

## **Deputy Leader**

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

**Date: Monday, 8 October 2012**

**Time: 9.30 a.m.**

## **A G E N D A**

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10th September, 2012 (herewith). (Pages 1 - 5)
4. Cabinet Reports (Directors to report).
5. Members' Issues (Directors to report).
6. Bring Your Own Device\Good For Enterprise (report herewith) (Pages 6 - 16)
7. Review of Council Tax Single Persons Discount - Update (report herewith) (Pages 17 - 19)
8. Date and Time of the Next Meeting - Monday, 19th November, 2012 at 9.30 a.m.

### **Extra Report:-**

9. Complaints Annual Report Attachment (herewith) (Pages 20 - 43)

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**DEPUTY LEADER**  
**Monday, 10th September, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair) and Councillor Sims.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gosling.

**N19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2ND JULY, 2012**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

**N20. ANNUAL FRAUD REPORT 2011/12**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, which detailed how the Annual Fraud Report 2011/12 was to bring together in one document a summary of the work which had taken place in the period to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. By publicising the report it was aimed to show the Council's commitment to minimising the risk of fraud and deter any would-be fraudsters.

It should be noted that the incidence of fraud remained very low in overall terms, taking into account the Council's activities and spending. General fraud cases (excluding benefits) exceeding £10,000 were required to be reported to the Audit Commission and there were none of these in 2011/12.

The Council investigated 1,393 potentially fraudulent Housing and Council Tax Benefit cases, obtained 32 prosecutions and issued 201 cautions and penalties.

The Council recovered £2.52m overpayments of benefits (£2.45m in 2010/11). These were mainly as a result of changes in circumstances, but also included fraudulent claims. Amounts recovered were used in delivering front line services for the benefit of Rotherham residents.

The report was presented to the Audit Committee in July and received support.

The Deputy Leader welcomed this report, but suggested that the timeframes for press releases be brought into line with the agenda publication.

Resolved:- That the production of the Annual Fraud Report 2011/12 be supported.

[2] That appropriate publicity be produced to highlight the outcomes from the Council's anti-fraud activity and to act as a deterrent to fraud.

**N21. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Simon Cooper, Human Resources Manager, which provided information regarding the introduction of an employee voluntary benefit scheme.

The range of benefits currently provided by the Council and those typically popular both in the private and public sectors were referred to and set out in detail as part of the report.

The Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), a local authority purchasing consortium operating through the Midlands and East of England, had established a framework agreement which allowed local authorities to introduce a variety of employee benefits without the need for any lengthy EU procurement procedures.

Benefits currently on offer through the agreement branded as 'Wider Wallet' included discounts in respect of major high street chains and entertainment providers such as Argos 6%, ASDA 4%, BHS 8%, M&S 5%, WH Smith 8%, Cineworld 10%, Disney on Ice 20% and iTunes 5%, . These savings were delivered in a variety of ways such as voucher purchase, cash back on purchases or charge cards which could be topped up by employees on an as and when basis.

Childcare Vouchers were a core element of the framework and the designated provider of this service within the agreement was Kiddivouchers. This company was the Council's existing Childcare Voucher provider. Any signatory to the agreement would be offered a reduced administrative charge by Kiddivouchers. Currently the Council pays Kiddivouchers a 2.1% administrative charge, but this would be reduced by them to just 1% effective from the date of entering into the framework agreement.

It was, therefore, proposed that the launch of the framework would provide an opportunity to publicise existing employee benefits and help to offset any negative perceptions generated by ongoing pay restraint and local measures such as the increment freeze.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the opportunity for a voluntary benefit scheme for both employees and Elected Members and suggested that further information be provided so he could raise awareness to the new combined scheme.

Resolved:- That the consolidation of the Council's employee benefit offerings in a new combined scheme using the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation framework be approved.

## **N22. LOCALISM ACT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Matt Gladstone, Director of Commissioning, Policy and Performance, which provided an update, detailing the commencement of the Act to date; highlighting key issues arising from specific provisions in the Act; and the process of engagement of Members in addressing the issues identified and determining ways forward for the Council.

Since the passing of the Act, there had continued to be a whole Council approach, facilitating detailed reports and briefings being made, particularly around the four key areas of the Act that required the Council's attention and which were set out in detail as part of the report.

Many of the provisions of the Act have now been implemented, but there

remained some risk, mainly around planning, community right to challenge and assets of community value. Some coverage in the media, including Government statements may confuse the provisions of this Act with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Bill, currently before Parliament, especially around statements covering business rates.

The programme of reporting would mitigate any risks arising from the uncertainties by ensuring that full detailed reports for decision were made in a timely manner and would be closely monitored.

Discussion ensued on the provisions of the Act, particularly around the Community Right to Challenge, which provided for expressions of interest in taking over the running of a Council service. It was noted that a published "Future Contracts Opportunities" list and very clear procurement pathways for interested providers would satisfy some of the conditions imposed on Councils by the Act and would hopefully avoid inappropriate Expressions of Interest's coming through to the Council, needing responses within mandatory timeframes.

A preferred way forward would be to open up for expressions of interest in a three month period rather than to a strict timetable which related to the commissioning process as this would create serious administrative difficulties.

Some local authorities have adopted a wait and see approach, while others were publishing some information on their procurement timetables with a caveat that they would consider all Expression of Interests as contracts were renewed.

Further information was also provided on the assumption that the trigger threshold would be set again at 3.5% in the coming budget round. However, it should also be recognised that the proposals for Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes to replace Council Tax Benefit would reduce the Council Tax Base and consequently the yield of any percentage increase in Council Tax. The Council would need to be aware of the trigger percentage for a referendum set by the Government when setting the Council Tax level next year.

Resolved:- That the implications of the Localism Act 2011, be noted in particular:-

- Council Tax referendum trigger as part of the broader changes to Local Government finance.
- Preferred approach to consider "right to challenge" submissions.
- Neighbourhood planning in the context of the Council's local plan.
- Approaches to tenure reform as part of developing the Council's Tenancy Strategy.
- Any opportunities arising from "assets of community value".

### **N23. BENCHMARKING REVIEW**

Matt Gladstone, Director of Commissioning, Policy and Performance, gave a verbal report on the current position of the Benchmarking Review for Commissioning, Policy and Performance. A report was to be presented to the Strategic Leadership Team by the end of the month and it was also suggested

that the information be shared with the Deputy Leader.

Resolved:- That a briefing note be provided to the Deputy Leader for information in due course.

#### **N24. PROCUREMENT**

Matt Gladstone, Director of Commissioning, Policy and Performance, gave a verbal report on the new e-procurement system that the Council would be adopting with a new supplier from January, 2013.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

#### **N25. CABINET REPORTS**

Consideration was given to the agenda which had been circulated for the meeting of the Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 and the contents noted.

Reference was also made to the forthcoming Council meeting and the three reports that were to be presented for approval.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

#### **N26. MEMBERS' ISSUES**

Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, provided updates on the following:-

- The 2011/12 Statement of Accounts was in the process of being externally audited. A positive outcome was anticipated and a report was to be progressed to the Audit Committee in due course.
- A report was to be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 19th September, 2012 on Localisation of Support for Council Tax (Council Tax Benefit) and Council Tax Technical Changes.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy was currently being updated.
- A budget monitoring report was to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2012, which would be the first for the 2012/13 financial year.
- An update was also to be provided to the next meeting of the Deputy Leader on the provisional outcomes from the review of Council Tax single person's discounts..

Richard Copley, Corporate I.T. Manager, provided an update on the "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) Initiative, which allowed access to email, the internet, intranet, calendar and contacts for verified RMBC personnel via an app "Good For Enterprise".

Subject to relevant approvals it was proposed that the BYOD initiative be publicised to Elected Members and that BYOD would allow for a greater variety of device to be offered for use by Elected Members. Further information was to

be provided on this in due course. It was suggested that further information be provided to Elected Members in the form of a drop in session/interactive workshop on or around the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2012.

Resolved:- That the information and the arrangements for the workshop be noted.

**N27. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act [as amended March, 2006 (information relates to finance and business affairs)].

**N28. RELOCATION AND RE-PROCUREMENT OF NETWORK LINKS - EXEMPTION FROM STANDING ORDERS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Richard Copley, Corporate I.T. Manager, which detailed the Council's use of network circuits for the provision of ICT services to schools, libraries and outlying offices. These were currently terminated in the Civic Building and needed to be moved to Riverside House as part of the decommissioning of the Civic Building.

It had been established through investigation that the provision and relocation of 14 of these circuits could only be done by one organisation and that the funding for these circuits could be accommodated through existing budgets to cover both set-up and rental charges.

Legal and Financial Services have been consulted and they have confirmed their agreement with the proposals

Resolved:- [1] That the contract for the set-up of 14 network circuits be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 48.1 (requirement to invite between three and six tenders for contracts with an estimated value of £50k or more) and the contract be awarded to the company named in the report.

[2] That the contract for the rental of 14 network circuits be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 48.1 (requirement to invite between three and six tenders for contracts with an estimated value of £50k or more) and the contract be awarded to the company named in the report.

**N29. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 at 9.30 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Deputy Leader</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>October 8th 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Bring Your Own Device\Good For Enterprise</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

## **5. Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the adoption of a 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) policy for RMBC. BYOD is an initiative which enables RMBC employees to access their RMBC email, contacts, Intranet and calendar from a non-RMBC owned smartphone or tablet.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Deputy Leader is asked to:

- **Support the proposed BYOD policies.**
- **Support an extended trial of Good For Enterprise as the authorised means for access to RMBC data from personal smartphones and tablets.**
- **Support the proposal to present a further report on BYOD, including a detailed financial impact assessment at the end of the trial.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Introduction

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is the name given to a movement/trend which sees an organisation's employees using their personal computers, tablets and smartphones to access the organisation's IT systems and data.

BYOD is not new – it has been common place in the private sector for several years. Adoption of BYOD in the public sector has been slower due to the more sensitive nature of the data being accessed and concerns around data security. Recent developments in technology mean that Local Authorities now have the option to allow employees to access Council systems from personal devices.

The RMBC ICT Strategy (2011 to 2015) includes an increase in mobile working among RMBC employees as one of its aims. The ICT Strategy capital budget includes provision for the purchase of tools to foster a more agile workforce.

### 7.2 The Scope of BYOD in RMBC – App Vs. Thin Client

There are two main ways of providing access to RMBC data from employee owned devices – these are App and Thin Client:

- **App** – Apps (short for 'applications') are small downloadable programmes that can be used on tablets and smartphones. These are developed by companies or individuals and then made available for download from the AppStore (Apple) or Market Place (Android).
- **Thin Client** – under the current model of application delivery we have most of our software programmes installed on the end user's computer. This makes it difficult for users to switch between devices as they are 'tied' to the machine which has their systems installed. Under the Thin Client model the applications are installed on servers in our data centre and no processing is done on the end user's device. This gives much greater flexibility and choice as to the variety of devices that we can enable access from.

BYOD can apply to employee owned laptops/desktops, tablets (such as iPads) and smartphones (such as iPhones). The method of accessing the Council's systems and data varies depending on the type of device being used:

- Smartphone – access is via an app
- Tablet – access is via an app or thin client
- Computer – access is via thin client

Each of the access technologies (app or thin client) allows different levels of access to RMBC's systems and vary considerably in the financial investment and infrastructure that they require:



	App	Thin Client
Email	✓	✓
Calendar	✓	✓
Intranet	✓	✓
Internet	✓	✓
Contacts	✓	✓
Cedar	✓	✓
YourSelf	✓	✓
EDRMS	✓	✓
G:\ and H:\ drives	✗	✓
Locally installed line of business systems	✗	✓
Technical complexity	Low	High
Financial investment	Low	High

RMBC already uses thin client technologies to provide faster access to some of its systems but this is currently only possible from an RMBC owned computer. We are working towards an increased use of thin client and this is likely to include the facility to access RMBC systems from an employee's own personal computer. This new service is still somewhat off, however, and it is likely to be 2013 before we can support BYOD with respect to non-RMBC computers – this will be the subject of a further paper to Corporate ICT and Information Governance Board, SLT and Members in 2013. Increasing the use of thin client technologies is one of the projects in the RMBC ICT Strategy and has been allocated a capital budget of £150,000 over 4 years.

Enabling BYOD on smartphones and tablets is a far quicker and easier task than with laptops because a number of apps are now available to facilitate access to email, calendar, contacts and Intranet. Because of these considerations and because the current demand for BYOD from RMBC Members and officers relates to their phones and tablets rather than their personal laptops, the scope of BYOD considered by this report will be limited to app enabled access from smartphones and tablets.

### 7.3 The Benefits of BYOD for Smartphones and Tablets

There has been a demand for access to RMBC email from non-RMBC smartphones for several years with Members and senior managers being the customers who have most frequently asked for this facility. There are numerous benefits to the employee in utilising their own device:

- Many people already own a sophisticated smartphone or tablet and wish to use it for RMBC business.

- Employees like the freedom to be able to make personal calls from their own handset. (They can do this from an RMBC handset but the process of identifying personal numbers by prefixing them with an asterisk does not always work and is not universally adopted. This means that it is likely that RMBC is currently funding personal calls made by employees.)
- Employees only have to carry one device.
- People are already familiar with these applications from their non-work life thereby assisting in the blending of consumer and business lifestyles.
- Employees generally prefer the more intuitive 'tap and swipe' interfaces to the more 'fiddly' keyboards that are used by Blackberrys.

The main benefits of BYOD to RMBC are:

- Ability to respond to requests from Members and officers to access RMBC emails and other data from their personal smartphone or tablet.
- Increased efficiency of staff through access to emails, calendar and the Intranet when away from their computers\office.
- Future cost savings resulting from reducing the number of RMBC devices in use (see section 8).

### 7.4 Good For Enterprise (GFE)

In March 2012 RMBC was approached by Vodafone (the supplier of our mobile phones and Blackberrys) to offer the Council a trial of a BYOD product called Good For Enterprise (GFE). GFE is an app that works on Android and iOS (Apple's operating system) phones and tablets to allow access to RMBC email, calendars, contacts and Intranet.

The GFE app was deployed to the personal phones or tablets of over 30 RMBC employees and Members with the trial running for 6 weeks. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive – so much so that the Corporate ICT Manager was asked by Members to extend the trial indefinitely pending formal adoption of the product via an SLT report (this document). In light of this a handful of our GFE trial accounts (i.e. those belonging to Members and other VIPs) were converted to live accounts at the end of the trial with monthly fees (see Section 8) being charged to the relevant department's cost centre. The GFE accounts for other users were shut down at the end of the trial period.

The GFE trial revealed that the product is fit for purpose. The trial did result in feedback to GFE with requests for new features and enhancements but none of these are significant enough to prevent RMBC adopting GFE as its BYOD solution.

The option to procure Good For Enterprise from Vodafone is included in RMBC's corporate Vodafone contract. Because of this RMBC is able to procure GFE without the need to conduct a competitive tendering exercise.

### 7.5 Security Considerations

On November 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 RMBC's Internal Audit Section published a report in to the feasibility of allowing employees to access RMBC systems from their smartphones which concluded that, at the time of writing, there was no secure way to deliver this functionality.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010 the Internal Audit report was presented to the eGovernment Board which recommended that RMBC email should only be accessed from non-RMBC devices via Outlook Web Access ('MyMail') using the devices browser. This recommendation was subsequently supported by SLT and Cabinet.

In the intervening years there have been technological advancements which mean that there are now downloadable apps which allow access to an organisation's data from employee owned devices. The apps have the added advantage in that they store all of RMBC's data within the encrypted app and it can be easily deleted, remotely, in the event that the device is lost.

In July 2012 RMBC's Internal Audit conducted a review of security of the Good for Enterprise app and concluded that GFE is as secure as email access from a RMBC issued Blackberry. Internal Audit have recommended a minimum level of security to which the app should be configured – these include strong passwords and time out after periods of inactivity. A full list of security controls is included in the BYOD policy at Appendix 1.

### 7.6 Legal and HR Considerations

A proposed policy for BYOD is included at Appendix 1. All employees wishing to use BYOD will be expected to sign this policy.

Following consultation with RMBC HR it has been determined that it is not possible to reimburse employees for work related calls made from their personal phone as this would add a new layer of claims processing which currently does not exist within the council and would result in an increase in administrative burdens and complexity around Payroll processing in relation to taxation (as call costs would be taxable). Where an employee needs to make a large number of work related calls then it is likely that an RMBC issued device will be more appropriate than BYOD.

Similarly we cannot make a contribution towards the employee's data usage or recompense individuals who incur data usage charges as a result of accessing RMBC data via GFE. These restrictions are set out explicitly in the BYOD policy at Appendix 1.

Furthermore RMBC will not be liable for supporting the employee's personal device or reimbursing employee's in the event of devices being damaged whilst being used to access RMBC data.

There is some concern that BYOD will lead to a blurring of the work\personal life boundary that results in some employees feeling stressed, harassed or unable to 'switch off' from work. To help mitigate this risk BYOD users will be trained in the use

of apps such as 'Call Control' which can categorise a user's contact list in to 'work' and 'personal' contacts and, at the touch of a button, configure the phone such that work contacts are blocked as and when the user sees fit. In addition the user can set up their phone so that they can prevent their personal number being revealed when using their phone for work calls.

It is proposed that team leaders should be responsible for making the decision as to whether an employee should be granted access to BYOD (as is the current arrangement with RMBC Blackberrys and mobiles) and that team leaders will be encouraged to grant BYOD requests for all employees who are flexible or mobile workers.

### 7.7 BYOD and RMBC Blackberrys

For the purpose of this report it is envisaged that GFE will be used on employee's own personal devices rather than on smartphones and tablets owned and issued by RMBC. It is proposed that the use of BYOD\GFE should be entirely voluntary – i.e. it is not proposed that we should cease the practice of providing RMBC Blackberrys in favour of mandatory BYOD. There are two reasons for this:

- Because RMBC cannot subsidise and employee's calls or data use it seems likely that the majority of RMBC employees will not be willing to use their personal device. We will therefore need to continue to provide RMBC Blackberrys for the foreseeable future.
- RMBC has recently signed a new contract with Vodafone which commits us paying for all our current mobile phones and Blackberrys until July 2014. This means that we have to continue to pay for Blackberrys even if they are unused or returned to Vodafone.

After July 2014 the potential exists for RMBC to cease using Blackberry as its preferred email\phone device and to either mandate BYOD or begin using RMBC smartphones with GFE instead. There are many appropriate smartphones on the market which are significantly cheaper than Blackberrys.

In order to maximise savings and to encourage employees to use BYOD as opposed to RMBC Blackberrys it is proposed that all employees requesting a new Blackberry are asked to consider BYOD in the first instance.

## **8. Finance**

In setting up the GFE trial it was necessary for RMBC ICT to create a virtual server to host GFE. This was done using existing infrastructure and at negligible cost to RMBC. Upon reaching the end of the trial period the same virtual server has become the live platform for GFE – again at negligible cost. GFE is priced as follows (these are charges to RMBC, not the end user):

- One off activation fee - £50 per user
- Monthly fee - £5.50 per month

These charges relate to each *device* that is enabled to use GFE – not each member of staff. If an employee wishes to use GFE on two devices – e.g. on their iPad *and* iPhone then RMBC will need to pay for two activation fees and two monthly fees.

The creation and activation of a new GFE account takes less than 10 minutes – Corporate ICT will, therefore, not need to charge for this service. There is, however, a small amount of work to do in supporting GFE in terms of processing change requests, seeking policy sign off (see Appendix 1), applying updates and unlocking accounts. It is proposed that the cost of this work is covered by charging a small monthly fee to the user meaning that the total cost to the user will be £6 per month – this charge could be reviewed in the light of operational experience.

The table below shows a comparison in costs to RMBC for Blackberrys and personal smartphones using GFE.

Item	RMBC Blackberry	BYOD with GFE
Handset	£155	NA
Setup Charge	£55.90	£50.00
Supplier Monthly Charge	£11.25	£5.50
Average monthly call costs	£5.19	NA
Total cost of ownership for year one	£408.18	£116
Cost per year in subsequent years	£197.28	£66.00

RMBC currently uses 510 Blackberrys at an annual cost to RMBC of £100,612 but because the Council is contractually committed to paying for all our Blackberrys until July 2014 we cannot generate a short term saving by switching Blackberry users to BYOD. Until July 2014 each Blackberry user who switches to BYOD will cause a net increase in costs for RMBC – i.e. RMBC will pay for both the Blackberry charges and the GFE charges for that individual.

The risk of RMBC being left with unused Blackberrys for which a payment must be made to Vodafone is reduced when we consider that there are more than 100 requests for new Blackberrys each year:

- **2011** – 140 new Blackberrys issued
- **2012** – 135 new Blackberrys issued to date

Furthermore we can convert an unused Blackberry account to a new mobile phone account which gives us further means to mitigate the risk of paying Vodafone for unused devices. This notwithstanding, RMBC should remain cognisant that:

- If the rate of issue of new mobiles or Blackberrys exceeds the rate at which existing Blackberry users switch to BYOD then there will be no net increase in costs to RMBC.
- If more existing Blackberry users switch to BYOD than there are new requests for mobiles or Blackberrys then there will be a net increase in costs to RMBC.

It is not possible to be precise about how many RMBC employees will wish to adopt BYOD as this will depend entirely on their attitude towards the non-subsidy of calls and data. Findings from the initial trial indicated that Members and senior officers are most willing to adopt BYOD as are individuals who already have unlimited data and call contracts (as they can be sure that will incur no cost as a result of GFE use). Employees outside of these groups are less likely to migrate to BYOD.

The financial business case is further complicated when we consider that the GFE trial has resulted in some employees indicating that they intend to return their RMBC laptops and VPN tokens as they feel that GFE has rendered this equipment redundant. It is not possible to predict whether this behaviour will be widespread amongst BYOD users but the business case would be strengthened if BYOD and GFE leads to a reduction in the amount of ICT equipment which RMBC provides.

It is because of our inability to predict user behaviour that a further trial of GFE is proposed. By advertising GFE more widely in RMBC and monitoring uptake and user behaviour for a period of 6 months we will be able to better understand the financial impact on RMBC. At the end of the trial a report will be presented to Corporate ICT and Information Governance Board, SLT and Members which explains how GFE has affected use of RMBC Blackberrys, laptops and VPN and sets out the financial impact of continued use of BYOD and GFE.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

There are several apps available that enable smartphone access to RMBC data in an insecure manner. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some employees are using these apps and we have no technical means to prevent their use - if RMBC does not provide its employees with a corporately sanctioned and controlled BYOD product and policy there is a risk that employees will continue to use insecure access routes and products and thereby risk the loss of RMBC data.

Furthermore, RMBC email can already be accessed from smartphones via 'MyMail' but this is method of access is much less secure than GFE and increases the risk of data loss.

There is a risk that the number of Blackberry users electing to switch to BYOD will exceed the number of new Blackberry requests. In this scenario RMBC would see Blackberry usage levels fall below 510 devices and would begin paying Vodafone for unused devices. This risk can be mitigated by careful monitoring of all Vodafone contracts and BYOD adoption levels as described at section 8.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Policy and Performance issues are considered elsewhere in this report.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Strategic Leadership Team (01/10/12)

- Corporate ICT, Information Governance and Web Strategy Board (27/09/12)
- RMBC ICT Strategy (2011 to 2015)
- Internal Audit Report (November 2010) – Access to RMBC email from Smartphones
- Internal Audit Report (July 2012) – Bring Your Own Device
- Human Resources, Procurement and Internal Audit have been consulted on security, financial and HR related issues in relation to BYOD.

**12. Contact Names:**

Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, Tel 54525  
[richard.copley@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:richard.copley@rotherham.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### **RMBC Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy for Smartphones and Tablets**

The voluntary use of a smartphone or tablet in connection with RMBC's business is a privilege granted to employees through approval of their management. RMBC reserves the right to revoke these privileges in the event that users do not abide by the policies and procedures set out below.

The following policies are aimed to protect the integrity of RMBC data and ensure it remains safe and secure under RMBC control.

References to the word "device" below includes, but is not limited to, iOS, Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, iPad, tablet or other smartphones. Please note that Good For Enterprise does not currently work on Windows mobiles devices.

#### **Security**

Users of Personal Smartphones or tablets must agree to all terms and conditions in this policy to be allowed access to those RMBC services.

1. Irrespective of security precautions mentioned here, you are expected to use your device in accordance with the employee\Member code of conduct and the RMBC IT Acceptable Use Policy.
2. Government Connect (GCSx) email cannot be used on any mobile device regardless of whether it is RMBC issued (Including Blackberrys) or privately owned.
3. In the event of loss or theft of your device, you must inform RMBC ICT Service Desk immediately.
4. Access to RMBC data from your device must be via an RMBC sanctioned app (currently Good for Enterprise (GFE)).
5. GFE will lock after 15 minutes of inactivity, requiring re-entry of your password.
6. GFE will lock your account after 10 failed login attempts.
7. GFE includes password rotation every 90 days.
8. Passwords must be of the following strength:
  - a. The password must be a minimum of 7 characters
  - b. The password must contain at least one letter or number (except on devices that cannot accept alphanumeric passwords)
  - c. The password must not be one of your previous 2 passwords
9. The GFE app and all data contained within it will be remotely deleted if:
  - a. you lose the device
  - b. you terminate employment with RMBC
  - c. the IT section detects a data or policy breach or virus; or
  - d. the IT section detects that the device is 'hacked' or tampered with

#### **Business Calls and Data Usage**

A personal smartphone can be connected to the RMBC infrastructure or services, but the user is personally liable for their device and all supplier service costs. Users



of personal smartphones are not eligible for reimbursement of expenses for hardware or supplier services.

An employee may use their personal device to make work-related calls but RMBC will not reimburse the employee for the cost of these calls.

Employees with a frequent requirement to make work related calls from a mobile device will need to choose between using GFE to access emails from their personal phone in conjunction with a RMBC mobile to make calls (not Blackberry) or using a RMBC Blackberry only. Employees are not permitted to use GFE if they are RMBC Blackberry users. Any employee wishing to use GFE must relinquish their Blackberry if they have one.

It is the employee's responsibility to understand their own mobile phone contract and data usage tariffs. RMBC will not reimburse the employee for costs incurred relating to data usage as a result of accessing RMBC emails and other services. Employees who do not have an unlimited data usage contract are encouraged to monitor data consumption when using GFE – most network providers offer free downloadable apps to help with this.

### **Disclaimer**

RMBC hereby acknowledge that the use of a personal smartphone in connection with RMBC business carries specific risks for which you, as the user, assume full liability. These risks include, but are not limited to, the partial or complete loss of data as a result of a crash of the operating system, errors, bugs, viruses, downloaded malware, and/or other software or hardware failures, or programming errors which could render a device inoperable.

RMBC ICT are responsible for deploying GFE, resetting/unlocking GFE passwords and uninstalling GFE when necessary. RMBC ICT will not offer any support to personal devices over and above this. There is no Service Level Agreement associated with the GFE product – remediation will be approached on a best endeavours basis.

By signing this document you confirm that you have understood the conditions of GFE use and that you will abide by them. You are also confirming that you have completed the RMBC Information Security eLearning module and that you understand, and agree to abide by, the RMBC Information Security Policy.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1)</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Deputy Leader</b>
<b>2)</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>8 October 2012</b>
<b>3)</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Review of Council Tax Single Persons Discount – an update</b>
<b>4)</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

**5. Summary**

This report provides an update to the Deputy Leader on the Council Tax Single Person's Discount review that is being carried out in conjunction with Northgate (our Revenue's software supplier) and Experian.

**6. Recommendation**

**Deputy Leader notes the content of the report**

## **7. Background**

The Council's Local Taxation Section is currently undertaking an intelligence based review of the Council Tax Single Person's Discount (SPD) awarded to residents in the borough, working with Northgate and Experian.

In June 2012 the Single Person Discount caseload was cross matched against Experian records. The cross match identified 5,613 discounts that required further follow up due to their classification by Experian as moderate to high risk . This risk rating is due to there being recorded financial activity at the property from more than one person within the last three months.

Canvass letters were issued to the identified cases on 29 June 2012 asking customers to declare their current household circumstances. Customers who failed to respond to this initial letter were sent a reminder letter 21 days later.

To date the results of the canvass are as follows:

- 2,979 discounts have been verified as being correctly claimed.
- 1,771 discounts have been cancelled. Of these, 1248 were cancelled as a result of the customer failing to respond to the initial canvass letter, a reminder letter and a further letter asking for contact before the discount was cancelled. The other 523 discounts have been cancelled following a declaration of a change in household circumstances by the customer.

The cancellations have resulted in an additional £635k Council Tax income being raised across the identified Council Tax accounts. Revised Council Tax bills have been issued requesting that relevant payments are made to bring their Account up to date. This figure is subject to change due to customers who have previously not made contact now making contact which may result in the SPD being reinstated.

Work to finalise the outcomes from the Review will continue over the next few months. A further concluding report will be brought to this meeting in due course.

## **8. Finance**

Although the review is not yet complete, the cancellations so far have resulted in an additional £635k Council Tax income being raised in 2012/13 across the identified Council Tax accounts.

Reducing the number and value of SPD's has the effect of increasing the Council's Council Tax (CT) Base used in setting the Council Tax. The Council's CT Base is approved by Members as part of the Council's Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting process in January each year.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The Council Tax collection rate may initially be adversely affected due to the cancelling of SPD's which will require a higher level of income to be collected by the Council. This risk will be mitigated through prompt and robust recovery action to minimise any potential future bad debts arising.

### **Contact Names:-**

Rachel Humphries, Operational Manager, Local Taxation Revenues and Benefits, Ext 55119, email address: *rachel.humphries@rotherham.gov.uk*

Robert Cutts, Service and Development Manager Revenues and Benefits, Ext 23320, email address: *robert.cutts@rotherham.gov.uk*

<b>ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>
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<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>Deputy Leader</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>8th October, 2012</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Complaints – Annual Report 2011 – 2012</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>All Directorates</b>

## 5. Summary

This report provides information about complaints made between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 to the Local Authority, under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services complaint regulations

The figures in the report include details of the number of complaints made by customers. The information is presented for the Council and by each Directorate. It contains a summary of complaints received, main complaint issues and how services have been improved.

The report also includes details on how complaint handling has been improved over the year and how it can be improved further.

In total over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received by the Council has **reduced** from **1248 (2010/11)** to **724 - 42%** reduction

Overall **94%** of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to **76% (2010/11)**

## 6. Recommendations

That the Deputy Leader:-

- Notes the content of the report

## 7. Proposals and Details

In 2011-2012 the Council has greatly improved performance in terms of complaints dealt with in target time. We are also committed to reducing the number of complaints received, reducing the number of escalations through the complaint procedure, improving the experience of customers and reducing the cost of dealing with complaints both in terms of efficiencies in complaint handling and the amount of compensation awarded.

**Overall 94% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales**, compared to 76% (2010/11). This demonstrates a progressive approach to performance management across the Council, leading to year on year improvement. All Directorate leads are targeted to achieve 100% performance.

### Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of comments (quick response concerns) increased **30%** from **1457** in 2010/11 to **2095**
- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **1248** to **724** (42% reduction)
  - Complaints for NAS – Housing and Neighbourhood services reduced from **781** to **370** (**52%** decrease)
  - Complaints for Resources reduced from **86** to **44** (**49%** decrease)
  - Complaints for Children and Young Peoples services reduced from **120** to **87** (**27%** decrease)
  - Complaints for Environment and Development services reduced from **148** to **115** (**22%** decrease)
  - Complaints for NAS – Adult services reduced from **113** to **108** (**4%** decrease)
- Total number of complaints (at all stages) upheld increased, **319**, **43%** compared to **380**, **40%** 2010/11.
- Reduction in the number of complaints escalating reduced **40%** from **102** in 2010/11 to **61** (Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2)
- Complaints about quality of service reduced from **286** in 2010/11 to **195**
- Complaints about actions of staff reduced from **222** in 2010/11 to **176**
- Ombudsman average response time was **25.1** days from **14** first enquiries (**25.1** days from **7** first enquiries in 2010/11)
- Total compensation awards made in 2011/10 was **£540**
- External complaint investigation costs in CYPS reduced from **£22,541** in 2010/11 to **£12,592** in 2011/12.
- Savings made in Resources and CPP restructure in respect of complaint team's resources was **£112,391** (staffing costs).

The Directorate complaints teams has maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Learning from all Complaints to identify service improvements
- Improved performance on enquiries responded to in time
- Reduced the number of complaints received
- Increased the number of comments (quick response concerns) received
- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers

- Improving the quality of responses
- Improving satisfaction of the complaint management process
- Training in complaint handling which is delivered on a rolling programme to all managers.
- Learning from complaints workshops with staff.
- Reduction in the amount of compensation paid.
- Reduction in cost of responding to complaints, reducing cost of external investigators
- Aligned complaint functions – improved sharing of best practice.
- Internal review of complaint handling completed – see **2011/12 Improvement Actions** page 18.

### **8. Risks and uncertainties**

Although positive management of complaints can be achieved, the number and type of complaints received is determined by circumstances beyond the control of the complaint service. Regardless of any external factors the service is required to maintain a high level of performance and excellent customer care.

The financial decisions the Authority is making will also affect the number of complaints received, changes to services drive the level of complaints received.

### **9. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The complaints report reflects the policy and performance agenda requirements of both national government and the Council. These include;

- Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).
- The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- Corporate Complaint procedure (Making Experiences Count)
- Rotherham's local plans including corporate and service plans.
- Corporate Complaint Review, looking at complaint handling processes across the Authority.

### **10. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Appendix 1 Complaints Annual Report 2011-2012 (in full)

#### **Contact Names:**

Dave Roddis, Performance & Quality Manager, ext 23781  
Stuart Purcell, Performance and Improvement Officer, ext 22661

# Annual Report

April 2011 to March 2012

## Complaints





## Executive Summary

This report provides information about complaints made between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 to the Local Authority, under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services and Childrens Social Services complaint regulations

The figures in the report include details of the number of customers and the number of complaints they have made, each Directorate area has provided information and a breakdown summary.

**In total over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received by the Council has reduced from 1248 to 724 - 42% reduction.** This reduction is due to improved management of complaints, the restructures in Resources, an internal review of complaint handling and that wherever possible complaints are dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity – this is why the number of quick response concerns has increased. *(Further explanation of these changes is provided throughout the report)*

Complaint information is shared and monitored by the Council through the central database and a quarterly / annual reporting mechanism to its Strategic Leadership Team and to Cabinet. Directorate Services also report monthly and quarterly at both a Directorate and Service area level and to Directorate Cabinet Members.

**Overall 94% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales,** compared to 76% (2010/11). This demonstrates a progressive approach to performance management across the Council, leading to year on year improvement. All Directorate leads are targeted to achieve 100% performance.

### Headline Results 2011/12

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- Savings made in Resources and CPP restructure in respect of complaint team's resources was **£112,391** (staffing costs).

The Directorate complaints team has maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

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- Reduced the number of complaints received
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- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers
- Improving the quality of responses
- Improving satisfaction of the complaint management process
- Training in complaint handling which is delivered on a rolling programme to all managers.
- Learning from complaints workshops with staff.
- Reduction in the amount of compensation paid.
- Reduction in cost of responding to complaints, reducing cost of external investigators
- Aligned complaint functions – improved sharing of best practice.
- Internal review of complaint handling completed – see **2011/12 Improvement Actions** page 18.

### **Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12**

Directorate complaint teams have reported complaint trends around the following areas;

#### ***Neighbourhoods and Adult Services***

##### *Adult Services*

The main areas of complaint in Adult Social Services were regarding the assessment process in older people's services (38% of complaints received) and direct payments (10% of complaints received). These were centred on the outcomes of assessments, delays in the process and lack of information and advice. Changes and restructuring of the assessment teams are expected to reduce the number of complaints received and work to improve information and advice provided at assessment is ongoing. There were also significant numbers of complaints received about direct payments. Direct payment complaints increased in line with an increase in the provision of direct payments but work has also been completed to improve advice available and to clarify Council procedures.

##### *Housing and Neighbourhood Services*

The number of complaints has dramatically reduced by 52% in 2011/2. Reductions in complaints have been seen across all services, however, the reduction has been particularly driven by improvements in the repair and maintenance service and contractors performance. The level of complaints in 2010/11 was also skewed upwards by the severe winter and the response to the problems experienced by gas boilers. There is no room for complacency

because repair and maintenance complaints remain the majority of all complaints received by the service. The next highest number of complaints were made against the Housing and Neighbourhood Teams, this area also showed a 41% reduction in complaints in the year.

### ***Resources***

Although formal complaints more than halved (52% reduction), it was again Revenues and Benefits (65% of complaints received) and Contact Centre (31% of complaints received) that received the highest number of complaints. These were mainly regarding advice and information provided by staff and individual members of staff making incorrect decisions and providing misinformation. Action was taken with individuals through supervision and HR procedures but also through robust ongoing training and briefing protocols.

### ***Environment and Development Services***

The number of official complaints received has reduced by 22% in 2011/12. However this has been met with an extraordinary (66%) increase in customer comments (unofficial complaints). The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride and were specifically around services delivered by Leisure and Community Services including complaints around litter build up, lack of weed killing and a reduction in grass cutting. In Network Management customer complained about the lack of maintenance of road surfaces and number of pot holes evident across the borough along with complaints relating to re-siting of new street lighting columns without consultation. 41% of complaints received centred around the quality of service received.

### ***Children and Young Peoples Services***

Complaints regarding all aspects of children's social care accounted for over 96% of all complaints received by the directorate in 2011/12. The highest number of complaints relate to services provided by the Locality Social Work Teams who collectively received 74% of all Stage 1 complaints, which has reduced from 86.8% in the previous year. Locality Teams deal with the vast majority of people who receive a service and the number of complaints reflects the nature of the social care role and the role of the complaint procedure.

## **Learning from Complaints**

Learning from Complaints discussions with accountable managers to promptly identify service improvements and changes in current practice now take place in respect of all complaints responded to.

Learning outcomes case studies are presented in the Directorate Performance update sections in the shaded text boxes;

## Directorate Performance in 2011/12

### Neighbourhood and Adult Services

Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate complaints are split into statutory (Adult Services) and non statutory complaints (Housing and Neighbourhood Services). They are usually recorded and reported separately.

However, combined results for the whole Directorate are as follows;

**Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Neighbourhood and Adult Services has reduced from 894 in 2010/11 to 478 (53% reduction).**

**Overall 91% of all complaints were responded to within the timescales, compared to 75% in 2010/11.**

- Number of comments increased from **498** to **774**
- Total number of complaints upheld was **233** compared to **205** in 2010/11
- Decrease in the number of complaints escalating :-
- From **81** (2010/11) to **44** for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2
- **£440** total compensation awards made in 2011/12 (HNS only )

### Adult Services

Adult Services Complaints are dealt with under the complaints and representations procedures established through the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).

**Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services has reduced from 113 to 108 (4% reduction).**

**Overall 100% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales for the third year in a row, compared to 94% (2008/09) and 88% (2007/08).** This performance again benchmarks the best against the regional Yorkshire and Humberside Local Authority complaints group based on numbers received (15 Local Authority areas).

### Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of comments increased from **73** to **100**
- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **113** to **108**
- Complaints regarding Action of Staff increased from **15** to **23**
- Complaints regarding quality reduced from **29** to **28**
- Complaints regarding Delay reduced from **22** to **13**
- Total number of complaints upheld was **43** compared to **27** in 2010/11

- Increase in the number of complaints escalating :-
  - From **9** (2010/11) to **14** for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2
- No compensation awards made in 2011/12
- External complaint investigation costs were maintained at zero in 2011/12

The Adult Social Services complaints team has maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Reduced the number of complaints received
- Maintained performance at 100%
- Maintained high levels of satisfaction with the complaint process
- Promoting and increasing accessibility of the complaints procedure through the development of the internet, information packs and campaigns in our reception areas.
- Training in complaint handling which is delivered on a rolling programme to all managers.
- Learning from complaints workshops with staff.
- No compensation paid.
- Reduction in cost of responding to complaints, investigations (no external investigators were procured in 2011/12).

#### Learning from complaints case studies

1

##### Adult Services

Customer was not happy that they had been provided misleading information about Direct Payment regulations. The customer wanted to employ a family member as their personal assistant.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Taken action to ensure that customers are given accurate information regarding the use Direct Payments to employ close relatives. We have reviewed and updated available information.
- Managers reminded to be certain that information contained in correspondence to customers is checked for accuracy before being sent.

#### Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12

##### Delays in Assessment process

There has been a significant reduction the number and proportion of complaints received regarding delays in assessment. The reorganisation of the Assessment and Care Management service has streamlined the process by which referrals are received and planned and unplanned reviews take place. There is now a single point of contact for new referrals via Assessment Direct and the intake team focuses on ensuring that initial assessments are completed in a timely manner and that where appropriate planned reviews are arranged within a specific timescale.

##### Information about services

A significant number of complaints received were from customer's not happy about the availability of information or the accuracy of information they had received. Complaints were received about information not correctly recorded on assessment documents that could potentially impact on the outcome of the assessment. Other complaints were received about out of date information online or in leaflets and advice booklets. As well as advising individual members of staff regarding mistakes we have an ongoing process of reviewing the information

we provide to customers. In addition complaints were received about lack of information available, customers felt that they were not advised about what services were available or were not kept informed following requests for service. We have changed processes for individual services and teams to make sure that customers are kept better informed. We are in the process of reviewing the availability of information about our services, including signposting to information available in our partner organisations.

### **Direct payments**

There was an increase in the number of complaints received that involved Direct Payments. These were regarding delays in the process, lack of or inaccurate information provided about Council direct payments rules. This reflects an increase in the provision of Direct Payments by the Council, however, we have looked at ways to reduce the complaints received by making sure customers are better informed about the Direct Payment process at the time of assessment and by reviewing our internal procedures around direct payments.

### **New Developments in 2011/12**

- There is a continued commitment to putting things right and that enquiries and concerns are dealt with at the earliest opportunity. Again as a result complaints have decreased and comments have increased In 2011/12 Adult Services received 108 complaints and 100 comments. This compares with 113 complaints and 73 comments received in 2010/11.
- Regular feedback sessions to the Director Of Health and Wellbeing has improved accountability, reduced risk and ensured timely service improvements.
- The Ombudsman has published new guidance documents providing advice regarding their new powers to investigate complaints from customers in receipt of self funding care. We have ensured that these documents were distributed to independent providers throughout the borough.

### **2012/13 Improvement Actions**

The Adult Services complaints Team will ensure that all enquiries through the team are dealt with in the best possible way, that any issues of concern are resolved at the earliest possible opportunity and take the opportunity to learn and seek improvements to service.

They will work with management and staff to improve customer care around; information and advice provided to customers and to reduce complaints regarding actions of staff and lack of service.

They will increase the number of learning from complaint issues and work with managers to ensure these lead to real service improvements. They will also ensure that learning issues are referred into the wider service level reviews. They will also develop ways of keeping customers informed of service improvements that were generated by their complaints.

**Learning from complaints case studies****2****Adult Services**

A customer visiting one of the contact centres was given the wrong information regarding eligibility for a Blue Badge.

In response to their concerns we have;

- We now ensure when changes are made to how we issue documents like Blue Badges, information is updated and all frontline staff are made aware of the information customers will need.
- Changes to Blue Badge applications nationally highlighted a need to ensure that customers are advised to apply for renewals one month before their current Blue Badge runs out. Where a customer has difficulty doing this they will be advised to contact Rothercare Direct for further advice.

**Housing and Neighbourhood Services**

Housing and Neighbourhood Services' complaints are dealt with under the Council's corporate Complaint's Procedure, Tell Us Your Views.

The figures presented in this summary include the complaints for services previously managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. They also include Environmental Health, Business Regulation and the previously retained housing function – for the purpose of this report they will be referred to as Neighbourhood Services.

**The combined figures show a significant reduction of complaints over the last 12 months, reducing from 781 to 370- 52 % reduction.** The biggest single improvement being the reduction in complaints about the repair and maintenance service.

**Overall 89% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales. (Neighbourhood services recorded 100% throughout the year and Housing services maintained 100% performance since January 2012)**

**Headline Results 2011/12**

- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **781** to **370**
- New (stage 1) complaints about the former 2010 Rotherham Ltd managed services fell from by 52% from **616** to **293**
- New complaints about services not previously contracted out to 2010 Rotherham Ltd reduced by 43% from **76** to **43** (Neighbourhood Services )
- The total number of complaints upheld was **190** or **57%**, **178** or **24%** 2010-11.
- The number of complaints escalating from stage 1 to stage 2 to reduced by 58.5% from **72** to **30**
- New complaints about lack of service decreased from **180** to **110** or 39%
- New complaints about delays in service decreased from **266** to **93** or 65%
- New complaints about actions of staff decreased from **80** to **71** or 11%
- New complaints about the quality of service decreased from **116** to **51** or 56%
- New complaints about the lack of information reduced from **21** to **3** or 86%
- New complaints about the cost of the service reduced from **20** to **5** or 75%
- **£440** total compensation awards made in 2011/12

- Number of comments increased from **425** to **674**

The figures which show both improvements in service delivery and case resolution have had a positive impact, with both the number of complaints reducing and the percentage escalating beyond stage 1 dramatically reducing. This suggests the service is putting right what has gone wrong and learning from the customer experience to improve the services.

### **Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12**

#### **Improved variation process**

A considerable number of customers experienced delays generated or exacerbated by the repairs partners seeking approval from the client for a variation to the contract before starting repair work. The process was reviewed and from the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012 a more streamlined service was introduced, contributing to a reduction in the delay in services category of complaint in 2011/2. The improvements included:

- Partners self approving any work outside of price per property which is required to restore "*minimum service*"
- Partners self approving any work outside of price per property which is required to restore "*normal service*" which requires less than one persons – day labour.
- Client approval is deemed to be given unless otherwise authorised within 24 hours.

#### **Improvements to the Standard of Empty Homes**

The year also saw a trend of complaints about the standard of empty homes, this in part has been addressed by restructure of the Housing and Neighbourhood Service and the creation of a dedicated Empty Homes Team. A significant improvement adopted by the team following a complaint in December has been the adoption of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to assess and quality check empty homes. It is anticipated this will reduce the number complaints.

#### **Improving how we respond to damp and disrepair**

Reports of damp constituted a significant proportion of repair complaints and disrepair claims received in 2011/12. The issues were highlighted to the director who chaired a meeting of managers which resulted in the following improvements being implemented:

- 100% of damp reports are now inspected.
- 100% empty homes to be inspected for damp using a damp meter.
- ITC Reports developed to map all damp reports and inform future preventative investment programmes.
- A revised disrepair process has been implemented with Legal and Democratic Services resulting in a more responsive service for the customer and minimisation of risk for the service.



**Learning from complaints case studies**

3

**Housing and Neighbourhood Services**

A complaint was received stating the decision letter following a licensing Board decision was inaccurate.

In response to this problem;

- Officers now have access to the rationale behind each board decision and incorporate into the decision letter.

**New Developments in 2011/12**

- The re-incorporation of 2010 Rotherham Ltd and realignment of the service has provided greater transparency and accountability, this combined with embedding the externalisation of the repair service has resulted in an improved service and greatly reduced level of complaints.
- The re-incorporation of 2010 has released resources to analyse complaints in more detail and target common themes of complaint and then work alongside service managers to share best practice and put things right.
- The volume of repair related complaints has allowed trends to be identified and focused upon the most significant being; loss of heat, delays caused by the repairs variation process, damp and the standard of empty homes.
- Regular feedback sessions to the Director Of Housing and Neighbourhood Services has improved accountability, reduced risk and ensured timely service improvements.
- Reports have been introduced to identify learning from complaints and allowed best practice to be shared.
- Staff learning from complaints workshops have been introduced to allow front line staff a contribution into the service improvement process.

**Learning from complaints case studies**

4

**Housing and Neighbourhood Services**

A new tenancy start date was delayed by weeks due to a high security door being damaged and the need to measure and supply a new one.

In response to their concerns we have;

- The contractors now have arrangements to access temporary high security blank doors which can be installed pending the delivery of a standard high security door.

## 2012/13 Improvement Actions

- Housing and Neighbourhood Services Complaint Officer will continue to assist the service to make service improvements based on the outcomes of the complaints received, and on what our customers have told us are their main concerns.
- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform service improvements and the corporate complaints teams focus. Trends show that despite the reduction in repair related complaints there are still significant improvements that can be made in areas such as communication with the customer. This means the complaints team will particularly support this area of the service in 2012/3.
- There will be an increased emphasis on improving the accountability of the complaint service in 2012/3 by engaging both staff and customers in complaint based service developments.
- Training will be provided in complaint handling to all investigation managers on an ongoing basis.
- The authority is preparing for changes to Housing (tenancy management and repair) complaints introduced under the Localism Act 2011. From April 2012 complaints will be investigated by the Housing Ombudsman and not the Local Government Ombudsman. It is also considering the introduction of tenant complaint adjudication panels, in line with suggested good practice in the legislation (Localism Act 2012).

### Learning from complaints case studies

5

#### Housing and Neighbourhood Services

A new tenancy in a sheltered bungalow was let with a damp problem and level floor trip hazard, resulting in reimbursement and a significant delay in the tenancy starting.

In response to this problem;

- The Empty Homes Team has now issued all surveyors with Damp Meters and provide specifications of work based on their readings.
- The Empty Homes Team has implemented the use of the Housing Health and Rating System for all empty properties which provides a robust template to assess the hazards.

## Children and Young People Services

Children and Young People's Services complaints are responded to in accordance to The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

The Service records customers and complaint points as is required under their regulations. **The number of people making complaints has decreased from 120 to 87, which is a 27% decrease.** (422 complaint points were registered).

**Overall 91% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to 61% (2010/11).**

## Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of people making complaint at Stage 1 has decreased from **115** to **82**
- Reduction in the percentage of complaints which were upheld from **77 (64%)** in 2010/11 to **30 (34%)** in 2011/12
- **30** compliments were received about services.
- External complaint investigation costs reduced from **£22,541** in 2010/11 to **£12,592** in 2011/12.

The Children and Young People's Services Complaints Team has made significant improvements in the following areas:

- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers
- Improving the quality of responses
- Learning from complaints

## Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12

### **Inaccuracies and omissions from assessments and reports**

The subject of some of the most complex complaints often relates to the contents of assessments and reports produced by social workers. Because of the nature of children's social care, customers are often unhappy with what is written about them in reports and assessments and customers are entitled and encouraged to share their views with the relevant social worker as part of the assessment process.

Complaints about Section 7 Welfare Reports typically result in customers complaining as the reports are usually completed as part of contested private court proceedings between parents in divorce / separation. Customers typically complain as they feel that reports favour one party and are inaccurate or omit facts about the other party in the case.

Training in the completion of Assessment and Section 7 Reports is provided to social workers where training needs are identified. Issues of social work practice are identified through regular supervision with Team Managers and Social Workers.

In some cases where complaints about assessments and reports are upheld inaccuracies and omissions are put right straight away and reports and assessments are amended.

### **Communication and customer service**

Complaints about phone calls not being returned or about customers being unable to contact members of staff still account for a significant proportion of all complaints received. However these types of complaints rarely form the basis of a complaint and tend to be raised supplementary to the customer's main issues which they have complained about.

A significant proportion of complaints are also about the actions, conduct and professionalism of staff while undertaking their duties. Again these types of complaints are usually made supplementary to the main issues which the customer has complained about. These types of complaints particularly refer to verbal comments made by social workers while undertaking their duties and it is acknowledged that in most cases there is little evidence to support or disprove the complaint being made.

From May 2012 issues of practice learning for social workers are fed into workforce development plans through the Practice Improvement Group. These issues of customer care and professionalism when dealing with customers will be addressed through staff training in 2012/13.

### **Lack of information**

A significant number of customers make complaints about not receiving documents on time; or in some cases not receiving documents at all. The documents referred to often relate to Case Conferences, Core Group and Children in Need Meetings.

Customers often complain about not receiving reports on time to enable them to respond to them at meetings; particularly social worker's reports for case conferences. This issue has been reported to the Practice Improvement Group and further work is planned to explore the reasons for delays in submission of information and decision-making around information that is sent out to customers. This work will then lead to service improvements and will address this issue.

#### **Learning from complaints case studies**

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##### **Children and Young People services**

Customer was not happy that some of the details included in the Initial and Core Assessment were not accurate and they had felt that they had not been able to have their views represented within the assessment.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Changed our practice to now encourage customers to challenge the content of assessments with their social worker as part of the assessment process.
- Have reported the issue to our Practice Improvement Group to contribute to improvements in social work practice through workforce development.

### **New Developments in 2011/12**

- Following the Commissioning Policy and Performance review in 2010 the complaints function for Children and Young People Services is undertaken by the Performance and Quality Team by an identified lead officer.
- Reporting protocols have been reviewed, complaints performance and key issues will be reported on a monthly and quarterly basis to CYPS DLT and SMT meetings.
- Learning from complaint procedures have been refreshed, all complaints are considered for learning.

### **2012/13 Improvement Actions**

Maintain the improvement in performance which has seen 100% of Stage 1 Complaints responded to within statutory timescales since September 2011; by continuing the excellent performance management of complaints.

Reduce the number of complaints dealt with through the formal complaints process by working with teams to take immediate actions to put things right at the earliest opportunity and achieving resolution for our customers.

Improve the timeliness of Stage 2 Complaint responses so that more Stage 2 Complaints are dealt with within statutory timescales through performance management and working closing with the independent investigators.

Focus on improving the quality of complaints responses through the introduction of quarterly quality checks on response letters.

Re-introduce processes to capture the satisfaction of customers with the complaints handling process.

Learn from customers by ensuring that learning issues and actions are identified for all complaints where appropriate; and improve the recording and reporting of comments so that learning issues are identified and implemented.

Improve access to the complaints procedure for children in care by improving information provided to them and opportunities to tell us their views.

Provide training to all managers in complaints investigation and response.

#### Learning from complaints case studies

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##### Children and Young People services

A child complained that they were fed up of having lots of different social workers.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Made sure that since the beginning of 2011, all children in long-term care have an allocated social worker in the Looked After Children's Team.

#### Environment and Development Services

Environment and Development Services' complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure, Tell Us Your Views.

**Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Environment and Development Services has reduced from 148 to 115 - 22 % reduction.**

**Overall 97 % of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales.**

#### Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **148** to **115**
- Complaints regarding Streetpride **66**
- Complaints regarding Planning, Regeneration & Cultural Services **47**

- Total number of complaints upheld was **39, 45%** compared to **46, 35%** 2010/11
- Reduction in the number of complaints escalating reduced:-
  - From **16** to **12** for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2
- Complaints about quality of service increased from **39** to **48**
- Complaints about actions of staff reduced from **34** to **32**
- One compensation award made in 2011/12 as part of LGO enquiry
- Number of comments increased from **543** to **902**

Environment and Development Services has maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers
- Improving the quality of responses
- Improving satisfaction of the complaint management process
- Learning from all Complaints to identify service improvements
- Training in complaint handling delivered to new Managers

#### Learning from complaints case studies

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##### Environment and Development Services

A complaint was received relating to a planning application which suggested that the customer couldn't understand from the planning officer's report why a certain recommendation had been made.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Made improvements to the standard of the case officer reports to ensure that specific detail is included within the reports which clearly identifies why a recommendation has been made by the planning officer.

### Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12

#### Improved Planning Consultation Process

A considerable number of customers complained that the level of consultation and information provided relating to planning applications via Planning Officer reports wasn't acceptable. A review of the statutory consultation requirements was undertaken along with reviews of case officer reports. The following improvements were implemented:-

More detailed reports produced containing as much information as possible and careful checking of documentation against all objections received with the statutory 21 day consultation period to ensure all details are referenced within the report for determination.

All planning application documents and objections to be made available for public view on the web site as soon as possible after receipt.

Frequently asked questions to be produced for customers relating to enforcement cases.

Most prominent position for planning notification signage identified so that wider consultation takes place.

All objection letters publicised on the website must contain address information of the sender i.e. no anonymous objections will be considered

Cross referencing of Right to Speak for attendance at Planning Board requests takes place with objections received to ensure all objectors have had the opportunity to make representations to Members of the Planning Board.

### **Improved Access to Household Waste Recycling Facilities for customers that don't own a vehicle**

Following a complaint and an LGO investigation relating to the fact that only registered vehicle keepers could receive free entry to our Household Waste Recycling Centres a review of our policy was undertaken. The following improvements were implemented:-

Entry is now allowed on an appointment basis for family members who have access to a vehicle to dispose of domestic waste for relatives that don't have access to a vehicle

### **Improvements in process undertaken in the siting of new Street lighting Units**

A number of complaints were received from customers who had had a new street lighting column positioned in close proximity to their homes without prior consultation. In order to ensure complaints of this nature weren't received in the future the following improvements were implemented:-

The addition of a consultation process has been added to the scheme for the placing of new street lightings columns where they are in a different position to an existing unit. Customers are also provided with contacts details for the Council Officer that is responsible for the scheme so that direct contact can be made should they have any queries.

### **New Developments in 2011/12**

- There has been a greater focus on putting things right, consideration has been given to dealing with the issue of concern at the earliest possible opportunity. This is manifested itself in the reduction of complaints and the increase in the number of comments. In 2011/12 EDS received 115 complaints and 902 comments. This compares with 148 complaints and 543 comments received in 2010/11.
- The team supplies complaints performance information (complaints, comments, MP enquiries, compliments and Freedom of Information Requests) and contributes to Learning from Customers Workshops.

#### **Learning from complaints case studies**

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#### **Environment and Development Services**

A number of customers complained that new street lighting columns had been erected close to their property without prior consultation.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Reviewed our procedure for dealing with the placement of new columns and introduced a consultation phase to ensure that customer feedback is received prior to works being undertaken to reduce the need to re-site the column following a complaint.

## 2012/13 Improvement Actions

Environment and Development Services will continue to assist the service to make service improvements based on the outcomes of the complaints received, and on what our customers have told us are their main concerns.

The Directorate lead, based on the trends apparent in 2011/12 will work with management and staff to improve customer care around; information and advice, seek to continue to reduce complaints regarding actions of staff and lack of service. The team will continue to highlight the need for improvements where customers express a concern regarding quality of service.

The recording of comments and concerns will be improved and learning issues will be captured from all feedback and not just formal complaints.

Training will be provided in complaint handling to all managers and senior staff in EDS on an ongoing basis.

### Resources

Resources' (former RBT services) complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure, Tell Us Your Views.

**Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Resources has reduced from 86 to 44 - 52 % reduction.**

**Overall 100% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales.**

#### Learning from complaints case studies

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##### Resources

Customer complained, in April 2011 regarding the lack of response from a case opened in June 2010.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Apologised to the customer, this case should have been followed up by making a simple diary entry. Procedures have now been put in place to ensure all staff carry this out.

## Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **86 to 44**
- Complaints regarding Revenue and Benefits **29**
- Complaints regarding Contact Centre **14**
- Total number of complaints upheld was **17, 38%** compared to **52, 55%** in 2010/11
- Reduction in the number of complaints escalating reduced:-
  - From **3** (2010/11) to **0** Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2
- Complaints about quality of service decreased from **41 to 16**
- Complaints about actions of staff decreased from **48 to 19**
- No compensation awards made in 2011/12



- Number of comments increased from **98** to **178**

Resources maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- All complaints dealt with in time
- All complaint and comments Quality Assured
- More timely responses to customer enquires
- More learning from all Complaints issues identified

### **Top complaint issues - complaints received 2011/12**

#### **Information and advice**

A significant number of complaints were received about information and advice provided. This is reflective of the type of service officered by the Directorate, i.e. from the Customer Service Centres and Contact Centre. Where individuals have found to have provided misinformation or poor and incomplete advice, they have been dealt with on a one to one basis. However, the services will always feedback to their wider team and service areas to ensure errors are not repeated. Issues included customer enquiries not being processed correctly leading to a lack of response or promises made to a customer that was not kept.

#### **Revenue and Benefits**

The majority of complaints for the Directorate were received in Revenue and Benefits. These complaints were mostly regarding how people had been dealt with by staff and the advice that they had been provided. Complaints were received around how quickly benefits would be assessed and processed and how housing benefit can be paid – landlord/ tenant. Again in response issues were resolved locally and individuals dealt with but learning and service improvements for the whole service were made.

### **New Developments in 2011/12**

- Launch of a new print on demand leaflet for complaints. To significantly reduce costs and place a greater emphasis on services / outlets resolving complaints at the point of access
- Officer guidance for managing customer complaints / comments
- Revised complaint officer group, new terms of reference and reporting structure.
- Rollout of processes for capturing key learning issues and time / cost recording for complaints
- Concerted effort to deal with all enquiries within 10 days. Remove need for complaint escalations.

#### **Learning from complaints case studies**

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##### **Resources**

Customer complained that their details had been passed to a third party.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Spoken to the member of staff concerned and issued a reminder to all staff regarding Data Protection and have refreshed information governance training.

## **2012/13 Improvement Actions**

The Resources complaint service is part of the corporate complaint team structure. Resources complaint handling will be a shared responsibility of team.

The improvements and new developments from previous years will be delivered at a significantly reduced cost as part of the new structure.

## **New Developments in 2011/12**

In 2011-12 the Council's complaint service as part of the new Performance and Quality teams in Commissioning Policy and Performance continued to embed the changes and improvements to their operating structures. As expected this led to much improved communication, sharing of best practice and a more joined up approach between the Directorate Complaint Officers. This is evident in the reduction in complaints, improved learning from complaint outcomes and overall reduction in costs, including compensation awards. Performance was also improved and is at its current highest ever level.

The Complaint teams continued to make improvements in complaint handling attempting to reduce unnecessary processes for customers. There is a focus on putting things right, dealing with the issue of concern at the earliest possible opportunity. This is partly why there is an increase in the number of comments recorded, customers are being responded to more effectively and their concern is dealt with quickly and at a lower cost.

The staffing structure of the complaints function also reduced with a greater support role being provided by the Performance and Quality Teams. This means that efficiencies in complaint handling within the teams that were once desirable have become essential and processes were improved to accommodate the reduction in resource.

Teams continued to provide and improve levels of complaint training in some areas, either ad-hoc or part of a rolling programme. The consistency and frequency of training for staff across the Council will be addressed as an improvement action in 2012-13.

Teams continued to improve learning from complaint outcomes and continue to work with services to drive forward improvements to services. Complaints data is recorded better and learning issues contributed to a number of Directorate level service improvements.

## **2012/13 Improvement Actions**

### **Internal Complaint review**

Following the restructures of the Performance and Quality services across the Council, the creation of the Commissioning, Policy and Performance Department and Resources Directorate, we internally reviewed how we can most effectively deal with customer complaints.

The Directorate complaint functions, now part of the new matrix management structure, are all working in an aligned team in one department. This structure allows for a consistent approach to how complaints are dealt with and how they are used to improve services.

However, as shown in the report, although significant improvements in how the Council deals with complaints have already been made and we have already made great progress towards our review recommendations, there are still further improvements that we would like to make. Our review made recommendations of how the new structure could be the mechanism to continue to deliver step change in the following areas:

- Responding to complaints in appropriate timescales so that the customer receives a more timely response to their concerns
- To ensure that there is a consistent, customer focused approach, adopted across the organisation
- Addressing complaint issues quickly and putting things right for the customer at the earliest opportunity, removing internal layers of bureaucracy that may act as a barrier
- Reducing the cost of delivering a complaints service through reducing bureaucracy and getting things right first time
- Learning from customers to improve services and make sure poor customer service is not repeated
- Clarifying roles and increasing accountability through removing duplication throughout the complaint process and current structures
- Improving governance and reporting arrangements to become accountable to members and customers.
- Provide customers with a faster, more effective and streamlined complaints process.
- Putting in place a flexible resource to provide a faster response for customers.
- The Council's complaints service is fit for the future.

### **Review outcomes**

It was clear from the review that complaint staff wanted a new approach to allow them greater ownership in how the Authority deals with complaints. Previously they felt that their views, knowledge, skills were dismissed and overlooked due to complete lack of flexibility in the current system. They felt that the previous system was too prescriptive and did not allow much scope for ideas around service improvement. This led to good practice being put in place at Directorate level, with good learning and service improvements gains, but not been shared across the Authority.

Complaint staff in the Commissioning, Policy and Performance Structure wanted a complaint handling system in place that at the same time as maintaining the objectivity of the complaint procedure, allows them a greater voice and allows them to add value to the experience of the customer and wherever possible provide real outcomes for customers.

The change in structure and the alignment of the Directorate complaint functions in the Commissioning, Policy and Performance department has meant that we have the opportunity to facilitate improvements in complaint performance, a more consistent approach around complaint handling, better value for money and improved learning from complaints, addressing problems with the current complaint handling arrangements.

There are a number of cashable and non-cashable efficiency savings that can be delivered through the implementation of the recommendations through, removing duplication, reducing complaint escalation, revising the current stage 3 process, reducing need for independent investigation and getting things right first time.

The changes should be used as an opportunity to completely refresh the way that complaints are responded to. Under a Putting Things Right approach each complaint should be considered to be an opportunity for service improvement, by doing so this will in turn provide better value and better quality of service for the customer.

**The recommendations in the review are expected to continue to deliver;**

- Improved performance in complaint handling – an aim to achieve 100% complaints responded to in time and where not this is by extreme exception.
- Reduced costs in investigation and escalation.
- Reduced number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure (Stage 2 and Stage 3) through an earlier resolution and acceptance of service failure
- Improved customer satisfaction, as evidenced in best practice models that exist across the council.
- Improve the learning and service improvement from complaints
- A better experience for customers making a complaint.