

CABINET

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham. S60
2TH**

Date: Wednesday, 18 January 2012

Time: 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To consider questions from Members of the Public.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st December, 2011 (copy supplied separately)
5. Minutes of a meeting of the Groundworks Trusts Panel held on 12th October, 2011 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 6)
 - Chief Executive to report.
6. Minutes of a meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 15th December, 2011 (herewith) (Pages 7 - 11)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.
7. Minutes of a meeting of the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group held on 16th December, 2011 (herewith) (Pages 12 - 17)
 - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
8. Calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2012/13 (report herewith) (Pages 18 - 21)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.
9. Housing Rent Increase 2012/13 (report herewith) (Pages 22 - 27)
 - Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services to report.
10. Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector (report herewith) (Pages 28 - 50)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.

11. Local Development Framework Consultation Feedback Report (report herewith) (Pages 51 - 57)
 - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
12. Community Budgets and Approach for Troubled Families (report herewith) (Pages 58 - 67)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.

Extra Item:-

13. Out of Hours Service (report herewith) (Pages 68 - 70)
 - Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services to report.
14. Exclusion of the Press and Public.
The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006 – information relates to finance and business affairs).
15. Section 49 Discretionary Hardship Rate Relief (report herewith) (Pages 71 - 74)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.
16. Discretionary Rate Relief Applications (report herewith) (Pages 75 - 77)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.
17. New Discretionary Rate Relief Top Up Applications (report herewith) (Pages 78 - 80)
 - Strategic Director of Resources to report.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	CABINET
2.	Date:	18TH JANUARY, 2012
3.	Title:	GROUNDWORK TRUSTS PANEL – MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12TH OCTOBER, 2011
4.	Directorate:	ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

5. Summary

Minutes of the quarterly meetings with the Groundwork Trusts Panel are submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

6. Recommendation:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Groundwork Trusts Panel held on 12th October, 2011, be received, and the continued excellent partnership work of both Groundwork Trusts be noted.

7. Proposals and Details

The Panel was established in March 2000 to provide a forum to discuss the on-going partnership between the Council and the two Groundwork Trusts in pursuit of the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the Borough.

The two Groundwork Trusts – Groundwork Dearne Valley and Groundwork Creswell - are able to use the quarterly meetings to raise and discuss issues with Councillors and officers.

The Groundwork Trusts make an important contribution to the regeneration of the Borough and to individual local communities. The Groundwork Trusts Panel provides an important opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, and co-ordinate actions to maximise impact and efficiency.

8. Finance

A small fund was established to enable community groups to access third party funding in support of WREN bids. The partnership working arrangements with the two Trusts enables the delivery of a wide range of projects and initiatives.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Without the partnership working with the two Trusts many community based and environmental projects would not be able to be delivered.

Risk that funding for projects may be withdrawn and future funding sources may not be found.

Constraints on budgets of both Groundworks Trusts and the Council.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Sustainability is the heart of the work and operations of the two Groundwork Trusts. The Council and Groundwork Dearne Valley jointly fund a Local Action 21 officer for example.

The joint working of the Council and the Groundwork Trusts provides effective environmental protection, addresses social needs and creates employment opportunities for local people.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Groundwork Trusts Panel held on 12th October, 2011, is attached.

Contacts:- Karl Battersby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, Ext. 23801

Nick Barnes, Greenspaces. Ext. 22882

Tracie Seals, Neighbourhood Services. Ext. 34969

GROUNDWORKS TRUSTS PANEL
12th October, 2011

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Rushforth, Sharman, Swift and Wyatt.

together with:-

Jamie Ferneyhough	Groundwork Dearne Valley
Janet Johnson`	Groundwork Dearne Valley
Rob Saw	Groundwork Dearne Valley
Caralynn Gale	Groundwork Creswell Ashfield and Mansfield
Nick Barnes	Greenspaces, RMBC

48. INTRODUCTIONS/APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Introductions were made and apologies given.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE PANEL HELD ON 13TH JULY, 2011.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th July, 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

50. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES.

Reference was made to a number of key issues.

51. QUARTERLY REPORT - GROUNDWORK CRESWELL.

Caralynn Gale, Education Manager, Groundwork Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield and Cresta Limited, introduced the quarterly report for the period 1st July to 30th September, 2011.

The following items were highlighted:-

- Groundwork Creswell, Ashfield & Mansfield (CAM) continues with its involvement in environmental improvements across the borough.
- This quarter CAM have worked on a number of sites in the Rotherham area to include-

CTF July – Aug

- Thorpe Salvin – Cut back encroaching / overhanging vegetation on footpath from Common Road. Repaired or replaced steps and backfilled with limestone.
- Harthill – Cleared up Woodall Lane play area at the request of the Parish Council following vandalism the previous night.
- Greaseborough Park – Cleared out weeds / rubbish from the hedge line adjacent to Rossiter Road

- The Rotherham CTF team also cleared up and installed fencing and raised beds at Killamarsh infant school allotment.

It was agreed:- That the officer from Groundwork Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield and Cresta Limited, be thanked for their informative report and continued involvement in projects.

52. QUARTERLY REPORT - GROUNDWORK DEARNE VALLEY.

Janet Johnson, Executive Director, Groundwork Dearne Valley, introduced the quarterly report covering the period 1st July to 30th September, 2011.

Jamie reported on:-

Rawmarsh and Other Areas Regeneration:

- Continued to progress the Fitting Future for the Fitz project.
- Continued to support Rawmarsh & Parkgate Partnership.
- Held discussions regarding development of Rosehill Sensory Garden project.

Maltby Regeneration:

- Held steering group meetings working on the Maltby Big Clean Up and organised a day event whereby working with numerous partners we will hold the Maltby Big Clean Up.
- Worked with Maltby Academy School Council to educate on the Maltby Big Clean Up.
- Supported the Model Village Community Association.
- Signed up over 20 young people on the China Town Estate to get involved in a young persons group to work on making the estate a better place to live.

Key Green Space Projects:

- Continued to meet with RMBC staff to identify a number of priority green space projects throughout the Borough.

Health Activity:

- Staff members attended formal walk leader training course.

Rotherham in Root:

- Developing activities to further this campaign to get more Rotherham residents growing their own food.

Allotments:

- Very useful meeting held to look at how Groundwork can support Council initiatives and enable more Rotherham residents to take up allotments.

Dearne Valley Eco-Vision:

- Community Champions meeting held
- Green Doctors operating in Brampton Bierlow

Turning the Corner (Youth Work):

- Continued delivery of the 'Bloomin Lovely' project working with shop owners.
- Completed phase 1 of Alpine Shops improvements. The funding of £8,000 has now been secured to complete the second phase of the project to redevelop the central soft landscaped area.
- Continued development of the Fellowsfield Way clean up project in Kimberworth.
- Delivery of two 'Charity CD' projects with young people from Wingfield Business & Enterprise College & Winterhill Comprehensive School.
- Completion of the 'BMX roadshow' project based around Rosehill Skatepark facility.
- Completion of an overnight residential to Crowden with young people from Rawmarsh.

Volunteering:

- Continue to actively seek and recruit volunteers into numerous roles within the Trust.

Outdoor Explorers:

- Currently exploring the feasibility of delivery of an 'outdoor explorers' project in Rotherham, aimed at young people and their families.

Garden Projects:

- Progress on developing ideas and identifying suitable sites for 'demonstration' front garden projects

Cadbury Spots v Stripes:

- Throughout the quarter held 21 events in Rotherham alongside partners such as RMBC Green Spaces, China Town TARA, Rockingham 33 TARA, and Maltby Crags Wood Lee Common Steering Group.
- Worked with several partners to draw up events for the future.
- Worked with the 5 Games Ambassadors to run the events.
- Held two really successful skate/BMX jams at both Maltby and Rawmarsh skate parks.

Miscellaneous Regeneration projects:

- Lodge Lane Primary Wildlife Garden- Initial discussions have taken place with the Area Assembly and the Aston TARA.
- Supporting the Brampton BMX Track

Rob Saw reported on:-

Alternative Curriculum Activity:

- We continue to work in partnership with Swinton High School and Milton school, we are also now working with pupils from Wingfield, Clifton, Oakwood and Wath schools on either horticultural training or cycle maintenance courses.

Rotherham NEETs:

- All our current NEETs participants have now finished and the majority have achieved a successful outcome.
- We are actively recruiting to try and reduce the NEETs numbers even further.

Future Jobs Fund:

- Continuation of FJF programme, on a number of sites throughout the Rotherham area.
- Programme has now come to an end.

Bikes 4 All Programme:

- No activities have taken place this quarter.

Groundwork Environmental Services (Dearne Valley) Limited:

- No work has been undertaken by GES this quarter

Various matters were discussed, including the following:-

- Maltby Clean Up
- Dearne Valley Community Champions
- Bikeability
- Woodside Allotments, Swinton
- Mural for the Fitzwilliam Estate
- Garden Projects

It was agreed:- That officers from Groundwork Dearne Valley be thanked for their informative report and continued involvement in projects.

53. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Reference was made to action at the Alpine Shops, Kimberworth.

54. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PANEL AS:-

Wednesday, 18th January, 2012 at 2.30 p.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	CABINET
2.	Date:	18TH JANUARY, 2012
3.	Title:	MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL – MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER, 2011
4.	Directorate:	RESOURCES

5. Summary

To consider Members' training matters.

6. Recommendations

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 15th December, 2011.

7. Proposals and Details

To ensure implementation of the Council's Training and Development Policy in accordance with the meeting's Terms of Reference.

8. Finance

The Panel has its own training budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Without proper training and support being in place there is a risk that Members' capacity to make decisions is not soundly based.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

To consider best practice in relation to Member training and development.

The aim is for every Elected Member to be given suitable opportunities for development and training to help support all aspects of their role.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 15th December, 2011 is attached.

Contact Name : Deborah Fellowes, Policy Manager, Resources Directorate – Tel. 01709 822769 deborah.fellowes@rotherham.gov.uk

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
THURSDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2011**

Present:- Councillor Stone (in the Chair); Councillors Buckley, Dodson, Lakin, Pickering, G. A. Russell, Sharman, Smith, Welbourn and Wootton.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Gosling.

67. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th September, 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

68. REVISED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2011

Consideration was given to the above Strategy which had been reviewed and updated to reflect the current priorities and direction of the Council in light of changing Government agendas.

The core programme had been updated to reflect the various roles of Members and the challenges presented in terms of Member skills and knowledge. In particular the Council Vision and priority outcomes had been updated together with the business values.

The Strategy provided for 6 monthly reviews of training programmes by the Panel. It was proposed that the Panel reviewed attendance and feedback from events in February and July. Whilst it provided for Members to complete their Personal Development Plans, it currently did not include a target and timeframe in which they should be completed. Other Councils also set targets for a minimum level of annual development hours for each Elected Member.

Agreed:- (1) That the revised Member Development Strategy be agreed.

(2) That a target of 80% completed Personal Development Plans on an annual basis be supported.

(3) That a commitment be made that there be compulsory elements of training e.g. Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, Emergency Planning.

69. MORE (MEMBER ONLINE RESOURCE ENVIRONMENT)

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Members Online Resource Environment (MORE) which had gone live in November. A development group, supported by RIEP funding and the LGYH, had been working on the development of an online resource area for Elected Members.

The purpose of the site was to provide Members with a single point of reference for a range of development resources including upcoming events, conferences and seminars, topical updates and briefings, resources from recent programmes and events, e-learning and specially commissioned resources around crucial topics.

At a later date the site would be developed to provide automated updates on

new resources and a password protected area for Members to exchange ideas and share information.

The development group had requested member representation on a reference group which would look at development of the site and agree content.

It was noted that Councillor Hussain had expressed an interest in becoming the Champion for this project.

Agreed:- (1) That the availability of the MORE website (www.more.lgyh.gov.uk) be noted.

(2) That the sharing of appropriate locally developed resources via the site be agreed.

(3) That Member involvement in the development of and publicity relating to the site be agreed.

(4) That information be circulated to Panel Members on the work of the development group.

70. UPDATED AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to training events that had taken/were to take place during the Autumn, 2011. Planning had started on the Spring Programme.

It was noted that information had been received from the Region on a Local Government Finance Policy Update conference for Elected Members with responsibility for Finance in Yorkshire and the Humber.

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

(2) That the Spring Programme be submitted to the next Panel meeting.

(3) That the conference be referred to the Deputy Leader, Chair of the Audit Committee and the Self-Regulation Select Committee.

71. REPORT GUIDANCE

Caroline Webb, Scrutiny and Member Support Services, reported that this was an outstanding issue from the Member Development Charter.

It had been hoped to submit the report to the meeting, however, the Plain Language Guidance and the report template was currently being reviewed.

Agreed:- That Tracy Holmes, Communications and Marketing, attend the next meeting of this Panel and report on this issue.

72. ILM LEVEL 3 AND 4 PROGRAMMES

Consideration was given to 2 weekend residential courses being held at Northern College, Barnsley, on Leadership and Management Qualifications for Councillors.

The Level 3 Award in Leadership and Management was to be held on 20th-22nd January and 3rd-5th February, 2012 and the Level 4 Award in Leadership on 24th-26th February and 9th-11th March, 2012.

Agreed:- (1) That the information be circulated to all Members to seek expressions of interest

(2) That the recently Elected Members be offered the opportunity of attending the above courses.

73. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- (1) That future meetings be held bi-monthly.

(2) That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel take place on Thursday, 16th February, 2012 at 2.00 p.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	CABINET
2.	Date:	18TH JANUARY, 2012
3.	Title:	MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) MEMBERS' STEERING GROUP HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2011
4.	Programme Area:	ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

5. Summary

In accordance with Minute No. B29 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th August, 2004, minutes of the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group are submitted to the Cabinet.

A copy of the minutes of the LDF Members' Steering Group held on 16th December, 2011 is therefore attached.

6. Recommendations:-

That progress to date and the emerging issues be noted, and the minutes be received.

7. Proposals and Details

The Council is required to review the Unitary Development Plan and to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The proposed policy change of the new Coalition Government should be noted re: the Localism Bill and implications for the LDF.

8. Finance

The resource and funding implications as the LDF work progresses should be noted.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- Failure to comply with the Regulations.
- Consultation and responses to consultation.
- Aspirations of the community.
- Changing Government policy and funding regimes.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

There are local, sub-region and regional implications. The Local Development Scheme will form the spatial dimension of the Council's Community Strategy.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Minutes of, and reports to, the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group.

Attachments:-

- A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December, 2011.

**Contact Name : Karl Battersby, Strategic Director,
Environment and Development Services
Ext 3801
karl.battersby@rotherham.gov.uk**

**ROTHERHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP
16th December, 2011**

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Dodson, Doyle, Hussain, McNeely, Pickering, Whelbourn and Wyatt.

1. INTRODUCTIONS/APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies for absence submitted from Councillors Hughes, Jack and Whysall.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER, 2011

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Agreed:- That the minutes be approved as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING.

Councillor Hussain drew attention to communications issues regarding the LDF consultation and emphasised the need to keep all Ward Councillors informed. It was accepted that this consultation had the possibility of involving hundreds of sites and many members of the public, and that whilst there had been a very extensive consultation exercise, it was not possible to cover every site individually.

Resolved:- That the consultation procedures and responses be kept under constant review with a view to every one involved having their views heard.

4. LOCALISM ACT

Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader introduced a report on the Localism Act and stated that the Localism Bill received Royal Assent on 15 Nov 2011. The report considered the implications of this changed context for the planning system and the preparation of Rotherham's Local Development Framework.

The Act aims to significantly decentralise power and decision making. The reforms cover the broad areas of:

- strengthening local democracy
- community empowerment
- reforming the planning system
- social housing reform

Part 6 of the Act addressed changes to the planning system. The measures were outlined below.

Plans and Strategies

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Neighbourhood planning

Enforcement

Nationally significant infrastructure

2 ROTHERHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP - 16/12/11

It was noted that the Act could have significant impact on decisions to develop sites in Rotherham, possibly outside of the existing planning controls.

Resolved:- (1) That the report relating to the potential implications of the Localism Act for the planning system and the Local Development Framework be noted.

(2) That the Planning Board be asked to consider the Neighbourhood Planning consultation.

5. LDF ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to a report introduced by Neil Rainsforth, Principal Planner, which stated that the Council was required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Framework. The draft 2011 Annual Monitoring Report was ready for submission to Government.

Annual Monitoring Reports were required to cover the financial year preceding December publication - this seventh AMR covers the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. It sets out a monitoring framework which was evolving incrementally as the first round of planning documents and policies were prepared and additional ones were brought forward in the future. Accordingly, this seventh AMR builds on some of the initial broad principles to guide the monitoring of the developing LDF as well as a selection of performance indicators based on data that was most readily available.

Resolved:- That the submission of the 2011 Annual Monitoring Report to Government be agreed.

6. LDF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT

Consideration was given to a report introduced by Helen Sleigh, Principal Planner which stated that the Core Strategy (and the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document) Consultation Feedback Report summarised the key planning issues put forward in writing during the consultation period Monday 4th July 2011 to Friday 16th September 2011, it provided a summary of the key planning issues arising from the workshops held with communities of interest. An interim summary report was presented to Members of the Local Development Framework Steering Group on the 2nd November, 2011.

The Consultation Feedback Report summarised the number of representations received; the key planning issues put forward in writing during the consultation period Monday 4th July 2011 to Friday 16th September 2011; and a summary of the key or most pertinent planning issues arising from the workshops held with communities of interest. The "actions" arising from the consultation would guide the drafting of the publication version of the Core Strategy prior to its "submission" to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. These actions would also guide the drafting of policies for the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document and will assist in the allocation of sites.

Resolved:- (1) That the Feedback Report be noted.

(2) That the Feedback Report be submitted to Cabinet for approval prior to publication.

7. PROPOSED CORE STRATEGY CHANGES

Consideration was given to a report introduced by Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner which set out the proposed changes to the Core Strategy to date arising from the consultation undertaken earlier this year. These changes will be used to prepare the Publication Core Strategy. Subject to approval by the Council, the Publication Core Strategy will be published for consultation in 2012.

In preparing the Publication Core Strategy regard will be had to:

Consultation comments and feedback
Recommendations of the Integrated Impact Assessment
The Localism Act and emerging changes to national planning policy
Whether any elements of the Regional Strategy should be retained (assuming that these documents will be abolished by the Government)
Legal advice
Feedback from consultants as a result of our involvement in the Planning Advisory Service's Direct Support programme
The outcome of cross boundary discussions with neighbouring authorities

Resolved:- That the proposed changes to the Core Strategy identified to date be noted and the report be updated for consideration at the next meeting.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING VIABILITY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report introduced by Nicholas Ward, Principal Planner, which stated that Rotherham's Affordable Housing Viability Study was a key part of the evidence base which would support and inform preparation of the Local Development Framework, and inform planning decisions. A draft update produced to ensure that the evidence supporting policies requiring affordable housing provision on new housing developments was kept up to date.

Rotherham's first Affordable Housing Viability Study was completed in 2007 by West of England University and provided a key element of the evidence base for the Council's Affordable Interim Planning Statement (IPS) adopted in 2008. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) required that policies securing affordable housing provision as part of housing developments were supported by two pieces of evidence; firstly a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) establishing levels of need and, secondly, an assessment of the financial viability of various levels of affordable housing.

Resolved:- That the report and the findings of the draft study be noted.

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9. RENEWABLE ENERGY AND LOW CARBON STUDY

Consideration was given to a report introduced by David Edwards, Area and Environmental Planning Team Leader which stated that Wardell Armstrong had been commissioned to prepare a report on Rotherham's Low Carbon and Renewable Energy resource. This had been required to enhance the evidence base to underpin proposals and policies within the Local Development Framework for the promotion of low carbon and renewable energy through the planning system.

There was a widely accepted need to plan for, adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. Proposals to do so within the Local Development Framework (LDF) were likely to be subject to scrutiny as part of Core Strategy examination. To be found sound at examination such proposals must be supported by a robust evidence base.

As part of preparation of the then Integrated Regional Strategy, Local Government for Yorkshire and Humber (LYGH) commissioned AECOM to prepare a report into the 'Low carbon and renewable energy capacity in Yorkshire and Humber'. Issued in April 2011 this was of some use to preparation of Rotherham's LDF but lacked the level of detail considered necessary to properly inform preparation of local policies and proposals.

Resolved:- (1) That Wardell Armstrong's Report on Rotherham's Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Resource as part of the evidence base for the ongoing preparation of the Local Development Framework be noted.

(2) That a copy of the report be provided to Dave Richmond.

10. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY STUDY

David Edwards, Area and Environmental Planning Team Leader gave a presentation setting out the latest position with this Study.

Various options for the Community Infrastructure Levy were being reviewed.

Resolved:- That the position be noted.

11. BASSINGTHORPE FARM PLAN

David Edwards gave an update on informal discussions with representatives of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates on the options for the possible development of this area.

Resolved:- That the position be noted.

12. NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting be held on 20th January, 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET
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1)	Meeting:	Cabinet
2)	Date:	18th January 2012
3)	Title:	Calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2012/13
4)	Directorate:	Financial Services

5. Summary

This report provides details of the calculation of the Authority's proposed Council Tax base for the 2012/13 financial year. In accordance with the regulations governing its calculation it is determined that the tax base for the financial year 2012/13 is **75,898.06** Band D Equivalent Properties.

6 Recommendations

That Cabinet is asked to:

- **resolve that the amount calculated by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council as its Council Tax Base and those of the Parish Councils shown at Appendix A for 2012/13 shall be a total of 75,898.06 Band D equivalent properties.**

7 Proposals and Details

- 7.1 Regulations under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require the Council to calculate its annual Council Tax Base before 31 January in the preceding financial year. Although this duty was in the past reserved for full Council, since 2003 it has been possible for Cabinet to determine the Tax Base by resolution, however the deadline of 31 January remains unchanged. Setting the Tax Base is a precursor within the Budget setting process to the determination of the Council Tax level.
- 7.2 The Regulations set out the formula for the calculation and the estimated Tax Base is shown in Appendix A. The Council Tax Base is derived from the total number of properties within the Council's area as at the 1st December 2011, which, in the opinion of the Listing Officer, were subject to Council Tax.
- 7.3 The Council Tax Base however must reflect several changes and adjustments that will occur both prior to April 2012 and during the forthcoming 2012/13 financial year such as:
- Changes in banding as a result of adjustments and appeals;
 - The completion of new properties;
 - Discounts, exemptions and reliefs (for example, single person discounts -25%, the empty property discount of 50% and reductions in liabilities for disabled persons).
- 7.4 After allowing for the additions, discounts and reliefs the estimated property base is converted into Band D Equivalent properties, giving a total of **78,245.41** Band D Equivalents. Appendix A provides details of the total for both parished and non-parished areas.
- 7.5 It is recommended that an adjustment of 3% should be made to the tax base in respect of non-collection, giving a total of **75,898.06** Band D equivalents. The result of applying the 97% collection rate to the Band D Equivalents for each of the parishes within the Borough and for the Borough as a whole is shown in the final column of Appendix A attached. The Tax Base for the Council as a whole (both parished and unparished areas) is made up as follows:

<u>Tax Band</u>	<u>Band D Equivalent Properties</u>
Band A	34,549.24
Band B	14,738.21
Band C	11,380.30
Band D	7,492.28
Band E	4,668.44
Band F	2,123.35
Band G	897.25
Band H	48.99
TOTAL	<u>75,898.06</u>

- 7.6 Compared to 2011/12 the Council's Tax Base for 2012/13 has increased by just over 586 Band D equivalent properties or 0.78%.

The increase in the unparished area is 455.22 Band D equivalents. Of this 366.50 Band D equivalents have been estimated as new properties that will be completed between now and 31 March 2013. The Council is experiencing an increase in the development of new properties throughout the unparished area, with a large proportion of the new build activity in the Wath area. The remainder of the increase relates to general changes in discounts, exemptions, bandings and reliefs

There is also new development underway throughout the parished areas, giving an increase of 131.26 Band D equivalent properties with the most significant rise in terms of new build properties being in Bramley.

8 Finance

There are no direct costs arising from this report – however determining the Council Tax Base is a fundamental part of the determining the level of Council Tax set, which is a significant element of the Council's resources for the coming financial year.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

As the Council Tax base must be set by the 31 January 2012, it contains projections in respect of the additions, adjustments, discounts and reliefs to be granted before the 31 March 2012 and during 2012/13.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The setting of the Council Tax Base is essential in underpinning all parts of the Council's activities.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations (Statutory Instruments 1992 no.612 and 1999 no.3123).
- Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base/Supply of Information) Regulations 1992 (Statutory Instrument 2904).
- Section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003

Contact Name:

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Appendix A – Rotherham MBC Tax Base 2012/13

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL	LESS 3%	BASE
Aston	1,470.54	1,362.91	686.44	587.80	492.85	118.10	19.60	1.00	4,739.24	142.17	4,597.07
Brampton Bierlow	701.40	149.10	92.20	238.30	140.90	0.00	1.70	0.00	1,323.60	39.71	1,283.89
Brinsworth	843.20	1,256.70	300.00	113.30	12.80	1.40	0.00	0.00	2,527.40	75.82	2,451.58
Catcliffe	360.50	118.40	86.40	23.00	0.00	0.70	0.00	0.00	589.00	17.67	571.33
Orgreave	27.20	171.70	21.80	1.00	0.00	1.40	0.00	0.00	223.10	6.69	216.41
Treeton	463.10	177.17	33.10	133.50	85.60	16.60	0.00	1.00	910.07	27.30	882.77
Ulley	11.30	7.80	13.10	9.80	13.70	9.34	3.30	0.00	68.34	2.05	66.29
Wentworth	42.50	110.40	119.10	114.80	103.60	63.60	42.50	4.00	600.50	18.02	582.48
Whiston	453.20	393.59	353.30	131.00	214.50	93.90	50.40	4.00	1,693.89	50.82	1,643.07
Anston	558.70	1,158.68	416.44	396.00	371.80	179.08	41.70	6.50	3,128.90	93.87	3,035.03
Dinnington	1,350.50	360.70	344.84	461.00	88.00	36.50	12.50	2.00	2,656.04	79.68	2,576.36
Firbeck	7.40	19.60	15.60	12.50	29.90	33.20	22.50	0.00	140.70	4.22	136.48
Gildingwells	2.50	1.60	0.90	7.80	12.20	16.60	1.70	0.00	43.30	1.30	42.00
Harthill	177.80	83.80	102.40	110.50	93.81	84.50	37.90	0.00	690.71	20.72	669.99
Letwell	2.50	1.90	0.70	5.00	17.70	20.90	15.40	0.00	64.10	1.92	62.18
Thorpe Salvin	10.80	8.80	13.80	32.30	38.20	57.80	40.80	2.00	204.50	6.14	198.36
Todwick	37.30	77.30	80.90	257.30	129.90	52.40	45.40	0.00	680.50	20.42	660.08
Wales	934.57	412.44	424.42	248.00	116.10	60.30	22.90	0.00	2,218.73	66.56	2,152.17
Woodsetts	78.10	201.30	136.00	93.30	61.10	38.60	25.40	6.00	639.80	19.19	620.61
Bramley	743.37	422.19	690.03	428.00	201.02	14.40	5.80	1.00	2,505.81	75.17	2,430.64
Dalton	1,483.47	403.89	589.60	211.50	251.50	27.40	11.30	0.00	2,978.66	89.36	2,889.30
Hooton Levitt	5.00	8.60	1.80	4.50	15.00	15.90	6.70	1.00	58.50	1.76	56.74
Hooton Roberts	7.00	2.10	7.60	13.50	27.20	17.30	9.60	0.00	84.30	2.53	81.77
Laughton	112.90	57.00	41.80	115.30	77.00	52.70	26.70	0.00	483.40	14.50	468.90
Ravenfield	122.80	113.00	284.44	240.50	207.20	101.10	12.90	0.00	1,081.94	32.45	1,049.49
Thrybergh	874.60	52.70	55.80	56.50	39.71	40.10	13.30	0.00	1,132.71	33.98	1,098.73
Thurcroft	1,183.30	281.90	261.33	191.50	66.62	29.20	22.90	0.00	2,036.75	61.10	1,975.65
Wickersley	249.20	765.30	612.18	282.30	306.54	376.60	204.60	1.00	2,797.72	83.93	2,713.79
Maltby	2,742.30	691.80	686.70	557.80	97.20	30.70	37.50	2.00	4,846.00	145.38	4,700.62
Hellaby	29.70	182.80	22.70	16.30	6.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	258.20	7.75	250.45
TOTAL PARISHED	15,086.75	9,055.17	6,495.42	5,093.90	3,318.35	1,590.32	735.00	31.50	41,406.41	1,242.18	40,164.23
TOTAL UNPARISHED	20,531.02	6,138.86	5,236.85	2,630.10	1,494.47	598.70	190.00	19.00	36,839.00	1,105.17	35,733.83
TOTALS	35,617.77	15,194.03	11,732.27	7,724.00	4,812.82	2,189.02	925.00	50.50	78,245.41	2,347.35	75,898.06
LESS 3%	34,549.24	14,738.21	11,380.30	7,492.28	4,668.44	2,123.35	897.25	48.99	75,898.06		

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18 January 2012
3.	Title:	Housing Rent Increase 2012/13
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Services

5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members for the proposed housing rent, new build rents, garage rent, heating charge and communal facilities increases for 2012/13.

6.0 Recommendations

CABINET IS ASKED TO NOTE THE CONTENT OF THIS REPORT AND APPROVE:

- **AN AVERAGE RENT INCREASE OF 9.45% BASED ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG) RENT FORMULA WHICH RESULTS IN AN AVERAGE WEEKLY INCREASE OF £6.02 WHEN COLLECTED OVER 48 WEEKS.**
- **AN AVERAGE RENT OF £95.57 ON NEW BUILD COUNCIL PROPERTIES**
- **THAT IN LINE WITH THE ANNUAL RETAIL PRICE INDEX GARAGE RENTS ARE INCREASED BY 5.6%**
- **THAT IN LINE WITH THE ANNUAL RETAIL PRICE INDEX THE STANDARD COMMUNAL FACILITIES CHARGE IS INCREASED BY 5.6%. IN ADDITION FOR SCHEMES WHICH HAVE A LAUNDRY SERVICE AS PART OF THEIR COMMUNAL FACILITY, AN ADDITIONAL FEE OF 80P PER WEEK WILL BE CHARGED. FOR THESE SCHEMES, LAUNDRY FACILITIES WILL THEN BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE.**
- **THAT IN LINE WITH THE ANNUAL RETAIL PRICE INDEX THE STANDARD COOKING GAS CHARGE IS INCREASED BY 5.6%.**
- **THE VARIOUS PROPOSED INCREASES TO HEATING CHARGES OUTLINED IN SECTION 7 OF THIS REPORT**

7.0 Proposals and Details

Council Rent Setting

- 7.1 The financial climate for many people living in Rotherham is extremely challenging and historically wherever possible this authority has sought to restrain annual charge increases, however since 2002/03 DCLG has required all authorities to use a prescribed Formula to calculate each tenants rent and to apply annual increases to actual rents to achieve the Formula Rent (Formula Rent is the rent set under rent restructuring). This formula for 2012/13 produces an average rent increase for RMBC tenants of 9.45%. The consequences of not following this formula are addressed elsewhere in this report.
- 7.2 The Government expects that all similar properties in the same local area will have similar rent levels, even if properties are owned by different landlords. This process is known as 'rent convergence'. Rotherham Council Dwelling rents are expected to achieve rent convergence by 2015/16. It should be noted that Rotherham rents still rank as some of the lowest in the country.
- 7.3 The average rent for 2011/12 was £63.61 collected over 48 weeks. The proposed 2012/13 average weekly rent using the government formula, collected over 48 weeks would rise to £69.63, an increase of £6.02 per week (over 48 weeks).
- 7.4 Total housing rent income generated through the proposed revised weekly rents is estimated to be £68.4m in 2012/13.
- 7.5 The Council secured grants of £15.3m for the building of 132 new Council properties, all of which recently became available for social tenant occupation. For these dwellings, the funding model assumed that rents would be aligned to the Councils existing rent structure based on these dwellings having a higher property value (than existing stock), the rent is set higher than those of the existing stock. Consequently the proposed average rent to be charged across all new build properties will be £95.57 over 48 weeks based on the formula of RPI plus 0.5%.

Housing Self Financing Determination

- 7.6 On 5 October 2010 the Government announced its intention to replace the existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system with a devolved system of council housing finance called self-financing from 1st April 2012.

The stated purpose of the new arrangements is to:

- Give local authorities the resources, incentives and flexibility they need to manage their own housing stock for the long term; and

- Give tenants greater transparency and accountability as to how the rent collected is spent on the services provided.

A 30 year Business Plan has been developed to give indicative income and expenditure for the short, medium and long term.

Key to this Business Plan is the requirement to ensure that rents converge by 2015/16 and increase in line with national guidelines of RPI + 0.5% thereafter. For every 1% reduction below the proposed rent increase would result in a loss of rent income to the Council of £697k (or for tenants an average reduction of 70p per week over 48 weeks), which over the 30 years would significantly reduce the resources available for enhancing the Council's dwelling stock and improving related housing services for tenants.

- 7.7 The Draft HRA Baseline Self Financing Determination for 2012/13 was released for consultation by Central Government on 21st November 2011.

The Determination supplies key data to be used in uplifting rents, including the continuation of the limit on the annual increase an individual can be charged at Retail Price Index (5.6% for 2012/13) plus 0.5% plus £2 per week, where full rent convergence is not yet achieved. Applying this limit results in an average rent increase of 9.45% in 2012/13 as referred to in paragraph 7.3 in this report.

As a comparator the RPI in September 2010 was 4.6% resulting in an average rent increase in 2011-12 of 8.69%

Garage Rents

- 7.8 The Council has continued with its garage site improvement programme investing £200k in 2011/12 in addition to the £1.9m over the last 5 years. It is therefore proposed to increase the rents in line with RPI (5.6%) as in 2011/12. This would increase the rent from £4.50 to £4.75 per week in 2012/3 for Council tenants.

It is also proposed that garage plot sites are also increased by RPI, therefore for a surfaced site the charge would increase from £50 per annum to £52.80 in 2012/13 and for non-surfaced sites from £45 to £47.52 per annum.

District Heating

- 7.9 The council operates 3 distinct district heating schemes:

- A pooled metered scheme;
- An unmetered scheme at Beeversleigh; and
- Switch 2 card meter scheme at Swinton

Each scheme has a separate charging scheme.

- 7.10 In 2007/08, the Cabinet Member approved a three year strategy for ensuring the full recovery of district heating costs. Due to ongoing and significant increases in the prices of gas and utility charges in general, this strategy has yet to be fully realised. Despite these rises, to try and ensure that heating is affordable for Rotherham tenants, it is proposed to increase charges by the rate of inflation (RPI).
- 7.11 The proposed charges for pooled schemes excluding St Ann's (984 properties) in 2012/13 are:-

Pooled district heating charges			
	2012/13	% Increase	2011/12
Unit Cost KWh	6.55p	5.6%	6.2p
Pre-payment Charges per week			
Bedsit	£12.80	5.6%	£12.12
1 Bed	£14.90	5.6%	£14.11
2 Bed	£17.10	5.6%	£16.19
3/4 Bed	£19.78	5.6%	£18.73

The unit cost in the table above is an amount that tenants pay for each kWh of gas consumed. This is measured by individual dwelling meters fitted on the district heating system. The pre-payment charge is the weekly charge that is raised through the rents system to pay for the heating charges – on average the majority of residents should be in credit by the year end and therefore receive a refund from the scheme. This approach has been particularly well received by elderly residents who previously struggled to pay year end charges.

- 7.12 It is proposed to increase the unit rate charged from 6.2 pence per kWh to 6.55 pence per kWh, an increase of 5.6% in line with RPI.
- 7.13 It is also proposed to increase all of the pooled scheme pre-payments in 2012/13 by 5.6% in line with the unit rate increase.
- 7.14 St Ann's (73 properties) has recently been added to the pooled scheme in 2011/12. The Council agreed in April 2011 to bring charges at St. Ann's into line with the pooled metered schemes over three years.

The proposal for the 2012/13 (year 2) fixed weekly payment is shown in the table below.

St Ann's	Proposed	Actual
----------	----------	--------

	Charge 2012/13	Charge 2011/12
1 Bed	£12.80	£10.00
2 Bed	£14.90	£12.00
3 Bed	£19.78	£17.84

- 7.15 Beeverleigh (48 properties) is not part of the pooled, metered district heating scheme. It is proposed that their charges are increased as follows to bring more into line with the pooled schemes:

Beeversleigh	Proposed Charge 2012/13	Actual Charge 2011/12
One bed flat	£14.90	£13.79
Two bed flat	£17.10	£15.52

- 7.16 A third category of district heating is the dwellings charged by the installation of "switch 2" card meters. This is now only in operation at Swinton (238 properties). It is proposed that the charges are increased from 3.91 pence per kWh to 4.5 pence per kWh. This amounts to an increase of 15% which is continuing progression towards the recovery of the costs relating to the dwellings and towards the same unit rate as the pooled schemes.
- 7.17 The Council also charges for cooking gas facility at 77p per week (over 48 weeks). It is proposed to increase the charge by RPI (5.6%), which in 2012/13 will increase to 81p per week.

Communal Facilities

- 7.18 The Communal charge for Neighbourhood Centres was increased in 2011/12 by inflation to £4.27 (4.6%) per week to cover increased costs of the service. For 2012/13 it is proposed to increase the charge by inflation (5.6%) taking the standard charge to £4.50. However, for centres with laundry facilities it is proposed to increase the charge by a further 80p to £5.30 per week subject to a review of this facility, this will replace the existing system where the use of the laundry facilities is charged for at £1 for each occasion.

8.0 Risks and Uncertainties

The greatest risk and uncertainty surrounds the level of rent income received into the Housing Revenue Account. This is dependent upon the number of properties available to generate income. The level of properties is directly affected by the level of sales and demolitions which may vary to those used in the budget assumptions. Due to the current economic climate it is unlikely that RMBC will see any significant sales.

It is possible that rent income may fall and arrears may rise, this would affect the amount of income received and therefore be reflected in housing revenue account balances.

All budgets carry a certain level of risk in that unforeseen circumstances may arise, causing additional pressures on the level of resources applied.

9.0 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposals contained within this report are in line with Council priorities and policies, as established and set out in key planning documents. The aim is to deliver effective, value-for-money services for people within Rotherham.

10.0 Background Papers and Consultation

The Draft HRA Baseline Self Financing Determination for 2012/13 – DCLG – 21st November 2011

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18th January, 2012
3.	Title:	Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector
4.	Directorate:	Resources All wards

5. Summary

The attached report sets out the findings and recommendations of the *Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector*, undertaken by members of the former Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel. The report and recommendations were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, at its meeting of 16 December 2011.

6. Recommendations

- a. That Cabinet receive the report;
- b. That Cabinet's response to the recommendations be fed back to OSMB within two months of its submission.

7. Proposals and Details

The former Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel undertook a scrutiny review into the “private rented sector”.

With high numbers of people seeking affordable housing across all sectors; the availability of decent properties to rent is an ongoing concern. This is reflected anecdotally in surgery reports from councillors who had both private sector tenants coming to them for advice and also local people concerned at the upkeep of private properties in their areas. There were other concerns raised through Area Assemblies and Safer Neighbourhood Teams about the condition of properties and impact on wider community.

Issues discussed include:

- The very short supply of housing in the social housing sector - both council and housing association and the changing economic circumstances of people entering the housing market during a recession;
- Proposed national changes to housing benefit which would see a reduction in local housing allowances;
- Shortages of affordable decent, private rented accommodation in some areas of the borough. Whilst social housing stock has been brought up to decent homes standards, there are pockets of poorly maintained and sub-standard properties in the private sector;
- The impact of poor maintained housing stock and tenant churn on the wider community;
- Tenant and landlord accreditation schemes;
- Difficulties of absentee landlords;
- Success of local initiatives to engage landlords; however, pressure on resources has meant a reduction in proactive work which may undermine these successes.

7.1 The review began its evidence gathering in summer 2010, concluding in early 2011. Unfortunately, because of staffing pressures it has not been possible to produce the report until this point.

7.2 The recommendations from the review are detailed in Section 7 of the review and include:

- The production of a long term sustainable development and action plan to improve the physical fabric of the Private Rental Sector in the borough, in line with neighbourhood based regeneration initiatives, local priorities and reflecting changes in Government Policy.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are aligned to the delivery of the action plan and that working practices across relevant teams are co-ordinated to support it.
- Alongside the Action Plan, the council should seek to engage landlords, tenants and councillors in its work
- There should be a re-launch of the Private Landlord Accreditation scheme built on the best of the models developed by other authorities

- That the Council takes robust enforcement action against those landlords (or tenants) who persistently disregard their responsibilities
- Consideration should be given to the Council's use of its powers to bring properties back into use
- Support is given to local agencies such as RoBond to ensure that vulnerable tenants have access to affordable bond guarantees, assistance and advice
- Designating one of the Advisers to the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods to a watching brief on the role of the private rented sector in Rotherham.

8. Finance

A number of the review recommendations may have financial implications if adopted. This would require further exploration by the Strategic Leadership Team and Partners on the cost, risks and benefits of their implementation.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is a risk that interventions will be short term and not achieve a sustainable impact. To avoid this, we will need to ensure that any new approaches are properly embedded within the council and partner agencies.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

see main report

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The report has been circulated to key individuals that participated in the review for their comments and to check for factual accuracy.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 16 December, 2011

Contact Name:

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Scrutiny review “The private rented sector in Rotherham”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review was initiated because Members had raised concerns about problems with private sector rented housing in their wards, notably Dinnington. There were also concerns at changes to housing policy and the impact this may have on the private rented sector.

The aim of the review is:

- To find out what current policies & practices around the Private Rented Sector in Rotherham are and how they operate
- To identify any gaps in the service and any areas of work for further development.

The review group was made up of the following members of

- Chair: Cllr Alan Atkin
- Cllr Sue Ellis
- Cllr Jenny Andrews
- Cllr Andrew Roddison

In addition to Council officers, the group spoke to witnesses to give information and opinions to the review and undertook site visits.

Summary of Findings

- The very short supply of housing in the social housing sector - both council and housing association, coupled with shortages of affordable decent, private rented accommodation in some areas of the borough;
- Proposed national changes in local housing allowances and homelessness duties the potential impact this may have on people on low incomes and other vulnerable people renting in the private sector;
- The importance of maintaining advice and support to tenants either through the Community Protection Unit or through third sector organisations such as RoBond or Shelter;
- Examples of proactive work to engage with landlord’s forums and bring empty properties back into use or poorly maintained properties up to decent standards; however the removal of funding means that this work may not be sustained;
- Many areas have experienced ‘tenant churn’ with ‘problem’ tenants moving from street to street. This has compounded some of the problems of anti-social behaviour, vandalism or littering experienced in those areas;
- Examples of tenant and landlord accreditation schemes that have worked in other parts of the country;
- Evidence has shown that there are difficulties in some areas with landlords who do not maintain their properties to decent standards, are absent, or in some cases do not treat their tenants with respect. In light of this there is a need to balance the ‘carrot and stick’; incentivising positive relationships whilst pursuing rigorous enforcement activity if necessary.
- With the reduction in resources, the need to examine how different parts of the council work and communicate effectively with each other, with landlords and tenants to contribute to a thriving, decent private rented sector.

Key Recommendations

1. The production of a long term sustainable development and action plan to improve the physical fabric of the Private Rental Sector in the borough, in line with neighbourhood based regeneration initiatives, local priorities and reflecting changes in Government Policy.

2. Ensure that sufficient resources are aligned to the delivery of the action plan and that working practices across relevant teams are co-ordinated to support it.
3. Alongside the Action Plan, the council should seek to engage landlords, tenants and councillors in its work
4. There should be a re-launch of the Private Landlord Accreditation scheme built on the best of the models developed by other authorities
5. That the Council takes robust enforcement action against those landlords (or tenants) who persistently disregard their responsibilities
6. Consideration should be given to the Council's use of its powers to bring properties back into use
7. Support is given to local agencies such as RoBond to ensure that vulnerable tenants have access to affordable bond guarantees, assistance and advice
8. Designating one of the Advisers to the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods to a watching brief on the role of the private rented sector in Rotherham

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1 ORIGINAL CONCERNS – WHY MEMBERS WANTED TO LOOK AT THIS ISSUE

With high numbers of people seeking affordable housing across all sectors; the availability of decent properties to rent is an ongoing concern. This is reflected anecdotally in surgery reports from councillors who had both private sector tenants coming to them for advice and also local people concerned at the upkeep of private properties in their areas. There were other concerns raised through Area Assemblies and Safer Neighbourhood Teams about the condition of properties and impact on wider community.

As Members discussed the issue other strands emerged:

- a) The very short supply of housing in the social housing sector - both council and housing association and the changing economic circumstances of people entering the housing market during a recession
- b) Proposed national changes to housing benefit which would see a reduction in local housing allowances.
- c) Shortages of affordable decent, private rented accommodation in some areas of the borough.
- d) Tenant and landlord accreditation schemes

Whilst there are concerns about (mostly) EU migrants living in sub-standard housing conditions in the private sector, the review group was aware that there are other strands of work being undertaken in this area. To avoid duplication, this review deliberately did not focus on these issues.

1.1 Council Priorities

One of the Council's priorities, articulated in Corporate Plan is that people should be able to live in safe and affordable housing of their choice. Although council housing is by far the housing of choice as demonstrated by the housing register, the demand far outstrips, the resource. Increasingly, people are reliant on the private rented sector.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment links poor housing conditions to long term health conditions and health inequalities. It cites problems with maintenance of existing stock and the requirement for major structural repairs. In addition, energy efficiency in housing is crucial to meeting climate change targets and address issues of fuel poverty. As many of these properties are located in the private rented sector, working with landlords is vital.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members of the review group agreed the following terms of reference:

- To find out what current policies & practices are, how they operate, where they overlap and how they might be integrated.
- To identify any gaps in the service and any areas of work for further development
- Current policies & practices within Rotherham

- Examples of best practice from other authorities
- The role of councillors

The review group included:

- Cllr Alan Atkin - Chair
- Cllr Sue Ellis
- Councillor Jenny Andrews – Maltby Town Council (Co-opted Member)¹
- Andrew Roddison – Rotherfed (Co-opted Member)

(The review was due to be chaired by Cllr Pat Russell (Vice-Chair of the former Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel) but unfortunately the review coincided with an operation and a long period of recuperation.)

The review began its evidence gathering in September 2010. Interviews were organised with officers from Neighbourhood and Adult Services, RoBond, Private landlords & tenants and Shelter South Yorkshire. The review group visited areas of Maltby and Dinnington where there were high levels of Private Sector Rented Accommodation (PSRA). They also attended the Private Landlords Fair (organised by the RMBC), an auction in Sheffield, attended meeting of the Landlords' Forum. Further web-based searches of other housing providers were also undertaken. Views were sought from members of the public via interviews and an article in Rotherham News and the review group also met with a focus group organised by Rotherfed (the borough wide federation of Tenants and Residents Associations), and with RSL representatives and private landlords.

The review group would like to thank all those who contributed to the review and the staff in Key Choices and 2010 Rotherham Ltd for their openness and co-operation.

3 OVERVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 General Housing Policy

The Coalition Government has recently published *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England* (November 2011). It sets out the Government's intention to address the problems currently facing the housing sector. Recognising that the private rented sector accounts for 16% of the housing stock in England and is the fastest growing sector, experiencing 30 per cent growth since 2005, the government wants boost supply and encourage institutional investment and remove barriers. This is coupled with what is described as "tough enforcement against rogue landlords" (p33).

The measures include:

- working with industry to drive up standards and improve consumer awareness

¹ Note Jenny Andrews and Andrew Roddison have both been elected as borough councillors since the review was undertaken

- encouraging local authorities to make full use of the robust powers they already have to tackle dangerous and poorly maintained homes.
- requiring landlords to make reasonable improvements (from 2016) and meet minimum standards in relation to energy efficiency (from 2018)

The policy of the previous Labour Government took the view that if the private rented sector is seen as affordable and secure, more low-income households will be encouraged into private renting². Although there was a commitment to legislate in this area, this did not occur prior to the General Election of 2010.

Its recommendations included:

- Establish a national register of landlords, to protect tenants and support local authority enforcement activity.
- Introduce full regulation of letting and managing agents.
- Require all tenancies to take the form of a written agreement.
- Increase the limit for assured shorthold tenancies.

Despite these proposals receiving widespread support from housing charities and tenants organisations, the current government have rejected them, insisting that their adoption would be an unnecessary burden on landlords.

3.2 Proposed changes to Local Housing Allowances

The June 2010 Budget announced several measures to reduce Housing Benefit expenditure. The rationale behind this was:

“Housing Benefit is often criticised as making excessively generous payments that damage work incentives. To address this, the Government will remove payments that trap benefit claimants in poverty instead of providing incentives to work as well as being unfair to the millions of families on low income who do not depend on welfare”³.

These measures were to be introduced from April 2011 onwards. The package of reforms aimed to save £1.765m by 2014/15 (7% of total expenditure). From the package of measures listed below the first three will only affect claimants living in private rented accommodation while measure 4 will affect all claimants:

1. Changing the basis for setting Local Housing Allowance rates from the median to the 30th percentile of local market rents from October 2011, saving £425m by 2014/15.
2. Capping LHA rates at £250 per week for a 1 bedroom property, £290 per week for a 2 bedroom property, £340 per week for a 3 bedroom property, and £400 per week for all properties with 4 bedrooms or more, from April 2011. This replaces the inherited policy to exclude the top 1 per cent of rents from the market evidence used to calculate LHA rates, saving £65m by 2014/15.

² Based on the findings of the ‘Rugg report’ University of York, 2008

³ http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/junebudget_complete.pdf P.33

3. LHA rates to be updated by the Consumer Price Index (rather than the Retail Price Index) from April 2013 – saving £390m by 2014/15
4. Up-rating non-dependent deductions to reflect increases in rent since 2001/02, in April 2011 and annually on the same basis. Saving £340m by 2014/15.

The Department for Work and Pensions has recently published a good practice document on the Local Housing Allowance reforms 2011. The document has been produced to highlight how local authorities are addressing the changes to minimise the impact. It focuses on the following areas:

- Communicating with claimants
- Using Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to deal with the reforms
- Working with landlords
- Working with housing teams and other stakeholders

It suggests that with a less generous HB scheme it is important that local councils engage with landlords in order to keep sufficient levels of private sector housing 'stock'. Effective engagement with landlords can also help reduce evictions, improve property standards, ensure tenants are treated fairly and lawfully, and help benefit teams to process claims.

3.3 Proposed changes with the Localism Act

The Homeless duty will be discharged in the private sector through provision of a minimum 12 month, fixed term tenancy. However if an applicant becomes unintentionally homeless and re-applies for accommodation within two years of accepting an offer of a tenancy in the private rented sector, they will still be owed a duty under s.193(2) regardless of whether they have a priority need. Before the duty is discharged the Local Authority will need to ensure that the offer is of good quality and suitable to the needs of the individual (ie accessible, where this is needed).

4 EVIDENCE & FINDINGS

Demand for council housing is considerable and there are growing numbers on the housing register in Rotherham. Due to the lack of social rented housing, the private rented sector in Rotherham has grown from being almost negligible to about 10% of the housing supply in Rotherham (2009 figures)⁴. It is also likely to be an area of growth⁵ due to the continued depletion of the social rented housing sector due to further incentives to exercise the "Right to Buy". It is also exacerbated by the inability of younger people to afford mortgages even for relatively modestly priced properties due to the low wage economy of South Yorkshire coupled with job insecurity. An increase in student loans could also mean that young professionals, traditionally the first time house buyers, will not be able to get mortgages due to large debts.

There are very few (licensed) Houses in Multiple Occupation in Rotherham. Most

⁴ Research into the private rented sector in South Yorkshire May ECOTEC May 2009

⁵ Tenure Trends in the UK Housing System Building & Social Housing Foundation June 2010

properties were rented as entire properties. The review group therefore concentrated on single properties. The group also agreed to exclude the specific problems facing migrant workers housing conditions.

4.1 Site visits

4.1.1 Maltby Model Village & Little London

Maltby has two areas of predominantly rented private housing: the Model Village and Little London.

The Model Village was built by colliery owners; the quality of the housing on the whole, would not meet today's decent homes standards. There are some pockets of owner occupation but it is thought that it is mostly owned by private landlords⁶. The Estate was sold in late 1980s by British Coal.

"Many of us can remember whole rows of houses going willy nilly under the hammer to city speculators with little or no knowledge of where or what Maltby might be, and even less care about the fact that had any responsibility to tenants"⁷

There has been a gradual decline in the fabric of the properties which accelerated rapidly in the 1990's. Because many of the tenants were in employment albeit in low paid jobs, they were ineligible for government grants for property improvement.

In the Model Village they have set up a community association to tackle many of the issues. They have a neighbourhood agreement. In the housing section of the agreement the council has committed to

- Work with tenants to develop a tenants handbook to inform tenants on their rights and responsibilities
- Provide advice and assistance to owner occupiers through the Home Improvement Agency; this may include applying for funding, technical advice and advice to find suitable buildings.
- Dedicate a Community Protection Unit officer to any complaints about private sector housing within 4 working days.
- Respond to all complaints about private properties within four working days and write to the owners of empty properties to try and establish why they are empty.

Whilst on a walkabout, members of the review group expressed concern about broken windows⁸, fly tipping, poor standards of repair, abandoned buildings and empty properties.

⁶ Based on benefits data in 2009/10, over 10% of the housing in the area was privately rented to benefit claimants.

⁷ About the Model Village – Ray Hearne 8:09:10 Taken from the Maltby Model Village Neighbourhood Agreement

⁸ The "Broken windows" theory suggests that a successful strategy for preventing vandalism is to fix the problems when they are small. Problems do not escalate and thus respectable residents do not flee a neighbourhood. The theory thus makes two major claims: that further petty crime and low-level anti-social behaviour will be deterred, and that major crime will, as a result, be prevented.

The Model Village area has experienced high levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. However it was recognised that the resources to undertake intensive neighbourhood management such as that undertaken at Chesterhill were not available in the current financial climate.

Little London was built during the Second World War to house the workers at the newly built munitions factory. Again the housing is of poor quality and would not meet decent home standards. Houses have flat roofs and are prone to damp and condensation, with poor insulation and energy efficiency. A variety of landlords own these properties, with numerous tenants finding their tenancy 'sold on'.

A great number of properties are owned in main by two landlords who appear to own a portfolio of properties around the country. It shares many of the same issues with the *Model Village* in terms of poor physical environment and low levels of investment in property maintenance.

4.1.2 Leicester Road and environs - Dinnington

There has been considerable enforcement activity in the area and there is a Dinnington Private Landlord's Forum. The Area Development Framework steering group has a sub-group which has supported a proactive enforcement approach towards improving housing and environmental standards. Activities have included mapping property ownership and identifying landlords, inspecting properties, undertaking walkabouts/clean up campaigns and community activities to raise tenant's awareness. The Team achieved the following;

- All (147) private rented properties received an internal survey.
- Category 1 hazards were identified within 86 private rented properties. These properties were made compliant prior to the end of the scheme (March 2011)
- 38 empty private properties were brought back into use through private sector investment.
- Properties were beginning to realise values equivalent to those seen in 2007 and investor interest was seen to be increasing with long-term empty properties being purchased for rental purposes.

There continues to be a working relationship with landlords to improve properties, hence the work with the Landlord's Forum. Although, the approach appears to have paid dividends, because of the work is resource intensive it is no longer available on a proactive basis and there are is an issue with its long-term sustainability.

Within Dinnington there are pockets of deprivation concentrated in a small number of streets. The areas tended to be characterised by a high proportion of private rented accommodation, with tenants "churning" around the same small number of properties/streets. The effectiveness of Dinnington landlords' group, which aims to tackle the issue of problem tenants and inappropriate lettings, is often limited by poor attendance.

"...with the support of the ADF steering group, the Area Assembly team, other partners and the Dinnington Landlord forum, the proactive enforcement team did some fantastic work in profiling the most deprived area of Dinnington and bringing many properties up to standard along with

bringing some disused properties back to full occupation. Their loss in the area has been felt but through continued partnership working much of the good work is continuing albeit on a much smaller scale.”

**Cllr Jacquie Falvey
Chair: Dinnington Landlords’ Forum**

4.1.3 Auction

We were aware that many private sector properties are bought at auctions by landlords who may have little connection to the local area. With this in mind, members of the review group attended an auction in Sheffield where houses from Maltby and Dinnington were being sold. The properties sold for low prices; the lowest at £35k and the highest for £44k. The majority of properties were being bought to let.

4.1.4 Landlords

Landlord’s Fair

The council arranged a Landlord’s fair at Whiston Barn. This was an event both for prospective and more well-established landlords, letting agents, the council, the landlord’s forum, Robond and property, maintenance companies. A series of presentations ran throughout the day aiming to give help and support to landlords. Although attendance was lower than hoped for (despite extensive advertising), the review group thought that it was a worthwhile exercise and hope it is repeated in the future.

Landlord’s Forum meeting.

Rotherham and District Residential Landlords’ Association is the main landlord organised forum in the borough with about 40 members. Many small local landlords are willing to engage in the forum. However, there are many more landlords who are ‘absentee’ and who do not wish to engage.

This Forum meets monthly to discuss matters of interest or concern, including speakers from the council to update them of policy or legislative changes. Many of their tenants claim housing benefits (HB). Changes to housing allowances could mean a risk to the security of tenants. Changes to HB for single people under 35 meaning that they would only be eligible to claim for a bedsit/room in an HMO was a particular concern for landlords.

Forum members spoke candidly of their frustrations. Firstly in relation to how information about changes in circumstances housing benefits are not communicated on a timely basis. Secondly, the tone of enforcement letters is ‘heavy handed’ and fails to recognise that often landlords already have a good relationship with the Council. At the same time there was a feeling that the council was not “bullish” enough with ‘rogue’ landlords.

Case Study of a Small Private Rented Sector Landlord

Like many other landlords, Landlord B had bought the property as a long term investment and has a small portfolio. Two of properties are in a neighbouring borough. As with the Landlord’s Forum, Landlord B cited concerns about the

payment of Housing Benefit. Two properties while occupied by tenants receiving HB paid promptly and the Landlord had not been aware that they received HB until the tenant mentioned it.

However on another property the tenant after an initial good start began not to pass on the HB for rent. The landlord is not able to make a complaint about lack of rent until after arrears have built up for 2 months although technically they ought to be able to ask after a month and a day. The landlord has to go through legal procedures to get it or evict the tenant which is costly. In this case the tenant demanded their deposit back as a condition of leaving.

The landlord had been unaware that there was a landlords' forum or that advice & support was available from the council.

4.1.5 Tenants

Cllr Atkin sent a letter to the Sheffield Star inviting private tenants and landlords to contact him with their experiences. Despite a flurry of initial emails, tenants proved reluctant to come forward in a public arena to air their concerns. Only one tenant was willing to speak to the review group and then only under guarantee of anonymity.

Case Study: Long Term Private Sector Tenant

The tenant had lived at the same address for 18 years and their property had been 'sold on' 8 times during this period; the last time for £50k.

The current landlord had put rent up, and was planning further increases. He had turned up at night accompanied by another man, demanding to be let into the property to talk to the tenant. The gas certificate had not been renewed and the flue had been condemned. The landlord had ignored multiple enforcement notices that had been served over the previous four years.

Council officers have supported the tenant, undertaking essential repairs to the roof and bathroom, recharging the cost to the landlord. The property was damp and the tenant has complex health needs exacerbated by these conditions. Whilst being complimentary of the support given by Council officers, it was clear that the level of support could not meet their level of need. The tenant spoke of feeling intimidated by the landlord's repeated harassment.

4.2 Council staff

4.2.1 The Community Protection Unit

Lewis Coates, manager of the **Community Protection Unit** came to speak to the review group. He explained that the Rotherham set up was different from other councils as there was a multi-disciplinary team which worked together on issues from Industrial Air Emissions to Pest control to Private Sector Housing plus many other issues arising such as anti-social behaviour, noise, fly tipping etc. While the sharing of this expertise in one team was a positive aspect, the reduction in resources did hamper work.

The unit had undertaken pro-active work in Dinnington using Neighbourhood Investment Services (NIS) Private Sector Support funding. There had been a “mostly carrot and some stick” approach which had helped to develop relationships with landlords including setting up a local landlords’ forum.

In 2010/11 the unit had taken up

808	Complaints
2,852	Actions
186	Statutory Notices

There were a small number of cases that were settled prior to prosecution.

Other issues raised included examining the Council's capacity to manage properties and how this can be increased. This could involve engaging private sector letting agents, which will allow RMBC to utilise compulsory purchase, enforced sale or Management Orders to bring properties back into use and be managed by the Council. This in turn could not only improve the empty property stock but would also increase housing capacity to link into the homeless process thus ensuring the vulnerable would have a route into good standard properties.

He saw the challenges for the near future being:

- Diminishing resources for frontline pro-active work, particularly with the ending of ring-fenced funding of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder
- The proposed reductions in the local housing allowance especially the under 35s shared room rate
- Arising from the above a rise of Housing in Multiple Occupation and the policing problems for this
- Continued EU migration
- The ability to continue reactive work on a significant scale when there was to be a reduction in staffing.

4.2.2 Private Sector Staff from the Housing Service

Paul Benson and Dave Richmond outlined the work undertaken by Paul as the officer responsible for the council’s strategy for the PRS. The strategy’s aim is to improve both the management and the property standards of the PRS. The strategy was due to be refreshed in the light of the Government’s proposed changes in housing policy.

Again there was a discussion about reduction in resources and how future work would be managed. There was an acknowledgement that this was an area of experiencing significant pressure. Although it is an area of increasing need, it is balanced against other priorities and additional resources are not available. Whilst the local authorities have powers of enforcement, this is resource intensive, as is adopting a strategy of early intervention. It was hoped to develop more local landlord forums (along the lines of the one In Dinnington) as well as the general one which was organised by the landlords themselves. Officers attended their meetings on a regular basis and also produced a landlord newsletter – which had a circulation of over a 1000.

The Landlord Handbook which had been produced by ANUK and LACORS was

offered to all known landlords as a useful source of information and signposting. The Landlords Fair had also run sessions on changes to Housing benefits, where to get advice and support and other practical information.

4.2.3 Staff from Key Choices

The Key Choices Service was the subject of a scrutiny review in 2008 so the review group simply asked for an update on their work. A dossier of their further development was given to the review team. The main discussion concentrated on the fact that the Private Sector Landlord accreditation scheme did not appear to have been effective. The review members wanted to know why this had happened.

Staff explained that the scheme had not failed so much as changed and no longer included accreditation. They are still managing properties for many landlords and also working with Letting Agencies to ensure that more PRS housing was available to those coming to the Key Choices Shop. They have a good relationship with Housing Benefits, which includes a fast-tracking system for direct payments for homeless households where tenants have a history of rent arrears. It was recognised that the proposed Sheffield City Region Accredited landlord scheme would be beneficial for both Rotherham Landlords and tenants.

Members were impressed by alternative accreditation schemes, in particular the one developed by Oxford City Council, and considers that it warrants further exploration to see if it could be applied in Rotherham.

4.2.4 Housing Benefits Section

Andy Sheldon, Operational Manager of the Housing Benefits Section spoke to the group.

The service which new claimants can expect means that HB claims should be turned around in 28 days. If all information is submitted from the outset, this can be as low as 14 days. People who have been on Housing Benefit continue to receive it but new claimants now receive the Local Housing Allowance. There was concern that the proposed changes in Housing Benefit levels as it did seem unlikely that rents would reduce and that therefore there would be more arrears cases to be dealt with.

There was discussion of LHA/HB being paid direct to landlords once more. Currently landlords can receive them direct if the tenants have fallen into arrears of 8 weeks or more or if there are deductions from JSA/IS to cover rent arrears. The onus is on landlords to inform HB if they have not received rent from the tenant. Claimants could ask to be paid by cheque rather than directly into an account but this had to be undertaken on a case by case basis.

Claimants, support workers or landlords can request help for those who cannot manage their finances or are unlikely to pay their rents. There are three officers who can support this but even if tenants sign that they want their rent to be paid direct they do have to fulfil criteria to do this⁹.

⁹ RMBC Local Housing Allowance Safeguards Policy March 2008

4.2.5 Councillors

A questionnaire was distributed to all councillors with a very poor response – fewer than ten were returned. This may reflect that private rented housing is in specific pockets of the borough. Of the forms returned, councillors were concerned at an increase in the number of people coming to their surgeries with problems around private rented housing and the councillors' lack of information as to where to send people for help. As a result of Member's interest in this area, all Elected Members are now receiving copies of the newsletter 'Landlord News'. In addition, Member development sessions coupled with web resources would provide a swift solution to this.

4.3 Other organisations

4.3.1 The group received a presentation from **David Burrows & Glenn Stables from RoBond**. (<http://www.robond.org.uk>) RoBond was founded in 1996 by David Walker, the vicar of Dalton who was also the founder of the South Yorkshire Housing Association.

RoBond provides rent bonds for those who would not be able to raise a bond any other way. This includes those previously homeless, those out of prison and those who would be deemed vulnerable. It receives referrals from RMBC, the probation service and voluntary organisations such as the Citizen Advice Bureau. It also accepts referrals directly from private landlords who may have a tenant in need of support. In 2010 it received 1099 referrals, undertook 493 interviews and as a result over 280 bonds issued. The failure rate on the scheme is around 9% - this has increased of late.

All clients referred to RoBond are interviewed to establish whether they qualify for assistance. All staff are HHSRS trained which means that they can all inspect properties and ensure that they are of a fit standard for tenants. If concerns are raised, they will liaise with the Council to ensure improvements are made. They will also check that the rent being requested is reasonable and exactly what percentage of it will be covered by housing benefit.

Bond guarantees are issued in six month periods (the maximum length of a shorthold tenancy) which are renewable for further periods of 6 months for the duration of the tenancy.¹⁰ Funding for the project is precarious depending as it does on grants and contracts which tend to be short term. Support for tenants and proactive work with landlords is therefore vulnerable to reduction when funding dries up.

The group were impressed by the information given by RoBond and acknowledged the immensely valuable work which is undertaken with people, who are generally the more vulnerable, in need of a home.

"There are no comments to produce the amount of thanks for RoBond and its staff we feel. We have a worry free, happy family life now, with great landlords and amazing support from RoBond. Thank you."

¹⁰ Current Bond amounts are: £300 for 1 bedroom property, £350 for 2 bedroom property and £400 for 3 bedroom property

4.3.2 **Andy Nutley of Shelter South Yorkshire** also spoke to the review group. Shelter runs drop-in advice sessions at the RAIN building from 9-4pm to give support for housing and housing debt issues. Homeless people are referred to Key Choices, Ro-bond or Rush house depending on their age and circumstances.

During the first six months of 2010/11 Shelter dealt with the following queries:

Housing – 246 clients

Debt – 196 clients

Welfare Benefits – 94 clients

Community Care – 61 clients

The issues he raised were:

- The disrepair of many private rented houses in Rotherham. These are predominantly in the Eastwood, Herringthorpe, Canklow and Rawmarsh areas although they are no worse than other parts of South Yorkshire.
- There can be a lack of co-operation between council services - "That's not us that's housing" - which is not helpful.
- While the council is able to inspect properties promptly, its ability to move on to enforcement is more mixed.
- Many tenants are forced out without a correct "Notice to Quit" but don't know where to turn for help.
- Many tenants have problems with getting their deposits returned, even when they have been protected.
- The payment of Housing Benefit direct to tenants instead of to landlords has proved a problem for both tenants and landlords. The proposed changes to Housing Benefit would be likely to push people into debt as it was unlikely that rents would be reduced.
- There is a problem of landlords being ignorant of their responsibilities, but Shelter is unable to help them being a tenants' organisation. They are referred to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Shelter had commissioned research from the Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research into the likely effects of the reduction of Housing Benefit on private sector tenants. The report¹¹ made for grim reading with the conclusion that *"... there is sufficient evidence that the measures as they stand will cause financial and housing hardship to a large number of households, and will damage the supply of private rented housing to LHA claimants"*.

Although the effects would be most likely felt in areas of high rental values such as London, there would very likely be a knock on affect of people seeking cheaper rental properties in areas such as Rotherham. This could well exacerbate a difficult situation as more people seek fewer properties.

¹¹ How will changes to Local Housing Allowance affect low-income tenants in private rented housing? – Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research September 2010

If there were any measures which might improve the lot of private tenants and the work of Shelter, they would be:

- Closer links between Key Choices and the enforcement team. At the moment there is no “dedicated” officer who can be phoned to advise or signpost.
- More training for private landlords with an awareness of their responsibilities. An accredited landlord scheme would only work with clear incentives – perhaps having a dedicated officer to go to might give some incentive.
- More enforcement taken and seen to be taken around poor housing conditions in general.

5 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Desktop research was undertaken using the internet including the Centre for Public Scrutiny library, the Local Government Association Information pages and the House of Commons Library. A selection of examples includes:

- **Durham County Council** includes a section on the claim form for the tenant to indicate that they were concerned about their ability to pay their rent if the HB were paid directly to them
- Several authorities give preference in some way to accredited landlords and agents. **L B Newham** was highlighted as being helpful in that the borough was able to provide more information on the status of specific HB claims over the telephone.
- A **Sunderland** respondent mentioned a fast-tracking system for accredited landlords with HB tenants in rent arrears under the eight week rent arrears provision.
- **Newcastle Upon Tyne** includes free reference checking, local advertising, help with tenancy agreements, a property maintenance register which carries details of maintenance workers and suppliers who have been recommended by other landlords, training and information sessions for landlords.
- **Gateshead MBC** operates an incentive scheme to encourage landlord participation in their accreditation scheme including a tenant reference scheme which gives a five year housing history. Around 800 tenants have been “vetted” for this scheme.
- **St Helens MBC** offers support to landlords wishing to evict anti-social tenants by way of an action plan and support through the legal process. In some designated areas landlords are offered 50% interest free loans (Max of £10000) to help improve their properties.
- **Pendle** recommended that as with many areas collection of bulky waste is an issue so consideration might be given to incentivising accreditation through free or discounted bulky waste collection to landlords once a year.
- **Oxford City Council** information about its Accreditation scheme via a website gives detailed information about the benefits of the scheme for all participants including mediation for landlords & tenants.
[http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/dech/Landlord Accreditation Scheme occw.htm](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/dech/Landlord%20Accreditation%20Scheme%20occw.htm)

- It also provides a Private Tenants Guide informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities & where to find further help. <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/PrivateTenantsGuide2010.pdf>

6 CONCLUSIONS

The private rented sector is growing in Rotherham, in size and in importance. Whilst there are many responsible landlords who look after their properties and treat their tenants with respect, by the same token, there are pockets of poorly maintained and sub-standard properties owned by what the Landlord's Forum described as 'rogue' landlords. Many of these properties are located in areas of multiple deprivation.

The review identified the following key issues:

- The very short supply of housing in the social housing sector - both council and housing association, coupled with shortages of affordable decent, private rented accommodation in some areas of the borough;
- Proposed national changes in local housing allowances and homelessness duties the potential impact this may have on people on low incomes and other vulnerable people renting in the private sector;
- The importance of maintaining advice and support to tenants either through the Community Protection Unit or through third sector organisations such as RoBond or Shelter;
- Examples of proactive work to engage with landlord's forums and bring empty properties back into use or poorly maintained properties up to decent standards; however the removal of funding means that this means that this work may not be sustained;
- Many areas have experienced 'tenant churn' with 'problem' tenants moving from street to street. This has compounded some of the problems of anti-social behaviour, vandalism or littering experienced in those areas;
- Examples of tenant and landlord accreditation schemes that have worked in other parts of the country;
- Evidence has shown that there are difficulties in some areas with landlords who do not maintain their properties to decent standards, are absent, or in some cases do not treat their tenants with respect. In light of this there is a need to balance the 'carrot and stick'; incentivising positive relationships whilst pursuing rigorous enforcement activity if necessary.
- With the reduction in resources, the need to examine how different parts of the council work and communicate effectively with each other and partners, and with landlords and tenants to contribute to a thriving, decent private rented sector.

There have been successful initiatives to engage landlords; however, pressure on resources has meant a reduction in proactive work. Changes to local housing allowances, homelessness duties and wider housing policy may also have an impact on the housing market and more vulnerable tenants. Despite the willingness of many landlords to engage, there are some who persistently disregard their responsibilities to their tenants. As the Government has signalled that it considers current powers adequate to deal with these problems, it remains incumbent on

local authorities to take action to address these difficulties.

Given the acute pressure on resources, it is critical that we co-ordinate our efforts to make the greatest impact in the areas of greatest need. The report suggests ways to co-ordinate support, information and advice to both landlords and tenants.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure a thriving and settled private sector in Rotherham we recommend:

1. The production of a long term sustainable development and action plan to improve the physical fabric of the Private Rental Sector in the borough, in line with neighbourhood based regeneration initiatives, local priorities and reflecting changes in Government Policy.
2. Ensure that sufficient resources are aligned to the delivery of the action plan and that working practices across relevant teams within the Council and with partners are co-ordinated to support it.
3. Alongside the Action Plan, the council should seek to engage landlords, tenants and councillors in its work through:
 - For Landlords – ensure that the borough wide Landlord Forum, facilitated by the National Landlords Association (NLA) and wider South Yorkshire Landlord Forum are supported to discuss local issues affecting the sector and training sessions to inform them of changes in government policy and the Council's response;
 - linking with the wider community regeneration agenda, raise with the landlord forum the issue of 'responsible letting' to ensure that concerns about 'problem' tenants are referred to the relevant agencies to address on an timely basis
 - For prospective tenants – a handbook giving information on rights and responsibilities, how to raise concerns and signposting them to sources of help.
 - For Councillors – training and regular information sessions on the private rental sector in Rotherham , with special regard to any work or enforcement activity going on in their ward.
4. The Development of on-line resources to allow access to information about the council's plans and support for the Private Rental Sector.
5. There should be a re-launch of the Private Landlord Accreditation scheme built on the best of the models developed by other authorities eg Oxford City Council. This scheme should encompass an accredited tenant scheme.
6. Following on from this, the council should explore the development of a partnership scheme within Sheffield City Region to give landlords accreditation across the region; the scheme should deal with long and short term private sector housing demand
7. That the Council takes robust enforcement action against those landlords (or tenants) who persistently disregard their responsibilities, and that such action is publicised in the media.

8. Consideration should be given to the Council's engagement of private sector letting agents, use of compulsory purchase, enforced sale or management orders, and/or other powers to bring properties back into use.
9. Lobbying through MPs, the LGA and other similar fora, for the government to re-examine the current Rent Deposit/Bond Scheme to make sure that tenants' deposits are returned promptly
10. Identifying opportunities to support local agencies such as RoBond to ensure that vulnerable tenants have access to affordable bond guarantees, assistance and advice.
11. In order to demonstrate its importance, consideration should be given to designating one of the Advisers to the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods to a watching brief on the role of the private rented sector in Rotherham.
12. That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board gives consideration to how the impact of changes to Local Housing Allowances and homeless duties are scrutinised.

8 THANKS

- Andy Nutley, Shelter South Yorkshire
- David Burrows & Glenn Stables, RoBond.
- Dave Richmond, Neighbourhood and Adult Services
- Lewis Coates, Neighbourhood and Adult Services
- Paul Benson, Neighbourhood and Adult Services
- Sandra Tolley, Neighbourhood and Adult Services
- Andy Sheldon, Revenues and Benefits

9 INFORMATION SOURCES/REFERENCES

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- RMBC Local Housing Allowance Safeguards Policy March 2008
- How will changes to Local Housing Allowance affect low-income tenants in private rented housing? – Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research September 2010

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18th January, 2012
3.	Title:	Local Development Framework Consultation Feedback Report
4.	Directorate:	EDS

5. Summary

The Local Development Framework (LDF) Consultation Feedback Report summarises the key planning issues raised during the consultation period Monday 4 July to Friday 16 September 2011. Approval for publication of the LDF Consultation Feedback Report is sought to provide information to stakeholders and local people – it is not intended to seek views on the feedback report itself. Further public consultation on the LDF is programmed for 2012.

6. Recommendations

- 1. Cabinet approve publication of the LDF Consultation Feedback Report.**

7. Proposals and Details

Over the summer of 2011 we consulted on the Plan for Rotherham's future growth and prosperity – the Local Development Framework (LDF). This set out how many new homes and employment land we think we need for the next 15 years and broadly where it should go. We also consulted for the first time on the detail of sites that could be developed in local communities to meet this need. The consultation ran from 4 July to 16 Sept 2011.

To publicise the consultation we:

- wrote and emailed around 5,000 people on our consultation database
- notified around 180 statutory consultees and local interest groups
- placed adverts in the Rotherham Advertiser, South Yorkshire Times and Dinnington and Maltby Guardian
- held a press briefing at the start of the consultation and responded to press enquiries throughout the period
- held radio interviews
- provided extensive information on our website
- held 20 public drop-in sessions across the Borough
- held 12 workshops with interest groups
- provided consultation material via Parish Councils, the central and all local libraries, on the Council's website, via the Area Assembly Network and local interest groups
- briefed Borough councillors, parish councillors and local MPs

In total, across the Borough around 1,500 people attended the 20 LDF public drop-in sessions we held. All comments received will be made available to view on our online consultation system at <http://rotherham.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>. In total, over 7,000 comments were received on the consultation. A summary breakdown is attached at Appendix 1.

Key issues

Several key themes or areas of concern for stakeholders and local people were voiced during the consultation. In summary, these were:

- loss of Green Belt land for social, leisure and recreation
- loss of agricultural land
- impact on local wildlife and biodiversity
- loss of open space
- pressure on existing infrastructure and services, ie schools, doctors, hospitals etc.

- increased traffic
- flood risk
- should use only brownfield land
- don't agree with housing target; it's too high/low
- concerns over distribution of growth and "settlement hierarchy"
- impact of planning reform and Localism Act
- meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers
- detailed concerns on individual sites

Our response

We recognise the concerns that people have over the prospect of new building and the uncertainty while the Plan is finalised. We also appreciate the strength of feeling these proposals generate. To address the concerns raised, we will:

- look again at our local housing target to ensure we only release the minimum amount of land necessary and no more
- have a strong policy to prioritise the use of brownfield land first
- save any release of Green Belt land to the longer term when all other options have been exhausted
- urgently draw up a plan to assess the infrastructure requirements that growth might require, such as road improvements, doctors, schools, water, sewage etc.
- ensure proposals for new development do not increase flood risk
- carefully consider all the alternative suggestions put to us for sites that could be developed and any alternatives for growth areas
- carry out a Green Belt review to ensure that only the least valuable Green Belt land is considered for release
- consider the detailed comments given on individual sites in further drafting of the Plan
- ensure we meet the housing and employment needs of all our communities

What happens next?

Nothing has been decided yet – we have collected a lot of evidence and have tried to present it in a way that will let people have their say before we make any decisions. We will continue to carefully consider all the comments we received on the consultation.

Publishing the Feedback Report will provide information to stakeholders and local people setting out the methods of consultation, the key issues raised by consultees and the Council's response. The actions arising from the consultation will guide the drafting of the publication version of the Core Strategy prior to its submission to Government. These actions will also guide the further drafting of the Sites and

Policies document and will assist in the allocation of development sites and/or identification of alternative sites based on community feedback.

The Feedback Report will be published on the Council's website with hard copies available in local libraries.

We will consult again of the next version of the Plan in 2012 to allow further public scrutiny of our proposals before they are submitted to Government. We will also maintain the dialogue with local groups established during the consultation period, for example the Save Our Green Belt groups at Bassingthorpe Farm and Dinnington.

8. Finance

There are no major financial implications arising from this report as the Feedback Report will be made available via the Council's website. There will be a small cost associated with printing hard copies of the Feedback Report and placing them in local libraries. This cost will be met from existing budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The timescale for completing the full analysis of the representations received is an uncertainty and could potentially impact on the revisions to the Core Strategy, its Sustainability Appraisal and submission to Government.

The Localism Act has brought in a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" if an adopted development plan is not in place. This could lead to the Council having to grant planning permission for major development contrary to our priorities, aspirations or locational preferences. It is therefore imperative that the Council draws up its own Plan in consultation with local people rather than be forced into releasing Green Belt/greenfield land by speculative development. Further transitional guidance is awaited from Government on the timetable for this presumption to come into force.

A failure to achieve timely progress on the LDF could also delay the spatial strategy required to mediate potentially conflicting aspirations of any neighbourhood plans that may emerge under the provisions of the Localism Act. Under the Act neighbourhood plans have to conform to the Borough-wide Plan – if one is in place.

Failure to make progress with the LDF risks delayed provision of the new homes and employment opportunities that the Borough desperately needs.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The implementation of the LDF will make a positive contribution to all of Rotherham's Regeneration priorities. When adopted, the Core Strategy and supporting documents will further the objectives of the Corporate Plan and support the delivery of the Rotherham Sustainable Community Strategy by:

- providing sufficient good quality homes

- ensuring well designed, decent affordable housing
- providing employment land to meet the needs of the modern economy and support sustainable communities through access to employment opportunities
- promoting the “town centre first” policy approach to help the regeneration and renaissance of Rotherham Town Centre

11. Background Papers and Consultation

LDF Draft Core Strategy June 2011

LDF Sites and Policies Issues and Options June 2011

A copy of the Draft Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Issues and Options Consultation July, 2011 document has been circulated to all Members of the Cabinet.

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Appendix 1: Summary breakdown of LDF consultation comments

This appendix provides a summary of the consultation response.

CONSULTEES : REPRESENTATIONS		
	Consultees	Representations
Core Strategy	91	643
Sites & Policies:	1,171	1,795
(Standard letter/petitions)	5,003	5,003
Total:	6,265	7,441

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED FROM CONSULTATION (04/07/11 to 16/09/11)			
DRAFT CORE STRATEGY AND SITES & POLICIES / ISSUES & OPTIONS			
Received By:	Core Strategy	Sites & Policies	Total
Individual Letter	102	1,106	1,208
Web	86	326	412
E-mail	455	363	818
Others:			
Standard Letter / Petition	0	5,003	5,003
TOTAL:	643	6,798	7,441
Response:	Core Strategy	Sites & Policies	Total
Object	295	1,364	1,659
Standard letter objections	0	5,003	5,003
Support	117	126	243
Support with conditions	89	59	148
Observations	142	225	367
Site Response Forms	0	21	21

LATE REPS (Received after 16th September cut-off)	93
ANONYMOUS REPS (No name and / or address details)	102

SITES & POLICIES

REPRESENTATIONS ON THE LDF SITES & POLICIES / ISSUES & OPTIONS - JUNE 2011				
Document Section		Issues:	Number of Responses:	
			Individual	Standard letter / petition
Chapter 3	Site Allocation Methodology	Issue 1	19	
Chapter 4	Designations	Issues 2 to 18	77	
Chapter 5	Development Management Policies	Issues 19 to 23	39	
Annex 1	Site Options Response Form		21	
Appendix 1	Site Options in Rotherham Urban Area	Issues 24 to 27	316	
	Bassingthorpe Farm (Broad Location for Growth)		102	986
Appendix 2	Site Options in Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common	Issues 28 to 31	262	
	Dinnington East (Broad Location for Growth)		1	1,878
Appendix 3	Site Options in Wickersley, Bramley and Ravenfield Common	Issues 32 to 35	289	151
Appendix 4	Site Options in Wath upon Dearne, Brampton and West Melton	Issues 36 to 39	30	
Appendix 5	Site Options in Kiveton Park and Wales	Issues 40 to 43	248	
Appendix 6	Site Options in Maltby and Hellaby	Issues 44 to 48	102	1,363
Appendix 7	Site Options on Aston, Aughton and Swallownest	Issues 49 to 52	47	
Appendix 8	Site Options in Swinton and Kilnhurst	Issues 53 to 57	88	193
Appendix 9	Site Options in Catcliffe, Orgreave, Treeton and Waverley	Issues 58 to 61	27	
	Waverley (Broad Location for Growth)		0	
Appendix 10	Site Options in Thurcroft	Issues 62 to 65	54	98
Appendix 11	Site Options in Non-Green Belt Villages: Thorpe Hesley, Todwick, Harthill, Woodsetts and Laughton-en-le-Morthern	Issues 66 to 68	69	334
Appendix 12	Site Options in Green Belt Villages		2	
Appendix 13	Automatically excluded sites		0	
Appendix 14	Methodology: Identification of Site Allocations		2	
TOTAL:			1,795	5,003

Standard letters and/or petitions (Objections):	Names:
Dinnington / Anston (re building on Green Belt)	1,878
Maltby (Stainton Lane, Site LDF0271)	1,363
Bassingthorpe Farm (re building on Green Belt)	986
Thorpe Hesley (re 4 sites)	334
Swinton (Piccadilly Fields, Site LDF0775)	193
Wickersley (Sorby Way, Site LDF0371)	127
Thurcroft (New Orchard Lane, Site LDF0441)	98
Wickersley (Sites off Morthen Road)	24

The Feedback Report will include the notes of all workshops with communities of interest, including:

Rotherfed the Tenants and Residents Association
 Faith and Interfaith
 Youth Council
 Older People's Network
 Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
 Women
 LGBT
 Barnsley Rotherham Chamber
 Environment workshop

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – CABINET
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18th January 2012
3.	Title:	Community Budgets and approach for Troubled Families
4.	Directorate:	Cross-cutting

5. **Summary**

Following the creation of the Troubled Families Unit in November 2011 there is a rapidly developing framework for Community Budgets for Families with Multiple Problems. Rotherham's plans for using a community budget approach to deliver support to troubled families need to have a robust local focus but at the same time be flexible to take full advantage of the emerging payment by results mechanism that aims to break the intergenerational cycles of deprivation and need.

A preliminary briefing paper was circulated before Christmas giving background information about the Community Budget programme of which families with multiple problems is a component part. This report outlines the proposed plan and offers initial recommendations for its development.

6. **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Consider the government approach in supporting troubled families which supports work already undertaken across Rotherham in recent years.
2. Agree that the Troubled Families additional resources are mainstreamed and aligned with the deprived communities work. All officers working on the deprivation work will be expected to be working on the troubled families agenda.
3. Agree that the Community Budget work can be used as a catalyst to continue work in reshaping services and refocusing on prevention and early help and intervention.

7. **Proposals and Details**

Background

Rotherham was accepted as a Phase Two Community Budget pilot for Families with Multiple Problems (now referred to as Troubled Families). A project plan to turn around the lives of Rotherham's estimated 720-740 troubled families has to be submitted by 31 March 2012.

In his announcement on 15 December 2011 the Prime Minister said that £450 million has been made available in a new, determined, cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 of the country's most troubled families by the end of this Parliament. He stated 'turning lives around' means getting:

- Parents back to work
- Children attending school
- Reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour
- Cutting costs for the State

Subsequent to this on 22 December 2011 the Troubled Families Team outlined its initial plans and set out the following key tasks to be undertaken by local authorities before April 2012:

- Verify the number of troubled families by February 2012
- Estimate how many of these families will achieve the success criteria by 2015
- Develop any service redesign plans required to expand provision to troubled families
- Formulate the business case for the local authority and partner agencies to commit 60% of the resources for this work (40% Government funded on a payment by results basis)
- Plan the outcome tracking arrangements required to demonstrate success
- Identify a Troubled Family Coordinator from April 2014

The Troubled Families Team are offering funding of £20,000 to facilitate the deployment of either senior-level internal resources to do this work and/or the purchasing of external advice and expertise focused on this programme.

Rotherham's approach will be to use the Community Budget as the catalyst for working together (across all agencies) to redesign local services to improve outcomes and reduce duplication and waste by making better use of what is already in place, strengthening links between services and removing barriers that impede the delivery of effective support to troubled families. It is expected that the Family Intervention methodology will form the basis of the work with troubled families and will work alongside the most deprived communities initiative.

Branding and Communications

This cross cutting approach will need to be branded and have clear communications channels to develop understanding across all agencies of the strategic and operational links that need to be strengthened to support us to work

together more effectively. This work will directly link to targeting resources to the most deprived communities.

Troubled Families Co-ordinator

The government is offering funding of £100,000 per annum for 3 years from 2012/13 to enable a senior post (or posts) to champion, coordinate and troubleshoot the efforts local partners to ensure the success of this programme and form part of a national network of co-ordinators. The requirements of this post are attached at Appendix A which is an extract from the 22 December 2011 letter from the Troubled Families Team.

Cabinet are asked to agree to the development of this role. Other Local Authorities are considering covering these roles by means of part time secondments of senior leadership figures.

In addition SLT are asked to agree for support arrangements to be implemented to assist the nominated Co-ordinator(s) in driving and monitoring the programme. It is anticipated that the overlap with existing workstreams will facilitate sharing of monitoring information and minimise costs but where this is not possible it will be necessary to draw on the £100,000 to cover additional support costs.

Outline Plan

It is likely that the Troubled Families Team's future announcements will make the development of the plan more prescriptive particularly in relation to targets and monitoring success, but the delivery model should unequivocally reflect local need. By 31 March 2012 Rotherham must develop its Community Budget plan covering:-

- **Political and strategic governance**
The LSP Chief Executive Officers Group will provide governance for the Community Budget Programme in the same way as those currently afforded to the Family Recovery Programme and oversight of the deprived communities work. This should secure robust governance arrangements supported and promoted by Members and Chief Officers of all agencies.
- **Partnership arrangements**
Strong partnership at all levels has to be implemented to allow all staff groups and managers to work together with a common understanding and ownership of new systems and the removal of barrier that have previously led to duplicated effort. Branding and communication will have a major role in supporting this together with strong and effective links between agencies. The plan will need the agreement of all partners prior to submission.
- **The families to be supported**
Of the 120,000 families identified nationally 720-740 are estimated to be the Rotherham cohort. We are developing a Troubled Families version of the Vulnerable Localities Index to assist in the verification of these figures but also to identify any discrepancies once the actual families are identified.

By February 2012 we are required to verify the actual families requiring support this will allow us to identify the support services required in each area and also assist in prioritising the roll out of the programme.

- **Resources**

The effective use of partner resources is key to the success of community budgets giving options for pooling, aligning or more innovative ways of sharing. Now the Government is offering up to 40 per cent of the cost of 'successfully' dealing with these families on a payment-by-results basis it is imperative to understand the cost (whether in cash or in kind) of services provided by each agency to ensure that the 60% matched funding requirements are met.

To gather the financial information required a liaison offer is needs to be identified by each Directorate / Agency involved.

- **Service offer, outcomes and success measures**

A focused service offer is required to meet local needs. We are linking the 11 most deprived areas work and the emerging criteria of attendance, worklessness and crime / anti social behaviour to turn around troubled families (see appendix 2).

- **Timetable and project management**

The Government timetable for this project is three years (to 2015), but it is clear that the complexity of the problems faced by these families and the shared service approach needed will take longer to be in a position to fully address this.

8. Finance

Additional resources in excess of £100k are available from Government to help deliver on this agenda. It is important that the Council considers how initiatives can be mainstreamed into day to day operational activities rather than being reliant on external funding.

The development of Community Budgets builds upon previous government initiatives such as area based grants and the Total Place initiative. All are ultimately seeking to improve outcomes for local people and in turn through greater collaboration financial efficiencies should be materialised over time.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Council and partners had already undertaken much work in this area building upon the Rotherham Families research. The increased focus on troubled families is useful and helps to support the focus on deprived communities. However the introduction of payment by results introduces some uncertainty as failure to meet outcomes for families will result in no payments. This is similar to the reward monies given under the local area agreement initiative. Through effective partnership working, leadership and a strong focus on delivery then results and improvements will be secured for families.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The work on families with multiple problems directly supports the Corporate Plan priority of protecting the most vulnerable. In addition, it will link to a number of outcome areas such as health improvement, standard of housing conditions and helping vulnerable people back into work.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The preliminary briefing provided on December 21st gave key background information to be read in conjunction with this report.

22 December 2011 letter from Joe Tuke, Director of Troubled Families Team

15 December 2011 Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Communities Secretary Eric Pickles announce plans to radically transform the lives of the country's most troubled families

17 November 2011 letter from Louise Casey, Director General of Troubled Families Team

Peer learning event – Families with Complex Needs on 21 November 2011 in Bradford

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Troubled Families Coordinators

Background: As part of a national implementation plan for the Government's ambition to turn around the lives of the country's most troubled families, the Troubled Families Team has announced a commitment to fund a national network of troubled families coordinators.

Funding: As per Louise Casey's letter of 16th December, your local authority will be offered money to fund a person/ people to perform this role locally. As such, we expect most coordinators to be employees of the local authority. However, alternative arrangements with other local partners (e.g. the Police, the NHS, JobCentre Plus) may be agreed at a local level in consultation with the Troubled Families Team.

Timing:

- Recruitment should begin immediately, with a view to having candidates in post from April 2012, when funding will be available.
- As outlined in Joe Tuke's letter of 22nd December, additional funding will be available in February 2012 to prepare for the introduction of the new programme. This funding may be used for the early appointment of coordinators, subject to advance agreement with the Troubled Families Team.

Core Task: To lead the troubled families programme locally, as a senior level strategic coordinator, who will grip delivery and radically boost the pace and scale of work locally to turn around the lives of their population of 'troubled families'.

Main Responsibilities:

The main responsibilities of the coordinators will be:

- Taking responsibility for identifying the most troubled families - the numbers, names and locations of the families in their area;
- Using the extra money provided by the Troubled Families Programme to lever all the remaining money and resources needed for their local programme;
- Ensuring local agencies (e.g. police, Job Centre Plus, health organisations, schools etc.) work together to put a robust plan of action in place to deal with the families;

- Focusing local action on the right results for the target families – ensuring the local area has gripped delivery and is on track to deliver against the success criteria set by DCLG;
- Ensuring that the progress of their local programme is being monitored and fed back to the Troubled Families Team.

The Network:

In addition to leading work at a local level, the coordinators will play a vital role as part of a national network of local leaders who can work with the Government to drive delivery of this national commitment. The national network will:

- Form part of a coalition of ambassadors, driving a radical step change in the pace and scale of work with troubled families across England;
- Ensure that local areas are learning from the best, sharing the most effective service models and cutting-edge approaches to service redesign, efficient and unbureaucratic systems to track results and capture the potential savings of this work; and
- Offer constructive challenge and support. If areas are struggling, Government departments and other areas will work with them to get back on track.

To form this network, at least one person will be identified by each upper-tier local authority as the named coordinator. In areas with high numbers of troubled families, small teams may be established using this funding, but a singled named leader should still be nominated.

Briefing Note: Targeting and Co-ordinating Resources to Rotherham's Most Deprived Areas

Assignment of Cabinet Members and SLT Lead Officers

Cabinet has agreed that a Cabinet Member and SLT Lead Officer be assigned to each targeted area to ensure ownership, leadership and to make things happen at a local level. The proposed allocations are set out below:

Neighbourhood	Cabinet Member	SLT Lead Officer
East Herringthorpe	Paul Lakin	Joyce Thacker
Canklow	Rose McNeely	Tom Cray
Eastwood	Mahroof Hussain	Matt Gladstone
Town Centre	Mahroof Hussain	Karl Battersby
East Dene	John Doyle	Paul Woodcock
Dalton & Thrybergh	Paul Lakin	Karl Battersby
Ferham & Masbrough	Jahangir Akhtar	Matt Gladstone
Maltby South East	Amy Rushforth	Tom Cray
Dinnington Central	Richard Russell	Andrew Bedford
Aston North	Gerald Smith	Andrew Bedford
Rawmarsh East	Ken Wyatt	Joyce Thacker

Thematic Priority Areas

Whilst all aspects of deprivation exist across all deprived areas, the Borough-wide drivers of deprivation are poor health, low attainment and skills, and worklessness. However, no area is the same and it is possible to identify key thematic challenges facing each neighbourhood from the Indices of Deprivation 2010. The table below shows where each of themes shows the highest levels of deprivation.

Neighbourhood	CYP Education	Adult Skills	Employment	Health	Crime & ASB	Environmental
East Herringthorpe	✓	✓	✓	✓		
East Dene	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Dalton/Thrybergh		✓		✓		
East Rawmarsh	✓	✓				
Eastwood	✓				✓	✓
Town Centre			✓	✓	✓	✓

Ferham/Masbro	✓			✓	✓	
Dinnington	✓			✓	✓	
Maltby SE	✓		✓		✓	
Aston North			✓	✓		
Canklow	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Critical Success Factors

Strong community involvement and ownership

Nothing can be successful without the involvement and buy-in from each community.

Leadership across all levels of Partnership

A Member and senior lead officer from the Council or partners agency is needed to ensure that issues are tackled.

Co-ordination role

It is critical to have a smooth operational team who can help co-ordinate activity, engage with the local community and get them involved in the solutions.

Visibility in the areas

A high degree of visibility is needed across all agencies with responsive action taken when issues arise.

Resources to be flexibly deployed across all areas

Partners need to be committed to shifting mainstream resources into areas of greatest need.

Long term commitment

Tackling deprivation is not a short term fix, there needs to be long term commitment both in resources and leadership to the targeted areas.

Effective communication

Shifting resources to areas of greatest need will need careful handling both politically and with neighbouring areas.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18th January, 2012
3.	Title:	Out of Hours Service
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5 Summary

This report outlines the approach that has been taken to ensure that customers receive a safe and effective service on a 24/7 basis. Following the successful development of an Out of Hours service using newly recruited staff on amended contracts and volunteers from within the existing staff team it has been decided to extend this to all social work staff.

Consultation has been thorough, with the intention of encouraging as many staff as possible to accept the change to their work practice on a voluntary basis. This has been successful with 88 staff accepting the change. For the remaining 17 it is necessary to undertake a more formal process.

Our intention to issue notice on 30th January 2012 with potential dismissal and re-engagement taking effect on 30th April 2012.

6 Recommendations

- **The Cabinet approves the recommended changes to Terms and Conditions and the process necessary to implement such changes.**

7 Proposals and Details

In 2007 it was identified that Rotherham Social Care Service was putting customers at risk by having no Out of Hours Service in place. Immediate steps were taken to address this by amending the social worker job description and recruiting all new workers to work on a rota to support the new Out of Hours service.

This has resulted in a service which ensures an effective response to customer need between 8.30am and 10.00pm, with a crisis/emergency response provided by the Mental Health Services in RDASH between 10.00pm and 8.30am.

The recent restructure of Assessment and Care Management Services, following an End to End Review, provided an opportunity to review the Out of Hours service. It was found to be working well, but to be having an adverse impact on those service areas which had recruited the most new social work staff since 2008. This was predominantly in the Intake and Hospital Teams, with less significant impact on the Learning Disability Service and the Safeguarding Team. It was agreed to consult with all staff on the following:-

- All social workers and SSO's to participate on the Out of Hours rota, resulting in staff working approximately ten Out of Hours "shifts" per year. This would bring the most experienced social workers onto the rota, as most of the newly recruited social workers are also newly qualified. It would also spread the impact of being on the rota across all teams, and effectively minimise that impact.
- All managers to participate in the on-call rota which supports the Out of Hours service.

Consultation was launched formally on 18th February 2011 on the whole of the restructure proposal and Out of Hours working attracted considerable feedback. Following this feedback a document which summarised the feedback and gave a response was circulated to all concerned. The formal consultation came to a conclusion and recruitment to the new structure commenced. Once in place, all of the newly appointed managers took their place on the on-call rota. This is now fully staffed and working well.

On 13th September 2011 a letter was issued to all social work and SSO staff, informing them of the conclusion of the consultation process and asking them to confirm their participation on the rota. A number of social work staff communicated their intention to decline to participate and following this, a series of actions were implemented:-

- The Principle Social Worker with responsibility for Out of Hours working attended all social work teams to provide them with full information regarding the service.

- 1:1 meetings to be established with all staff refusing to participate to establish their reasons, offer reasonable adjustments, support and information.

This process has resulted in a total of 17 staff continuing to refuse to accept the change to their Terms and Conditions on a voluntary basis and it is concluded that there is no option but to seek to 'dismiss' and 're-engage' these staff.

The Trade Unions have been consulted both formally and informally and are aware of the actions that are being taken.

8 **Finance**

There are no financial implications of this report. The Out of Hours service has been implemented within existing budget and represents good value for money.

9 **Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to bring all staff in line with consistent practice will cause inequity between staff in the same role.

11 **Background Papers and Consultation**

Consultation with Trade Unions held.

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