businesses are consulted in the most effective and efficient manner so as to ensure that service improvements directly reflect (where possible) the consultation findings. It is closely intertwined with Community Involvement (for further information see Community Involvement Position Statement [www.](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk))

Consultation has become an integral part of local and national government policy making process. There is a clear relationship between good consultation and effective delivery and high satisfaction with services. This is because analysis by key agencies such as the Audit Commission shows that effective consultation means that:

- Can result in better targeted services, improving satisfaction and reducing costs
- Better decisions about policies priorities and strategies
- Local people, partners and employees becoming involved in decision making
- Strengthened community leadership role
- Higher satisfaction levels with a council – there is relationship between between the extent resident feel they can influence local decision making and satisfaction rates
- Improved communication and awareness of services and priorities

- There are also knock-on benefits of consultation, such as improved turn out at elections – analysis shows a relationship between the extent resident feel they can influence local decision making and their likelihood to vote.
- More influence and community involvement has been shown to improve social cohesion and wellbeing in the population.

### 3. Policy Context

Improving the level of involvement of local people is a major part of the Government's agenda to delivering improved services and policies and greater user satisfaction, nationally and locally.

It has given local authorities a raft of enhanced powers and duties to help achieve this. These powers and duties can be divided into three main categories.

**Legal requirements** such as to consult the business community when setting the budget, or the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that has a requirement to consult on and submit a "statement of community involvement" as part of preparing a Local Development Framework. Involving service users is also a statutory requirement under equal opportunities legislation, for example the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

**General requirements** such as the Local Government Act 1999 that introduced best value reviews and requires consultation to secure continuous improvements in the way in which Local Authority functions are exercised, and the Local Government Act 2003 which enables local authorities to hold local polls to assess opinion on local services and expenditure.

**Specific requirements** relating to a particular activity or to involve a particular group, example include the Local Government Act 2000 that requires consultation on the preparation of a Community Strategy.

The Government has made it clear that it continues to see consultation as a top priority, and local authority's powers and duties continue to be strengthened. This is illustrated by the revised Guidance for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) which continues to emphasise the need for clear and effective co-ordination and 'joined up' approach as a key line of enquiry, and through the councils functions.

"As part of CPA we want to see that councils engage effectively with their service users and wider communities. We also want to see that such engagement makes a difference in practice", and will be "strengthening corporate assessments by considering the quality and robustness of councils own customer surveys, citizens panels and other consultation methods".

### 4. Rotherham's approach

Consultation has become an integral part of the Council's policy making process. Every year it undertakes hundreds of consultation exercises, both internally and

externally aimed at service users, non service users, residents, partners and other stakeholders.

It is at the heart of Rotherham's new Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan. A good example is the shared Priority Theme Rotherham Proud. This commits the Council and all local partners to "there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision-making. The means to do this will be clear, well-know and accessible." Strengthening consultation and community involvement mechanisms is also a Year Ahead Commitment.

These are supported by more detailed policies and guidance such as the Good Practice Guide to Consultation which encompasses all elements of good practice, and the production of an Annual Review which enables focus to be placed on the outcomes from conducting consultation undertaken.

Analysis shows that all Programme Area's are engaged in consultation, and use a range of consultation techniques such as consultation documents, public meetings and focus groups.

This consultation can be grouped under three main headings:

- Statutory consultation – e.g. Local Development Framework and Crime and Disorder Strategy
- Consultation where the Authority has chosen to ask questions – e.g. through community planning, to inform funding programmes, the Employee Opinion Survey, Reachout - the Borough's Citizen's Panel and the Council's Staff Opinion Survey.
- Ongoing consultation as an integrated part of service delivery – e.g. assessment and care management in Social Services and Joint Commissioning.

The Council also uses a range of approaches to consult. Focus groups, postal surveys and citizen panels are just a few good examples. Some involve many thousands of people, others just a few, depending on the consultation. These are sometimes combined such as in relation to the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan which included questionnaires, public meetings and focus groups.

The Council has also improved the integration of its consultation activities. These include more established groups, strategic bodies such the Members Advisory Consultation Group and more operational ones such as the cross Programme Area Consultation Co-ordination Group. The production of an Annual Plan for consultation which details the main consultation exercises to take place during a financial year. The appointment of a Consultation Co-ordinator who has the responsibility for ensuring that consultation is co-ordinated, consistent and carried out to a high standard. The Council has also sought to integrate its Consultation and Community Involvement activities by the development of a single Consultation and Community Involvement Strategy.

The Council has developed special measures and approaches to ensure that consultation reaches all sectors of the community, for example a specific community planning event aimed at Disabled people; focus groups held with older persons and Black and Minority Ethnic groups as part of the development of the Community Strategy Vision, the recent Young People's Visioning Consultation and the Disabled and Women Worker Representative Groups.

The Council has also grasped the opportunities new technology presents to enable greater involvement with additional focus being developed in terms of E-Government Agenda and consultation methods and mechanisms, such as text messaging, on-line questionnaires and interactive consultations in terms of video booths. This includes using e-mail and intranet based questionnaires as part of Employee Opinion Survey and Reach-In, the Council's employee Panel.

The Council has also sought to strengthen its internal consultation mechanisms with its own staff such as the bi annual Employee Opinion Survey and Reach-In, the Council's staff panel.

Increasingly the Council is undertaking consultation in partnership. This is illustrated by Rotherham Reachout, the Borough's Citizens Panel developed and implemented jointly with Rotherham Primary Care Trust.

Rotherham MBC is committed to strengthening further its consultation mechanisms and structures. Improving Consultation and Communications is a Year Ahead Commitment (No. 7) which commits the Council this year to "refresh of the Council's approaches to consultation, including its Citizens Panel – Rotherham Reachout, and will encourage all services of the Council to adopt a more pro-active approach to involvement and consultation".

### **5. How well is Rotherham MBC doing**

Analysis shows that Rotherham MBC has made great progress in improving its consultation and mechanisms and structures, and that this is delivering generally improved services and satisfaction with for satisfaction with parks and open spaces improving from 62% in 2000/01 to 70% in 2003/04. It also points to some areas where further strengthening and refinement is required.

The main evidence has come from external inspections and reviews.

In the 2002 Corporate Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Audit Commission whilst generally supportive of the Council's approach to consultation highlighted that there was little evidence of consultation changing priorities, and the need to determine a role for area assemblies and ensure they provide appropriate community leadership.

Other more recent Audit Commission inspection reports have said:

- "There are encouraging examples of success in delivering improved well-being to residents...through involvement in planning and delivering activities expected to

regenerate their neighbourhoods - the cross-over between economic and social regeneration.” (*Regeneration Inspection, 2004*)

- “The council recognises that there is a need to improve the range of groups it actively engages with. Community planning has been identified as one mechanism to improve consultation techniques. This should improve the ways that the council obtains a more representative view on services and develops strategies with the community.” (*Indicative ALMO inspection, 2004*)
- “Tenants have been involved through various forums in reviewing services, policies, procedures, producing relevant information leaflets and in identifying service improvements. As a result, the services being delivered are much more customer focused.” (*Indicative ALMO Inspection, 2004*)
- “Social services should ask service users and other agencies if services had improved and involve them in the development of services.” (*Children’s Services Follow-Up Inspection, 2004*)
- “The service has good consultation mechanisms and dialogue with local communities to respond to their needs”. (*Waste Management Inspection, 2004*)
- A youth cabinet is in place - drawn from the local secondary schools which each send a representative and hold the majority of their meetings at the town hall. This helps the council engage and consult with young people, as members attend the youth cabinet but also gives the young people a voice.” (*Supporting People Inspection, 2005*)
- “The council has supported a multi-agency group which has been effective in raising awareness of services and activities available to people with disabilities and providing networking opportunities for organisations and individuals.... Based on the success of this event, a further event is planned to promote better coordination of information provision and to promote social inclusion for local disabled people.” (*Access to Services Inspection, 2005*)
- “There are good examples across service areas of initiatives to engage with Rotherham’s diverse communities and to provide opportunities for them to participate in the life of the Borough”. (*Access to Services Inspection, 2005*)

In addition, a recent Reachout survey when asked to what extent they thought the Council took notice of the views of members of the public 8% thought ‘fully’ with the majority (49%) thinking this was partially true. However, 32% thought that the Council only rarely or never took notice of the views of the public. The coordination across the authority should therefore reflect joined up consultations and also methods for ensuring feedback to those involved and to the wider community.

The Council can also point to some areas where its activities are amongst the best. Its Library Services gained Charter Mark Status for their involvement of BME communities in the shaping and delivery of their library services to meet their needs. The Streetpride Scheme also gained a major national award, the Local Government Chronicle Environment Award, for the work it does with the community to maintain

and improve the street scene to a high standard. Economic Development Services also achieved the prestigious ISO 9001 Quality Management System Award, which has at its heart consultation related processes, including specific elements relating to customer focus and involvement of people.

This overall position is also supported by wider evidence such as relatively high response rate to Rotherham Reachout, the Borough's Citizen's Panels, and generally improving user satisfaction with the Council and its services.

## **6. The Way Forward**

The overall position is one of good progress in integrating and delivering consultation into the Council's policies and services, and that this is delivering improved services and user satisfaction. There is a strong and shared commitment across the Council to consultation.

These provide a sound basis to strengthen the Council's consultation mechanisms and structures. However, the development of this Position Statement has highlighted a small number of key strategic areas of potential improvement if the Council is to achieve the ambitious aims it has set itself as set out in key documents such as the Community Strategy and Council's Corporate Plan and the challenges presented by CPA 2005. There:

- A lack of consistency: the quality and quantity of consultation and feedback varies enormously, as does the recording of consultation activity in RMBC.
- Is a need to develop a more transparent and proactive approach to planning of consultation; this will ensure that it is used effectively to support and drive corporate developments, and avoid "consultation fatigue" with major consultation exercises running parallel or consecutively.
- Are gaps in reaching some sectors of the community; such as Gypsy and Traveller communities. Disabled People and Black and Minority Ethnic groups are currently under-represented on Rotherham Reachout, for example.
- Is scope to strengthen opportunities to share the outcomes of consultation across the Council, with partners and Members
- Is a need to ensure that findings are acted upon, and their application evidenced in strategies and plans
- The need to inform consultees and wider groups such as Council staff and Members as to the outcome of their comments; It is important that their contribution has a genuine influence and this is seen to be the case.
- Is scope for greater evaluation and performance management of consultation; putting mechanisms in place to measure consultation and its impact
- examples of inappropriate use of consultation findings such as the use of Reachout for performance indicator measurement

## 7. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Council:

- Strengthen mechanisms so that people who are participating & wider public can see the results of their contribution is having an influence on decisions, policy and service development and by strengthen structures and procedures to share the results of consultation across Programme Areas and with Members and partners
- Improve and make more transparent the planning and timing of consultation
- Strengthen the links between consultation and decision making, ensuring that consultation exercises relate to a decision that the Council is intending to make and that can be influenced by the results of that consultation, so as to inform policy and service delivery.
- The consultation techniques used will be appropriate to the people to be consulted
- Improve structures to ensure that those taking part in consultation are representative and inclusive of the Boroughs communities
- Enhance the evaluation and performance management of consultation, ensuring that consultation is being used appropriately, meeting its objectives and what service and policy developments are being achieved as a result
- Develop a joined up approach to consultation with partners across the Borough

### Appendix 1: Principles of successful consultation:

The Audit Commission in its report 'Connecting with Users and Citizens, Audit Commission' identified the following underlying principles of effective consultation and involvement:

- **Commitment and cooperation** from everyone taking part and at all levels from front line staff to senior management, and from the full range of agencies involved.
- **Support and structure** – supported by cross organisational structures – specific budget for consultation; approaches should be planned and co-ordinated across the whole organisation to make best use of expertise and resources; training – staff at all levels should receive information and support
- **Diversity and representation** – need to ensure participants in consultation are representational and inclusive.

- **Handing over control** – willingness to hand over control to the service users or communities involved. Lessons learnt are incorporated into new approaches and shared.
- **Real Results** – people participating in consultations is that they can see the results of their contributions having an influence on decisions, policy and service development; communication results and outcomes
- **Learning from experience** – able to grow and develop according to changing needs, and not remain static.

**Rotherham MBC**

# **Half Yearly Plan of Consultation**

**2005 – 2006**  
**(September to April)**

**Produced by**  
**the Chief Executive Department**  
**September 2005**

# Contents

## Section 1

### Summary & Introduction

Introduction	p.5
Why Do RMBC Consult?	p.5
Different Methods of Consultation	p.6
Does Consultation make a difference?	p.7
Feedback Methods	p.7
RMBC Consultation Policies	p.8
Consultation Strategy	p.8
Good Practice Guidance	p.8
Consultation Coordination Group	p.9
Members Consultation Advisory Group	p.10
Reachout Sub Group	p.10

## Section 2

### Strategic Consultation Plan 2005 – 2006 (September – April)

Department of the Chief Executive	p.12
Economic Development Services (EDS)	p.17
Resources	p.20
Education, Culture & Leisure Services (ECALS)	p.21
Neighbourhoods	p.22

Social Services  
RBT

p.23  
p.25

Strategic Consultation Calendar 05-06

p.26

## **Section 1**

### **Summary & Introduction to the Half Yearly Plan of Consultation**

## **Summary & Introduction to the Half Yearly Plan of Consultation 2005 – 2006 (September to April)**

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.2 The Council's Half Yearly Plan for Consultation for the period of September 2005 to March 2006 sets out the Council's plans for consultation over the period identified. This includes key details such as timescales, target audience for each consultation exercise and contact details of Lead Officers.
- 1.3 It seeks to improve the co-ordination and the sharing of results and best practice. The coordination of consultation information in the manner within the Council and with our external partners, allows for the avoidance and duplication of consultation activity but also ensure the most effective use of resources.
- 1.4 The Council undertakes many hundreds of consultation exercises (see also section 2) a year some major lasting many months and involving many hundreds of people others small scale spanning a short period and involving a handful of people.
- 1.5 The Half Yearly Plan outlines the major consultation exercises to be undertaken in financial year 2005 – 2006 (September – April) by the Council, in many cases in partnership with other organisations. These generally span the activities of all Programme Areas, involve partners, and use a variety of consultation mechanisms and of strategic significance.
- 1.6 These will serve to inform the Council and external Partners of the consultation activities taking place. They will also be reflected in Council Matters as a regular feature; this will enable members of the Public to be aware of what consultations are going to take place, allowing them to contact key officers, should they wish to be involved in the Consultation, where appropriate. This is a 'live' document that will be regularly reviewed and updated on a half yearly basis over the year.

## **2.0 Different Methods of Consultation**

2.1 There is no agreed or commonly used definition of consultation. The Council's Consultation Strategy defines consultation as a "two way process where views are actively sought and considered before decisions or plans are made".

In general terms, Consultation can be used to describe many forms of public or stakeholder involvement, for example:

- Public Meetings
- Focus Groups
- One-2-one formal/informal interviews
- Roadshows
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Art, music or other expressive forms
- Emails
- Text messages
- Telephone interviews
- Informal discussion groups
- Scrutiny Reviews
- Members Advisory Groups
- Surveys
- Video/audio diaries
- Reflective diaries

2.2 The variety of consultation methods can be combined to provide a more robust process, should this be required; it is common that several methods be used at different stages of the consultation process in order to achieve maximum output.

2.3 The variety of methods identified above are only some of those that are currently used, with the growth in technology and the importance of innovative ideas in terms of consultation methods, the ways in which we will consult are developing further.

### **3.0 Feedback methods**

**3.1** This key to carrying out effective consultation, and the Council uses a range of methods to feedback the results of consultation and how they have been used to inform and shape policy and service delivery. These include:

- The Council website
- Newsletters
- Informal meetings for feedback
- Formal feedback events
- Presentations
- Accessible formats when requested

### **4.0 Why does RMBC Consult?**

**4.1** Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has a long and good track record in consultation. It is central of the Council's approach to engaging communities in its activities, in the shaping of services and in policy development. It is key to the Community Strategy which seeks to ensure that "Active Citizenship and democracy will under-pin how Rotherham works" and "there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and decision making". In particular, it

- Is key to the delivery of high quality effective services that meet the needs of the communities improve the quality of life for the local people, in particular;
- Enables Communities and Members to set priorities;
- Enables the testing of the impact of possible decisions, ideas and policies;
- Promotes the democratic process and councillors community leadership role
- Enables individuals and groups to take responsibility as members of the community;
- Widens ownership of issues and decisions;
- Encourages greater understanding of, and confidence in, what the council is aiming to do;

### **5.0 RMBC Consultation Policies**

The Half Yearly Annual Plan is one element of the Council's Corporate approach to Consultation. In addition, it has developed.

## **5.1 Annual Review of Consultation**

This identifies the significant outcomes of the wide range of consultation activities undertaken across the Authority and outlines how the results have been used to inform policies and service improvement across the Council and more widely. The next Annual Review is expected towards the end of 2005.

## **5.2 Consultation Strategy**

This sets out the Council's vision, aims and objectives for consultation. This is currently being refreshed, and will be brought together with the closely related Community Involvement Strategy to form the Council's first single Consultation and Community Involvement Strategy. A draft will be available in November for consultation and feedback.

## **5.3 Good Practice Guidance**

Good Practice Guidance aims to ensure consistency and ensuring that quality and effectiveness underpins the ways in which the Council consults and engages with its stakeholders. The Guidance highlights a number of Good Practice markers to be taken into consideration before embarking on any consultation process.

## **5.4 Consultation Co-ordination Group**

This is a corporate officer working group, and includes a representative from each of the Council's programme areas. The purpose of the group is as follows to:

- Ensure that all consultation exercises conducted across the Council are co-ordinated in order to avoid duplication, optimise the use of resources and avoid consultation fatigue in communities.
- Ensure that all consultation that is carried out, both internal and external, is consistent and in line with good practice. This should include the promotion and relevant use of the consultation framework and protocols that have been developed for RMBC.
- Challenge consultation in order to identify the most effective methodologies for achieving consultation objectives and to ensure that that it encompasses principles of good practice.
- Ensure that the outcomes of consultation are effectively utilised to feed into the Council's priorities and service developments.

## **5.5 Members Consultation Advisory Group**

This is made up of Councillors and officers, and meets on a quarterly basis to:

- Consider the outcomes of the latest Reachout survey, the Borough's Citizens Panel
- Advise on the content of the next Reachout survey
- Advise on the development of Corporate Consultation
- Advise on and co-ordinate consultation with Members

### **5.6 Reachout Sub-Group**

This leads on Reachout in the Borough, the Citizens Panel. The main purpose of this officer group is to:

- Work in partnership to oversee the operational management of the Rotherham Reachout panel and surveys
- Ensure the effective planning and preparation of surveys, and the appropriate reporting of results
- Ensure that survey themes are effectively prioritised in accordance to key corporate and partnership issues

This work has been developed and led by the Council's Corporate Consultation Co-ordinator Dawn Price, in the Chief Executive's Department on extension 2783 or e-mail [dawn.price@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.price@rotherham.gov.uk).

**Section 2**

**Half Yearly Plan of Consultation  
2005 – 2006  
(September to April)**

**Strategic Consultation Plan**  
**September - April**  
**2005 - 2006**

This identifies major *strategic* consultations to take place this year between September to April. These have been identified in key strategies and plans such as Corporate Plan, Year Ahead Statement and by individual Programme Areas.

Its seeks to ensure that consultation is co-ordinated to make the best use of skill and resources, avoids duplication and share information, expertise and best practice as well as consistently to a high standard, and shapes policy and service delivery.

The Strategic Consultation Plan identifies strategic consultations only. Given the sheer number and diversity of the consultation undertaken by the Council it would be inappropriate to list them here.

**KEY:**

- LO – Lead Officer**
- LCO – Lead Consultation Officer**

<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVES DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Consultation</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Origination &amp; Comments</b>
Corporate Equality Strategy		LO: Carol Adamson	Equality Standard 2 requires the Council to develop a corporate equality action plan	Council staff, Voluntary/Community Groups, PCT, Police, Business, people	User Groups	01/07/05 – 30/11/05	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment

Community Involvement & Consultation Strategy	LO: Dawn Price & LO: Asim Munir	and this must be subject to consultation.	with disabilities, older people, LGBT, BME Groups, and Young People.	Service Users, Non-service users, council staff, members, Voluntary/community groups, other partners BME groups, Socially Excluded people	Questionnaire, focus groups, user groups, face to ace interviews, comment forms, electronic consultation, Consultation & Community Involvement event	01/06/05 - 30/09/05	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Race Equality Scheme 2	LO: Janet Spurling	Compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 mean we are required to review & update our race equality scheme, inc. detailed action plan every 3 yrs.	Council staff, Voluntary/Community Groups.	Council staff, Voluntary/Community Groups.	Focus groups, Electronic Consultation	01/03/05 – 31/03/06	Corporate Plan and legal requirement
Framework for Sustainable Development	LCO: Dawn Price/CCI Assistant	To help shape and inform the final development of the Framework	Service Users, council staff, voluntary/community groups, partners	Service Users, council staff, voluntary/community groups, partners	Comment forms, Community Involvement events	January 2006	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Older Persons well-being Strategy	LO: Andrew Towleron LCO: Dawn	To consult Older People across Rotherham on the	Council staff, voluntary/community Groups, partners,	Council staff, voluntary/community Groups, partners,	Focus Groups, written comments,	20/11/05	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead

	Price	issues and experience that effect their Health & Well Being. To develop a Strategy that realistically reflects these issues.	service users and providers	Strategy event. Questionnaire, Consultation & Community Involvement events		Commitment
Public Health Strategy	LO: Lee Adams LCO: Asim Munir	To consult all communities in the Borough on the major issues that affect health and well being. The findings will then be used to develop the final Strategy.	Service Users, Non-service users, council staff, business, Voluntary/community groups, PCT, health and other partners	Focus groups, user groups, face to ace interviews, comment forms, electronic, events	November 2005	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Rural Framework (Strategy)	LO: Colin Bulger LCO: Asim Munir	To develop detailed proposals and actions to improve the well being of Rotherham's rural communities	Service Users, Non-service users, council staff, Voluntary/community groups, parish councils, other partners	Comments, meetings and events, including with parish councils	Winter 2005	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Social and Environmental Strategy for the Town Centre	LO: Lee Adams LCO: Asim Munir	To help shape and inform the final Strategy	Service Users, council staff, Voluntary/community groups, partners, business people living in and around the Town Centre, reachout	Focus Groups, written comments, Strategy event. Questionnaire, Consultation & Community Involvement events	Winter 2005	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Reachout – Citizen Panel	LCO/LODawn Price	To identify public satisfaction levels with services received	Reachout Panel Members, 1600 members	Reachout - questionnaire	Ongoing – approx. 3 a year	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead

Commitment						

Economic Development Service						
Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Consultation	Target Group	Consultation Method	Dates	Origination & Comments
User Satisfaction Survey – StreetPride	LO: Colin Knight	To seek customer views on how Streetpride/Rotherham Connect are performing to inform service improvements	Callers that contact centre	questionnaires	1/4/05 – 31/3/06	Corporate Plan commitment
Gateways Improvement Strategy	LO: Andrew Newton	To develop detailed proposal for improvements within gateway corridors (principally highway corridors, but potentially also rail, canal and footways or cycle ways.	Business , Members & others	Meetings; other	15/07/05 – 31/12/09	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment
Enforcement Strategy for traffic / parking	LO: Graham Weaver	To enable implementation and enforcement of traffic orders which help to achieve the overall aims of the Local Transport Plan and the requirements of the	Statutory consultations with regard to all legal orders for CPZ, RPS & VP included emergency passenger transport executive, etc	To be confirmed	Winter 2005	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment

			Traffic Management act 2004. Order process' required for :- Controlled parking Zone (CPZ) Residents Parking Schemes (RPS) Verge Parking (VP)					
Urban Renaissance – Town Centre Regeneration	LO: Adam Wilkinson	To provide a public participation forum for all stakeholders to be informed and have input into the development of the town centre regeneration initiative	Town Team which is an Open Forum	Meetings, Forums, comment forms	2003 - ongoing	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment		
Capital and Asset Management Strategy	LO: Adam Wilkinson LCO: Ian Smith	To inform the final strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment		
Local Development Framework/ Statement of Community Involvement	LO: Alan Mitchell LCO: Noel Bell	The SCI is a critical part of the LDF and will explain to communities & stakeholders how they will be involved in the preparation for LDD's and the steps we will take to facilitate this involvement	Service Users, Non-service users, council staff, Voluntary/community groups, PCT, Police, Business, Young People, Older People,	comment forms, questionnaires, specifically arranged meetings, electronic consultation	01/04/05 - 01/01/06	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Commitment and legal requirement		
Regeneration Plan	LO: Richard Poundford	To help the refresh of the Regeneration Plan	Programme Areas, business and partners	comment forms, specifically arranged	Winter 2005	Corporate Plan and Year Ahead		

Tourism Plan 2005 – 2008	LO: Joanne Edley	To undertake a plan for tourism in the Borough, which is dependent on public, private and voluntary sector delivery for the success of the tourism offer in the area.	Tourism Forum members which consists of Parish Councils, Attractions, Accommodation providers and transport providers, Community Interest Groups Other Council service areas	Tourism Forum members which consists of Parish Councils, Attractions, Accommodation providers and transport providers, Community Interest Groups Other Council service areas	01/01/05 – 30/06/05	meetings, Comments forms, other	Regeneration Plan priority
Customer Satisfaction – Caretaking Team	LO: Jane Muffet	To continue to improve an efficient, cost effective and flexible caretaking service to our customers, discretionary, however links to corporate plan, team action plan and performance and development reviews	Council Staff	Electronic Consultation	02/05/05 – 31/07/05		Service Plan
Local Industry Satisfaction Survey Tourism Businesses	LO: Joanne Edley	The Tourism Development Unit is a member of DPUK City Group 4, which is a benchmarking group for tourism to assess like for like areas for best value. As part of annual benchmarking exercise	Rotherham Borough Tourism related businesses – accommodation providers, transport providers, attractions, eating out establishments, leisure and entertainment	Questionnaire	January 2006 – October 2006		Service Plan

<p>How's the Visitor Economy? Business Survey</p>	<p>LO: Joanne Edley</p>	<p>tourism businesses are asked about <b>local industry satisfaction</b> with the Tourism Development Unit and this information is utilised in the assessment criteria identified by DPUK for tourism, which is completed in June / July 2006 and a report is produced by the end of 2006.</p>	<p>establishments, night clubs</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>January 2006 – October 2006</p>	<p>Service Plan</p>
<p>Exercise Lighting</p>	<p>LO: Alan Matthews</p>	<p>The Tourism Development Unit is a member of DPUK City Group 4, which is a benchmarking group for tourism to assess like for like areas for best value.</p>	<p>Rotherham Borough Tourism related businesses – accommodation providers, transport providers, travel agents, and tour operators, attractions, eating out establishments, leisure and entertainment establishments, night clubs</p>	<p>Questionnaire, Other</p>	<p>26/07/2005 – 02/08/2005</p>	<p>Service Plan</p>

Review of completed projects	LO: Paul Smith	exercise It is the policy in Rotherham construction partnership to review relationships and customer satisfaction levels when schemes are completed	Service users, Council staff, other groups	Questionnaires	01/04/2005 – 31/03/2006	Service Plan
Evaluation of ID Service	LO: Graham Clark	Part of the team action plan is to consult customers of the ID badge service	Service users, Council Staff	Questionnaires	01/04/2005 – 31/03/2006	Service Plan
Customer Satisfaction - Incubation	LO: Geoff Link	key output measure from Objective One funded project covering business incubation and business support	business	survey	2005/6	Service Plan
Visitor Center Customer Satisfaction Survey	LO: Clare Warsop	To undertake the completion of a Visitor Satisfaction Survey to comply with best Value	Service users	Questionnaire	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept – March 06	Service Plan
Customer satisfaction levels on Vandalism/Graffiti/Rubbish	LO: Andy Shaw	To seek customer satisfaction levels on Vandalism/Graffiti/Rubbish to inform service improvements	Service Users, Non-service users, council staff, members, Voluntary/community groups, Young People, Older People, People with Disabilities, LGBT, People with Learning	TBD	2006	Service Plan

Post Works Questionnaire	LO: Stephen Finley	To inform service improvement and develop a strategy	Disabilities, BME groups, Socially Excluded people	Questionnaire	Ongoing 05/06	Service Plan
Rotherham by the Sea 2005	LO: Dawn Runciman	To evaluate Rotherham by the Sea	Families attending the event	Questionnaires	15-27 August	Service Plan
SRB IV New York Riverside Challenge – Project 3.5 Evaluation	LO: Andrew Newton	To measure the perceived success of project 3.5 amongst participating businesses, the exercise is also intended to inform service improvement, particularly where such grant aid regimes are proposed, the exercise is discretionary	Businesses	Questionnaires 12	01/06/2005-20/08/2005	Service Plan
Design Code	LO: Ryan Shephard	The main purpose is to consult on a draft design code which provides planning a Guidance for residential-led mixed use development at Westgate	Other groups	Exhibition / Roadshow	20/06/2005 – 22/08/2005	Service Plan
Buy local user satisfaction survey	LO: Peter Hunter	To obtain feedback on how useful the buy	Other groups	Electronic Consultation,	01/04/2005 –	Service Plan

	Regulation 25 "Frontloaders Club"		LO: Phil Turnidge	local service is to the businesses community.	Other Groups	Other	Questionnaires 113	31/03/2006	18/07/2005 – 31/03/2006		Service Plan
--	--------------------------------------	--	----------------------	--	--------------	-------	-----------------------	------------	-------------------------------	--	--------------

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Consultation</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Origination &amp; Comments</b>
<b>Title</b> Risk Management Strategy	LO: Steve Merriman LO: Andrew Bedford	To identify the extent to which risk management is embedded in RMBC. Key requirement of the Audit Commission and is part of risk management action plan following the 2004 inspection.	Council staff, Members	Electronic consultation	01/02/05 - 31/03/05	Corporate Plan
Customer Access Strategy	LO: Dawn Rowley	To inform the final strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Budget/Council Tax Consultation	LO: Andrew Bedford	To gather views on level of Council tax spending and to establish customer satisfaction.	All Council Stakeholders	TBC	Feb 06	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
ICT Strategy	LO: Paul Edwards	To inform the final strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
ReachIn	LO: Emma Kirkwood	Service Improvement, IIP, to measure employee satisfaction against customer	Council staff, Members, people with disabilities, older people, LGBT, BME	3 questionnaires a year, focus groups	01/04/05 – 01/04/06 Ongoing	Corporate Plan

		satisfaction	groups.	annually. Sample 300 staff from across programme areas.	Consultation through FY's.	
Equal Pay Challenge	LO: Alan Swann	To seek agreement from those parties involved in response to the equal pay challenge	Former manual grade employees	Direct mailshots to home addresses Formal postal ballot	July 05 onwards Sept 05	Year Ahead Commitment
Trade Union Consultation	LO: Alan Swann	Regular planned consultation throughout the year on a range of employment issues	Trade Unions	JCC meetings involving Members and Chief Exec	15.04.05 29.07.05 21.10.05 27.01.06 (additional meeting in December to discuss budget)	Service Plan
Workforce Planning Framework	LO: Tracey Parkin	To pilot and receive suggestions/comments regarding the proposed draft framework and matrix	Corporate Workforce Development Panel Specific services participating in pilot – Leisure & Green Spaces, Strategic HR, Adult Services	Pilot exercise	April – Sept 05	Year Ahead Commitment
Legal Services	LO: Robert Parker	To obtain feedback on service standards to inform future service planning	All programme areas	Questionnaire	March 06	Service Plan
Risk Management –	LO: Steve	To identify the extent to	Council Staff,	Electronic	01/02/2005	Corporate Plan

Strategic Diagnostic Survey	Merriman	which risk management is embedded in RMBC. This is a key requirement of the Audit Commission and is part of the risk management action plan following the 2004 inspection.	Members	Consultation	- 31/03/2005	
Customer Survey	LO: Robert Parker	For development of Legal Services to be more customer facing an working towards excel accreditation	Council Staff	Questionnaires, Electronic Consultation 150	22/04/2005 - 31/07/2005	Corporate Plan
Rotherham Standard Managers Programme	LO: Ian Whittle	To formulate an outline design for the content of the Rotherham standard management development programme	Council Staff	Focus groups, Face to Face interviews 40	11/05/2005 - 12/07/2005	Corporate Plan
RESOURCES PA-CORRESPONDENT NEWSLETTER	LO: Emma Kirkwood	To influence action plans on the development	Council Staff	Questionnaire, Electronic Consultation, Other 150	15/06/2005 - 31/08/2005	Corporate Plan
Customer Satisfaction Survey	LO: Aileen Heggie	To gauge whether RBT are providing a good service. To improve service delivery. To	Service users, council staff, other	Postal Questionnaire	01/06/05 - 31/03/06	Corporate Plan



<b>ECALS Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Consultation</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Origination &amp; Comments</b>
Children & Young People's Strategy	LO: Julie Westwood	To inform the final development of the Strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Cultural Strategy	LO: Phil Rogers	To inform the final development of the Strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Service Plan
Young People's Visioning Consultation	LO: George Simpson	To create a children and young people led vision for Children and Young people's Services	All children and young people 0-25 years.	Questionnaires, Face to Face, Interviews, Focus Groups, user Groups	Complete by October 2005.	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
School Transport Review	LO: Mariam Haque	To perform a scoping study to review current education transport policies. This follows a government initiative in the education transport bill (October 2004) to link with other government initiatives including the accessibility planning part of the 2006-20	Service Users, Council Staff, Members, PCT, Police, Other groups	Questionnaires, Face to Face, Interviews, Other 4,000	01/02/2005 – 31/03/2005	Service Plan
Bi-Lingual	LO: Jackie Blackshaw	Inform Service improvements	Service users , Non-service users, Young People, People with	Focus Groups, user Groups	01/01/2005 – 30/06/2005	Service Plan

Involving Children in Service Development	LO: Judith Milner	To involve children in service development	disabilities, People with Learning disabilities, BME groups, Other groups	Service Users	Face to face interviews, Other 4	01/03/2005 – 30/06/2005	Service Plan
Early Support Evaluation	LO: Hilary Eadson	For development of future strategy, inform service development	Service Users, Non-service Users, Young People, People with disabilities	Service Users, Non-service Users, Young People, People with disabilities	Focus groups, User groups, Face to face interviews	01/06/2005 – 30/09/2005	Service Plan
Common Assessment Framework	LO: Elaine Meshane	The purpose of undertaking the consultation is with a view to influencing the implementation of the common assessment framework (CAF) in Rotherham	Young People, other groups	Young People, other groups	Questionnaires, Focus groups, Reachout, Face to Face interviews, Electronic Consultation	01/04/05 – 31/03/06	Service Plan
Early Years & Child Care Service Delivery	LO: Aileen Chambers	To inform future service delivery and to enable us to report on the inspection criteria of ECM framework	Service users, Young People, People with disabilities, People with learning disabilities, BME groups	Service users, Young People, People with disabilities, People with learning disabilities, BME groups	Questionnaires	01/03/2005 – 01/10/2005	Service Plan

Neighbourhoods	Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Consultation	Target Group	Consultation Method	Dates	Origination & Comments
	Community Planning	LO: Martin Hughes	<p>Support communities to develop Plans that indicate their priorities and needs and identify action to address them.</p> <p>Support the establishment and development of representative community organisations (Partnerships, Parish Councils, etc.) who will lead on the delivery of their Community Plan by working in partnership with core service providers.</p> <p>To provide evidence of need that will influence future Plans, Strategies and Budgets of key Agencies and Service Providers (at Area Assembly and Borough wide level)</p>	<p>All geographic communities</p> <p>All communities of interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory Appraisal</li> <li>• Planning For Real</li> <li>• Virtual Villages</li> <li>• Open Space Technology</li> <li>• Visioning</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Public events</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>By Dec 2005 there will be 25 geographic Community Plans completed, with up to 20 more in various stages of development</p> <p>Completed Community Plans are periodically being reviewed and updated.</p>	<p>Year Ahead Commitment &amp; Corporate Plan</p>

Area & Community Planning	LO: Debbie Marks	To inform Community Plans and targets	Area Assemblies, Tenant and Resident Associations	Meetings, Forums and Events	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Parish & Town Councils' Joint Charter	LO: Paul Griffiths	To inform the final charter	Council, parish councils	Meetings, Forums and Events	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Housing Market Renewal Masterplanning	LO: Paul Walsh	To provide information and engage the community & key stakeholders in consultation activity regarding the development of housing market renewal master plan for their neighbourhoods.	Service users, non service users, Members, Voluntary/Community groups, businesses	Electronic consultation	01/05/05 – 31/05/05	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Refresh Area Assemblies	LO: Andrew Balchin	To inform the refresh	Area Assemblies	Area Assembly	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Neighbourhood Charters	LO: Richard Walker	To inform the development of the Neighbourhood Charters	Area Assemblies, Tenant and Resident Associations	Meetings, Forums and Events	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan
Environmental Action Plan	LO: Bon Crosby	To inform the final Plan	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Year Ahead Commitment & Corporate Plan & Corporate Plan
Tenants Satisfaction	LO: Phil Rees	Service Improvement	Tenants	Quarterly	To be	Neighbourho

Survey			and Performance		Survey of Tenants	confirmed	ods Service Plan
Safer Neighbourhoods Teams	LO: Mark Ford & Vaughan Williamson	To provide the SNT's with a citizen focus, enhance public reassurance by targeting priorities identified by, rather than imposed upon, the community	Businesses, Other groups	Questionnaires, Other	01/07/2005 – 31/08/2005	Service Plan	

<b>Social Services</b>		<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Consultation</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Origination &amp; Comments</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Consultation</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Origination &amp; Comments</b>	
Children in Need – Service User Satisfaction Survey	LO: Emma Heyes	Mandatory DfES survey conducted to identify whether Social Services are meeting the needs of Children in Need	Young people, aged 10-17, who are receipt of services from Social Service	Questionnaires	12/01/05 – 31/10/05	Service Plan	
Family Placement Survey	LO: Emma Heyes	Discretionary survey to improve services to foster carers and adoptive parents	Foster carers and adoptive parents	Questionnaires	1/11/05- 31/3/05	Service Plan	
Children's Guides for Fostering and Adoption	LO: Ruth Bastin	To produce 2 young person friendly children's guides for fostering and adoption	Looked After Children	Questionnaires and Discussion groups	1/04/05 – 31/10/05	Service Plan	
SWIFT Survey	LO: Tony Sanderson	Annual Survey to seek employee's views on SWIFT	Staff use whose use SWIFT	Questionnaires	01/07/05- 30/11/05	Service Plan	
Activities for Looked After Children	LO: Brian Sampson	To evaluate the activities provided to Looked After Children	Looked After Children and parents/carers	Questionnaires and face to face interviews	01/07/05- 31/12/05	Service Plan	
Contracting and Commissioning Strategy for Older Peoples Services	LO: David Lisgo	To inform and shape the final strategy	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Action Plan to be completed by 30/11/05	Year Ahead Commitment	
Intermediate Care Strategy	LO: Paul Billingsley	To develop detailed proposals and actions to improve the intermediate care	Council staff, Health staff and User and Carer representatives	Comments and meetings	01/04/05 – 31/10/05	Year Ahead Commitment	

PSS User Experience Survey for Homecare	LO: Christine Marriott	provision in Rotherham Compulsory government survey to provide comparative information across the country	Homecare Service Users	Questionnaire	01/12/05 – 31/5/06	Service Plan
Support for Services For Parents & Carers of Children with a Disability within Rotherham's BME community	LO: Laura Townson	To provide information on how the current service has been delivered in the ethnic minority community and as to how the service can be developed / improved	Service Users	Questionnaires 25	14/03/2005 – 30/05/2005	Service Plan
Demand for childcare	LO: Aileen Chambers	To inform future service delivery and to enable us to report on the inspection criteria of the ECM framework	Service Users, Non-Service Users' People with disabilities, People with learning disabilities, BME groups	30,000	01/05/2005 – 01/09/2005	Service Plan



Consultation Calendar

FY 05 -06

**Please Note:** Bars identify dates of consultation activity where dates have been provided by Lead Officers or Consultation Lead Officers.

Consultation	A 05	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J 06	F	M	A
<b>Chief Executives</b>													
Corporate Equality Strategy													
Consultation & Community Involvement Consultation													
Race Equality Scheme													
Sustainable Development Framework													
Older Person's Well Being Strategy													
Public Health Strategy													
Rural Framework													
Social & Environmental Strategy for the Town Centre													











## **RMBC Position Statement on Community Involvement**

### **1. Introduction**

Consulting and involving communities, and finding out from them what they want from their public services for their area, can help local authorities deliver their services more effectively and efficiently and play a full community leadership role in the borough. Community Involvement is not just about improving service delivery; it is also about enhancing the democratic legitimacy of local government and the development of community leadership.

This paper thus supports the RMBC's (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council) key strategic areas of activity to improve Community Involvement, in implementing the Council's Corporate Plan and the Rotherham Community Strategy. Central Government is pushing for local authorities to involve communities in shaping services to meet their needs through the various policies they have introduced such as the White Paper Local Modern Government, Civic Renewal and Sustainable Communities.

There are different levels of community participation from consultation through to full involvement. Each level is appropriate for a different purpose; involvement is not the same as consultation, although they can be seen to contribute to community participation.

**Involvement** concerns identifying ways in that people feel they are part of a decision making process and that they make a real difference to what is decided. It is important that communities need to have opportunities to be involved from the beginning to end of the process of a community involvement initiative. If people have never been involved before, they will need the appropriate information and support to get involved in a meaningful way.

**Consultation** is asking people for advice, asking what they think about a particular service area or a strategy, or asking what their needs are and what can be done without them. It is generally a one off process with short-term outcomes.

The model below<sup>1</sup> shows this participation spectrum from consultation to involvement and will assist the Council to think through the process of participation, and how we will develop greater community involvement.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Arnstein's Ladder of Participation and Wilcox's Degrees of Control



2. **Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion:** Local authorities need to engage local communities. Too often local people feel powerless to influence what happens in their community. They are daunted by, or alienated from officialdom.
3. **Involvement makes the community stronger in itself:** Equipping people to participate in developing their communities. People want councils that listen to, lead and build up their communities.
4. **Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources:** Need local strategies developed with local people to meet the needs of local people, voluntary organisations and other service providers with the common objective of improving quality of life.
5. **Involvement helps 'join-up' different contributions to development:** Establishing a framework for effective partnerships to allow properly joined up strategies to be developed and implemented with local people and all the organisations involved in tackling local problems.
6. **Involvement helps sustainability:** A clear message from the regeneration initiatives of the last 30 years is that real sustainable change will not be achieved unless local people are in the driving seat. 'Key to ensuring long term sustainable change is to involve the local community, the people who live and work in an area'<sup>3</sup>

### 3. National and Local Policy context

#### National Policy Context

##### Modern Local Government

Improving the level of involvement of local people in public services is a major element of the Government's modernisation agenda. Historically local authorities made the decisions about what services should be provided, on the basis of what suited the council as a service provider, the interests of the public were not considered as important in shaping the services<sup>4</sup>. Now real efforts by the Government to encourage local authorities to involve communities in their decision-making processes have been made through proposed democratic renewal in The White Paper, Modern Local Government. This paper proposed fundamental changes and set out a strategy for the reform and modernisation of local government in England, this involved local authorities being in touch with people, providing high quality services and providing vision and leadership for local communities. The key elements of the proposed changes were:

- The new role of community leadership.
- New political structures.
- The need for democratic renewal and greater community involvement.
- Improved services through 'best value'.

---

<sup>3</sup> Community Involvement: the Roots of Renaissance? Urban Research Summary 2002 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> (1998)The White Paper, Modern Local Government, DETR.

- High ethical standards.

This meant that local authorities had to develop a vision for their communities that were shared by local people and organisations<sup>5</sup>.

### Civic Renewal

As part of the civic renewal agenda, the Government is encouraging greater community involvement in the delivery and governance of local initiatives and public services. Promoting active community involvement is central to the Home Office's agenda<sup>6</sup>. The goal of civic renewal is a society whose communities are inspired and enabled to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live. Through these contributions, they shape and sustain strong communities and effective, representative governance. The idea behind civic renewal is that there is a belief that strong communities are just as important in today's society as they were in the past, and that, without active participation by citizens, good governance will be difficult to achieve<sup>7</sup>.

### Sustainable Communities Plan

The Government introduced the Sustainable Communities Plan in 2003. The aim of the Sustainable Communities Plan is to create sustainable communities, places where people want to live, that promote opportunity and a better quality of life for all. The plan includes major investment in housing, transport, regeneration, and changes in planning, design and construction and a new regional approach to tackling the different housing problems across the country. The sustainable communities encourages links between people and place, "a new localism that builds and binds strong communities, with good local schools, transport, healthcare, employment and leisure- generating prosperity and a renewed sense of civic pride". There are 5 strategic priorities which contribute to the creation of sustainable communities, these are:

1. Delivering a better balance between **housing supply and demand**.
2. Ensuring people have **decent places to live**.
3. **Tackling disadvantage** by reviving the most deprived neighbourhoods.
4. Delivering better public services, by devolving decision-making to the most effective level- regional, local or neighbourhood.
5. Promoting the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> April 1999, Modernising Local Government, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> Larsen, S.L (2004) Facilitating community involvement: practical guidance for practitioners and policy makers, Home Office.

<sup>7</sup> (December 2004), Towards self-governing communities, the role of local government in civic renewal, Local Government Association.

<sup>8</sup> (May 2004) ODPM Annual Report 2004, ODPM

### The Egan Review

Sir John Egan was asked by the Deputy Prime Minister to undertake a Skills review to focus on the professional, built environment skills necessary to deliver sustainable communities. The definition of sustainable communities is:

“Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.”

The outcome of the Egan Review was that for the concept of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan to work, it was necessary to adopt a new approach that will require new skills and new ways of working for everyone involved. The Egan Review proposed a common goal, a clear understanding of the sort of communities we are trying to achieve; strong and empowered leadership at local level that will drive a vision forward in conjunction with all key partners; efficient, transparent processes for delivery (including creation of the vision, development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy detailing infrastructure requirements and development opportunities, arrangements for engaging the local community, and cost effective pre-application and planning processes); and above all skilled committed individuals working collectively to implement people's priorities into a reality.<sup>9</sup>

### The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building

The Government completed its review of support for community capacity building at the end of 2003 and consulted on its findings. The review documented the fact that the Government will only achieve many of its objectives if it fully involves citizens and communities. This means investing time to build the skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence of people and community groups, to enable them to take effective action and lead on the development of their communities. This includes expanding learning and development within public services, so that professional practitioners and policy makers are better equipped to engage with citizens and communities<sup>10</sup>.

### “Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter” and “Vibrant Local Leadership”

A key element to the Government's whole approach to tackling deprived neighbourhoods is the approach to governance and the role of local authorities

---

<sup>9</sup> Egan, J (2004) The Egan Review, skills for sustainable communities, ODPM.

<sup>10</sup> Home Office (2004) Firm Foundations, The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building, Civic Renewal Unit.

working with communities, local partners, the regional tier and central government. Local authorities are seen to have a key leadership role within communities and with LSPs. The two recent Government papers: "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" and "Vibrant Local Leadership" directly relate to this theme.

To improve public services, the Government has committed to:

- Improve the targeting, coordination and flexibility of health, education and transport services to achieve better outcomes for people in deprived areas;
- Improve the targeting, coordination and flexibility of the neighbourhood renewal delivery system through using local area agreements and improving incentives for local strategic partnerships to deliver outcomes more effectively;
- Strengthen support from the regional tier with a strengthened role for regional government offices;
- Use neighbourhood bodies to improve local services and sustain the renewal of deprived areas; and
- Use improved public services to raise the aspirations of residents and public sector workers alike.

The government proposes that key public services such as education, health and transport will be likely to achieve greater outcomes in deprived areas if they adopt a similarly targeted approach. In addition, the system of delivering additional neighbourhood renewal funding needs to be more effectively focused "on the right issues, in the right places and needs to ensure that investment benefits the right people". Delivery of services and programmes should learn from the wider programme of public service reform in reducing bureaucracy, releasing resources to the front line of delivery and ensuring that services are designed around the needs of the intended beneficiaries of government policy and investment.

Community engagement is seen as critical to delivering quality public services in all neighbourhoods. Whilst the Government's paper does not promote a one size fits all approach, it clearly promotes citizen engagement as an important part of local governance arrangements. Engagement ranges from participation at local elections to involvement in local community groups and parish councils.

The Government is promoting five principles for citizen engagement:

- All councils, in partnership with other service providers, should provide opportunities and support for neighbourhood engagement through appropriate arrangements so that they can respond to the needs and priorities of neighbourhood communities;
- Neighbourhood arrangements must be capable of making a real difference to the everyday lives of citizens;

- The nature of neighbourhood arrangements must be appropriate to local circumstances, be flexible to changing circumstances over time and be responsive to the needs and diversity of the community and its organisations;
- Neighbourhood arrangements must be consistent with local representative democracy which gives legitimacy to governmental institutions, and places elected councillors as the leading advocates for their communities, and with the requirements of local democratic accountability; and
- Neighbourhood arrangements must be balanced with the demands of efficiency and proportionality.

These are supported by underpinning principles for the role of communities in service delivery:

- Know and understand the communities using the service - Organisations need up to date and complete information on the communities they serve, including their needs and preferences;
- Help to build the confidence of the community - Deprivation may limit the development of community resources and capacity. Less experienced people and groups need to be supported in making their voice heard;
- Take active steps to involve the community as widely as possible - Reliance on a few well-established channels of communication may restrict engagement to those already active in the community. Innovative ways of reaching out to the widest range of groups should be used to involve the diversity of the community;
- Ensure no sector or group dominates - Groups and individuals helping to give voice to a community need to be as representative as possible of that community. Manage tensions between representatives to promote a common purpose;
- Make sure procedures for ensuring representation are transparent - The procedures organisations use to engage communities need to be transparent and open in order to sustain people's confidence;
- Provide practical assistance - Organisations' procedures and practices may inhibit community participation. Practical steps need to be taken to tilt the balance of power towards the community, such as arranging meeting times outside of normal working hours and making sure that documents are free from jargon; and
- Demonstrate positive support for community engagement - Help community groups to see the impact of their input by celebrating success. This will help to sustain their engagement.

Issues around capacity and resources for neighbourhood management and other arrangements suggest that neighbourhood management is about using resources more effectively rather than having to provide an additional resource. However, within this the Government does promote the use of delegated budgets

and neighbourhood ownership. Capacity to engage includes providing support to communities including the role of ward councillors to act as leaders and advocates of their communities, promoting the communities needs to the Council rather than representing the Council to the community<sup>11</sup>.

The leadership role is further developed by the report “Vibrant Local Leadership”. This report sets out the Governments vision of flourishing, fair society based upon opportunity for everyone depends upon creating sustainable communities of this type. Local councils are central to realising this vision through the local leadership they provide in:

- Enabling and empowering local people and acting as their advocate;
- Championing the area; leading the formulation of community strategies, setting out the vision for the local community in partnership with other agencies;
- Challenging and scrutinising public services; providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in a locality – including the council itself;
- Decision making; setting priorities for the area and the council and being accountable for the choices made; and
- Shaping services around the needs of the citizen; marshalling resources to best meet the needs of individuals and communities by influencing the mix of services that are brought together from a range of delivery partners.

Local authorities are also seen to have a unique role with three essential characteristics:

- Democratic accountability – Local government is the only organisation that represents all the people living in its area. This is not a mandate to ride roughshod over others but it provides legitimacy to be the voice for the area;
- A sense of place - Local government owes its existence to the geographical area whose interests it represents and for whose well being it is responsible; and hence; and
- An ability to bring together the full range of bodies - that contribute to the life of that area to best meet the needs and aspirations of the communities that live and work within it.

Key to achieving the Government’s aspirations is for local government to have the leadership capacity at both member and officer levels. The Government has already invested in local government leadership along with the LGA and I&DeA. However, there is concern about the future supply and development of local government leaders. It is noted that local authorities are not wholly representative

---

<sup>11</sup> (February 2005) Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter, ODPM.

of their communities in age profile, gender or ethnicity, and that in recent years the average age profile has become older. The Government also believe that the current systems of local government are confusing and that these issues are a barrier to communities relating to their elected representatives.

The Government have set out their views for the future, which they intend to discuss with local government. Their vision for the future develops three components:

- A framework for the future - A framework for the future should signal significant changes in the nature of local leadership, which in effect would be to:
  - Place community leadership at the centre of every council's role;
  - Put the role of neighbourhood leader at the heart of every local councillor's role;
  - Provide opportunities for more visible, stronger and more accountable leadership of towns, districts, cities and counties;
  - Facilitate the wider development of the sort of effective political and managerial leadership found currently in the highest performing councils so that localities everywhere can benefit from councils being at the heart of leading sustainable communities; and
  - Stimulate a healthy supply of people, which also better reflects the overall makeup of the communities being served, to come forward to be councillors or managers by making these roles clearer and more attractive and tackling some of the current barriers to participation.
- Clearer and more attractive roles:
  - Development of the community leadership role of councils who have a key role in leading their communities, focused on networking, influencing and working through partnerships, building on the governance arrangements for LSP's and approaches for Local Area Agreements;
  - Greater discretion on models of governance and leadership, which integrate wider locality and community dimensions in a way that is tailored to local circumstances; and
  - Reinforcing a distinctive role for community councillors as neighbourhood champions who have a primary role to act on behalf of their communities and represent them to the council. They would be, in effect, a 'mayoral' figure for their individual locality.
- Developing the supply of people:
  - Attracting people and those from a wider range of ages, gender, ethnic backgrounds, and employment status into positions of political leadership;

- Attracting managers from outside the local government sector; working more collaboratively with others as part of both a varied public sector career path as well as attracting more managers from the private sector;
- Mainstreaming succession planning into the core business of the local government sector, of councils and political parties;
- Promoting the overall benefits of public sector careers within local government in a more positive and active fashion; and
- Take diversity more seriously, working to identify and actively remove barriers and obstacles for groups that continue to be under-represented in political and managerial leadership positions<sup>12</sup>.

Overall the Government is seeking community involvement in ensuring delivering better public services that will meet the needs of the local communities. This is demonstrated very strongly in the government policies that have been discussed in the national context.

## **Local Context**

### Corporate Plan and Community Strategy

There is a strong commitment to encouraging community involvement in the council and amongst its partners. The Community Strategy provides a framework to involve local communities in the further development and delivery of the vision and strategy. The New Vision has been developed and agreed through the Council and the LSP. The focus is on the following 5 themes and 2 cross-cutting themes which provides focus for the new Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy. There are 5 priority themes in the Corporate Plan, which are:

1. Learning.
2. Achieving.
3. Alive.
4. Safe.
5. Proud.

There are also 2 crosscutting themes, which are Fairness and Sustainable Development. The Proud theme addresses community involvement specifically.

The current 'Proud' theme is:

“Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place; the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive

---

<sup>12</sup> (February 2005) Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Vibrant Local Leadership, ODPM.

communities, both of place and interest, and there will be opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.<sup>13</sup>

It is evident that the Proud theme is addressing the Government's agenda around Civic Renewal and Sustainable Communities which are strong policies on the need for local authorities to involve communities in decision making. There are currently 5 measures in the Proud theme which are:

1. Promote Pride in the Borough.
2. Promote Active Citizenship and Democracy.
3. Support Vulnerable People.
4. Develop Strong Sustainable Communities.
5. Ensure involvement in local decision making.

The Corporate Plan will be closely aligned with the Community Strategy which means that other partner organisations aside from RMBC whom will also be seeking to address community involvement. RMBC will have a joint approach to Community Involvement with LSP partners.

### Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

The NRS (Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy) 2004-2010 for Rotherham seeks to address the root causes of deprivation and ensure communities are able to benefit from improved quality of life. The NRS sets out to tackle the inequalities that exist in the Borough between its most deprived communities and the rest of Rotherham. One of the broad aims is to,

“Ensure our resources and service delivery is aligned with community needs, across target neighbourhoods and for communities of interest”.

This aim is complemented by a measure to involve communities,

“Prioritising the active involvement of communities- both geographical communities and communities of interest- and place community needs and aspirations at the heart of neighbourhood renewal.”<sup>14</sup>

### The Compact

The Compact is a statement of partnership between the Voluntary, Community, Statutory and Private sector partners represented in the Rotherham Partnership. It is a commitment to work together more closely and to respect each other's rights and responsibilities. It offers a new approach to partnership and a framework to develop more detailed agreements in future work.

These are 5 codes of good practice currently undergoing an impact assessment by the partner organisations before they sign up to them that all members of the Rotherham Partnership agree on. They provide guidance on how relationships between the different sectors represented within the Rotherham Partnership should be formed and looked after in five important areas identified by Central

---

<sup>13</sup> (March 2005) RMBC Draft Corporate Plan, 2005-2010, (RMBC)

<sup>14</sup> (2004) Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2004-2010, (Rotherham Partnership)

Government. These will give clear direction about how the principles of the Rotherham Compact as a framework will affect these 5 named areas which are:

Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations.  
Community Groups  
Consultation and Policy Appraisal  
Funding  
Volunteering

The Code of Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal has an impact on Community Involvement. The aims of the Code of Good Practice are to:

- To provide a framework of good practice for all organisations to enable them to consult with and undertake policy appraisals with voluntary organisations and the community sector so that there is a positive impact on the way policies and services are developed.
- To promote the value of consultation and policy appraisal as a means of ensuring voluntary and community organisations are able to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise in development and decision making.
- To contribute to a shared vision of how the public, private, voluntary and community sectors can value each other and work together in the most effective and efficient manner. This will make the best use of the resources, skills and experience available, avoid duplication of effort and consultation fatigue and result in better informed and inclusive decision making.
- To increase and support the capacity of people and representatives to be involved in consultations and policy appraisals on an ongoing basis.<sup>15</sup>

All these aims play a crucial part in delivering Community Involvement across the partners and ensuring communities are involved in decision making to shape the different services that are available to them. The Rotherham Compact and its 5 Codes of Practice are yet to go 'live' and therefore it is too early to make an assessment of whether the Consultation and Policy Appraisal Code of Practice is working in practice or not.

### Consultation Strategy

The current Council's Consultation Strategy is in the process of being refreshed by the newly appointed Consultation Officer with the aim of merging Consultation with Community Involvement into one Framework for the Council. The previous Consultation Strategy has been in place since March 2000, but updated in March 2003 and alongside this a Good Practice Guide produced. With the Government policies in recent times heavily depending on Community Involvement in public services, consultation is one aspect of Community Involvement and therefore

---

<sup>15</sup> (July 2004) Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal, (RMBC)

there is a need to refresh the Consultation Strategy to reflect the Community Involvement agenda which demonstrates consultation and community involvement working in tandem together to enable communities to influence the way council services are shaped and delivered.

#### **4. Community Involvement in Rotherham**

There are pockets of community involvement that is happening within the different service areas of the council, but there is not enough community involvement in the design and delivery of services and it is not co-ordinated. The Principal Community Involvement Officer undertook a mapping exercise with senior officers from the different programme areas to identify existing community involvement and any potential community involvement that needed to take place (Please see Appendix 2).

In summary, key features at present includes the following points:

##### Chief Executives (Policy and Research)

- Has the lead responsibility for co-ordinating community involvement and consultation activity across the Council, and ensuring that the frameworks exist to enable involvement and consultation to be incorporated into policy development.
- Whilst a corporate group oversees consultation activity, manages the consultation planning process (form 1s and 2s), produces the Consultation Annual Plan and Annual Review, it focuses purely on consultation. A Member Consultation Advisory Group provides Member input to Consultation across the Council.
- Community Involvement is the focus of a relatively new corporate group, and closer links are needed between the two groups to ensure alignment and focus.
- Through the development of the Policy Toolkit, the Policy and Research Team will provide guidance on the role of community involvement in policy/ strategy development.

##### Chief Executives (Scrutiny)

- Each Scrutiny Panel is open to the press and public.
- Four of the panels have co-opted members who are co-opted annually from local community groups. Many of the co-opted members are from communities of interest E.g. Tenants and Residents Associations, Older People's groups and Disability groups etc.
- RMBC pay expenses for their co-opted members to get involved.
- Currently they seek to involve communities through the VOICE and NOP structures.
- Their service plan seeks to involve communities in the scrutiny process in line with Local Government Modernisation Agenda. Have specific targets in their service plan in terms of involving the public.

Chief Executives (Partnerships- Voluntary/Community Sector)

- The lead responsibility of developing the Community Planning Model for Rotherham.
- The Community Development and Involvement Partnership over sees the Community Planning process and Neighbourhoods are the delivery agents. The Community Planning Core Group, a sub group of the CDIP is the main body through which Community Planning is developed.

Social Services

- Involve Service Users and Carers, Voluntary & Community sectors to influence the development of services.
- Ensure effective consultation and community involvement mechanisms, which are inclusive to all sections of the community; Adhere to Corporate Consultation Strategy / guidance Form 1 used. Use Customer satisfaction surveys and complaints procedures to improve service delivery.

ECALS (Community Learning)

- There are Learner Forums that are developed with different interest groups E.g. BME and disabled etc. Sample of telephone surveys are carried out with Learners.
- Involving learners in identifying their learner needs is a priority within the Adult Community Learning Common Inspection Framework.
- Developing a pool of Learning Champions to support identification of learner needs in schools.
- Facilitate and capacity builds communities of interest groups to get involved in Learner Forums.
- They have a KPI around effective consultations i.e. 80% of learners are evaluated through evaluations.

ECALS (Young People's Services)

- Involve young people and children through their Voice and Influence work with aims to give them a voice to express their views and needs. Consultation is part of this process. It is about developing young people's understanding, skills and confidence to take control of decisions that affects their lives. Whilst significant work has been done over recent years to develop Voice and Influence, much more needs to be done to integrate it into the Council's strategic agenda, and also establish the infrastructure to enable Voice and Influence activity to have a real impact on decision making, and to demonstrate the outcomes of activities – for young people.
- The Youth Cabinet (voice of secondary Student Councils) is made up of 4 representatives from each school/college. The Cabinet meet monthly to discuss issues affecting them and to influence the running of schools. More work is needed to be done to involve students from BME and Disabled communities where representation is low.

- Voice and Influence is included within the Youth Service self assessment and young people's voice is part of the OFSTED inspection criteria.

#### ECALS (Cultural Services)

- Involvement in the following, Design and commissioning of NOF-funded play areas by local children and families and the, design and assessment of skateboard parks by skateboarding groups.
- There are good examples of work with and through Friends groups, umbrella groups such as Rotherham Arts and Rotherham Heritage Association, and cultural groups with similar objectives to our own, but effective working is constrained by inadequate financial resources to engage stakeholders, by very limited staff capacity to engage and support groups, and by our very limited ability to deliver the expectations of those groups. Work with a range of community groups including BME communities to identify, research and record and celebrate their heritage and life stories.
- Measure Community Involvement through the following KPI's:  
The % of adult and young people residents who have used Cultural Services at least once a month in the last 12 months.  
The % of adult and young people residents/users satisfied with Cultural Services.  
% residents who think Cultural Services has got better .

#### ECALS (Education)

- Work with families to address barriers to learning for a child.
- Parental feedback after support service intervention to address barriers to learning for a child.
- Parents invited to decision making panels: non school attendance.
- Parental representation on Pupil Referral Unit Management Groups (similar critical friend role to a school Governing Body but without delegated powers).
- Service representation on groups which address community issues, working with a range of partner organisations: Safer Estates; Anti-Social Behaviour Panels.
- Parent Partnership Service is an arms length service which consults, supports and supports parents of children with Special Educational Needs.

#### ECALS (Leisure)

- Community Involvement in Leisure & Green Spaces Current – Friends of Parks Schemes, manager meetings with user groups, partnership meetings with organisations that share goals/objectives, customer feedback forms, Out reach activities that are developed in consultation with user groups, steering groups (particularly for externally funded

- projects. Leisure & Green Spaces being developed – All site to develop an annual plan for consultation, community open days, provide accommodation for community groups, Managers surgeries, more friends of schemes,
- KPI's- Majority of these have only been introduced this year and as such there is little or no baseline.  
Numbers residents who feel they have increased self confidence and potential through involvement in Cultural activities.  
The % of adult and young people residents who state that participating in cultural or recreational activity has a beneficial impact on their quality of life.  
The % of residents Satisfied with Cultural Services. (BVPI 119 a - e)  
% Residents who think Cultural Services has got better. (BVP119)  
% of population involved in one hour volunteer work per week to support activity within the cultural sector.
  - The % of adult and young people residents who have used the services provided by cultural services at least once a month in the last 12 months.

#### ECALS (Libraries)

- Library and Information service takes advice from and consults with support groups for various excluded groups within the community The users are given every opportunity to play an active part in stock selection and decisions regarding service provision through such means as the provision of stock selection catalogues, stock buying visits, free request service, comments forms, occasional surveys and by encouraging staff to talk to customers about their needs and encouraging suggestion for improvement.
- LIS has a Stock Management Policy that deals with community involvement in the choice of materials and we also have a Social Inclusion Policy and Action Plan.
- They have no KPI's currently to measure the impact of community involvement.

#### Neighbourhoods

- Have the most active Community Involvement function because of the high number of staff they have with duties to involve communities in their service areas E.g. tenants involvement, Area Assemblies, Community Planning etc. Have plans and strategies for involving communities through their ALMO Delivery Plan and Tenant Empowerment Strategy. The Programme Area has been restructured to give a greater focus on community involvement.
1. Customer focus groups – covering communications, equalities and “learning from customers”
  2. Tenant representatives on decision making groups e.g Housing Futures Group, Scrutiny Panel

3. Area Assemblies – open meetings and a variety of working groups e.g. Community Safety
4. Community Planning – working with individuals and groups to identify local priorities and promote action
5. Customer surveys – written and by telephone on a regular basis
  - Consultants were used to develop some KPI's for the Neighbourhoods focussing on measurable Community Involvement. These are based on:
    1. Customer Priorities and Consultation
    2. Current Best Value Performance Indicators
    3. New Best Value Performance Indicators for 2005/06
    4. The ALMO Delivery Plan
    5. Audit Commission Quality of Life Indicators
    6. Current Local Indicators

#### Economic and Development Services

- The Street Pride Scheme gained recognition and an award for the work it does with the community to maintain and improve the street scene to a high standard.
- A substantial part of Streetpride's budget has gone to Area Assemblies. This allows local people to go along to Area Assembly meetings and make practical financial decisions as to how they want funding to be allocated to provide improvements in their area.
- The Statement of Community Involvement is part of the Local Development Framework has been produced and sets out the Council's Policy for community participation, including the engagement of traditionally excluded groups. The Statement is intended to ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of local communities and stakeholders.
- They involve communities in the Local Development Framework, devolved budgets to Area Assemblies (Streetpride) and involve communities in regeneration and economic plans.
- Local people throughout the Borough who have a keen interest in their environment have been chosen as Streetpride Champions. Currently there are over 80 and a target has been set to increase this number to 200. Champions act as leaders in their street in reporting local environmental issues to the Streetpride golden number, free of charge.
- The Access Liaison Group meets to co-ordinate and improve liaison between the Council and disabled people so that:
  - Disabled people are aware of the work of the Council and other service provided.
  - Disabled people can actively challenge, support and influence the Council and other service providers on issues which affect disabled people
  - Disabled people have a voice as equal citizens of the Borough and can make recommendations to resolve any areas of concern

- Local people are involved in the management of community buildings and provision of low cost accommodation for local groups so that activities and services respond to the needs of local people.
- Targets have been developed for public involvement in the Local Transport Plan and work that is undertaken is regularly reviewed.
- Their Programme Area Plan 2004/2007 seeks to better engage communities in making decisions to improve safety, increase inclusivity choices and quality of life.

### RBT

The Council's vision for e-government focuses on improving our services to customers, helping to make them open, customer-friendly and easy to use. Delivering e-government was a key factor in the decision to form the partnership with BT. RBT plays a large part in enabling and improving access to the Council's services, in particular through Rotherham Connect, the joined-up customer contact service for the Council. A phased take-on of customer facing services is underway, and services are already and will continue to be delivered through 3 main access channels:

- A single customer contact centre, providing telephone access to services
- A series of customer service centres in the town centre and a series of localities across the Borough, providing face to face access to services
- The Council website, providing electronic access to services – other electronic channels including specialist websites, kiosks, digital television and text messaging are being explored and will be introduced where appropriate

The Council's aim is to provide the same level of access and service irrespective of which access channel customers decide to use. To help achieve this aim, customer transactions with the Rotherham Connect telephone contact centre and the face to face customer services centres are enabled by means of customised modules of the Siebel CRM system, allowing the Council to build up knowledge and understanding of its customers and their needs so that it may better serve them<sup>16</sup>.

## **5. RMBC's approach to Community Involvement**

### **Critique of Community Involvement in Rotherham**

#### **Service Improvement**

Programme areas are seeking to involve the communities to improve the services they deliver. Inspection Reports have shown that some of the programme areas have struggled to demonstrate how they have improved

---

<sup>16</sup> (May 2005) Customer Access to Services Self Assessment (RMBC)

services as a result of involving communities or not been able to utilise the information they have got from communities. The successful and most obvious examples of community involvement has been the Libraries and the Street pride Scheme where services have been improved as a result of involving communities. The mapping exercise with the programme areas have indicated that there is some community involvement activity taking place, but they have been unable to measure the impact of involving communities. Area Assembly Plans, Community Plans and Voice and Influence have involved communities, but it is not clear whether the information gathered is feeding into the service planning and budgets and therefore for the CPA, there is little evidence of community involvement and consultation changing priorities.

### **Involvement in Decision Making**

The Council has some measures in place to involve communities in the shaping of council services and decision making in the form of Area Assemblies, Citizens Panels, Scrutiny Panels, Public meetings and Community Planning.

#### **Cabinet Meetings**

Cabinet Meetings give opportunities to the Elected Members to influence decision making and put forward the views of the communities in their constituencies and the borough. There are 20 minute sessions within the cabinet for public to ask questions, but the problem has been that it tends to be the same few members of the public that attend who does not represent the wider community in Rotherham. The LGA and IDEA is investing more in developing to Community Leaders, building their capacity and skills to become more at the forefront of local decision making and shaping the services around the needs of the communities. Several Rotherham Elected Members have been through the IDEA Leadership Academy and more are now booked to attend.

#### **Scrutiny Panels**

Each scrutiny panel is open to the press and public; the fourth item on every agenda (after the first standing items) is "Questions from the Press and Public". Four of the panels have members who are co-opted annually from local community groups. This has been recognised as good practice by the IDEA, with the Centre for Public Scrutiny - Engaging the Voluntary and Community Sectors in Scrutiny, coming to visit the staff and members of the community who participated in the scrutiny panels. The scrutiny panels have effectively influenced services and issues such as Domestic Violence which is being used as a case study by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

#### **Area Assemblies**

With the introduction of Democratic Renewal, Area Assemblies were set up in Rotherham to enable communities to have a say in the council services. Area Assemblies are local organisations made of Councillors meeting with residents and other relevant organisations (health authority, police etc). There are seven Area Assemblies across the Borough dealing with local issues at a local level.

Essentially, Area Assemblies were supposed to: -

1. Provide an effective mechanism to enable the Council and other service providers to consult and communicate with local communities;
2. Be a mechanism for identifying local needs and priorities, and for playing a key role in the development of local community plans, Area plans, and the Community Plan for Rotherham, and will work in partnership with communities and others to meet these local needs and priorities;
3. Improve local democracy and accountability within communities and help to influence strategic policies and priorities;
4. Be a mechanism for influencing the quality, delivery and co-ordination of all local services;
5. Ensure that all people are able to get involved at a stage and level appropriate to them and that equality of opportunity and access will underpin the Council's commitment to community consultation.

CPA inspection has demonstrated that it is uncertain how the Area Assemblies implement consultation in practice and the impact of decision making is unclear and it informs wider decisions across the council. There are currently discussions taking place within the Council to develop the Area Assemblies into Area Partnerships which are now being used by other local authorities to inform decision making in council services and the LSP. The aim of the Area Partnerships would be to bring together local communities and service providers to address community needs in the different neighbourhood areas of the borough.

#### Rotherham Reachout

Rotherham Reachout is the Council's Citizen's Panel which is one of the ways in which the council listens to the views of the people in Rotherham. The panel enables the Council and its partners (Rotherham Primary Care Trust, Rotherham LSP and South Yorkshire Police) to monitor public satisfaction with their services while also dealing with adhoc issues of interest. The Panel has 1600 members. It is important to note that this is a very small sample of the Rotherham population and therefore is not a representative view. The Panel just provides a means of

obtaining views, but not involving communities in decision making and the shaping of different council services.

### Community Planning

Community Planning is recognised within the Community Strategy as “the means by which local people, communities and groups can express their needs and aspirations”. Approximately 20 Community Plans have been developed out of 40. Although various communities and service providers have engaged in Community Planning activities, it is fair to say that a great deal more work is required to develop and implement the Community Plans, and align appropriate resources with the priorities identified in the Community Plans. A Community Planning model has been developed to enable the Communities and the service providers to gather views from the communities in their areas effectively. Community Planning Officers now employed by the Neighbourhoods Programme Area are responsible for supporting the development of the Community Plans by working along side communities and partners.

Some work has begun with developing community plans with communities of interest. In the course of 2004, work began with implementing the action plan to engage disabled people in Community Planning. This involved a variety of initiatives including a plain language questionnaire (designed with support from Speak Up); an I.T. based consultation exercise at the Disability Awareness Day; and a prioritisation exercise at an event to coincide with European Day of Disabled People. The ideas prioritised by disabled people have been forwarded to various agencies with a proforma to record the responses.

Other action plans will be worked up in 2005 and implemented. Target groups include Older People, Young People and the BME communities. Further work needs to be done to develop the full capacity and skills of all the interest groups to fully engage in Community Planning. There is a need to use Community Planning to help develop networks and infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector to give communities a voice of their own. Discussions have begun to take place with REMA (Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance) to look at developing a Community Plan with the BME communities in Rotherham.

A positive feature of Community Planning is that it has empowered communities to set their own agendas for action. Many communities have used the process to develop local projects which has led to active citizenship. Overall Community Planning needs to be integrated into service planning, so that the communities can see some action being taken as a result of their community plans. There has been no evaluation undertaken about Community Planning, so it has been difficult to measure the impact of Community Planning.

### Parish Councils

There are 29 town and parish councils and parish meetings in Rotherham, but it has so far been difficult to assess how they have influenced service planning. A Charter is currently being done between the Council and the Parish Councils to

ensure more influence on services provided to them and to work in partnership with parishes and towns in the proposed Area Partnerships and it needs to be worked through.

### **Community Activity**

More Development is needed to enable communities to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to get involved in the Council's decision making structures. More work is needed within RMBC to open up its influences and currently there are already dangers of people suffering from consultation fatigue. There needs to be processes put in place that allows support work to get new people to get involved and provide choices of what service areas they can get involved in, this can only happen through Development and Communication. There are existing structures such as the Community Empowerment Network which has 2 structures, NOP (Network of Partnerships) and VOICE Network which feeds into the LSP and the Community Strategy. If local Area Partnerships do materialise, then it is important that the local people are given every opportunity to participate by communicating to them and giving them the relevant training to support people to get involved.

The constitution for the Council is currently in drafting stages and is exploring the possibility of devolving more powers to the Area Assemblies in terms of decision making. This will be a step forward as the Council needs to encourage community ownership in the decision making structures.

The mapping exercise with programme areas has identified the need to develop networks around different Communities of Interest to enable them to get involved in decision making and influencing the shaping and delivery of council services. Without strong networks built around communities of interest, there are no mechanisms to engage communities of interest which will mean excluding them from decision making. Members and Officers would need training and support to engage communities of interest.

The Community Development Strategy has identified the following:

A recent mapping exercise carried out by VAR has shown that of the 8 priority communities of interest, identified in the Rotherham Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, only one community, the Black and Minority Ethnic Community, has developed a fully independent network, supported by REMA. Three other networks (Asylum Seekers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender [LGBT]; and young people) have a multi-agency membership. Rotherham's Older Peoples network is relatively small and is supported by both the PCT and RMBC to influence the Health & Social Care agenda. An inter-faith network is in the early stages of development and there are no networks currently in place for either women or people with disabilities, albeit in the case of disabled people there are numerous opportunities for effective engagement with statutory agencies.

Community development work is required at four different levels:

- Level One - with individuals and community groups
- Level Two - with Community Partnerships and communities of interest
- Level Three - with networks (e.g. the Network of Partnerships, and Voice – bringing together voluntary sector service providers and networks serving communities of interest, etc.)
- Level Four - with agencies and organisations – particularly those involved in the Rotherham Partnership.<sup>17</sup>

RMBC is supporting VAR with their South Yorkshire Investment Plan bid to undertake further capacity building with some of the identified interest groups.

### **Performance Management**

RMBC has just recently developed a Performance Management Framework, the purpose of this framework is to improve the Council's performance and to ensure they meet challenges such as Community Involvement. The Framework outlines the need for the Council services to be focussed on the needs of local people. The document aims to raise the awareness and understanding of performance management and help deliver high quality services to the communities based on their needs.<sup>18</sup>

The mapping exercise with the programme areas has emphasised the need for a more robust performance indicators as many of the programme areas found it difficult to measure the impact of involving communities.

The main recommendations from the last CPA carried out demonstrate the need for the Council to improve Community Involvement. Key weaknesses were identified:

- Determine a role for area assemblies and ensure they provide appropriate community leadership.
- Improve the quality of decision making forums.
- There was little evidence of consultation changing priorities.<sup>19</sup>

Other inspection reports have indicated weaknesses in community involvement. The Best Value Inspection of Sport and Leisure (2001) recommended that,

---

<sup>17</sup> (January 2005) Community Development Strategy (revised) (Rotherham Partnership)

<sup>18</sup> (April 2005) RMBC Performance Management Framework (RMBC)

<sup>19</sup> (December 2004) RMBC Corporate Assessment, (Audit Commission)

“No progress has been made since our initial inspection on improving knowledge of customer needs and meeting the needs of a diverse community. The service still has no clear, consistent approach to tackling the issues of inclusion and diversity. It does not have a detailed understanding of customer needs.”<sup>20</sup>

The Audit Commission inspection of the Supporting People Programme (2005) identified that the,

“Council needs to improve on the engagement of service users in strategy formation.”<sup>21</sup>

The Audit Commission ALMO Indicative Inspection (2004) indicated that,

“tenants have not been fully engaged in developing existing service standards and there are no service standards in place covering the range of housing services;  
the council has yet to systematically and consistently communicate, consult and involve its customers across all services.”<sup>22</sup>

The Regeneration Inspection Report (2004) emphasised that,

“Some residents have also been involved in designing and managing small regeneration projects and in housing demolition and refurbishment schemes. However the council does not coordinate collection of this and other information to illustrate the longer-term and sustainable impacts and outcomes of its regeneration schemes.”<sup>23</sup>

The 2004 Children’s Services (Social Services) follow up Inspection illustrated that,

“It was not evident to what extent service users within the specialist services had been involved in changes to service provision or asked if services had been improved.”<sup>24</sup>

However there are some good practices of community involvement in the Council, the Library Services gained Charter Mark Status for their involvement of BME communities in the shaping and delivery of their library services to meet and resource the needs of BME communities accessing Library Services. Also cultural awareness training was delivered to their frontline staff to meet the cultural needs of the BME communities that they serve. The Street Pride Scheme gained recognition and an award for the work it does with the community to maintain and improve the street scene to a high standard. The Rotherham’s Streetpride initiative has picked up a major national award, the Local Government

---

<sup>20</sup> (August 2001) Best Value Inspection, RMBC Sport and Leisure, (Audit Commission)

<sup>21</sup> (February 2005) RMBC Supporting People Programme, (Audit Commission)

<sup>22</sup> (December 2004) RMBC ALMO Indicative Inspection, (Audit Commission)

<sup>23</sup> (July 2004) RMBC Regeneration Inspection Report, (Audit Commission)

<sup>24</sup> (June 2004) RMBC Children’s Services Follow Up Inspection (Commission for Social Care Inspection)

Chronicle Environment Award for keeping the local environment clean and tidy. The Scheme is working to involve community involvement through the Area Assemblies, community clear ups and Streetpride Champions. The Waste Management Inspection Report (2004) illustrated that,

“the service has good consultation mechanisms and dialogue with local communities to respond to their needs.”<sup>25</sup>

The council has achieved recent awards in relation to good quality access:

- Beacon council status for supporting new businesses and asset management;
- Charter Mark status for Rothercare provided by Social Services which offers 24/7 emergency response services to adults and;
- Charter Mark status for Meals and Wheels provided by Social Services.

The RMBC CPA 2005 onwards Key Lines of Enquiry has identified key issues to address community involvement. The internal performance assessment CPA Task Group identified strengths and key weaknesses.

- The council can identify a number of service focussed consultation exercises, but the corporate approach to consultation should be further developed, in particular coordinating it all.
- It is not clear how Area Assemblies contribute in practice. There is a lack of consultation with vulnerable communities in terms of shaping the visions and ambitions. There are question marks over the effectiveness of decision making at Area Assembly level and how it informs wider decisions across the council.
- The Council's priority themes have a strong focus on citizens and communities. Many of the council services focus on users such as street pride and housing management, but some are less obvious.
- The Council's approach to Community Involvement is developing with some good examples e.g. housing, libraries, streetpride, but there is no corporate approach to Community Involvement.
- The Council has to address and understand the diverse needs of the communities and measure who are the service users<sup>26</sup>.

#### Guidance for CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) Inspections

CPA will measure Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's proven ability to engage with and lead their communities, deliver community priorities in partnership with others and ensure continuous improvement across a range of council services. The CPA want to see that local authorities are user and citizen focussed and that reflect the needs and diversity of the communities that they serve. The council should take into consideration the needs of all sections of the

---

<sup>25</sup> (October 2004) RMBC Waste Management Inspection Report, (Audit Commission)

<sup>26</sup> (2004) CPA 2005 onwards, Key Lines of Enquiry, Initial Assessment (RMBC)

community in setting priorities and consulting with communities and partners when making changes to priorities.

The CPA provides guidance on how councils should address the theme of sustainable communities. The Community Strategy should be the key document in terms of illustrating what is important for a local area in relation to sustainable communities, and this should be embedded into the council's own plans and strategies. The councils should be actively engaging and listening to the community, private and voluntary sectors and supporting the development and empowerment of the community so that they can get involved in the planning system such as the Local Development Frameworks (previously Unitary Development Plans).

The Commission have developed some core principles for user focussed service delivery in local authorities:

1. Councils have a responsibility for community well being and cohesion.
2. Citizens and users should be at the forefront about the council's decisions about the design and delivery of services.
3. To improve the quality of life in a locality, councils should base their plans on a comprehensive and up to date understanding of the needs and aspirations of local communities.
4. Councils need to actively seek the engagement of users and citizens and users in the access to, and design and development of, services to secure their on-going improvement.
5. To ensure value for money in the delivery of its services, councils will need to consider an appropriate balance between progressing long term objectives to improve quality of life for the community as a whole and meeting the more immediate needs of individuals<sup>27</sup>.

### ODPM New Performance Framework

The Government has just recently introduced the ODPM New Performance Framework to enable local authorities to make real improvements by developing robust Performance Frameworks which has an impact on local people. This is about giving more freedom and flexibilities to local authorities through Local Area Agreements to give communities more ownership through devolution of powers. The proposed ODPM New Performance Framework has 5 core principles:

- Strong Community Leadership.
- Clearly specified national and local targets.
- Councils and partners responsible for delivery.
- External challenge, support and assurance.
- Robust mechanisms to identify and tackle under performance.

---

<sup>27</sup> (May 2004) Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Single Tier and County Pilot Assessments, Guidance on key lines of enquiry themes and shared priority evaluations, Audit Commission.

This examines the development of a more effective and flexible performance framework to secure public services that are better focused on the needs of local people.

Published jointly by ODPM and the Treasury, it is intended to stimulate debate around developing a more devolved approach to improving outcomes. It emphasises:

- opportunities for users and local people to influence local priorities and the design and delivery of services - including through more choice and personalisation,
- a reduction in bureaucracy - through a more coherent approach to managing performance, with clear national priorities, but with local government having responsibility for securing services that meet the needs of local people and for improving their own performance in the way that the best councils are doing
- more flexibility to enable faster and better tailored responses to local circumstances - building on the experience of Local Area Agreements
- the potential for developing an increasingly area based approach between councils and their partners – with greater focus on accountability between local partners in achieving common outcomes for the area
- the importance of strategic, integrated relationship management through Government Offices to tailor negotiations, co-ordinate engagement and support, and challenge and respond to significant under-performance
- the need for better and more transparent information to underpin any effective performance system.<sup>28</sup>

The reason for the need to develop this framework is because public satisfaction indicators have shown a decrease in satisfaction with local authorities.

- There is a need for a LA's to have robust performance frameworks to enable real impact on local communities and to translate the negative public perception of LA's and must make a real difference to local people.
- The framework must have a strong focus on communities and demonstrate a culture of continuous improvements to deliver local solutions to local problems.
- Overall the framework should tackle dissatisfaction through improved performance including SMARTER indicators and tackle local priorities through partnership working.

### **Organisational Development**

There is a need to work towards changing the culture of the Council internally, so that RMBC corporately understands community involvement, and can develop the mechanisms to make it work through training staff to raise their awareness of community involvement and its key principles. This will enable the staff to involve communities more effectively in their service areas and be able to respond to the needs of the communities. This is reinforced by the Firm Foundations report which outlines the need to build the capacity by expanding learning and

---

<sup>28</sup> (2005) Securing better outcomes: developing a new performance framework, ODPM.

development within public services, so that professionals, practitioners and policy makers are better equipped to engage with citizens and communities<sup>29</sup>

## **6. Rotherham compared to other local authorities**

A number of local authorities are recognised as being at the forefront of community involvement, with a strong emphasis on community involvement, employing best practice and with well established structures and resources to involve communities. The Principal Community Involvement Officer undertook some visits to the local authorities, Rochdale, Tower Hamlets, Croydon, Wigan and Bradford who were recognised for their good practice in terms of community involvement. A mapping exercise (please see Appendix 1) has been completed with all the findings from the visits to the local authorities. The following themes identify some of the good practice adopted by the local authorities which are:

### Areas of good practice around Community Involvement

Two local authorities, Croydon and Tower Hamlets have achieved Beacon Council status for the 'Getting Closer to Communities' theme. Both authorities have used a variety of approaches to involve communities.

#### **Croydon**

- Croydon LA has a very close working relationship with Croydon Voluntary Action to involve communities.
- There is a Community Involvement theme in their Community Strategy which outlines targets to ensure communities are involved. A high level Community Involvement Strategy Group (multi-agency group) has been set up to oversee and manage Community Involvement at a strategic level.
- Ten Neighbourhood Partnerships funded by NRF have been set up in areas of deprivation, the council initially developed the partnerships but then the ownership was given to the communities with the chair elected from the community. From the Action Plans developed by the partnerships, Delivery Plans are developed which are agreed with the programme areas in the Council and Partners. These are budgeted and costed.
- Service Level Agreements with the CVA to deliver some of their services.

#### **Tower Hamlets**

- There are 8 LAPS (Local Area Partnerships) who have produced 8 area action plans with identified priorities from the local communities and

---

<sup>29</sup> Home Office (2004) Firm Foundations, The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building, Civic Renewal Unit.

service providers to identify local needs and agree local solutions. Each LAP has been given £500,000 (NRF funding) to implement their outcomes.

- Consultation is fed back through their weekly newspaper, 'East End Life'. This is distributed to all 70,000 households and includes pages in Bengali and Somali as well as the results of consultation.

### **Rochdale**

- Thematic Forums e.g. faith, transport etc.
- A Youth Forum in each Township.
- A Citizen's Jury which has an input into budget settings for the Council.

### **Wigan**

- The Hagfold Community Committee from the Hagfold area of Atherton in Wigan has been recognised for its valuable work in involving communities in council services and other mainstream services. This model of good practice is being used to develop a township programme in Wigan.
- A Community Charter has been developed between the community and agencies such as the council. The Charter focuses on improving core services by offering a commitment from agencies to provide high standards of service to the people who live in the area.

### **Bradford**

- 66 Neighbourhood and Community Action Plans are in the process of being developed. The neighbourhoods or communities have each been given £5000 to develop the Action Plans. 28 have written their plans and are implementing them into action. These neighbourhoods and communities have received a further second stage payment of up to £20,000. This payment is to enable them to negotiate with other partners and draw in additional funding so that their plans can be achieved.
- Neighbourhood Forums which have open public meetings to give information seek the views of the communities and involve them in service planning and project management.

### Structures

All the local authorities had structures in place to ensure that communities influence the shape and delivery of the services. The structures were to enable community involvement in their local community strategies/plans.

### Key Drivers or Barriers

The key drivers were mainly the LSP's across the local authorities in the form of their community strategies/plans.

#### Communities of interest/communities of place

The Communities of Place were engaged through the Area Partnerships in the 5 Local Authority areas. The most effective involvement of Communities of Interest was in Tower Hamlets, Croydon and Bradford.

#### **Tower Hamlets**

Developed a Third Sector Strategy with voluntary/community organisations which recognise that they are often closer to communities that they serve and better placed to deliver culturally sensitive services for them. Service Level Agreements have been developed with more than 250 groups to provide services including mother tongue classes and all youth services. For example, the Council worked with East London Mosque to improve Bengali children's attendance at Primary schools and communicated the importance of attendance via community radio during Ramadan, using the Imam's address at a Friday sermon, parent's tea gathering at the mosque, individual family work and home visits. As a result, the attendance in some schools is increasing by up to 7%.

#### **Croydon**

Communities of Interest are engaged via the Community Network, Older People's Network and the Children and Young People's Network. Also Forums such as the BME Forum, Community Care Forum, Mental Health Forum and the Refugee Forum etc.

#### **Bradford**

Communities of Interest are engaged through the Cnet (Community Net), Cnet has set up a Communities of Interest Working Group to guide communities of interest in developing their own action plans. In the period 2004-06, work will continue to develop robust action plans for at least 18 communities of interest. Alongside this, there will be work done with service providers to explore ways of ensuring these plans inform the development of public services to meet their needs.

#### Measuring the impact of Community Involvement

The strongest local authorities in measuring the impact of community involvement were Tower Hamlets, Croydon, Wigan and Bradford. All three have produced clear and robust targets and indicators.

#### **Tower Hamlets**

Developed a series of indicators to monitor how successful they are in achieving the Community Plan goals and the Council's Strategic Plan, these include indicators linked to engaging with and developing the community.

### **Croydon**

Developed some indicators in the CI theme in their Community Strategy. The indicators are still in development stages as they need firming up to align them more with CPA requirements.

### **Wigan**

KPI's are outlined in the Hag fold Community Action Plan with a number of actions to measure the CI levels.

### **Bradford**

Bradford Vision has produced an Action Plan that includes a theme around managing community involvement with outcomes and actions.

### Role of LSP

All the LSP's apart from Wigan engaged the voluntary and community sector through the Community Empowerment Networks and Area Partnerships. Tower Hamlets has the key processes to enable communities to have involvement in the decision making. The Community Plan Action Groups accelerate progress through joined up services aligned with both national targets and local priorities that have been identified. They listen to the Local Area Partnership views and use them to inform action to speed up improvement of mainstream services.

### Rural Area/Parish Council

Bradford was at the forefront of rural area and parish council involvement. The Parish Councils have a full time Parish Council Officer. They have produced their own action plans. The rural areas developed their own locality action plans. These all informed the LSP of their needs.

## **7. Areas for improvement**

In RMBC, a Principal Community Involvement Officer has been recruited to support the development and implementation of a corporate approach to community involvement to improve the engagement of citizens, communities and service users in council activity. There are a number of areas which the Principal Community Involvement Officer needs to address, but the three key areas of improvement becoming apparent from the findings and inspection reports which are Decision making structures influencing service planning, coordination and measuring the impact of Community Involvement.

1. Decision making structures influencing service planning

There are different decision making structures in the Council, but there is little evidence of how they are influencing the services that are delivered to the communities. There is a danger of communities getting frustrated and losing trust in the Council if there are no improvements made as a result of the communities getting involved in the decision making processes. Clear and workable structures and systems need to be implemented to align budget and resources to meet the needs of the communities. It is essential that the Council prioritises the needs of communities into service development, service delivery, performance and evaluation.

2. Co-ordination

The Council has agreed to various ways of involving communities through a number of plans and strategies. These however have not been co-ordinated into one Framework which makes it increasingly difficult for the Council to determine clearly what strategic improvements are needed and for the programme areas and partners to concentrate and co-ordinate their efforts and actions into addressing Community Involvement on a corporate level to maximise the impact and effectiveness of Community Involvement. If Community involvement is co-ordinated and addressed corporately, then this allows for programme areas to work closer together and share information and good practice.

3. Measuring the impact of Community Involvement

The majority of the programme areas have struggled to produce robust performance indicators to measure the impact of involving communities. If it is not addressed, then it will be difficult to demonstrate to inspectors and the communities how the council is performing in terms of meeting needs. This is an area where many local authorities are struggling, but ODPM have recently introduced the New Performance Framework to enable local authorities to make real improvements by developing robust Performance Frameworks which has an impact on local people. This is a Framework that the Council should explore to maximise the impact of involving communities in the shaping and delivery of council services.

**8. Recommendations**

1. The key recommendation is to develop a joint Community Involvement and Consultation Framework with two separate, but linked action plans for Community Involvement and Consultation. This will set out the future direction of Community Involvement in the Council. This will seek to address Community involvement and Consultation on a corporate level by identifying key objectives to deliver the improvements, identifying good

practice, managing performance and making strategic improvements on Community Involvement and Consultation across the council. It will focus on the importance of robust structures and methods in relation to the 5 identified themes; Community Activity, Service Improvement, Involvement in Decision Making, Organisational Development and Performance Management. It will be supported by the Communications and Marketing Strategy.

2. Work with VAR, NOP, VOICE and REMA to engage communities in the development of the Framework and ensure community ownership of it.
3. Through the development of Area Assemblies and by working with Neighbourhoods, consider new different models of involvement at area level E.g. as applied in Croydon, Bradford and Tower Hamlets could be adopted in Rotherham (please see Appendix 1) and ensuring that communities of interest are not excluded as a result of focusing on communities of place. This will need to be done in partnership with LSP partners.
4. Seek to improve integration of community planning into the Council's Strategic Planning Framework to ensure timely responses to needs and priorities identified by communities e.g. consider adopting best practice from Tower Hamlets (please see Appendix 1).
5. Work closely with the Equalities and Diversity team, External Affairs Team and VAR to develop the capacity of communities of interest to get involved in community activity using similar model applied in Bradford (please see Appendix 1).
6. Work closely with the Performance and Quality Team to develop a robust Performance Framework which responds effectively to the challenges set out in the ODPM's proposed Performance Framework in relation to the enhanced role of the communities in the performance management i.e. increased community ownership and the services more responsive to the needs of local people, ensuring greater accountability to users and partners and also enabling communities to challenge under performance.
7. Work closely with the Communications team to develop effective communication mechanisms to provide information to communities on how they can be involved and what they can be involved in.
8. That the Corporate Community Involvement group continue to be developed and established to oversee the delivery of improved arrangements for Community Involvement with key representatives from all programme areas.

9. Develop a Community Involvement/ Consultation training package and deliver to RMBC staff and members to enable them to understand the importance of involving communities and the most effective methods of involving communities.
10. Work closely with partner organisations to implement Community Involvement effectively particularly in respect to the Compact which will encourage good practice across the borough and better services for the communities.

## 9. Conclusion

This report has clearly illustrated that the Council still has a lot to do to ensure effective community involvement in the Council. The Community Involvement/Consultation Framework will clearly define what Community Involvement means and identify a clear set of objectives against which we can measure our progress in achieving Community Involvement and Consultation in Rotherham. The Framework would enable other strategies such as the Corporate Plan, Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy to provide a better means of involving communities in the key themes that have been identified.

In addition to this, work is ongoing to review the Council's current approaches to consultation, including Rotherham Reachout (to be the focus of a separate report). It is intended that the strategic Framework for Community Involvement/Consultation will seek to bring about improvements across all Community Involvement and Consultation activity, and deliver improved outcomes.

The Framework would act as an overarching document that would provide a key impetus for all the community involvement activity to be co-ordinated effectively and encourage better services as a consequence of involving and consulting communities. Such a Framework should be endorsed by the communities and partners, so that they are aware that the Council is seeking to maximise their performance by involving communities. If the 3 areas of improvement which have been identified as Decision making structures influencing service planning, coordination and measuring the impact of Community Involvement can be improved, then the Council will have taken a huge step in taking forward Community Involvement to a high standard.

## 10. References

1. How to sustain community involvement, [www.renewal.com](http://www.renewal.com)
2. Community Involvement: the Roots of Renaissance? Urban Research Summary 2002 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)
3. (1998) The White Paper, Modern Local Government, DETR.

4. (April 1999), Modernising Local Government, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
5. Larsen, S.L (2004) Facilitating community involvement: practical guidance for practitioners and policy makers, Home Office.
6. (December 2004), Towards self-governing communities, the role of local government in civic renewal, Local Government Association.
7. (May 2004) ODPM Annual Report 2004, ODPM.
8. Egan, J (2004) The Egan Review, skills for sustainable communities, ODPM.
9. Home Office (2004) Firm Foundations, The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building, Civic Renewal Unit.
10. (February 2005) Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter, ODPM.
11. (February 2005) Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Vibrant Local Leadership, ODPM.
12. (March 2005) RMBC Draft Corporate Plan, 2005-2010, (RMBC)
13. (2004) Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2004-2010, (Rotherham Partnership)
14. (July 2004) Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal, (RMBC)
15. (January 2005) Community Development Strategy (revised) (Rotherham Partnership)
16. (December 2004) RMBC Corporate Assessment, (Audit Commission)
17. (August 2001) Best Value Inspection, RMBC Sport and Leisure, (Audit Commission)
18. (February 2005) RMBC Supporting People Programme, (Audit Commission)
19. (December 2004) RMBC ALMO Indicative Inspection, (Audit Commission)
20. (July 2004) RMBC Regeneration Inspection Report, (Audit Commission)
21. (June 2004) RMBC Children's Services Follow Up Inspection (Commission for Social Care Inspection)
22. (October 2004) RMBC Waste Management Inspection Report, (Audit Commission)
23. (2004) CPA 2005 onwards, Key Lines of Enquiry, Initial Assessment (RMBC)
24. (May 2004) Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Single Tier and County Pilot Assessments, Guidance on key lines of enquiry themes and shared priority evaluations, Audit Commission.
25. (2005) Securing better outcomes: developing a new performance framework, ODPM.
26. (April 2005) RMBC Performance Management Framework (RMBC).
27. (May 2005) Customer Access to Services Self Assessment (RMBC)

**Contact Name**

Asim Munir, Principal Community Involvement Officer Ext. 2789 and email. [asim.munir@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:asim.munir@rotherham.gov.uk)