

## **Deputy Leader**

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

**Date: Monday, 9 September 2013**

**Time: 9.30 a.m.**

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

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence.
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 11th July, 2013 (herewith). (Pages 1 - 5)
5. Waiver of Standing Order to award the contract for Local Welfare Provision (Crisis Loans) to LASER Credit Union Ltd (report herewith) (Pages 6 - 8)
6. Post Recognition Strategy - Investors in People (IiP) (report herewith) (Pages 9 - 16)
7. Workforce Strategy Review 2012-13 (report herewith) (Pages 17 - 21)
8. Gov Delivery Communication System (report herewith) (Pages 22 - 25)
9. Resources Performance Report for 2013/14 □] Quarter 1 (report herewith) (Pages 26 - 31)
10. Cabinet Reports and Members' Issues (Directors to report).
11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting - Monday, 14th October, 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

**DEPUTY LEADER**  
**11th July, 2013**

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

An apology was received from Councillor Sims.

**N8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE, 2013**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 be approved as a correct record.

**N9. NATIONAL CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2013, HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, WEDNESDAY 16TH - FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER, 2013**

Consideration was given to the request for attendance at the National Children and Adult Services Conference and Exhibition 2013 to be held at Harrogate International Centre from Wednesday 16th to Friday 18th October, 2013.

Resolved:- That Councillors J. Doyle and P. Lakin be authorised to attend.

**N10. FUND FOR CHANGE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Rob Cutts, Service and Development Manager for Revenues and Benefits, which detailed the changes to the discretionary social fund, as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and which saw community care grants and crisis loans abolished from April, 2013. Local authorities have been provided with funding to establish replacement local support schemes for vulnerable groups. For Rotherham funding of £773,437 was received for 2013/14 together with administration funding of £163,431.

The scheme that had been developed in Rotherham was known as Fund for Change and was built around existing service provision in the Authority and with external parties. It provided grants and loans to vulnerable people who were in urgent need; or under exceptional pressure; or who needed support to remain or resettle in the community. The types of help that were available were:-

- Small emergency payments for people whose health or safety was at immediate risk and who have no other means of support.
- Interest free loans provided through Laser Credit Union for people

who were in financial difficulty and needed additional or less urgent support to meet essential expenses.

- Provision of goods through the Furniture Solutions Team for those needing help to resettlement or stay in the community.

This report outlined the progress of Rotherham's scheme in the first quarter of 2013/2014 and provided details of spend so far relating to:-

**Emergency Payments** – This was a large area of expenditure for the DWP under the old Crisis Loans scheme - this had not been the case under the Fund for Change. So far emergency payments totalling only £100 have been given as it was found that support through the scheme could be provided more successfully in other ways.

**Laser Credit Loans** – The majority of successful applicants have been referred to Laser Credit and provided with interest free loans. Figures for the first three months of the scheme show 475 loans have been granted totalling £65,807.

**Furniture Solutions** – Qualifying claimants who need help to re-settle or stay in the community may be provided with essential furniture items by the Furniture Solutions Team. These claimants will not be expected to repay the value of the goods to the fund. Figures for the first three months of the scheme show eighteen claimants have been assisted through the Furniture Solutions Team with the total value of the goods provided being £6,748.

**Bridging Support** – Cabinet agreed that £30,000 bridging support would be allocated from the Fund to assist various advice agencies in providing support for people affected by Welfare Reform.

In order to qualify for the Fund for Change support customers must be resident in Rotherham and be in receipt of one of the four qualifying benefits. However, should any customer fall outside of this criteria and still require support, then their needs would be considered on an individual basis by benefit experts and a detailed analysis undertaken. Of those people who were found to be ineligible for help they were signposted to other agencies, including the DWP.

At present it was anticipated that the scheme would be delivered within the funds available, but claims could increase and there be a big rise in demand as claimants found themselves on reduced incomes and as winter approached.

Discussion ensued on the success of the scheme to date, which was to be monitored on a month by month basis. Currently from the numbers received one-third qualified for support and two-thirds were unsuccessful.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

**N11. CABINET REPORTS AND MEMBERS' ISSUES**

(a) Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, reported on a number of issues including:-

- Discussions have continued between management and trades unions regarding pay issues in respect of Refuse Collection employees and an agreement now reached on working arrangements and pay negotiations. The finer details were yet to be worked through. Thanks were expressed to staff and colleagues from Human Resources and Streetpride for their support in the process.
- In terms of the National Pay Negotiations Unison and GMB have confirmed that their membership had voted in favour of accepting the National Employer's pay offer of a 1% across the board pay rise. Confirmation of Unite's ballot outcome was still awaited.
- It was proposed to delete spinal column point 4 from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2013.
- With regards to Investors in People the Council had received confirmation that the accreditation was completed successfully and the Gold status had been retained. The final report was expected towards the end of July.

(b) Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, reported on a number of issues including:-

- The number of calls, open jobs and change requests for the last month handled by the service desk.
- The progress of the ICT Strategy 2011/15, the projects of which were on target and should come in under budget.
- Implementation of the cost effective self serve software for Council Tax and Revenues and Benefits.
- The new version of the Intranet, which would go live from the 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013.

(c) Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, reported on a number of issues including:-

- The Comprehensive Spending Review and the implications of a revised funding gap for 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- The implementation of the new financial systems on the 10<sup>th</sup>

July, 2013 including a revised Chart of Accounts Structure and the proposed introduction of a new budget monitoring and report solution.

- The Council's unaudited Statutory Accounts have been published and will be on deposit for inspection from July 16<sup>th</sup>. The external audit of the Accounts is due to commence at the end of July.
- (d) Rob Cutts, Service and Development Manager for Revenues and Benefits, reported on the forthcoming review of the Single Person's Discount and the relaunch. A briefing on the process would be circulated to all Members.
- (e) Jacqueline Collins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, reported on a number of issues including:-
- The re-structure of Legal Services, which was nearing completion.
  - Discussions were to take place regarding the Access to Information Regulations and the elements of recording Council Meetings. Views from other Local Authorities were to be sought on this issue.

#### **N12. 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)).

#### **N13. PROCUREMENT OF SOFTWARE LICENCE FROM NORTHGATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Rob Cutts, Service and Development Manager for Revenues and Benefits, which confirmed that in order to enable the Council to implement the Housing Benefit, Benefit Cap legislation from 15th July, 2013, and include Personal Independent Payments (PIP), there was a need to use the Northgate software functionality enhancement.

An exemption from Standing Orders for procuring this new, software licence key was sought as the provision of the Housing Benefit software could only be supplied by Northgate.

Resolved:- That the contract for the purchase of a software licence key

be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 47.6.2 (requirement to invite at least two oral or written quotations for contracts with a value of £5k but less than £20k) and the purchase be made from Northgate be approved.

**N14. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting take place on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

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| <b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b> |
|--|

|   |                     |  |
|---|---------------------|--|
| 1 | <b>Meeting:</b>     | <b>Deputy Leader</b>   |
| 2 | <b>Date:</b>        | <b>9<sup>th</sup> September 2013</b>   |
| 3 | <b>Title:</b>       | <b>Waiver of Standing Order to award the contract for Local Welfare Provision (Crisis Loans) to LASER Credit Union Ltd</b> |
| 4 | <b>Directorate:</b> | <b>Resources</b>   |

## 5 Summary

A six months contract was let to LASER Credit Union Ltd to deliver the loan element of the crisis support 'Fund for Change' from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 as part of introducing "Local Welfare Provision" pending a wider market procurement process.

However, whilst some knowledge of demand and operation has now been gained, it is apparent that it is not yet possible to project the demand over a full year or the detailed ongoing administrative requirements. This in part is due to expected increased demand in the run up to Christmas and over the winter months.

In light of this, it proposed to extend the current contract to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and seek quotes for the service beyond that, subject to a waiver of standing orders. It is also necessary to confirm that whilst the loan fund is managed by LASER and loans from the fund are made by them, that the loan fund is the property of the Council.

## 6 Recommendations

**That Deputy Leader:**

- 6.1 Resolves that the delivery of the local welfare provision (crisis loans) for the period 1st October 2013 until 31st March 2014 be exempted from Standing Orders in accordance with Standing Order 38 (Exemptions) and Standing Order 49 (Tender invitation and receipt of tenders) and the contact be awarded to LASER Credit Union Ltd in the sum of £24,050.**
- 6.2 Confirms that the "Fund for Change" loan fund remains the property of the Council.**

## **7. Proposals**

Following the abolition of community care grants and crisis loans as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Council commenced local welfare provision with resources provided by the Departments of Work and Pensions (DWP), from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The DWP committed funding is for 2 years.

Part of the Council's local welfare provision includes a loan element of the crisis support 'Fund for Change'. In order to commence this new provision quickly and against an unknown level of demand, the Council entered into a 6 months contract to LASER Credit Union Ltd to deliver the service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. An exemption to the Council's standing orders provided for this arrangement with a view to securing competitive bids for the remaining 18 months of the current funding commitment.

At the end of June 475 loans had been made by LASER with a total value of £65, 807.

Following the first three months of operation, it is now clear that whilst the demand has settled down from an initial peak, it is still too soon to project the demand over a full year or the detailed ongoing administrative requirements. This in part is due to expected increased demand in the run up to Christmas and over the winter months. In turn, these unknowns impact on the ability to specify contract requirements for the purposes of obtaining competitive quotes for a new contract commencing in October 2013, as had originally been envisaged.

In order to gain a near full year knowledge of demand and operation, it is now recommended that the current arrangements with LASER are continued until the end of March 2014. This will provide for a procurement to be carried out in early 2014 with a contract for one year being let from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 which is the current limit of funding commitment for this provision.

The cost of the extension of current arrangements is calculated at £ 24,050. This being based on the first six months costs of £28,610 less start up elements of £4,560.

The proposals create a requirement to waive Standing Orders so that the contract extension can be awarded to LASER Credit Union Ltd for six month period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

## **8. Finance**

The six month initial contract value is £28,610, which is met from the allocated funding to establish replacement local schemes. The funding proposed to end of March 2014 is set at £24,050, which would be met from the same source.

Whilst reviewing the current loan fund arrangements it appears that whilst the loan fund is provided by the Council and the loans are made by LASER, there is no provision for the ownership of the loan fund. This report recommends that it is confirmed that the loan fund is the property of the Council.



**9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The main uncertainty relates to the level of demand and the risk is that the available funding and the capacity may be insufficient. The level of programme funding is nearly 30% less than that paid out under the equivalent social fund schemes, based on figures for 2010/11. Additionally there is a high risk of non repayment of crisis loans given the client group. The proposed extension of the current arrangements with LASER will assist in mitigating risk that would arise from procurement with inadequate specifications.

**10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The methodology adopted in Rotherham is a co-ordinated and consistent approach, exploring ways in which preventative action can be taken to reduce the need for reactive “crisis” provision in the longer term. It is for this reason that proposals for local delivery of crisis loans are part of the wider “fund for change” programme focussing on prevention and early intervention.

**11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Standing Order 38.3.2 requires that this report contains the views of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Strategic Director of Finance on the proposed exemption. Both Directors have indicated that they are content that Standing Orders should be waived.

Welfare Reform Act 2012 (c. 5)

[Social Fund reform - DWP](#)

**Contact:**

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**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT TO DEPUTY LEADER MEETING**

|    |                    |  |
|----|--------------------|--|
| 1. | <b>Meeting:</b>    | <b>Deputy Leader Meeting</b>                                 |
| 2. | <b>Date:</b>       | <b>9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013</b>                        |
| 3. | <b>Title:</b>      | <b>Post Recognition Strategy – Investors in People (IIP)</b> |
| 4. | <b>Directorate</b> | <b>Human Resources</b>                                       |

### 5. Summary

The Council has successfully achieved re-accreditation of the IIP standard effective from June 2013 and valid for a period of up to three years.

The Council met 185 of the 196 evidence requirements enabling retention of gold status.

The external assessor's report provides information on areas of strength and developments to enable the Council to not only continue to maintain the IIP standard and gold status but to further improve, develop and maintain organisational development.

### 6. Recommendations

- **Acknowledge and support the actions to address areas noted for development from the external assessor's report (Appendix A) which are to be included in the Corporate Workforce Strategy, Strategic HR service plan and passported into relevant Directorate service/team plans.**
- **Strategic Directors to ensure their directorate areas for development are addressed in service/team plans and performance managed. (Individual directorate reports will be provided to Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) during August 13 and colleagues from HR will be available to attend as necessary).**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background and method

The internal review team were allocated specific directorates to undertake the assessment against the full liP framework, producing feedback from those directorates which fed into the overall corporate assessment.

Evidence was gathered by means of one to one or group interview sessions undertaken with a random sample of employees and managers from across the Council.

The external assessor gathered evidence across all directorates from top managers (including Elected Members) and trade union groups.

### 7.2 Structure of the assessment and final report

The assessment has been shaped around the people priorities arising from the Council's five key priorities and the Way We Do Business Values which are detailed in the five key themes of the Corporate Workforce Strategy 2013-2016. The strategy also reflects the changing working environment of the Council. The themes are:

- Ensuring we have a modern and thriving Council
- Developing leadership capacity through change
- Developing our employees' skills for the future
- Managing talent and attracting new talent as appropriate
- Ensuring we have a fairly rewarded workforce.

### 7.3 Outcomes from the re-accreditation process

#### 7.3.1. Summary strengths

- A proactive approach from the key leaders of the Council towards the very many changes that have taken place which has been appreciated by all levels of employees.
- Service reviews have been undertaken in a planned, consultative and sensitive way thereby ensuring people felt part of the process.
- Employees are realistic about the changes the Council has had to undergo and they remain positive and extremely passionate about what they do.
- The Strategic Leadership Team are seen as helpful and approachable and people at all levels are positive about senior managers as a whole.
- The Plan on a Page sets out clearly the overarching priorities which are then translated into targets and outcomes for services and teams.
- Sharing of information and knowledge within teams and services has resulted in an informed, motivated and engaged workforce.
- A wide range of flexible working solutions being used to support efficient, customer-focused working and work-life balance.
- A blended approach to learning and development, including informal coaching resulting in a high level of buy-in to learning, efficient use of resources and equity of access to learning.

- Clarity of the vision and values and translation of these throughout the Council into individual objectives, impacting on performance levels.
- Employees demonstrate high levels of pride in working for the Council.
- The importance and commitment given to learning and development both now and for building capacity for the future, as well as improved performance management, reviews has resulted in a culture of continuous learning.
- Use of external and internal resources to provide learning and development has made effective use of both people and financial resources.
- As a result of the many changes that have taken place people have been able to positively maximise on opportunities. This has been due to skill gaps being created when experienced people have left, enabling people to not only develop their own skills but also being able capitalise on other people's existing skills.
- The flexible working options available and new ways of working are seen as very positive by all employees. In general people also have a positive view of the pay & benefits package though they are realistic in terms of the pay element.
- Formal and informal recognition of contribution has resulted in a high level of employee engagement.
- Clarity of requirements and responsibilities of managers has resulted in consistency in terms of management practices and leadership development.
- Core processes have been further embedded resulting in improved communication, team meetings, PDRs, people involvement as well as consistency in management practices.
- Equalities and diversity is well embedded and seen as an integral part of the culture whether that relates to colleagues or customers.
- As a result of the many changes that have taken place a greater emphasis on having a business focus for learning & development decisions as well as additional learning being undertaken with partners has been achieved.
- The induction process for new recruits to the Council (although limited external recruitment) has been found to be a positive experience.

### **7.3.2. Summary development areas**

- To raise awareness across the Council of the Plan on a Page. This will enable service/team plans to provide the detail as to what the key priorities will mean in practice and people can see how their own work links to the overall Council objectives. The refresh of the Plan on a Page will provide the ideal opportunity for this to take place.
- To raise awareness of the Way We Do Business values so that people are familiar with them and believe they are at the heart of how they are expected to work. Also how they are being used to drive role model

behaviours for shaping services for the future. The Plan on a Page refresh communications and discussions in PDRs when undertaking competency assessments will assist in achieving this outcome.

- To promote positive stories from across the Council to help improve the overall Council reputation and also inform the Rotherham community of the high level of service the Council still provides despite challenging circumstances.
- To continue to ensure information is communicated effectively across all locations in a timely way, providing reassurance where possible so that people don't think information is selective. Also maintaining the channels of communication even if there is 'no news' to help promote openness and transparency.
- To ensure all managers are embracing and being supportive of the full range of flexible working options and that those who demonstrate resistance are made aware that to achieve a modern thriving Council they will need to work differently in the future.
- To review succession planning strategies to enable the retention of talent. Also ensuring service/team structures make the best use of people's talents and abilities. It is also a key priority to ensure effective knowledge transfer takes place when people leave the organisation.
- To promote career progression opportunities for higher management roles, offering the support and development required so people are encouraged to apply for such roles and talent is retained within the organisation.
- To ensure the ongoing development of those skills identified as necessary for the future i.e. leadership skills, commercial awareness, decision making, managing a remote workforce, keeping up with/maximising technological advances, developing partner relationships, innovation etc.
- There were examples of coaching techniques being used as a methodology for developing people. If the full requirements of the coaching criteria are to be met then the Council will need to consider whether a more formal coaching approach is necessary or sustainable in the future.
- To continue to review innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development which may include learning from external networks and other cost reducing strategies as well as e-learning and its appropriateness in all cases.
- To ensure learning and development achievements are celebrated at all levels of the organisation (where appropriate).

#### **7.4 Directorate feedback**

The strengths and areas for development outlined in the above sections are the general corporate findings. However in addition, there are specific strengths and development areas which have been identified for each directorate. These findings have been captured in individual directorate reports. The reports will be presented to DMTs by the relevant internal reviewer during August. DMTs will then be responsible for ensuring the resulting actions are included in relevant service/team plans to ensure they are addressed and performance managed.

#### **8. Finance**

It is envisaged that there will be no or little direct cost implications to address actions for the development areas other than officer time. However, there may be some hidden costs which cannot be identified at this time but will become apparent during the action planning process.

The Continuous Improvement Plan (outlined in the full report) will be reviewed by the external assessor in December 2014 to assess progress. Cost for the external assessor's time for this process is £337.

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

Failure to address development areas outlined in the external assessor's report could impact on retention of the liP standard and our gold status in 2016.

It may also affect progress to become a modern, thriving Council, employee engagement and talent retention. Agreement of the suggested recommendations and incorporation of the development areas and proposed actions to address these areas within relevant plans would mitigate this risk.

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

Retention of the liP standard at gold level is crucial to the delivery of key factors of the Corporate Plan (Plan on Page), the Corporate Workforce Strategy and embedding of the Way We Do Business Values in particular getting it right first time and right people, right skills, right place.

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

liP external assessor's report  
liP sample employee group

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**Appendix A - INVESTORS IN PEOPLE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

A. Key Information

|                                  |  |                                       |              |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Organisation</b>              | Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | <b>Date of last assessment/review</b> | June 2013    |
| <b>Date of Action Plan</b>       | June 2014                              | <b>Review date for this plan</b>      | 12-18 months |
| <b>Proposed next review date</b> | June 2016                              |                                       |              |

B. Key Contacts

|                               |                                 |   |  |   |                              |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Client Key Contact</b>     | Tracey Parkin<br>Debby Lamb     | E | <a href="mailto:Tracey.parkin@rotherham.gov.uk">Tracey.parkin@rotherham.gov.uk</a><br><a href="mailto:debby.lamb@rotherham.gov.uk">debby.lamb@rotherham.gov.uk</a> | T | 01709 823742<br>01709 823701 |
| <b>Assessor</b>               | Julia Stokes                    | E | <a href="mailto:julia.stokes@btinternet.com">julia.stokes@btinternet.com</a>   | T | 07774 732224                 |
| <b>Adviser</b>                |                                 | E |  | T |                              |
| <b>Centre Contact Details</b> | Sara Barrie; sbarrie@i-dg.co.uk |   |  |   |                              |

C. Future Activity

| <b>Business Issue</b>    | <b>Suggested Action(s)</b>   | <b>Potential Benefits / Impact of Taking No Action</b>  | <b>Suggested Timescale / Priority When</b> | <b>Potential Solutions / Support Available</b>                |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <b>What</b>              | <b>How</b>   | <b>Why</b>  |  | <b>Who</b>  |
| Strategy and Core Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness across the organisation (Reputation project) of the Council's key priorities and outcomes as being shaped by the Modern Thriving Council agenda and associated refresh of the Plan on a Page</li> <li>Continue to embed the Way We Do Business values to drive role model behaviours for shaping services for the future (Reputation project and PDRs)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of employees in shaping new models of delivery and ensuring they understand their contribution to the Council's re-focussed priorities</li> </ul> | 12 months                                  | Strategic Leadership Team + Communications and Marketing Team |





|  |   |  |                           |   |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|---|
| Coaching techniques  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether a more formal approach to coaching would provide additional benefits to the current informal practice and whether this would be sustainable/desirable</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of the learning techniques available to support both manager and employee development and career progression, beyond current role</li> </ul>  | 6 months                  | Strategic Leadership Team<br>HR   |
| Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review learning delivery approaches and blends (both new and existing) and check appropriateness for learner(s)</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the need to celebrate learning and development achievements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of the learning and development toolkit with cost effective learning models and blends</li> <li>• Re-enforcement of the value the Council places on learning and development</li> </ul> | 12 months<br><br>6 months | Learning & Development leads<br><br>Strategic Leadership Team<br>Directorate Management Teams/Senior Management teams<br>HR |

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO DEPUTY LEADER**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Meeting:</b>     | <b>Deputy Leader Meeting</b>             |
| <b>2. Date:</b>        | <b>9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013</b>    |
| <b>3. Title:</b>       | <b>Workforce Strategy Review 2012-13</b> |
| <b>4. Directorate:</b> | <b>Resources</b>                         |

### **5. Summary**

This report provides an overview of the impact of HR policies, procedures and activities on the Council workforce during 2012-13.

### **6. Recommendations**

**Deputy Leader is asked to note:**

- **Continued high level of employee engagement/involvement**
- **Key HR activity**
- **£6.7m Reduction in workforce costs**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **7.1 Background**

The budget challenges facing the Council (and the need to achieve reductions in workforce costs) have required organisational redesign, changes to working practices and changes to Human Resources (HR) policies. Successful management of workforce costs (£6.7m reduction in 2012/13) has kept the number of compulsory redundancies to a minimum and reduced the impact of budget cuts on the delivery of front line services.

During the last year the Council liP Gold status was reassessed and employees were asked to participate in the Employee Opinion Survey. Despite major changes across the Council over the last few years the number of grievances lodged by employees continues to be well below benchmarks whilst employee engagement and involvement remains positive and similar to the high levels of the previous survey (see appendix 1 for statistics).

A continued focus on key workforce activity has helped to maintain an engaged workforce, whilst successfully achieving organisational change. The following is a summary of workforce activity in the last year, by the themes of the Workforce Strategy.

### **7.2 Theme: Ensuring we have a modern & thriving Council**

Numerous reorganisations took place across the council to reduce layers and increase spans of control where appropriate, TUPE transfers (both in and out) and voluntary severance schemes. These included Integrated Youth Support Services, Music Service, Housing & Contact Centre Cultural Services, Business Support, Legal Services, Academy Schools, Connexions Service and Public Health.

Following the successful bid to provide HR & Payroll transactional services to Doncaster MBC over 50 staff transferred to the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and the £500k income target was achieved.

In partnership with Asset Management and ICT project management support was provided to Doncaster MBC to facilitate a move to their new Civic Offices and move to flexible work styles. Our work in this area was also recognised nationally with a showcase event held at New York Stadium to share our expertise with public sector organisations from across the country.

The Service Level Agreement with the NHS occupational health service was managed in order to maintain existing service and the low cost and continue to offer the face to face counselling service provided by Rotherham Counselling Services.

Colleagues in Financial Services successfully upgraded the Councils financial system, a comprehensive review of HR policies and processes began and a revised HR self service platform was launched, allowing access over the internet.

The interim assessment for liP maintained our Gold level and preparations for the full assessment in 2013 (now informed awarded Gold again) began.

Sickness levels fell by nearly ½ a day per employee generating over £600k productivity savings (Gershon efficiency saving calculation).

### **7.3 Theme: Developing leadership capacity through change**

Director Group meetings commenced, with issues considered such as core offer, Pulse findings and response, prioritisation of Leadership programme places, health & wellbeing etc.

Member development was supported through carrying out Personal Development Plans, developing the Member skills profile and learning & development intranet site. One to one ICT

training support (including e-casework and IPad usage) was well used by Members. The partnership with South Yorkshire councils enabled seminars to be offered in key skill areas such as social media, reading faster.

The Secretariat team was trained in order for Member training to be captured on the training management system enabling better reporting of activity to Members.

The employee survey was run in October 2012 and reported to SLT & Members and the results shared with employees. The survey response rate was 44% (45% previous survey). Detailed Directorate reports were produced and action areas highlighted in workforce position statements provided to management teams.

Worker representative groups continued to be supported but on a more virtual model.

The Change site on the intranet was revised following employee feed back, to include updates on service reviews and resources to support managers and employees going through change.

Our employee recognition scheme was refreshed to incorporate the Partnership Ambassador Awards and the annual awards ceremony took place in the Council Chamber in April.

### **7.4 Theme: Developing our employees skills for the future**

A third round of participants started on the City Region Leadership Programme and a graduation event was held in December for the last cohort of successful managers. Evaluation of the programme highlighted improvements which via membership of the steering panel HR were able to influence.

Our core management development qualification programmes continued with the addition of new level 5 programmes for higher graded managers – “change manager” and “innovation manager” (commenced September). Very positive feed back has been received on these new themed courses.

Further themed training for managers in Business Improvement Techniques and Change Management were run (offered free of charge to Directorates, due to substantial external funding).

In conjunction with South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield City Council a shared coaching/mentoring scheme began (legacy project from first round of City Region programme).

In partnership with Doncaster MBC a Dynamic Purchasing System (provider framework) for training was launched. This captures all the regularly commissioned training the Council buys from external trainers. The aim is to achieve lower course costs via joint commissioning and a more competitive tendering approach.

The Skills Gain programme (for literacy & numeracy development) continued with new maths and English courses commencing and using an informal lunchtime drop-in approach as well as more formal programmes, such as business communications.

New modules were added to the e-learning library, e.g. maternity leave, Connect to Support, Web authoring, Doncaster fire Safety, sickness management, equalities & diversity with almost half (2763) of all registered users (5745) accessing the platform at some point during the year.

### **7.5 Theme: Managing talent and attracting new talent as appropriate**

The recruitment management system was upgraded (also now adopted by Doncaster MBC) including new functions and added manager guides. Guidance on internal restructuring recruitment was developed and issued and the management of the advertising contract continued.

Analysis of equality data on the composition of workforce, pre and post-downsizing activity, and of new starters and leavers did not show any adverse trend. Monitoring of agency spend showed a further reduction of £1.8m, reinforcing the impact of successful recruitment to critical jobs.

Apprenticeships and work placements increased in number again this year (figures in Appendix 1), Work commenced with NAS on the Deprived Communities project seeking placements, apprentices etc from deprived communities. A number of Rotherham schools were supported by attending careers and enterprise activities. Our achievements were acknowledged by the Shaw Trust granting 'referral organisation status' for our employability initiatives.

Employees leaving through voluntary severance were provided with support through rapid response arrangements with Rotherham Job Centre Plus, which provides advice and support in accessing free training, guidance on money management, how to set up in business and options for voluntary working.

### **7.6 Theme: Ensuring we have a fairly rewarded workforce**

The integrity of the Councils single status grading structure continued to be managed through the corporate pay and grading panel with only six grading appeals all connected to the reintegration of 2010 Limited.

Promotion of salary sacrifice schemes (e.g. cars and childcare vouchers) resulted in increased take up generating savings for both employees and the Council (£120k). To help employees pay stretch further an employee benefits platform, Wider Wallet, was launched giving access to discounts on a range of products and services.

To ensure employees were kept up to date on changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme briefing sessions and awareness raising activity took place including the promotion of additional voluntary contribution's which resulted in increased take up.

### **8. Finance**

Workforce costs fell by £6.7m (5% of pay bill) in the year due to redundancy, overtime, mileage and agency reductions. Workforce development activity continued, but with reduced budget.

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

Government continues to target Public Sector spending for reduction limiting the scope to retain, recruit and motivate employees.

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

The way we do business: Right people, right skills, right place, right time, reducing bureaucracy and getting better value for money.

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

- a) Corporate Workforce Strategy
- b) HR & Payroll statistical reports
- c) CIFPA HR Benchmarking Club

**Contact Name: Phil Howe**  
**Director of Human Resources**  
**Ext. 23716**

**HR Statistical Information****Ensuring We Have a Modern Thriving Council**

- 248 Voluntary Severances (workforce reduced 15% since 2010)
- Grievances 5.2 per 1,000 FTE (CIPFA 7.5)
- Disciplinary 33.9 per 1,000 FTE (CIPFA 21.7)
- Dismissals 82 in 2011/12, 52 in 2012/13
- Positive employee perception of work-life balance 70% (CIPD 58%)
- Sickness down from 7.96 days in 2011/12 to 7.51 days 2012/13 ( CIPD 5,000+ staff 8.1 days)
- Sickness absence attributable to mental health conditions 24% of absences (HSE nationally 40%)

**Developing Leadership Capacity through change**

- Employee perception of senior management 41% (ORC 35%)
- Employee perception of management of change 42% (Civil Service 29%)
- City Region Leadership Programme numbers: 3 in 2011, 3 in 2012.
- Top 5% earners BAME 1.36% (target 2.3%)
- Top 5% women 51.6% (target 50%)
- Top 5% with disability 5.14% (target 4.6%)
- Employee engagement 67%
- Employee suggestions: 92 in 2011/12 and 56 to Chief Executive on budget savings. 49 in 2012/13.
- The Joint Worker Group event – 40/50 attendees each year. 40/60 attendees at Rotherham Women's Equality conference

**Developing our Employees skills for the future**

- 71% Positive employee perception of line managers (employee survey 2012)
- Manager training attendance:  
Level 2 subsidised awards in key topics: 53 (12/13)  
Level 3 CMI certificate: 53 (12/13)  
New level 5 CMI (12/13): Change manager 9, Innovations manager 12
- Buddies scheme sign ups: 9 (12/13)
- Employee perception of getting the learning & development to do their job well reduced- 2012 61% from 67% in 2008 (Civil Service 46%)
- 80% of the workforce have a qualification above level 2 (March 2013) up 4% since 2011
- 69% of managers hold a management qualification (March 2013)
- 78% of employees indicate having a PDR (employee survey 2012)
- 28% employees feel there are opportunities for career development (NHS 30%)
- Mandatory e-learning training completions: 1236 (11/12), 1629 (12/13)  
Numbers booked on Directions (generic employee skills) training: 63 (11/12), 361 (12/13)
- New distance learning sign ups 2012: 34
- Skills Gain achievers 2012: 36

**Managing talent and attracting new talent as appropriate**

- New joiner engagement 83%
- Recruitment & Selection training attendance: 46 on 1 day course & 115 on e-learning
- Further £1.8m (60%) reduction in agency spend in last year
- Apprenticeship numbers: 26 (10/11), 41 (11/12), 54 (12/13)
- Disabled people in the workforce 4.46% (target of 4%)
- Looked after children placements: 10 (11/12), 7 (12/13)
- Access all Areas Placements: 71 (11/12), 91 (12/13)

**Ensuring we have a Fairly Rewarded Workforce**

- 148 cars ordered through the salary sacrifice scheme saved the Council £75k. Car parking salary sacrifice saved the Council £8k and Childcare salary sacrifice scheme achieved savings to the Council £60k
- Reduction in workforce recurrent annual saving £25m (£22m voluntary severance plus £3m deletion of vacant posts) i.e. 15% of the total wage bill
- Satisfaction with the total Pay & Benefits package 52%, up 5% 2012 survey (NHS 39%)

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| <b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL</b> |
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|-----------|---------------------|--|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Meeting:</b>     | <b>Deputy Leader</b>                     |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Date:</b>        | <b>9 September 2013</b>                  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Title:</b>       | <b>Gov Delivery Communication System</b> |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Directorate:</b> | <b>EDS</b>                               |

## **5. Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to purchase the Gov Delivery system, which is a cloud based communication system that will enable the Council to provide co-ordinated email, SMS, social media and RSS feeds.

As well as enabling us to disseminate proactive updates and alerts to customers about the Council in a very effective and economical way, it would also enable us to distribute marketing information to increase take up of our services.

The system will allow the Council to collaborate with and share subscribers with other local authorities and government agencies, such as the Met Office and the Highways Agency. This collaboration helps to increase citizen take up rates and proactively encourages digital registration and take up of services. As such, it will help the Council's strategy towards achieving channel shift, where users interact with the Council through electronic interfaces.

The system will also enable us to consolidate currently fragmented email and mobile telephony contacts which are in place across the Council into the Gov Delivery system, allowing us to combine various databases of resident information which are currently in existence.

## **6. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

- **the contract for the purchase of the Gov Delivery Communication System be exempt from the provisions of standing order 47.6.3 (requirement to invite at least 3 written quotations for contracts with a value of between £20k and £50k) and the contract be awarded to Gov Delivery.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **7.1 Background**

Rotherham Council has a wealth of information that, if shared, can make a difference in people's lives: for example severe weather alerts, school closures, missed bin collections, changes to services and marketing of events.

The Council currently has a wide range of digital distribution lists which are service specific and embedded into back office systems. In addition, the main corporate website has approximately 4,000 customers who have registered with the Council to be kept informed of service changes and news and events. However, bringing this information together in a joined up way is difficult at the moment as information is currently fragmented and managed by different areas within the Council.

Using our current systems it is rare that distribution lists are shared across services and it is rarer that cross promotion of services takes place. It is currently very complex to obtain approval and get information out to people using the wide variety of access channels which are available to our citizens (website, email, SMS, RSS feed, social media etc) in a proactive and joined up way.

Partly as a result of this, there has been limited focus on proactively marketing digital take up of services using digital methods. The Council could achieve significant savings by increasing channel shift towards electronic take up of services, but there is considerable improvement we could make in relation to the achievement of our channel shift strategy.

Rotherham Council would like to consolidate and centralise citizen contact details and communicate with customers by automating and coordinating messages through a single platform. We would like to automatically identify content which has been created or updated on our website or on our social media networks and be able to send proactive notices to targeted communities, thereby improving customer communication and saving the Council time and resources by reducing direct contact time with customers.

In addition, the Council would like to be able to generate increased revenue by increasing attendance at events through improved marketing and raising awareness of paid for services.

### **7.2 Gov Delivery**

Gov Delivery's digital communication management (DCM) platform is procured through the Governments G Cloud programme. It automatically identifies content which has been created or updated online and is able to filter information by key data such as post code, which can enable targeted communications to be made, such as letting customers on certain streets know that their bins have not been collected.

Citizens select the type of information that they want to receive, including topics from partnering organisations. This increases audience reach. Gov Delivery currently has more than 2 million subscribers and has typically penetrated 20% – 30% of area



households when implemented by local authorities. This helps to ensure that more traffic is generated to website and social media accounts and helps to encourage customers to use online services. Existing distribution lists can be imported into the system to enable cross promotion of services.

The system has a robust analytics module which will allow the council to better understand what communications citizens want and need, and offers advanced design and template editing, which supports the creation of sophisticated, professional looking email bulletins quickly, easily and cost-effectively. In addition, the Council can create templates which will ensure that the organisation's branding remains consistent, no matter who is communicating.

Central Government and more than 50 local authorities are using the Gov Delivery platform currently.

GovDelivery is the only supplier of this type of service currently available.

### **7.3 Marketing**

Subscription links and promotions to automated alerts must be actively promoted from social media and website content in order to encourage citizens to subscribe to bulletins and updates. It is therefore proposed that the Council's design studio develops an icon and strap-line which visually encourages customers to subscribe to the service. It is also proposed to develop and run a marketing plan to promote enhanced online access to Council Tax and Benefit services.

### **7.4 Benefits**

GovDelivery has a proven track record of gathering customer contact details extremely quickly and increase Councils' reputations of being proactive in updating customers quickly about anything including service changes, news and events. Other key benefits include:

- Increase usage of cheaper online channels (typically 35% more visitors to website and social media feeds)
- Increase number of online transactions (as high as 150% increase)
- Generate revenue by increasing attendance at events, marketing paid for services and attracting outside investment
- Reach more residents with timely, accurate service information (typically 20% of the adult population)
- Reduce avoidable telephone calls and face-to-face visits (typically 5% to 10%)
- Automate and coordinate multi-channel messages (email, SMS, RSS Twitter and Facebook) to residents without the need to provide additional resources to manage them
- Generate detailed demographic information on population to aid service delivery and drive improvements
- Collaborate and share subscribers with other Government agencies including Gov.UK Met Office, Department for Health, Highways Agency to boost sign-up rates (often 50%+)

## **8. Finance**

Gov Delivery has a published G-Cloud pricing of £1,932 per month. This provides a full enterprise license and unlimited usage of the system. It is proposed that the ICT Contracts revenue budget is used to fund the system.

Uptake will be monitored and it is anticipated this service will contribute to the achievement of the Council's aims relating to channel shift (ie reducing phone calls and face to face contacts) and associated savings.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Rotherham Council wishes to encourage greater citizen take up of services which can be accessed digitally. In order to encourage this, the Council must ensure that we have a proactive and frequent digital marketing campaign and co-ordinated approach to providing information which is of interest to our citizens. Our current systems are fragmented and resource heavy.

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

This will support the delivery of the Council's Customer Access Strategy and ICT Strategy.

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

- RMBC ICT Strategy (2011 to 2015)
- RMBC Customer Access Strategy (2011 to 2015)
- RMBC Online Services Manager
- RMBC Comms and Marketing Manager
- Head of ICT, RMBC

## **12. Contact Names:**

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| <b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b> |
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|           |                     |  |
|-----------|---------------------|--|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Meeting:</b>     | Deputy Leader's Meeting                              |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Date:</b>        | Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2013                |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Title:</b>       | Resources Performance Report for 2013/14 - Quarter 1 |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Directorate:</b> | Neighbourhoods & Adult Services                      |

**5. Summary**

This report provides the Deputy Leader with a quarterly position statement on the performance of Services that fit within the remit of the portfolio (previously part of the Resources Directorate). Performance reported is for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> June – Quarter One and provides both achievements and any risks and issues

**6. Recommendations**

- That the Performance report is received and performance noted.

**7. Proposals and Details****7.1 Procurement**Highlights / Achievements

1. Procurement cashable savings year to date (up to June) are £1.5M, this is above target against the 2013/14 forecast.
2. The Corporate Procurement Team has let a National framework agreement for Bailiff Services which is open to and being utilised by Local Authorities across the country. To date, 8 authorities are now using the Rotherham MBC framework, with a further 15 Councils across the country having signed confidentiality statements allowing them to view and consider using Rotherham's agreement. This is the first collaborative agreement let by a local authority for this type of service. In addition to leading on a number of collaborative agreements across the region, the Procurement Service is now managing in excess of 80 Rotherham MBC corporate framework agreements on behalf of the authority.
3. A recent corporate agreement put in place with telecoms provider Virgin Media Business has resulted in large cost reductions in both rental charges and call tariffs. Over the term of this corporate agreement savings of ~£300K will be realised for Rotherham MBC.

Issues / Risks

1. The Government continues to target public sector spending for reductions year on year, which in itself is a huge challenge for the authority. Procurement is playing a vital role in maximising every pound spent of public money, which is delivering real benefits to the citizens of Rotherham.

**7.2 Commissioning**

## **Adults Commissioning**

### Highlights / Achievements

1. Intermediate Care – we have developed “step” up Fast Response beds to provide timely and appropriate access to health and social care services for people who have minor injuries and minor illnesses. We are performing well against targets for timely return home with minimum support needs, and customers value the service highly. We are performing well in developing a community stroke pathway and specialist rehabilitative service to support people with high dependency needs to remain living in the community.
2. Partnership work with Supporting People Programme Providers to achieve financial efficiencies and streamline provision for homeless Rotherham people needing support with finding and maintaining new tenancies.
3. Shaping the Future Provider Programme – developing a care market that is diverse, good quality, and value for money and provides choice and accessibility for customers (whether they receive financial support from the Council or not) and their families.

### Issues / Risks

1. Winterbourne View judgement and the position of residential care for people with learning disabilities in Rotherham.
2. Transformation and change with VCS providers and directly provided services from traditional models to services which can attract customers using Direct Payments and who fund their own care and support – including shared services; social enterprise and mutual models, and bespoke solutions.
3. Developing our relationship with RCCG in light of plans for transfer of NHS funds into social care - need to consider role of joint commissioning and pooled budgets to maximise quality and efficiency within the whole health and social care community.

## **CYPS Commissioning**

### Highlights / Achievements

1. Framework established on 8th July for Residential Out of Authority placements for Looked After Children with the White Rose Consortium (8 local authorities) delivering high quality and substantial efficiencies
2. Rotherham Healthwatch launching their service on 2<sup>nd</sup> October at their new premises on High Street
3. Launch of Contracting Concerns database for CYPS to monitor quality and enable rising of concerns about placements.

### Issues / Risks

1. Delivery of substantial financial efficiencies against the challenging timelines set in the service transformation programme for change.
2. Management of unrealistic expectations of organisations for delivery by Healthwatch Rotherham.
3. Transformation of services commissioned from VCS and in-house CYPS services to meet the requirements of the SEND Green Paper.

## **7.3 Performance and Quality**

### Highlights / Achievements

1. The publication of the Adult Social Care Outcome Framework (2012/13 ASCOF measures) via the Health & Social Care Information Centre’s NASCIS national report. The report identifies our direction of travel over the past 12 months as very positive overall, both amongst our regional Y&H and nearest neighbours (IPF) comparator councils. Our key strengths are customer satisfaction, personalisation, mental health independence, reducing delayed transfers from hospital and dealing with assessments and reviews. Our outturn is summarised as follows:
  - Direction of Travel improved in 19 measures with 2 slightly declining
  - 0 (zero) in bottom three Y&H ranking (from 5 last year)
  - 9 top three Y&H rankings (from 3 last year)
2. Both 2012/13 response results from the adult social care customer and carer national satisfaction survey were very positive. Results were particularly high in relation to the two satisfaction measures, both achieving

national top quartile performance, customer satisfaction ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> in Y&H and 1<sup>st</sup> in IPF comparator group and carer's satisfaction ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in Y&H and 1<sup>st</sup> in IPF group.

## Issues / Risks

1. CQC inspected the Councils Enabling service on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. Four of the five outcomes inspected received positive feedback indicating the service is performing to or exceeding the required standard for these outcomes. The inspector did however raise a number of concerns regarding how robust the management arrangements were in relation to Outcome 16 relating to assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision. CQC have given the service a non-compliance judgement on this outcome. Swift action has taken place by the Council to deal with the issues raised. The service has now a new registered manager in place. We anticipate that the service will be re-inspected by CQC within the next three months.
2. Rent collection is under pressure owing to the introduction of Housing Benefit under-occupancy regulations. Recent analysis suggests that approximately £150k of the current arrears can be considered attributable to the 'bedroom tax'. There are in the region of 2500 tenancies affected by bedroom tax which owe some degree of arrears. Targeted action is in place to mitigate this risk which has resulted in:
  - Over £800k of additional income has been collected in the year date when compared against the same period in 2012/13.
  - The number of customers paying by Direct Debit has increased by almost 300 in the year to date, and this payment method is now collecting £79k per month more than as at the 2012/13 year end
3. OFSTED are introducing the new inspection framework for children's services which will commence late autumn 2013. This will include the majority of Services in CYPS under the framework of services for Children in Need of help and protection, children looked after and leaving care. Planning is underway with staff and partners to be prepared for this major inspection.

## **7.4 Communications and Marketing**

### Highlights / Achievements

1. RMBC's child sexual exploitation campaign material - developed in conjunction with the corporate marketing, comms/media and design teams - has been widely regarded by other LA's as best practice and has been adopted by Sheffield, Doncaster, and York Councils as well as the South Yorkshire Police. This is a critical part of the on-going campaign to raise awareness and understanding of CSE as part of the overall Prevent, Protect Pursue strategy.

Theatre marketing – despite a hard start the pantomime campaign is now ahead of last year's figures. The team have all undergone training and successfully implemented new theatre software and website which is having a positive effect on sales targets.

Approval has been given for the strengthening of the online services team by recruiting internally to a number of important new roles - web development, content development and marketing/trend analyst. Existing budgets will be utilised so no additional resources are required to deliver what will have a significant impact on the Council's customer access and channel shift programme.
2. Further work is needed to develop an action plan which clearly identifies the Authority's overall marketing priorities. Formerly the marketing team for Culture and Leisure, the current corporate marketing team has reduced in size but is currently involved in supporting services across all directorates and also for partnership initiatives. This is excellent in terms of service recognition of the positive impact which on service delivery which can be achieved through effective marketing. However, it is impacting on the ability to implement them all, which of necessity leads to implementation by non-marketing professionals and a potential reputational risk.

The post of Communications and Media Manager became vacant during Quarter 1. External recruitment to this critical post has been agreed and interviews are being held week commencing 5th August.

The Creative/Design team are working closely with the RMBC Print Unit to identify the potential for more printing work to be handled in-house, with the potential to reduce overall costs to the Council. A Service Level Agreement is being developed and regular monitoring/review is taking place during the initial pilot phase to determine whether this can be achieved without any detrimental impact on quality and service delivery.

## Issues / Risks

None to report

## 7.5 Policy and Partnerships

### Highlights / Achievements

1. The 2013 secondary school Lifestyle Survey has achieved 3,474 responses from 16 schools (more than double last year's response). The research team are now analysing the data and the results will be presented to CYPS DLT and Cllr Lakin on 17<sup>th</sup> September, and be reported to Cabinet on 16th October.
2. The Partnership Team will be at Rotherham Show working with Financial Inclusion, the DWP and CAB to hear the public's views on Universal Credit and other welfare changes, and provide information and advice, making use of our new benefit changes booklets.
3. As part of the 'Expectations and Aspirations' workstream of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, customer standards for all local health and social care partners are being developed. The public will be consulted about the proposed list of 'standards' at Rotherham Show, where people can have their say on what is important to them.

### Issues / Risks

1. Welfare reform continues to present a number of significant corporate risks:
  - There is a direct threat to Council income from non-payment of Council Tax and rents, and the rising cost of collection in both cases.
  - The estimated loss of income to the local economy is £91 million per year (by 2015/16). Levels of poverty will increase and intensify, especially in the most deprived areas.
  - Local services and agencies are struggling to meet rising demand for advice and support from the public, but lack the resources to respond adequately.

The new draft Corporate Plan goes some way to addressing these risks, but the scale and pace of the changes are such that economic growth will struggle to meet the challenge.

## 7.6 Financial Services

### Highlights / Achievements

1. National Council Tax collection figures for 2013/2014 have been released which show Rotherham retaining its place as 5<sup>th</sup> best Metropolitan Council and the best in Yorkshire. £91 million was collected which equated to 97.5% of the collectable debt for the year.
2. National Non Domestic Rates collection figures for 2013/2014 have been released which show Rotherham moving up to 5<sup>th</sup> best Metropolitan Council and the 2<sup>nd</sup> best in Yorkshire. £71.5 million was collected which equated to 98.1% of the collectable debt for the year.
3. The new Council Tax Reduction scheme has been successfully introduced to replace Council Tax Benefit. Despite the significant challenges of delivering a new local scheme the Benefits team has delivered impressively with performance in assessing new claims and changes in circumstances both showing improvements on performance in the first quarter last financial year.

### Issues / Risks

The impact of welfare reform, together with the changes to Council Tax empty property discounts are causing significant increases in workload across the Revenues and Benefits service.

Three areas where this has particularly impacted the service have been:

1. Customer telephone calls, which over the first quarter have increased by 34% from the numbers in the first quarter of 2012/2013.
2. A substantial increase in recovery notices for non-payment of Council Tax in the first quarter with reminders up 84%, summonses up 81% and Liability Orders up 37%.

3. A substantial increase in the number of requests for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), particularly as a result of the "Bedroom Tax". A total of 706 applications were received in the first quarter of compared with only 123 in the same period last year.

The increased customer demand does not at present show any sign of declining, June telephone calls were up 36% for example. On-going this will continue to put a severe strain on the service and could result in declining performance in areas such as collection rates and time taken to assess benefit claims or issue new Council Tax bills.

## 7.7 Human Resources

### Highlights / Achievements

1. Following successful negotiation supported by Human Resources, changes to the waste management service have now been agreed.
2. The HR Shared Service Centre has successfully implemented changes to comply with the new BACS procedure; Auto-Enrolment and RTI work streams, whilst demonstrating an upward trend in performance to Doncaster Council.
3. Corporate HR, led, supported and managed the corporate programme of work to ensure Rotherham Council was reaccredited with IIP Gold Standard.

### Issues / Risks

1. Leave and absence in the directorate advice and guidance teams has led to resourcing pressures. This is predicted to be short term and is being mitigated by cover arrangements in the team.
2. Financial pressures have the possibility of effecting service provision, both for Rotherham and the contract with Doncaster Council.

## 7.8 Internal Audit and Asset Management (ICT)

### Highlights / Achievements

1. RMBC has achieved compliance to the PSN Code of Connection. This ensures the Council can connect to Central Government Network of services securely. This is the culmination of 12 months network and systems hardening. Projects like Individual Elections Register are reliant upon the connection to PSN.
2. The NetApp storage platform upgrade was implemented, allowing internal customers speedier access to systems and data, expanding the storage capacity for a number of years.
3. As part of the RMBC ICT Strategy (2011 to 2015) the Intranet has been upgraded using new hardware and a newer version of SharePoint (SharePoint 2010) . SharePoint 2010 has all the features of the 2003 version in addition to some notable improvements. The Intranet upgrade goes live for internal customers on the 31st of July, but it could take until the end of 2013 to migrate all the content from the old Intranet to the new version.

### Issues / Risks

1. ICT is working with Finance to ensure the Security of the e-supplier project
2. Virgin Media cannot confirm timescales for PSN/GCF cutover, ICT are working closely with the Yorkshire and Humber PSN transition team.
3. The closure of Digital Region Ltd has been announced. ICT faces Network resourcing issues in the coming 12 months, in transferring all network connections to a new supplier.

## 7.9 Community Engagement

### Highlights / Achievements

1. An application has been submitted to The Council of Europe for the "Dosta Congress Prize for Municipalities for Roma Inclusion" to highlight our local partnership work on Roma migration issues.
2. The Multi-Agency Asylum Seekers Partnership Group has been reconvened to coordinate the local response to the settlement of asylum seekers in Rotherham.
3. The work of the joint Council and SYP Vulnerable Persons Unit in tackling Hate Crime was highlighted in a positive article in the Advertiser. This was part of a wider media campaign encouraging victims of hate crime to report incidents to SYP and RMBC.

## Issues / Risks

1. Discussions are on-going with the Jamie Oliver Foundation about the long term future of Rotherham Ministry of Food Ltd including a reopening date for the premises.

## **7.10 Legal & Democratic Services**

### Highlights / Achievements

1. Legal Services restructure has now been completed with the recent appointment to the Litigation Team Manager post. The Legal Team is now at full establishment.
2. Democratic Services (incorporating Committee Services, Secretariat, Town Hall Catering and Town Hall Attendants/Chauffeurs) arranged and facilitated the Yorkshire Regiment's Freedom of the Borough Parade and also the three Freedom of the Borough Ceremonies during July, 2013. Both received positive feedback and numerous compliments.
3. Rotherham MBC Legal Services have been identified as being best placed to lead on a project to explore shared practice management across the region.

### Issues / Risks

1. The continued increase in School Admissions Appeals will be closely monitored to identify potential resource implications.
2. The Service's requirement to meet efficiency savings targets whilst managing the resultant risks to the Council.

## **8. Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

We proactively manage risks to prevent negative impacts on performance against delivery of services and any associated key performance indicators.

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

The services above are responsible for key areas of service delivery and therefore have a significant role in the delivery of key national and local performance indicators. These services also support all Council Directorates enabling them to deliver against Corporate Plan outcomes.

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

None to consider

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