

CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

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

Date: Monday, 29th September, 2014

Time: 10.00 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 (as amended March 2006).
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. York Gardens and Centre - petition. (Pages 1 - 3)
6. Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Report 2014/15. (Pages 4 - 9)
7. Housing and Neighbourhoods Year End performance 2013-14 and 1st Quarter outturns for 2014/15. (Pages 10 - 17)
8. Neighbourhoods General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15. (Pages 18 - 21)
9. Environment and Development Services Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2014. (Pages 22 - 27)
10. Wharnccliffe Street pedestrian accessibility improvements. (Pages 28 - 30)
11. Housing Investment Programme P5 August 2014. (Pages 31 - 40)
12. Implementation of the 'Community Trigger' - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act, 2014.

13. Evaluation of Vulnerable Tenants Gardening Scheme.
14. Exclusion of the Press and Public
15. Approval of Tender for upgrading external insulation works to 121 Properties at Thrybergh. (Pages 41 - 45)
16. Introductory Tenancy Review Panel (Pages 46 - 50)
17. Date and time of next meeting

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO DLT

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	29th September, 2014
3.	Title:	York Gardens, West Melton – Petition
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

A petition has been received from residents at York Gardens, West Melton. The petition is attached as Appendix 1.

The petition raised concerns about the process of allocating properties on York Gardens. In addition, the petition also asked that a recent mutual exchange request be reconsidered. Petitioners requested a meeting with Council officers to discuss these issues in more detail.

The petition was acknowledged and the lead petitioner and residents have subsequently been visited to discuss the issues raised.

The allocation process has been explained and has been applied correctly to lettings to York Gardens. The mutual exchange request is still being processed and a decision will be communicated to both parties once the usual checks have been concluded.

The Area Housing Officer will maintain regular contact with residents and deal with any further concerns they may have.

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member notes the action taken in response to the petition.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

York Gardens is a complex of 34 bungalows in West Melton. Generally bungalows are let to persons over 50 years of age or persons with a medical need or physical disability who would benefit from ground floor and level access accommodation.

Housing applicants circumstances are checked and verified by our Key Choices team, in accordance with the allocations scheme and any other allocations criteria, such as Local Lettings Policies. In addition, Area Housing Officers also undertake 'It's Your Move' meetings with applicants to discuss issues relating to taking a Council tenancy and the conditions of tenancy.

There have been a total of eight new lettings made in York Gardens over the last three years. The petition alluded to two particular properties which were let in 2012. There have been no reports of anti-social behaviour relating to these properties.

7.2 Action taken in response to the petition

The lead petitioner was contacted to acknowledge receipt of the petition. Receipt of the petition was also initially reported to the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods in September.

The Area Housing Manager and Area Housing Officer for York Gardens have held discussions with individual residents and residents collectively to discuss the issues raised in the petition. In summary:

- Residents were concerned about a specific tenancy. Through discussion with residents there was clearly some apprehension, but there was no suggestion that there had been any particular problems caused by the tenant towards others. No specific complaints had been made.
- The mutual exchange referred to in the petition was on hold pending further investigations in accordance with due process. The Council had not agreed to the exchange and then retracted it, as suggested by the petitioners. The mutual exchange process was ongoing and both parties would be contacted with an outcome once all checks had been concluded.

7.3 Proposed response to the petition.

Having considered the issues raised by the petitioners, it is proposed that residents are advised that:

- Lettings to York Gardens have been completed in accordance with the Council's allocations policy and procedures and all the relevant applicant checks were made prior to letting.

- Tenancy support will be offered to any tenants who require assistance and are agreeable to such support. Where tenants have existing support services in place, agencies will be contacted should any problems arise.
- The mutual exchange will now progress and be concluded in accordance with Council procedures and both parties notified formally of the outcome.
- The Area Housing Officer will maintain regular contacts with the residents to discuss and resolve any concerns they may have. Tenants can also contact us by ringing our contact centre on 01709 336009.

8. Finance

There are no financial implications arising as a result of this petition.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

None to report.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Ensuring care and protection is available to those that need it the most.

People in need of care and support have more choice and control to help them live at home.

Helping to create safe and healthy communities. People feel safe and happy where they live.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Petition received from York Gardens residents is attached as Appendix 1.

Contact Name/s :

Trevor Wilson, Area Housing Manager, Neighbourhood and Adult Services,
Trevor.wilson@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	Monday 29th September 2014
3.	Title:	Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Report 2014/15
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

This budget monitoring report presents the forecast outturn position on the 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) based upon actual income and expenditure to the end of August 2014.

The overall forecast is that the HRA will outturn on budget with a transfer from working balance (reserves) of £0.807m which is a reduction of £633k against the approved budget.

6. Recommendations

- **That cabinet member receives and notes the latest financial projection against budget for 2014/15.**

7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1** This budget report is based upon actual income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of August 2014 forecast to the end of the financial year to give a projected outturn position, compared to budget.
- 7.2** Appendix A of this report provides the Budget Operating Statement for 2014/15 which shows the various income and expenditure budget lines which make up the net cost of delivering the service. The latest forecast net cost of service is -£7.636m which, together with Revenue Contribution to Capital (RCCO) costs of £8.513m and interest received (-£70k) will result in an overall deficit of £0.807m to be transferred from Working Balance.
- 7.3** Within the Operating Statement are several budget heads which are either year end adjustments (for example debt management costs £210k) or are subject to external influence and therefore outside direct control (for example cost of capital charges £14.492m).
- 7.4** Budget Monitoring is therefore focussed upon expenditure and income which is within control, i.e. income of £82.509m, the repair and maintenance budget of £19.072m and supervision and management of £20.652m. Other budget heads as seen within Appendix A are currently being forecast to outturn in line with budget.

7.5 Budget Monitoring

- 7.5.1** Appendix A, column B demonstrates the projected outturn based upon activity to the end of August 2014.
- 7.5.2** Overall it can be seen that the net cost of service (before RCCO and interest received) is forecast to be -£7.636m, a surplus of £633k as shown in the table below.

	Budget £000	Forecast £000	Variance £000
Expenditure	75,506	74,972	-534
Income	-82,509	-82,608	-99
Net Cost of Service	-7,003	-7,636	-633

- 7.5.3** At this stage of the financial year most budget lines within expenditure are forecasting to budget, only supervision and management is forecasting a variance to budget.

7.6 Expenditure

Column B of Appendix A demonstrates that based upon expenditure and commitments to date, total expenditure is forecast to outturn at £74.972m compared to a budget provision of £75.506m, a decrease in spend of £534k. The main variations are as follows:

7.6.1 Contributions to Housing Repairs

Appendix A demonstrates that the forecast year-end spend on Repairs and Maintenance is currently forecasting to budget of £19.072m.

The empty homes budget is difficult to forecast as this is a very responsive service. The original budget has been increased to an estimated 1,700 minor voids in year, an increase of approximately 200 compared with last year. At the end of July there were 50 less completions than budgeted. However, the actual number of voids completed is increasing due to the impact of the Welfare Reform as tenants transfer to smaller properties.

There is a slight overspend at this stage on planned works mainly around damp-proofing works and fluctuations in overhead costs due to additional revenue works. This is offset by forecast under spends within Responsive repairs and Empty Homes due to additional income from tenant recharges.

7.6.2 Supervision and Management

Column B of Appendix A demonstrates that based upon expenditure and commitment to date, total expenditure is forecast to outturn at £20.118m, a forecast overall under spend of £534k, mainly due to higher than expected staff turnover and savings on utility costs within District Heating schemes.

7.7 Income

7.7.1 Column B of Appendix A shows that based upon income received to date the total forecast income collectable is £82.608m against a budget of £82.509m, an over recovery of income of £99k.

7.7.2 Dwelling Rent income is forecast to over recovery by £150k due to fewer Right to Buy sales than anticipated at this stage of the year and a faster turnaround of void properties is resulting in more income than budgeted.

7.7.3 Non Dwelling rent income is forecasting an under recovery of income of £67k in respect of budgeted income for three properties which have subsequently been identified as non HRA properties plus an increase in garage voids resulting in a reduction in income.

7.7.4 The over recovery of income on Other Fees and Charges relates to income from the disposal of housing land which accounts for an additional £16k to date.

7.8 Summary

In summary it can be seen in foregoing paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 that the variance to budget of -£633k when comparing the forecast net cost of service against the budget of £7.003m is due to variances within the Supervision and Management and an overall increase in income.

8. Finance

Impact on Working Balance - The report identifies that any deficit or surplus arising from the net cost of service will be transferred to the Working Balance which is reflected through the Appropriations section of the Operating Statement at Appendix A. Any forecast increase/decrease will be added to the budgeted sum shown under transfer to reserves.

Based upon the current forecast out-turn position on the net cost of service, the forecast transfer from balances will reduce from £1.439m to £0.807m, a reduction of £633k. The reduction in contribution from reserves is a result of an under spend within supervision and management plus additional income.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- **Inflation – Non Contractual** –The 2014/15 budget was formulated around an inflation assumption of nil (except on utilities); if inflation rises costs may exceed budget provision. It should be noted that the inflationary increase on the repair and maintenance contract is locked in for the financial year at 2.7 % and this has been provided for within the budget set.
Mitigation: Ongoing monitoring
- **Vacancy Factor**
Salaries budgets assume various levels of vacancies. If vacancies do not arise this could lead to salary costs in excess of budget.
Mitigation: In depth monitoring and forecasting of salary budgets.

- **Repair and Maintenance Voids.** Whilst the current empty home forecast is considered to be a prudent projection based upon 1,700 minor voids, it should be noted that the final number of voids received and completed in year could change. Any change in numbers or values will impact on expenditure.

Mitigation: Ongoing monitoring and triangulation with contractors. Any forecast increase in expenditure will be offset by a reduction in planned revenue works.

- **Rental Income**

Net rental income has been calculated on the basis of 2% void loss. Any increase / decrease on the actual levels of voids will impact on the level of income achieved.

Mitigation: Ongoing monitoring.

- **Impairment of Fixed Assets**

HRA Self Financing legislation has resulted in the costs of impairment/revaluation of non-dwellings becoming a real charge to be met by the HRA.

This figure cannot be calculated until year end after the asset register has been fully updated. In 2013-14 the impairment charge was £16k and the revaluation of Fixed Assets was a credit of £482k.

Mitigation: Action is being taken to review the management of expenditure on non-dwellings assets to minimise the risk of impairment charges to the HRA. Advice is also being obtained via CIPFA as this is a real issue affecting many other local authorities.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

10.1 The HRA supports the new Corporate Plan Priorities and is central to the long term strategy:

- Making sure no community is left behind.
- Helping to create safe and healthy communities.
- Improving the environment.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Budget and Council Tax Setting Report (2014/15) to Cabinet February 2014
- Director of Finance and Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services have been consulted on the preparation of this report.

Contact Name:

Mark Scarrott, Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, Financial Services, Business Partnering, ext: 22007, email mark.scarrott@rotherham.gov.uk

Housing Revenue Account - Budget Operating Statement August 2014

Narrative	2014/15 Full	2014/15 Forecast	Variance
	Year Budget	Out-turn	
	£	£	£
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Contributions to Housing Repairs Account	19,072,350	19,072,350	0
Supervision and Management	20,652,000	20,117,877	-534,123
Rents, Rates, Taxes etc.	186,500	186,500	0
Provision for Bad Debts	987,800	987,800	0
Cost of capital Charge	14,491,700	14,491,700	0
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	19,905,970	19,905,970	0
Deferred Charges	0	0	0
Impairment of Fixed Assets	0	0	0
Debt Management Costs	210,000	210,000	0
Expenditure	75,506,320	74,972,197	-534,123
<u>Income</u>			
Dwelling Rents	-77,427,560	-77,577,560	-150,000
Non-dwelling Rents	-805,430	-737,992	67,438
Charges for Services and facilities	-3,987,300	-3,987,301	0
Leaseholder Income	-50,900	-50,900	0
Other fees and charges	-238,300	-254,500	-16,200
Contribution to Expenditure	0	0	0
Income	-82,509,490	-82,608,253	-98,762
Net Cost of Services	-7,003,170	-7,636,056	-632,885
Amortised premia - Debt redemption	0	0	0
Interest received	-70,000	-70,000	0
Net Operating Expenditure	-7,073,170	-7,706,056	-632,885
Appropriations:			
Transfer from Capital Finance Account- Deferred	0	0	0
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay	8,513,030	8,513,030	0
Transfer from Capital Finance Account- Impairment	0	0	0
Transfer from Major Repairs Reserve	0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,439,860	-806,975	632,885
Transfer to Reserves	0	0	0
Surplus/Deficit for the year	0	0	0

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	29th September, 2014
3.	Title:	Housing and Neighbourhoods Year End performance 2013-14 and 1st Quarter outturns for 2014/15
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

This report outlines the 2013/14 Key Performance Indicator (KPI) results for the Housing and Neighbourhood Service elements of the directorate; the report also shows a comparison to performance last year and gives the performance outturn up to the first quarter of 2014/15.

There are fifteen indicators managed by Housing and Neighbourhood Services; of these 10 **(67%)** achieved year end targets with 9 of the measures improving on 2012/13 outturns. Performance improvement action plans helped maximise outturns.

By March 2014 the number of void properties had reduced to less than 190 – in comparison to 300 empty properties at the end of December 2013 and the income service collected an additional income of £3.9m.

Performance improved in key areas such as completing more repairs right first time, increased customer satisfaction, managing anti-social behaviour and resolving longstanding cases.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Housing and Neighbourhood Services was 341 (Total received in 2012/13 was 325).

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

There was a **5%** increase in the number of complaints received, although **35%** fewer of these were fully upheld than last year. The quality of complaint investigation and resolution continues to improve with only one case progressing to stage three of the complaints procedure and no full investigations being conducted by either the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman Service. All this is built on the last year's strong performance, which saw a 12% reduction in new complaints and the number of complaints reaching stage two.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet Member notes the year end position and the improved outturns of performance from Year 2012/13 to 2013/14 and up to the 1ST quarter of 2014/15.

7. Proposals and Details

During the year progress has been made in delivering initiatives to improve performance and the customer experience with the highest levels of customer satisfaction.

The following KPI's achieved year end targets and also improved on last year's performance:

NAS 54 - % of repairs completed right first time

- Cumulative partnership year end performance of **97.73%** against a 92% year end target
- This indicator is measured from 2 of the questions on the repairs satisfaction survey completed by customers following the completion of their repair. Both questions must receive a positive response to register as right first time
- Performance has improved on the year end outturn in 2012/13 of 95.39%
- Nationally ranked amongst the best – 25 against 162 other organisations

Areas of improvement include:

- Call centre staff received technical repairs training to increase their skills in diagnostic of repairs at first point of contact
- Carrying out quality assurance checks with partners to help reduce the number of minor defects

Performance for first quarter of 2014/15

- 98.46% continuous improvement against the revised target of 93%

NAS 55 - % of gas safety certificates outstanding

- Performance of **99.97%** – this equates to 6 properties with a gas safety certificate outstanding. The best ever performance in this area
- In 2012/13 the year end outturn was 99.91% (19 properties with certificates outstanding)
- Over the last 3 years performance has shown significant improvement. *At the start of 2011 there were 472 properties without a valid certificate*
- Put in place a robust procedure to identify where a property has not received a safety test and reviewed customer access letters which has resulted in a reduction in the costs of taking legal enforcement action

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 99.98% compliance up to end of June 2014

NAS 57 - % of all repairs completed within target

- Year end partnership performance of **99.29%** against a 99.00% target
- This has improved on the performance in 2012/13 of 99.01%
- Nationally ranked **amongst the best** – 51 against a sample of 227 in Housemark

Improvements include:

- Work has been done with the Call Centre to improve scripts and diagnosis of repairs
- Allocation of specific areas to Technical Officers – named point of contact for repairs

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 99.35% against the 99 target, continues to improve

NAS 58 - % of repairs appointments made and kept

- Partnership performance of **99.21%** exceeding the target of 98.50%
- The year end outturn performance has improved when compared with 98.52% in 2012/13
- Nationally ranked **amongst the best** - 49 against a sample of 140 organisations in Housemark

This has been achieved by:

- Adopting Text Messaging notification of repairs
- Increasing take up of mutually agreed appointments and operatives phoning customers direct out of hours to arrange a convenient appointment time

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 99.95% of appointments kept against the revised target of 99%

NAS 59 - % of tenants satisfied with the repairs service

- Cumulative performance at year end saw satisfaction levels rise to **99.86%**
- This is the highest satisfaction level since the start of the contract in 2010
- Last year's performance was 99.75%

Improvement action:

- Increased RMBC quality checks
- Provided customer feedback to operatives in toolbox talks
- Workshops to review and challenge progress with frontline staff

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Satisfaction up to 99.92% at the end of June 2014

NAS 65 – Food establishments broadly compliant with the food hygiene law

- Year end performance of **85.00%** against the 85% target
- Performance on this indicator has been sustained however the number of high risk premises has increased compared to the year end position in 2012/13
- The out-turn for 2012-13 was 87%, however, there were **38 fewer** premises.
- There were **298 new premises/proprietors this year** and the economic climate has had an impact on businesses.
- In March 2014 there were 11 category A premises that were non-compliant; these will all receive a further inspection after 6 months
- There were 75 category B premises which were non-compliant; these will all be inspected during the next 12 months

Improvement action:

- Targeting inspections of high risk premises and carrying out quality assurance assessments
- Providing a step by step guide to premise owners on food safety management systems and relevant business packs

Future action

- Obtained funding to provide coaching sessions for poorer premises
- To consider compiling informal inspection revisits and reporting both figures

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Sustained compliance of 85%

NAS 66 – Satisfaction of business regulated services

- Satisfaction of **99%** against year-end target of 96%
- This has improved on last year's performance in 2012/13 of 96%

Improvement action:

- Quality assessments and inspections continue to be carried out regularly on high risk premises

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 100% satisfaction

NAS 79 – % of ASB Cases resolved

- Cumulative performance of case resolution at the year end was **98.50%** against a 96% target
- The performance on this indicator has shown improvements when compared to the year end position 2012/13 which was 95.45%
- Nationally this compares us extremely favourably - **amongst the best** in HouseMark

Areas of improvement include:

- Ongoing quality assurance by service managers of complaints and casework management

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 98% of housing cases resolved within the timeline

NAS 82 – Number of households living in temporary accommodation

- In March 2014 the best performance was achieved of **21** households in temporary accommodation
- Performance improved on 2012/13 of 23 (lower is better)
- **Over 1000 households prevented from becoming homeless**

This has been achieved by:

- Providing more support and advice in particular on the welfare reform changes that affect people especially in relation to concerns regarding under occupancy charges
- Continuing to work closely with partners to ensure that alternative permanent accommodation is available as soon as possible; these include housing associations, support providers and our own allocations

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- There has been an increase in number of people approaching the service threatened with homelessness and at the end of June the number of households in temporary accommodation increased to **28** - (*In 2011/12 there were 31 households in temporary accommodation*)

NAS 80 – Number of high risk premises due for trading standards inspection that are inspected within the required timescale

- Performance at the end of March was **100%** against a target of 100%

Improvement Actions include:

- A training schedule was produced for staff on the system for entering data and analysing information
- Providing step by step guides to assist staff with data entry and system administration

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Sustained 100% performance up to end June 2014

The following KPI's did not achieve year end targets although action to maximise individual progress outturn was made:

NAS 34 – Average length of time waiting for major adaptations from assessment to work beginning (Weeks)

- The overall **cumulative outturn for the year** is **16.53 weeks** which did not achieve the target of 11.25 weeks; this is primarily due to eradicating the backlog of work during the year from 2012/13
- Waiting time for a referral to be processed reduced from 21 weeks, in April 2013 down to 7 weeks by the end of March 2014
- The total number of referrals waiting to be processed at year end stood at 25 meaning that applications are now being processed within the same month for the first time in the services history
- For the current financial year 87% of respondents to satisfaction surveys were '*very satisfied with the service received overall*' and the remaining 13% were '*satisfied*'. Previously 79% and 17% respectively for 2012-2013, with 1.9% '*very dissatisfied*'

Actions for improvement include:

- During 2012/13 it came to light that there was a backlog of 395 referrals with a waiting time of more than 6 months – an action plan was put in place to clear the back log and this was finally completed during 2013/14

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Improved performance of 4.66 weeks, well below the revised 8 weeks target

NAS 17 – Average re-let time

- The cumulative average re-let time performance for year end is **29.85 days**- this calculation is different from the national benchmark measurement and will be aligned going forward for 2014-15.
- For the month of **March 14** in line with the national benchmarking criteria the performance outturn was **25.93 days**
- The year end outturn remained similar to last year at less than 30 days although this year we have seen a 30% increase in turnover of void properties
- The reported cumulative annual outturn ranked above average - 43 against 102 other organisations of all re-lets (including any time spent on major works)

Action

- Weekly performance clinics ensured voids performance remained at less than 30 days
- Reduced the number of voids to 190 (300 at end of December)
- Introduced back to back lettings- repairs completed within a 5 day turnaround time
- Ongoing support from P&Q on quality assurance data and pending voids
- Implemented a new utilities process – British Gas provide supply to all properties – Staff training provided on new process. This new process has reduced delays in carrying out safety testing and cut down the allowance of rent free weeks

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Below target with performance of 21.81 days against the reduced 25 days turnaround time – this now puts us **amongst the best** on Housemark

NAS 78 - % of rent loss through dwellings being vacant

- Cumulative Void Rent Loss performance for the year end was 1.14% against a target of 0.9% (lower is better)
- Performance just for the month of March 14 was 1.09% - a reduction and improvement on previous months in the year
- There is a direct link with the number of vacant properties which significantly reduced during the last quarter of the year

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- Improved performance of 0.87% at the end of June 2014 against the revised target of 2.1%

NAS 76 – Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed

- A year end performance outturn of 99.77, 0.54% below the target of 100.31% - for this indicator higher is better
- Performance has deteriorated by 0.53% since March 2013 ; however, within the year the income service still collected an additional income of £3.9m
- The overall increase in income collected stems from the ongoing recovery of debt from previous years in addition to an increase in the general value of payments owing to higher rent charges in 2013/14
- Nationally this places us **average** HouseMark

Action that has contributed towards improvement in rent collected:

- Carrying out affordability checks prior to new tenancy sign-up
- Developed a court action approval protocol - Independent case reviews conducted prior to all court applications where there are children in the household and/or the tenant requires multi-agency support
- Referrals to the Tenancy Support Officer, Money Advice and other agencies where possible prior to instigation of court proceedings

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 98.64% of rent collected up to June 14 below the monthly control and year target of 99.80%

NAS 77 – Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit

- The 2013/14 year end outturn is 2.18% and is 0.60% above the target (a lower outturn is better) – 1.58% target
- This represents a deterioration in performance since March 2013 of 0.59%
- The removal of the spare room subsidy for Housing Benefit claimants resulted in additional arrears
- Nationally this compares us **above average** in HouseMark
-

Improvement action includes:

- The income team have increased the take up of customers paying by direct debit by almost 300
- There is closer working with CYPS & Homeless team including the development of joint-working protocols
- The Income team have increased contact with customers making more telephone calls and carrying out more visits

Performance for 1st quarter of 2014/15

- 2.58% performance at 30th June 0.48%; above the control target of 2.1%

8. Risks

Since the introduction of the Housing Benefit under Occupancy in 2013 more than 2500 tenancies have been affected and as a direct result of the removal of the spare

room subsidy for Housing Benefit claimants it should be noted that it resulted in additional arrears of £306k.

The proposals to roll out Universal Credit nationally are still planned although specific dates and numbers of people initially affected are not yet known.

9. Background Papers and Consultation

The performance report has been discussed with Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate Leadership Team.

Appendix 'A' contains the performance results for the year end of 2013/14. The indicators rated 'on target' are shown as a star and those that were rated 'off target' are shown as a red triangle.

The Performance and Quality Team continue to support the operational management arrangements within Housing and Neighbourhood Service teams.

Contact Name:

Marie Ingham, Performance Improvement Officer, Ext 22292

Email: marie.ingham@rotherham.gov.uk

Appendix A - Housing & Neighbourhood Services - KPI Out turns for March 2013-14												
Key to symbols												
⚠	indicator rated 'off target'			B	Banding			RAG Status			⚠	★
★	indicator rated 'on target'			Q	Quartile			No. of indicators		5.	10.	
⬆️✔	Indicator has improved			Q1	is best			Percentage		33.33%	66.67%	
↔️	Indicator Shows No Change			Q4	is worst							
⬇️❌	indicator has deteriorated											
Housing												
Line no	RAG Status	Measure	Good Performance	2012/13 Baseline	Apr - Mar 2013-14	Monthly Control Target	Quartile	D.o.T.	2013/14 Target	Joint Indicator	Responsible Manager	
1.	⚠	NAS 34 - Average length of time waiting for major adaptations from assessment to work beginning (weeks)	Lower is better	12.25	16.53			⬇️	11.25		James Greenhedge/ Sandra Tolley	
2.	★	NAS 65 - (NI184) Food establishments broadly compliant with the food hygiene law	Higher is better	87.00%	85.00%			⬇️	85.00%		Alan Pogorzelec	
3.	★	NAS 66 - Satisfaction of business with regulated services	Higher is better	98.00%	99.00%			⬆️✔	96.00%		Alan Pogorzelec	
4.	★	NAS 80 - Number of high risk premises due for a trading standards inspection that are inspected within the required timescale	Higher is better	100.00%	100.00%			↔️	100.00%		Alan Pogorzelec	
5.	★	NAS 82 - (NI156) Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Lower is better	23	21			⬆️✔	26		Jill Jones/ Sandra Tolley	
6.	★	NAS 54 - % of repairs completed right first time	Higher is better	95.39%	97.73%			⬆️✔	92.00%	Contractors	John Brayshaw	
7.	★	NAS 55 - % of gas safety certificates outstanding	Lower is better	0.01%	0.03%	0.40%		↔️	0.00%	WDP	John Brayshaw	
8.	★	NAS 57 - % of all repairs completed within target	Higher is better	99.01%	99.29%			⬆️✔	99.00%	Contractors	John Brayshaw	
9.	★	NAS 58 - % of repairs appointments made and kept	Higher is better	98.50%	99.21%			⬆️✔	98.50%	Contractors	John Brayshaw	
10.	★	NAS 59 - % of tenants satisfied with the repairs service	Higher is better	99.57%	99.86%			⬆️✔	95.50%	Contractors	John Brayshaw	
11.	⚠	NAS 17 – Average relet time (days)	Lower is better	28.89	29.85			⬇️	27	Contractors	John Brayshaw	
12.	⚠	NAS 78 - % of rent lost through dwellings being vacant	Lower is better	0.80%	1.14%			⬇️	0.89%		John Brayshaw / David Bagnall	
13.	⚠	NAS 76 - Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f)	Higher is better	100.30%	99.77%	100.31%		⬇️	100.31%		Simon Bell	
14.	⚠	NAS 77 - Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	Lower is better	1.59%	2.18%	1.52%		⬇️	1.58%		Simon Bell	
15.	★	NAS 79 - Percentage of ASB cases resolved	Higher is better	95.80%	98.50%			⬆️✔	96.50%		Paul Walsh/ Steve Parry	

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	Monday 29th September 2014
3.	Title:	Neighbourhoods General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Services

5. Summary

This Budget Monitoring Report provides a financial forecast for Neighbourhoods General Fund within the Neighbourhoods & Adult Services Directorate to the end of March 2015 based on actual income and expenditure for the period ending August 2014.

The forecast for the financial year 2014/15 is an overall forecast under spend of (-£101k) against an approved net revenue budget of £671k.

6. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member receives and notes the latest financial projection against budget for 2014/15

7. Proposals and Details

The table below shows the summary forecast outturn position against the approved Net Revenue Budgets. The net revenue budget has increased by £97k since the last report as a result of the approval to carry forward underspends from 13/14 financial year in respect of Community Leadership Fund, Dispersed Units and Bereavement services.

SERVICE AREA	Net Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance from Net Budget Deficit/ (Surplus)	% Variation to Net Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's	%
Strategic Housing & Investment	97	106	9	9.28
Housing Options	-1,232	-1,306	-74	-6.01
Housing & Communities	251	208	-43	-17.13
Central	313	309	-4	-1.28
Business Regulation	150	127	-23	-15.33
Safer Neighbourhoods	1,092	1,126	34	3.11
TOTALS	671	570	-101	-15.05

The main variations against budget can be summarised as follows:-

7.1 Strategic Housing & Investment Service (SHIS) (+£9k)

The SHIS team budget has a pressure of +£9k mainly as a result of anticipated pressures on staffing budgets as a result of lower than anticipated staff turnover.

7.2 Housing Options (-£74k)

There is a projected surplus of (-£11k) within the Private Sector Adaptations Service as a result of an increase in fees and charges. This surplus may increase during the year if additional Capital budget is approved for Adaptations.

Dispersed Units area is projecting a (-£26k) surplus as a result of lower than anticipated occupation levels.

There is an anticipated (-£37k) saving on Furnished Homes as a result of higher than anticipated staff turnover.

7.3 Housing & Communities (-£43k)

This service area is projecting an overall under spend of (-£43k) consisting of an (-£11k) projected under spend on Community Safety Unit, mainly as a result of some additional funding from the HRA over budget.

There is also a small (-£4k) anticipated saving on transport and supplies and services costs on the Area Assemblies Management and Administration cost centre plus projected savings of (-£9k) on Area Assemblies cost centres.

The Members Community Leadership Fund is anticipating an under spend of (-£19k) which is likely to be requested as an ear marked carry forward in line with previous years.

7.4 Central (-£4k)

The Management & Admin area is anticipating a small (-£4k) under spend mainly as a result of slightly reduced pension costs.

7.5 Business Regulation (-£23k)

Overall Business Regulation is projecting a (-£23k) under spend. Pressures on employee costs within Health and Safety, Food and Drugs and Animal Health budgets totalling +£19K are being offset by savings within Trading Standards mainly due to higher than expected staff turnover (-£41k) and Licensing (-£1k) due to a staff vacancy.

7.6 Safer Neighbourhoods +£34k

There is an anticipated overspend on Community Protection mainly as a result of lower than anticipated staff turnover +£22k and a small shortfall in EPA income due to a legislative change. The projected overspend on Landfill sites of +£12k is in respect of statutory Health and Safety work.

7.7 Agency & Consultancy

To date there has been no expenditure on Agency or Consultancy.

7.8 Non Contractual Overtime

There has been no expenditure to-date on non-contractual overtime within Neighbourhoods.

8. Finance

The financial implications for each service area have been outlined in Section 7 above.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

These forecasts are based on financial performance to the end of August 2014. The forecast outturn is dependent on delivery of planned management actions being achieved and thus effective and tight financial management practices remain essential including holding monthly budget clinics with the Service Director and senior managers.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The delivery of the Council's Revenue Budget within the limits determined in March 2014 is vital to achieving the Council's Policy agenda. Financial performance is a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Report to Cabinet 26 February 2014 – Proposed Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2014/15.

The content of this report has been discussed with the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Finance.

Contact Name:

Mark Scarrott, Financial Services - Finance Manager (Neighbourhoods and Adult Services), Business Partnering, Extn 22007

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

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1	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2	Date:	29 th September, 2014
3	Title:	Environment and Development Services Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 31 st August 2014
4	Directorate :	Environment and Development Services

5 Summary

To report on the performance against budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate Revenue Accounts at **the end of August 2014** and to provide a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2014/15 financial year.

Members are asked to note the forecast outturn position of an over-spend of £219k for the Environment & Development Services Directorate based on expenditure and income as at August 2014.

6 Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member notes the latest financial projection against budget for the year based on actual income and expenditure to the end of August 2014, as outlined in the Briefing Note already circulated (*as agreed there will be no Officer to present this report*). This report is referred to the Self Regulation Overview and Scrutiny Select Commission for information.

7 Proposals and Details

7.1.1 Cabinet Members receive and comment upon budget monitoring reports on a monthly basis. This report reflects the position against budget for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014.

7.1.2 The table below summarises the forecast outturn against approved budgets for each service division:

Division of Service	Net Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variation	Variation
	£000	£000	£000	%
Asset Management, Audit and Insurance	8,230	8,125	-105	
Business Unit	401	401	0	
Communications	783	789	+6	
Regeneration, Planning and Cultural Services	6,937	6,979	+42	
Streetpride	28,878	29,154	+276	
Total Environmental and Development Services	45,229	45,448	+219	0.48%

Following the August cycle of budget monitoring the Directorate has identified that it is likely to be overspent by **+£219k (0.48%)** against its total net revenue budget of **£45,229k**. All possible actions to mitigate this are being taken.

7.1.3 The details below are as offered in the Briefing Note already circulated to relevant Cabinet Members:

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE

For Cabinet Members: Cllrs Beck, Godfrey, Hoddinott, Hussain.

SUBJECT: EDS REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

1. **Update on the current projections for EDS Revenue Budget Monitoring at the end of August 2014.**

The table below shows the monitoring figures for April – August with narratives explaining the current projections.

	April - August
Service	£000
Asset Management, Audit and Insurance	-105
Business Unit	0
Communications	+6
Regeneration, Planning, Customer & Cultural Services	+42
Streetpride	+276
TOTAL	+219

Asset Management, Audit and Insurance -£105k

There are some small pressures across the Asset Management service: Health and Safety (+£8k) for the cost of barriers for the first English Defence League rally, and due to staffing costs and under recovery of income (+£10k) All Saints toilets, and Riverside Café and Hospitality (+£5k) CENT has some residual costs (+£2k). Internal Audit (+£6k) pressure which is staffing related.

There are a number of underspends which are mainly building related. Commercial Properties (-£35k) due to additional rental income, and (-£59k) from Facilities Management of all council buildings. Further savings (-£42k) are being reported from the Corporate Environment Team and the Capital Team.

Business Unit £0k

The Service is currently reporting a balanced budget, and work is ongoing to identify any savings which could contribute to the current position.

Communications +£6K

This small pressure is around staffing and marketing events, and work is ongoing to mitigate this pressure.

Regeneration, Planning, Customer and Cultural Services +£42k

Whilst there are still some pressures within this service area, the current overspend is an improved position, and staff are working to reduce current pressures. A number of small pressures remain across this Service Area. **Markets** (£+30k) due to expected repairs bills on deteriorating buildings, and **Customer Services** (+£121k) mainly due to a delay in delivery of savings and unbudgeted staffing costs as the Service has needed to use temporary staff to meet service demands. The **Arts** budget has a pressure of (+£12k), due to part year unfunded staffing costs. **RIDO** is funding a replacement IT package, and has some staffing costs causing a pressure (+£22k).

These overspends are being partially offset by some reported under spends, **Business Centres** due to increased occupancy levels (-£31k). **Cultural Services** from Theatres (-£14k), Boston Castle and Museums (-£13k), and Libraries (-£64k) mainly due to the non-filling of vacant posts prior to the now implemented staffing restructure. Building Control (-£8k), due to an increase on applications. **Planning Services** have identified a small underspend due to the delaying of consultancy spend in this year (-£13k).

Streetpride +£276k

At this stage in the year the Service are reporting a pressure in **Network Management Services (+£292k)**:

Due to an under recovery of income from Parking Services (+£387k) which is due to a reduction in staff parking permits income, plus, based on previous years that income generated will be lower than the current income budget, and the impact of Tesco opening later this year. This is being partially mitigated by some savings in other areas (-£95k), mainly from Street Lighting energy savings.

Leisure and Green Spaces are reporting an under recovery of income from Allotments (+£23k), and (+£9k) from the golf course. Country Parks have a pressure (+£7k) due to agency cover costs, and Trees and Woodlands have a staffing pressure (+£3k). There are some savings from Urban Parks, Landscape Design and general management (-£34k).

Community Services are reporting a pressure due to an overspend on cleansing highways (+£53k), staffing costs (+£15k) and (+£11k) pressure due to a new kennel contract which is being partially offset by an underspend (-£10k) on Pest Control.

Waste Services are now reporting a changed position (**-£20k**) with Waste Collection under spent by (-£156k) mainly due to a WEEE rebate, effects of strike, increased income on bulky items and commercial waste. Waste Disposal (+£160k) pressure

due to expected outlet not coming on line when expected, and a saving on Waste PFI due to reduced savings on external consultancy (-£24k).

An underspend due to changes in transport provision (-£52k), from **Corporate Transport Unit**. And the Corporate Account is now reporting (-£21k) largely due to the moratorium.

Summary

The EDS reported pressures at April – August Monitoring shows an over spend forecast of +£219k.

As noted last month, and still valid, there are some areas within EDS which could be over budget by the end of the financial year, but these are not currently being reported in the figures :

Winter Service has historically overspent by around (+£450k), a review of previous years data has updated the current estimate to year end as a £417k pressure, but this could fluctuate depending on the severity of the weather.

Planning income was under recovered last year (+£93k), at this stage it is too earlier to predict whether this financial year will outturn the same, as early months have seen some significant planning applications.

Riverside Café could potentially show an under recovery of income due to increased food prices, if this has an impact on customers.

Agency Costs

Total expenditure on Agency staff for Environment and Development Services for the period ending 31st August 2014 was £322,586. This was £305,649 for the same period 2013.

Consultancy

For the period ending August 2014 the total expenditure on Consultancy was £34,608 this follows a review of spend by staff in EDS. The reported spend for the same period in 2013 was £67,297.

Non contractual Overtime

Actual expenditure to the end of August, 2014 on non-contractual overtime for Environment and Development Services is £176,470 whilst the same period to August 2013 spend was £220,312 some of the increased costs are due to the new services now being included and reported within EDS (Customer Services and Asset Management).

The actual costs of Agency, Consultancy and Overtime are included within the financial forecasts.

Currently ICT is reported via Resources staff

Agency Costs

Total expenditure on Agency staff for Environment and Development Services for the period ending 31st August 2014 was £322,586. This was £305,649 for the same period 2013, but now includes Customer Services, Asset Management, Audit and Insurance.

Consultancy

For the period ending August 2014 the total expenditure on Consultancy was £34,608 this follows a review of spend by staff in EDS. The reported spend for the same period in 2013 was £67,297.

Non contractual Overtime

Actual expenditure to the end of August, 2014 on non-contractual overtime for Environment and Development Services is £176,470 whilst the same period to August 2013 spent was £220,312 some of the increased costs are due to the new services now being included and reported within EDS (Customer Services and Asset Management).

The actual costs of Agency, Consultancy and Overtime are included within the financial forecasts.

8. Finance

There are no other details to report this month.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The overall Directorate budget shows an over-spend of £219k which has been identified and explained above and in the appendices. Winter Service, Planning Income and Riverside Café have been identified as areas that could potentially report a pressure by year end.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Directorate budgets are aligned only to corporate priorities and spending within the agreed Directorate cash allocation is key to demonstrate the efficient Use of Resources.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

This is the fourth budget monitoring report in this format for the Directorate for 2014/15 and reflects the position from April 2014 to August 2014. This report has been discussed with the Strategic Directors for Environment and Development Services and the Chief Finance Officer.

Contact Name: Andy Sidney – Finance Manager (EDS and Capital) – 01709 822025

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	29th September 2014
3.	Title:	Wharncliffe Street pedestrian accessibility improvements
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

To seek Cabinet Member approval to implement pedestrian accessibility improvements around Wharncliffe Street, it's service road and Eastwood Lane as shown in drawing 126/17/TT305.3 .

6. Recommendations

Cabinet Member is asked to resolve that:

- Detail design be undertaken on the proposed improvements and the scheme be implemented as shown in drawing 126/17/TT305.3.
- Public and Statutory consultation is undertaken on the proposed improvement to Wharncliffe Street and the surrounding area as shown in drawing 126/17/TT305.3. and that subject to no objections being received the proposal be implemented this financial year

7. Proposals and Details

As part of town centre pedestrian accessibility improvements, and to compliment works currently ongoing as part of the new Tesco supermarket development it is proposed to provide :-

- Additional crossing points for pedestrians together with associated highway works including build-outs around the Eastwood Lane junction and Wharncliffe Street service road.
- Removal of existing pedestrian barrier to assist in the provision of a footway, to link the bus stop on the central island with the footway on Wharncliffe Street service road and Eastwood Lane.
- A pedestrian refuge island on Wharncliffe Street near Percy Street allowing an additional crossing point for pedestrians to be provided between Drummond street car park, the surrounding residential area and the college restaurant, Civic theatre and nearby businesses whilst also enabling easier movement for the public between bus stops.
- Associated footway works will also be required as there is currently a grass verge adjacent the proposed crossing point that will need to be partially removed to allow connection between the existing footway and the proposed island.
- An over run build-out extension of the existing island between A6021 and the service road be constructed to restrict vehicles from turning right out of Eastwood Lane onto Wharncliffe Street, as the banned turn is widely abused.

8. Finance

The scheme is estimated to cost £60,000 and funding is identified from the 2014/2015 Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport block.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Objections to the proposals may be raised during consultation; should unresolvable objections be received these will be reported to Cabinet Member for a decision on how to proceed.

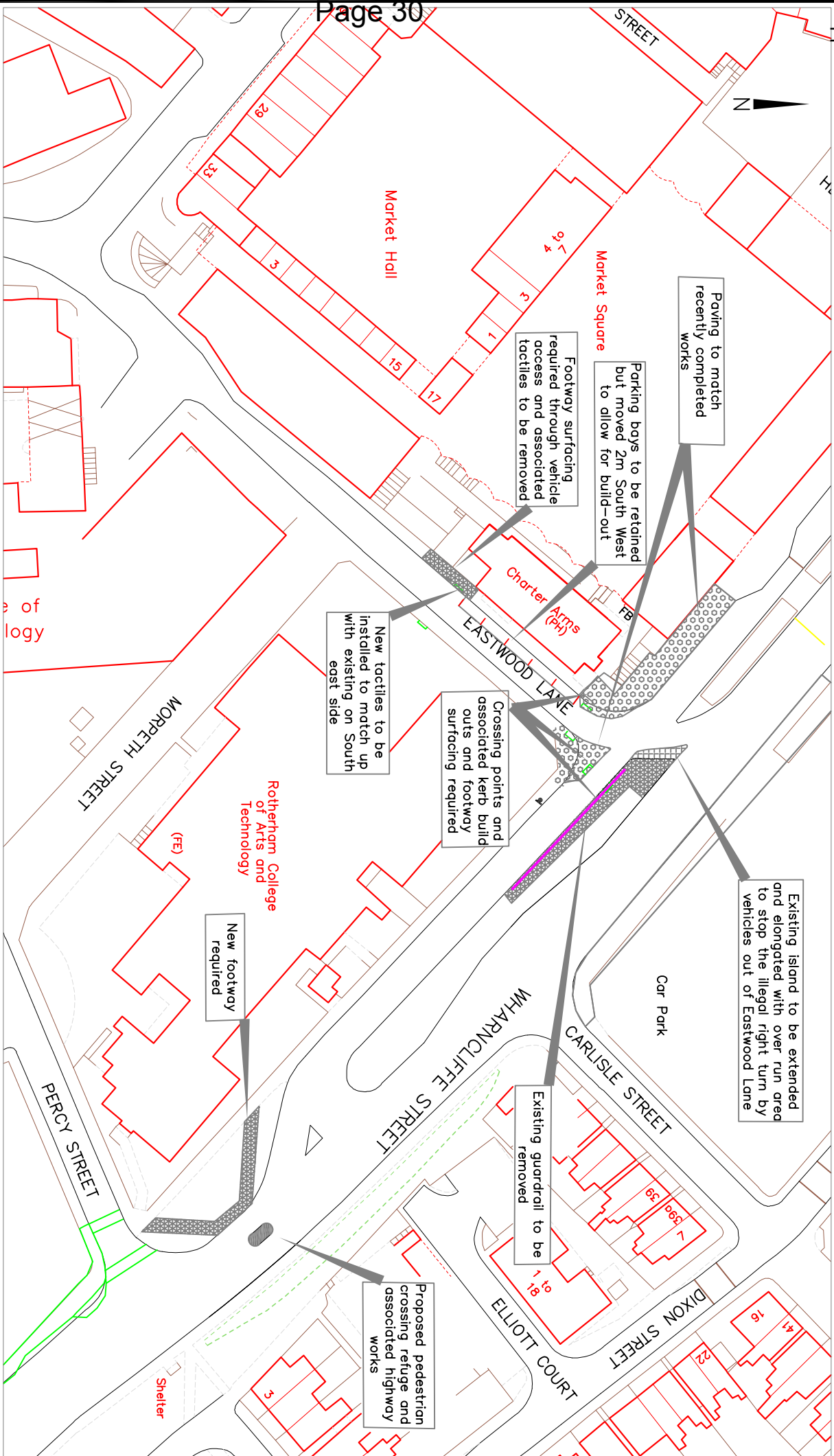
10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposals are in line with objectives set out in the Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy / Local Transport Plan 3; policy W to encourage safer road use and reduce casualties on our roads”,

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix A Plan number 128/17/TT305.3 showing the proposed layout of the scheme on Wharncliffe Street, between The Market and Clifton Hall Car Park.

Contact Name: *Richard Parry, Assistant Engineer, Ext 22959*



Client:



Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Environment & Development Services
Riverside House, Main Street,
Rotherham S60 1AE

Strategic Director:
Karl Battersby Bsc (Hons) MTP, MRP

Title
Wharncliffe Street Proposed pedestrian
crossing island and highway improvements

Dwg. No.
126/17/TT305.3

Scales
(if A4) 1:1000

Drawn
RP

Date
Sept 2014

Chd. by
AB

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	29 September 2014
3.	Title:	Housing Investment Programme P5 August 2014
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5.0 Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods on the status of the Housing Investment Programme at Period 5 August 2014.

6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods:

Receives and notes the contents of this report

7.0 Proposals and Details

7.1 HIP Programme & Revisions

The budget process that led to the original Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2016/17 ensured that the Council's capital investment plans were aligned with its strategic priorities and vision for Rotherham.

In order to maintain that strategic link, and make best use of the capital resources available to the Council, it is important that the programme is kept under regular review and where necessary revisions are made.

The following table provides an overview of the approved HIP programme for the period 2014-15 and previously approved revisions.

Description	Original Budget 2014-15 £	Original Budget + Approved Slippage	Revised Budget 2014-15 £ (approved 14 July 2014)	Revised Budget 2014-15 (approved 1 September 2014)
Refurbishments	11,995,000	12,626,687	13,197,786	13,197,786
Other Capital Projects	13,563,000	13,318,239	13,143,239	13,143,239
Fair Access to All (Adaptations)	3,389,000	3,389,000	3,389,000	4,093,660
Regeneration/ Neighbourhood Renewal – Public Sector	2,250,000	2,250,000	2,050,000	2,050,000
Regeneration/ Neighbourhood Renewal – Private Sector	971,000	1,314,074	1,484,074	1,484,074
HCA New build	2,836,000	2,836,000	2,836,000	2,836,000
Total	35,004,000	35,734,000	36,100,099	36,804,759

7.2 Details

7.2.1 Housing Improvement Programme 2014-15 Capital Works

Appendix A provides a detailed budget breakdown by scheme for 2014-15 based on the current approved HIP Programme for 2014-15 and it should be read in conjunction with the following explanations for works in 2014-15

7.2.2 Refurbishment

Budget	£13,197,786
Forecast	£13,381,984
Variance	£184,198

This budget is to fund works for internal and external refurbishments to properties. Internal works will include elements such as new kitchen and bathrooms. External elements include re-roofing, external render, fascia's, soffits & bargeboard replacements and outhouse improvements.

Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £3,503,525. To date 486 properties have received works through this programme.

At the current time there are risks associated with the forecast spend as detailed below:

- **External Pointing and Rendering**

There have been delays in tendering 3 schemes at Thrybergh, Aston/ Aughton/ Swallownest and Treeton/ Brinsworth with a total estimated value of £1.5m. At the time of reporting Thrybergh is being presented to Cabinet Member for approval on 29 September 2014. It is anticipated that the remaining two schemes will be approved under the Director's delegated powers by mid October 2014. If this timetable is achieved the majority of risk to spend should be mitigated. This will be monitored and reported to Cabinet Member through monthly HIP updates.

- **East Dene and Harthill Re-roofing**

There continues to be potential risks with these two schemes associated with the presence of bats. Depending on the extent of roosting and subsequently during the winter months hibernating bats these schemes may face significant delays. At the current time the plan is to programme any properties that have bats present at the end of the scheme, clearly this approach relies on only a small number of properties having bats present. Until works commence on site in October 2014 we are unsure what impact this will have on delivery of the scheme. This risk continues to be monitored at monthly capital programme meetings and if any significant delays are experienced with a subsequent impact on financial spend this will be reported back to Cabinet Member.

7.2.3 Other Capital Works –	Budget	£13,143,239
	Forecast	£13,161,941
	Variance	£18,702

The sections below breakdown individual spend within the Other Capital Works budget and works complete to the end of August 2014.

7.2.4 Environmental Works – Budget £1,612,000
Forecast £1,612,000

This budget will fund a variety of projects throughout the borough some of which are currently subject to consultation with tenants and elected members. Current works on site include i) completing a trial property at Birks Holt, Maltby with cladding to the external porch area, ii) fencing and footpath improvements at Brameld Road, Rawmarsh. Other works still to commence include path way improvements at China Town, Maltby and replacement bin stores at Plantation Court, Dinnington. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £446,370.

7.2.5 Empty Homes – Budget £2,900,000
Forecast £2,900,000

This budget is to fund major voids where the cost exceeds £4,000. This often occurs when a previous tenant has refused decency works so properties require new kitchens and bathrooms etc. prior to re-letting. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £569,329 with a total of 96 major voids completed to date.

7.2.6 Replacement Communal Entrance Doors – Budget £890,754
Forecast £890,754

This is a continuation of the scheme in 2013-14 and will result in all communal entrances to flats having high security entrance doors fitted. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £256,469 with a total of 35 blocks complete.

7.2.7 Electrical Board & Bond – Budget £150,000
Forecast £150,000

This is a demand led service and is to fund electrical improvement works to properties (e.g. consumer units, rewires etc.) following fixed wire electrical testing. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £24,802 with a total of 44 completions.

7.2.8 Asbestos Removal & Testing – Budget £380,000
Forecast £195,802
Variance -£184,198

This budget is to fund asbestos surveys and removals to properties that are receiving planned capital improvement works. The forecast is lower than budget due to fewer surveys required for the 2014-15 capital programme. Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £35,000.

7.2.9 Boundary Wall Treatments – Budget £100,000
Forecast £100,000

This budget is to fund improvements to boundary/ retaining walls and footpaths throughout the borough. Works are now anticipated to be issued for tender in September 2014, which is a month behind programme. It is not anticipated this will delay completion of the scheme within the current financial year.

7.2.10 District Heating Conversion/ Upgrades –	Budget	£1,800,000
	Forecast	£1,800,000

This budget is to fund replacement district heating at Swinton Fitzwilliam estate and replacement distribution systems at sites throughout the borough and forms part of a 5 year programme to upgrade the District Heating systems. Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £19,026. Works are due to commence on site in September 2014 on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate. Tender documentation for replacement distribution systems will be issued in early October 2014 for commencement on site in January 2015.

7.2.11 External Insulation (EPC Improvements) –	Budget	£50,000
	Forecast	£50,000

This will fund ad hoc top ups of insulation to external wall cavities and lofts. Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £4,046.

7.2.12 New IT System –	Budget	£273,725
	Forecast	£476,625
	Variance	£202,900

This budget is to fund the purchase and implementation of the new integrated Housing Management System. Cabinet member approved additional costs of £241,075 to be funded from the HRA on 16 June 2014. At this time we have not amended the available budget as we may be able to fund from slippage elsewhere within the programme as we refine spend forecasts throughout the year. Total spend to the end of August was £244,868.

7.2.13 General Structures -	Budget	£650,000
	Forecast	£650,000

This budget is to fund remedial works to building structures and includes pointing, rendering, underpinning and damp proof works. Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £199,618.

7.2.14 Replacement of Central Heating/ Boilers -	Budget	£3,761,000
	Forecast	£3,761,000

There is an ongoing programme of Central Heating replacements in order to reduce the revenue burden as a result of increasing repairs to Buderus and Alpha boilers. Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £941,610 with a total of 521 completions.

7.2.15 Community Centre Improvements –	Budget	£100,000
	Forecast	£100,000

This will fund essential upgrades to lighting and fire equipment within the centres. This does not reflect the forthcoming Community Centre Improvements at an estimated cost of £500,000. This will be released into the programme when the construction programme and cost estimates have been provided. It may be that these additional costs are funded from slippage on other schemes.

7.2.16 Flat Door Replacements – Budget £75,760
Forecast £75,760

This will fund completion of installing new fire doors to flats across the borough and is a result of slippage from 2013-14. There has been no spend within the current financial year as final accounts are being complete.

7.2.17 Lady Oak Flats Environmental Improvements – Budget £400,000
Forecast £400,000

This is a new project to undertake general environmental improvements, including upgrading of footpaths around Lady Oak Flats, East Dene/ Herringthorpe. The scope of works have now been agreed with MFS and EDS Streetpride, with roofing works due to commence on 22 September 2014.

7.3 Fair Access to All

7.3.1 Disabled Adaptations (Public Sector) – Budget £2,078,000
Forecast £2,014,594
Variance -£63,406

7.3.2 Disabled Adaptations (Private Sector) – Budget £2,015,660
Forecast £2,213,927
Variance £198,267

This will fund the ongoing provision of disabled adaptations to council and private dwellings. At the end of August 2014 spend on public sector adaptations was £492,417 with a total of 207 completions. For the same period spend on private sector adaptations was £645,864 with 162 completions.

Based on current forecast's it is anticipated the private sector adaptations budget will overspend even after the increase in budget at P4. At this time we will continue to monitor spend on private adaptations closely and will take action if required to accommodate the forecast overspend at the end of quarter 2.

7.4 Regeneration / Neighbourhood Renewal Public Sector

7.4.1 Non-Traditional Investment – Budget £1,400,000
Forecast £1,470,917
Variance £70,917

This budget is to complete external refurbishment and insulated render works to non traditional properties. This is part of an ongoing programme to extend the life of non traditional stock by circa 25 years.

Total spend to the end of August 2014 was £799,320 with 80 completions in year and 18 work in progress.

7.4.2 Garage Site Investment – Budget £250,000
Forecast £250,000

This will fund improvement works to garage sites across the borough. Works will include re-surfacing to the highway, re-roofing, new doors and general

environmental improvements. Works have still to be issued to contractors for pricing which is a later than planned but should not impact on delivering the programme within the current financial year.

7.4.3 New Build DPU Bungalows – Budget £300,000
Forecast £300,000

It is proposed to construct 4 DPU bungalows, 2 located in Kimberworth and 2 located in Thurcroft using cost savings generated to date through the Repairs and Maintenance contract with Morrison FS and Wilmot Dixon Partnerships. The reduction in budget is a result of only having Planning Permission in place for the site at Redscope, Kimberworth Park. A further site is now identified at Wadsworth Road, Bramley, but given lead time for design, planning permission and construction it is unlikely they will be complete within the current financial year.

7.4.4 Enabling Works (HRA Land) – Budget £100,000
Forecast £0
Variance -£100,000

There are currently no plans that will utilise this budget. Any requirement for enabling works will now be met from any underspends within other budgets within the capital programme.

7.4.5 Opportunity/ Strategic Acquisition – Budget £2,835,915
Forecast £1,537,000
Variance -£1,299,000

This funding is part of a multi-year commitment to acquire properties to add to the council's social housing stock through the 30 Year HRA Business Plan. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £525,714. Following a review of current agreed programmes with developers forecast spend has been reduced. The remaining budget of £1,299,000 will now be profiled to be spent in 2015-16. As part of this programme we were successful earlier this year in securing £437,500 grant funding from the HCA which will enable more properties to be acquired/ developed over the next two years.

7.5 Regeneration/ Neighbourhood Renewal Private Sector

7.5.1 Dinnington Transformational Change – Budget £1,200
Forecast £1,200

This project was funded through the Regional Housing Board and was the installation of temporary art work to Dinnington Town centre. This budget will fund the removal during 2014-15.

7.5.2 Canklow Phase 1 & 2 – Budget £720,531
Forecast £720,531

This is a multi-year programme of activity to regenerate an area within Canklow through Housing Market Renewal. The project is focused on demolition, buy back and refurbishment of public and private sector properties in the area. At the current time there are 3 properties subject to offers and 4 properties where negotiations are ongoing. Spend to the end of August 2014 was £168,186.

7.5.3 Bellows Road Service Centre Clearance – Budget	£592,343
Forecast	£400,000
Variance	-£192,343

This is an ongoing Housing Market Renewal scheme and includes the construction of new shop units and provision of new housing within the area. At the present time a planning application and lease agreement are pending for re-location of the T-mobile telephone mast. Asbestos surveys and removal are all outstanding on the multi storey car park and require completion prior to demolition, hence the reduction in forecast spend.

7.5.4 Monksbridge Demolition, Dinnington – Budget	£80,000
Forecast	£80,000

This is a new project and is to demolish 3 properties and reinstate land at 44-48, Monksbridge. The project is funded from Regional Housing Board grant funding ring fenced within the Capital Programme. It is anticipated works will commence on site in January 2015 subject to obtaining planning permission.

7.5.5 Doe Quarry Lane, Dinnington – Budget	£90,000
Forecast	£90,000

This is a new project and is to undertake boundary improvements to 43 properties. It is anticipated works will commence on site in September 2014. The project is funded from Regional Housing Board grant funding ring fenced within the Capital Programme.

8.0 Finance

- 8.1** Financial implications are contained within the body of this report. Any revenue implications from the revised programme have been fully reflected in the HRA's latest 2014/15 outturn revenue forecast. The table below details how the programme will be funded.

Funding	HIP £
RCCO	8,513,030
HRA Prudential Borrowing	2,836,000
MRA	21,955,995
Grants	1,283,597
GF Prudential Borrowing	0
Capital Receipts RTB	1,002,663
Capital Receipts	1,213,474
Total	36,804,759

9.0 Risks and Uncertainties

The Capital Programme is funded through a number of sources: borrowing, capital grants & contributions, revenue contributions and capital receipts. Any uncertainty over the funding of the Programme rests on confirmation that grants/contributions and capital receipts continue to be available in coming years. Where funding sources are volatile in nature the risks will be managed by continually keeping the programme under review.

Project/ scheme specific risks have been outlined within the body of the report.

10.0 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The HIP supports the Corporate plan priorities and is central to the longer term Housing Strategy:

- Making sure no community is left behind
- Helping to create Safe and Health Communities
- Improving the environment

The preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy incorporating a profiled capital programme and the associated revenue consequences, together with regular monitoring, highlights the Council's commitment to sound financial management.

11.0 Background Papers and Consultation

Dave Richmond, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, Stuart Booth, Director of Financial Services and Budget Holders have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

Report Author

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	6th October 2014
3.	Title:	Implementation of the ‘Community Trigger’ Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
4.	Directorate:	NAS

5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods of the proposed process to be introduced to support the implementation of the ‘Community Trigger’ in accordance with Section 104 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the Home Office document, ‘Reform of anti-social behaviour powers – Statutory guidance for frontline professionals, July 2014’.

The legislation comes into force on 20th October 2014 although there has been an agreement between the Police and the four Community Safety Partnerships in South Yorkshire to introduce the Community Trigger from 1st September in order to quality assure the process prior to the formal commencement date.

It has been agreed by South Yorkshire Police and the four CSP’s that the process will be the same in each of the four South Yorkshire local authority areas.

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods:

- **Notes the proposed procedures to be put in place to facilitate the implementation of the Community Trigger in Rotherham**
- **Receives periodic update reports on the use of the Community Trigger and the response from partners to address the issues raised.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

In 2010 the Home Office launched a consultation paper (More Effective Responses to ASB) that proposed a transformation in the way anti-social behaviour is dealt with. It also outlined the findings of a review of ASB tools and powers that found the current system inefficient, slow and not fit for purpose.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has stream-lined the current ASB toolkit (reducing the number of legal remedies (orders) from 19 to 6) so that the remedies are more flexible and swifter in addressing ASB. The Act also focuses on giving better witness satisfaction and making agencies more accountable to witnesses and communities when agencies fail to act.

7.1.1 The ‘Community Trigger’

A key change as a result of the Act is the introduction of the ‘Community Trigger’ which will impose a duty on the statutory partners in a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to take action in cases where victims or communities have complained about ASB on a number of occasions or when a number of people report the same ASB and it is perceived that local agencies have failed to respond.

It is a process to give victims and communities the right to request a review of their anti-social behaviour case and bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem-solving approach to find a solution. It does not replace an organisations existing complaints process and it is up to the complainant/victim to request that the trigger is activated. There is no responsibility on the part of the organisation to review complaints of ASB to see if the trigger should be activated, although this form of ‘hot spot’ identification should be established good practice. The current practice in Rotherham of identifying and supporting vulnerable victims through the multi-agency Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) and the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management process (VARM) compliments the Community Trigger process and where it is highlighted either through the VPU/VARM processes or by other professionals that the trigger could be activated, this should be brought to the attention of the complainant for them to make an informed decision.

7.1.2 Relevant bodies and responsible authorities

- Councils;
- Police;
- Clinical Commissioning Groups in England and Local Health Boards in Wales;
- Registered providers of social housing who are co-opted onto this group;

7.1.3 Who can use the Community Trigger

A victim of ASB or another person acting on their behalf such as a carer, family member, Member of Parliament or councillor. The trigger can be used by a person of any age and agencies should make it as accessible as possible to all victims.

7.1.4 Community Trigger Threshold

- Three complaints relating to the same problem in the previous six months;
- Or, five different households have separately reported the same anti-social behaviour issue which has occurred within the last 6 months.
- The anti-social behaviour was reported within one month of the alleged behaviour taking place; and
- The application to use the Community Trigger is made within six month of the report of anti-social behaviour;

When a request to use the Community Trigger is received, agencies must decide whether the threshold has been met and communicate this to the victim. In doing so they may take into account the persistence of the ASB, the harm or potential harm caused by the ASB and the adequacy of response to the ASB.

In an attempt to estimate the impact that Community Triggers under the new ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 may have on the partnership, a review of ASB incidents recorded by SYP between 01/02/14 to 31/07/14 has been carried out.

A total of 7,713 ASB incidents were recorded. There have been a minimum of 184 different residential addresses from which 3 or more ASB incidents have been reported within the review period. Approximately 11% of all recorded ASB. The greatest volume of calls from one single residential address was 34.

In comparison, there are a minimum of 36 non-residential addresses from which 3 or more ASB incidents have been reported. The greatest volume of calls from one single non-residential address was from Rotherham District General Hospital.

7.1.5 Community Trigger process

The process to be implemented in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire was developed by the Police and the four South Yorkshire CSP's. It was presented to the CSP's Chairs/Police District Commanders meeting on Thursday 1st May 2014 and agreement obtained for it to be implemented across South Yorkshire. A flow chart of the process, including timescales, is shown at Appendix 1.

In respect of the four Local Authorities across South Yorkshire it has been agreed that the respective ASB Departments will be the single point of contact (SPOC) for requests to activate the Community Trigger. From the 1st September 2014 requests to activate the trigger in Rotherham can be made in the following ways:

By phone: 01709 334562 (RMBC Crime & ASB Unit)
By email: CommunityTrigger@Rotherham.gov.uk
By post: Community Trigger, Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Floor B2,
Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham, S601AE

Where requests to activate the trigger are received by any other relevant body or responsible authority, details of that request will be forwarded to the SPOC and the process followed in line with Appendix 1.

Once received, the request will be acknowledged, partner agencies informed and an initial assessment made by the RMBC Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour Manager who will decide whether or not the threshold has been met in accordance with the statutory guidance.

If the threshold is met, the complainant will be notified and arrangements will be made for the case to be reviewed by a group consisting of the relevant bodies and responsible authorities (Community Trigger Panel). In the case of Rotherham, this will be the enhanced existing multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Case Conference (ASBCC) which in addition to the relevant bodies and responsible authorities includes RMBC Legal Services, RMBC Performance and Quality Team and Rotherham Victim Support, who will bring an independent element to the review process.

The introduction of an independent chair for this meeting would bring with it additional 'rigour' and provide greater challenge and support to the 'professionals' present. The view of the Safer Rotherham Partnership was sought at its meeting on Wednesday 27th August 2014. There was agreement that the review meeting should be chaired by a suitable person whose organisation is not directly involved in providing an operational response to reports of ASB. The chair is to be arranged by the councils Crime & ASB Manager as and when panel meetings are required. It was also agreed by the SRP that the identified chair of the review panel should give consideration to inviting the complainant to be part of the process if it is felt appropriate.

The case review will share information related to the case, review what action has previously been taken and decide whether additional actions are possible. The review will adopt a problem solving approach aimed at dealing with some of the most persistent, complex cases of ASB.

The Community Trigger Panel will if necessary agree an action plan to be delivered by the respective agencies. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the review and where further actions are necessary, an action plan will be discussed with them, including timescales.

In the event of the complainant not being satisfied with the action taken, they can appeal to the respective CSP, in the case of Rotherham, the Safer Rotherham Partnership, who will review the case, the action taken and respond to the victim with its findings within 28 days. The statutory guidance does not make reference to any appeals process but it has been agreed that the four CSP's in South Yorkshire will perform this function. In the case of such an appeal, the Joint Chairs of the SRP Executive Group will be asked to identify an individual of suitable experience and seniority within the wider partnership family to review the findings of the Trigger Panel in the event of an appeal. This was agreed by the SRP at its meeting on 27th August 2014.

The reviewing officer (RO) will inform the complainant of their finding within the relevant timescale. Although this is formally the end of the Community Trigger process the RO will advise the complainant that if they are still not satisfied, they can enter into the formal complaints process of the relevant organisation(s).

7.1.6 Administration

The responsibility for the administration and monitoring of the Community Trigger process in Rotherham will sit with the RMBC Crime & ASB Manager who will ensure regular updates are reported through the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) and the county-wide Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group, chaired by South Yorkshire Police.

7.1.7 Communications and Publicity

The communications plan for the Community trigger is currently subject of joint discussion between the Police and four local authority communication teams and the Police & Crime Commissioners Office to agree a standard approach.

7.1.8 Publishing data/Performance Management

The legislation states that relevant bodies must publish information covering:

- The number of applications for Community Triggers received;
- The number of times the threshold for review was not met;
- The number of anti-social behaviour case reviews carried out;
- The number of anti-social behaviour case reviews that resulted in recommendations being made;

This data can represent the whole area and does not need to be broken down by relevant body. One relevant body can publish the information on behalf of all the relevant bodies in the area and this must be at least annually. It is proposed that this publication of information will be supplemented by regular reports to the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, Directorate Leadership Team and SRP.

Performance of the process will be monitored by the SRP which will receive regular reports from the RMBC Crime & ASB Manager.

8. Finance

There will potentially be administrative costs associated with the operational application of the Community Trigger process. This is currently difficult to quantify and for now any costs will be met from existing budgets. There may be costs associated with communication and publicity. Once the communications plan is agreed costs can be identified. The joint Communication Teams have asked the Police & Crime Commissioner whether any funding may be available to facilitate it.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

At this point it is difficult to estimate how many requests to activate the trigger will be made. The trigger was not widely used in the various 'pilots' that took place across the country throughout 2012/13, although this may have been as a result of the communications approach adopted.

Tackling ASB and responding to the vulnerable within our communities is a priority for both South Yorkshire Police and the council in keeping people safe and protecting the most vulnerable. Putting in place a robust, customer focussed Community Trigger process shows a clear commitment towards meeting these priorities in addition to complying with our statutory responsibilities under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014.

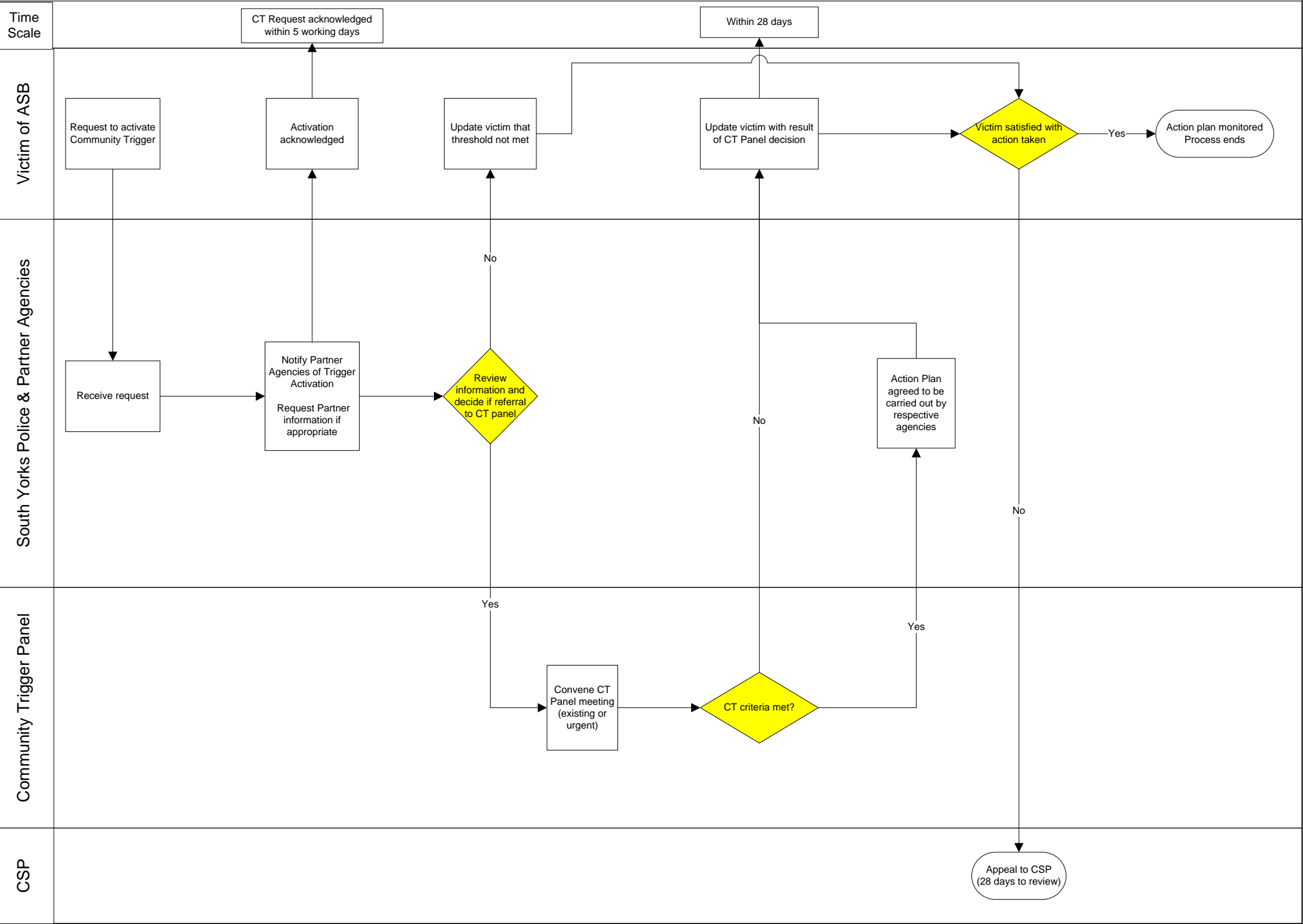
10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- CP4 -All areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
- Home Office document – ‘Reform of anti-social behaviour powers – Statutory guidance for frontline professionals’

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:-	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:-	29th September 2014
3.	Title:-	Evaluation of Vulnerable Tenants Gardening Scheme
4.	Directorate:-	NEIGHBOURHOOD & ADULT SERVICES

5. Summary

On the 21st May 2013, the Directorate Leadership Team received a report which detailed recommendations to provide alternative delivery arrangements for the vulnerable tenants gardening scheme.

This report provides an evaluation of the alternative delivery arrangements implemented.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member,

- **Agrees to allocate £5000 from the Housing Revenue Account to cover any future garden rectification works required by Council tenants who approach Age UK Rotherham for a regular garden service.**

7. Details

7.1 Background

Up until 2nd June 2013, Rotherham MBC provided a partial gardening scheme to help Council tenants over 65 and those with disabilities of any age with basic gardening, for example mowing the lawn and trimming hedges. The scheme was only open to people who did not have a relative to help them.

The scheme was at full capacity with 185 tenants receiving a basic gardening service, there were also 18 tenants on the waiting list. Tenants paid £10 - £20 per visit and received 2 – 3 cuts per annum.

Following the transfer of the repairs & maintenance service to external contractors, the gardening scheme was delivered by Morrison FS. Morrison FS ran the scheme using estate based caretakers rather than employing dedicated gardeners as the scheme was only needed between March and November (the growing season).

Up until March 2013 the caretaking service itself was largely reactive, relying on individual reports of problems as a means of allocating work. As a consequence of this approach there was no routine scheduled maintenance of estate and garage sites by the caretaking service. In this context it was possible to prioritise gardening within the caretakers workloads. However following a review of the caretaking service, it was felt that a reactive approach was inadequate as work was only being undertaken if it was identified and reported. As a means of improving the quality of estates, a cyclical planned work programme was introduced borough wide. This approach meant it was difficult to release the 2 caretakers required for the gardening scheme.

As well impacting on cyclical caretaking works, there were also other issues with how the scheme was being delivered;

- Not enough capacity to maintain gardens to desirable standard i.e. grass cutting was relatively ad hoc and resources not sufficient to cut at least every six weeks
- The service was heavily subsidised by RMBC i.e. cost of two caretakers on a seasonal basis (March to November). This introduced equity issues for tenants in effect paying for a caretaking service they did not receive.
- Poor income recovery by Morrison FS who did not have the resource to chase debts from tenants who didn't pay upon completion of works
- No assessment criteria. (in effect it was first come first served system)
- Morrison FS were unable to accept new requests for service due to their limited capacity
- No process for informing when tenancy ended.

As the roll out of the cyclical works programme was due to commence in April 2013 and with the start of the growing season, a review of the gardening scheme was urgently needed.

3 options were initially identified for the continuation of the garden scheme;

1. Continue use of Morrison FS
2. Tender works
3. Investigate options for delivery through a social enterprise/CVF sector organisation

Option 1 wasn't viable as this didn't resolve the current issues with the scheme. Option 2 was considered as this would resolve the current issues with the scheme however there were concerns that a commercial company would be more profit focussed rather than customer focussed and this could potentially be a lengthy process. Option 3 was the preferred option however assistance with start-up costs was anticipated. Whilst there was a cost attached to option 3, building social capital and adding to and developing skills and knowledge in the local community would offset these costs.

Rotherham MBC requirements for a CVF sector organisation to develop a scheme that could take forward the vulnerable tenants gardening service were identified as;

- Needed to be independently set up and ran
- Needed to be able to implement the gardening scheme by Summer 2013
- Needed to charge and become sustainable over a reasonable timescale
- Needed potential to develop over time to offer a service borough wide to those that needed it – not restricted to social tenants

Rotherham MBC approached Voluntary Action Rotherham to see if there was the potential for a CVF sector organisation to develop and take forward a gardening scheme for social tenants which would become sustainable over a reasonable timescale. After undertaking borough wide research of the sector, Voluntary Action Rotherham identified Age UK Rotherham as the most suitable provider as they met these requirements and already had a gardening scheme in place.

Following discussions with Age UK Rotherham in March 2013, they expressed an interest in expanding their operations to carry out this work.

To enable Age UK Rotherham to expand their operation and take over the existing client base on the gardening scheme, pump prime funding was required to support the costs of purchasing/hiring additional equipment and resources.

Age UK Rotherham already offered gardening to clients on a monthly basis (more regularly if required) at £15 per hour. Age UK Rotherham expressed concerns that the frequency of visits (2 – 3 time per year) on Rotherham MBC's scheme allowed gardens to become unkempt before each visit and would become too time consuming to be maintainable within a reasonable cost. It was therefore proposed that existing service users would be encouraged to take up Age UK Rotherham's provision of a monthly visit. Those that wished to stay with 3 visits a year were advised of a higher pricing structure (£20 per hour).

7.2 Implementation

On 21st May 2013, DLT supported the expansion of the Age UK Rotherham gardening scheme to enable it to provide a service to appropriate council housing tenants.

Aware that many gardens on the scheme wouldn't have received a cut in 2013 and would become unmanageable, there was an urgent need to transfer the scheme as soon as possible. Therefore immediately after the Directorate Leadership Team's decision, Rotherham MBC gave the existing clients prior notice of the intention to transfer services to Age UK Rotherham as from 3rd June 2013 as well as details of the charging system to enable them to opt out if so required.

Age UK Rotherham was issued with a small grant agreement and service specification to ensure monies were spent accordingly and work was undertaken in line with Rotherham MBC's local offers to customers;

- Contact those on the vulnerable tenants gardening scheme to arrange an appointment at least three days before carrying out works to the garden, provide you with a receipt for your payment and carry out at least 3 visits per year to those registered on the scheme
- Cut your grass, trim hedges that are no higher than two metres and remove all gardening related rubbish on each visit for those on the gardening scheme

Following the transfer of services, one stage 1 complaint was received which related to the change in the charging system (from per visit to per hour). The charging system was justifiably changed to enable the scheme to become sustainable however as this particular tenant's garden is approximately 30m long, the revised charging scheme would have had a major financial impact on him. Officers liaised with the tenant and carried out mutually agreed remediation work to make the garden more manageable and therefore ensuring the new charging system wouldn't financially impact the tenant.

7.3 Evaluation

Since Age UK Rotherham started the service in June, all tenants were contacted at least twice to establish relationships and need. Final letters were sent to everyone they had been unable to contact to aim to evoke a response.

Throughout the project, details of 190 council housing tenants were transferred over to Age UK Rotherham and of these; 86 tenants accessed the gardening service during the 12 month project. Of the 86, 79 have requested / accessed the gardening service beyond the end of the project. (49 monthly cuts and 30 3xyear)

Age UK Rotherham has maintained a record of the 111 tenants who declined the service and where possible, indicated reasons why service was not taken up.

These reasons included;	40	unable to contact
	13	family help / managing themselves
	12	using other provider
	8	service too expensive
	4	tenants deceased.

During the project Age UK Rotherham identified where tenants had not received an adequate service from the previous contractor to keep their gardens tidy. Rotherham MBC supplied additional funding that enabled Age UK Rotherham to undertake 'one off' garden rescues to bring tenants gardens back to a manageable state. Tenants were then able to make an informed choice as to what service they wanted to access on a regular basis to ensure their gardens remained tidy. A case study from one of the garden rescues is detailed in Appendix 1.

In total Age UK Rotherham undertook 24 half day rescues and 24 full day rescues.

The funding provided by Rotherham MBC has enabled Age UK Rotherham to offer gardening services to more older people across the borough, supporting them to maintain their gardens and continue to live independently and safe in their own homes. Age UK

Rotherham gardening client base has substantially expanded, making their service more sustainable long term.

7.4 Next steps

Going forward there is the potential for Rotherham MBC to fund further garden rectification work for council tenants who approach Age UK Rotherham for a regular garden service. This rescue work would cost in the region of £150 per day plus disbursements and be agreed on a case by case basis.

8. Finance

The costs of enabling Age UK Rotherham to expand their current operation and provide a gardening service to appropriate council housing tenants was £22,727.24

The funding was used for the following activities:

- To support the cost of short term hire of vehicles and the purchase of short life gardening equipment.
- To support the cost of the short term Coordinator time to cover the initial transfer of clients

The cost of enabling Age UK Rotherham to undertake the garden rectification work due to the gardens not being duly maintained as part of Rotherham MBC's gardening scheme was £6,140.00

Age UK Rotherham has confirmed that the project has developed sufficiently so that they are able to operate the scheme within its own financial arrangements and no further funding is required. However, there may be the need to provide Age UK Rotherham with further funding to undertake garden rescues for Council tenants who want to take up a regular garden service. It is therefore recommended that Rotherham MBC allocate £5000 from the Housing Revenue Account to cover any future garden rectification work for council tenants

9. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This scheme supported Council priorities;

- CP2 – Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence
- CP3 – Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained

10. Background Papers and Consultation

DLT – 21st May 2013 - Vulnerable Tenants Gardening Scheme
Appendix 1 – Garden Rescue Case Study

Contact Name:- Lindsey Gibson
Housing Projects Coordinator
Ext: 55043
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Garden Rescue Case study

About the person...
Mrs Holden lives in a council property with her husband on Sandbergh Road, Kimberworth Park. She and her husband had been placed on the RMBC vulnerable list to receive assistance with their garden due to their disabilities.
What were the problems?
<p>Mrs Holden has spondylosis of the spine and epilepsy and her husband is registered blind, so they struggle to maintain the garden to satisfy their tenancy agreement.</p> <p>Although Mrs Holden is under 55, we were able to support her under the grant funding supplied to Age UK Rotherham by Rotherham MBC. We identified that Mrs Holden had not received gardening services from the previous provider for over a year and her garden had become very overgrown and was causing her some distress.</p> <p>The assessment by the gardener identified a large garden - overgrown grass to the front, side and back of the property and hedges to the front and back of the property also needed cutting back.</p>
How did we help?
Utilising funding provided by RMBC, Age UK Rotherham were able to provide 2 gardeners to undertake a full day garden rescue to bring the garden back into a tidy state. They were able to offer Mrs Holden a suitable, affordable garden service, which would support her to maintain her garden on an ongoing basis.
WHAT OUTCOMES DID YOU ACHIEVE?
Mrs Holden is now buying in a monthly garden tidy service from Age UK Rotherham and is considering increasing this to a fortnightly service during the summer months. This service supports Mr and Mrs Holden to remain independent and safe in their property.
QUOTES/FEEDBACK FROM OLDER PERSON
<i>"I am very pleased with Age UK Rotherham's gardening service. I was quite upset at the state of my garden last year, when I'd been left, but when the garden rescue was done, it made me feel a lot better - I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I am having a monthly service now and Jack has been providing this – he's a lovely lad and gets done what he can in the hour I'm paying for. I appreciate with the size of the garden that he can only strim back and dispose of the grass and I'm pleased with what can be done in this time. I am now thinking about a fortnightly service to make the garden even better!"</i>

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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