

## SELF REGULATION SELECT COMMISSION

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

**Date:** Thursday, 18th September, 2014

**Time:** 3.30 p.m.

### A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press.
6. Communications.

#### **For Decision:-**

7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 31st July, 2014 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 5)

#### **For Monitoring:-**

8. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (report herewith) (Pages 6 - 19)
9. Corporate Performance Report (Quarter 1) (herewith) (Pages 20 - 34)
10. Complaints - Annual Report (April 2013 - March 2014) (report herewith) (Pages 35 - 73)
11. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, 23rd October, 2014 at 3.30 p.m.

#### **Members of the Self-Regulation Select Commission:-**

Councillor Currie (Chairman)  
Councillor Watson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Cutts, Ellis, Johnston, Reeder,  
Sansome, Sharman and Tweed.

**SELF REGULATION SELECT COMMISSION**  
**31st July, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Cutts, Ellis, Godfrey, J. Hamilton, Sharman and Tweed.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Currie and Sansome.

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**13. COMMUNICATIONS**

No communications had been received.

**14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2014, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

Further to Minute No. 82(6) (Revenue Account Outturn 2013/14) it was noted that the working group would be meeting shortly.

**15. REPRESENTATION ON PANELS AND SUB-GROUPS**

Resolved:- That Councillor J. Hamilton represent this Select Commission on the Environment and Climate Change Steering Group.

**16. WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND PLANNING 2013-14**

Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, presented an overview of workforce planning statistics and demographics, information on workforce planning data available to managers and key workforce activity carried out during 2013.

The Council Workforce Strategy had a focus on 5 key themes of which Appendix 1 detailed the current position and trends:-

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

Attention was also drawn to:-

- Budget Challenges
- Workforce demographics
- Workforce planning in Directorates
- Workforce Strategy during 2013/14
- Theme: Ensuring we have a modern and thriving Council
- Theme: Developing leadership capacity through change
- Theme: Developing our employee skills for the future
- Theme: Managing talent and attracting new talent as appropriate
- Theme: Ensuring we have a fairly rewarded workforce

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The budget challenges facing the Council had required organisational redesign, changes to working practices and changes to Human Resources policies - a £3.8M reduction in 2013/14 had taken recurrent savings to over £27M a year
- 1,200 employees had left the Authority since 2010
- 79 apprenticeships had been supported together with over 40 work placements arranged for disabled/long term unemployed through the access all areas scheme and 9 work placements offered for Looked after Children
- Pay Protection Policy had been revised as part of the negotiated changes to terms and conditions
- An annual summary was provided to all Services with a breakdown of age profile etc. which would highlight any areas of underperformance
- Historical target for the number of employees from an ethnic minority derived from the National Office of Official Statistics outturn for 2001
- Ongoing work for successful succession planning given the downsizing that had occurred over recent years as we all giving opportunities to remaining employees
- Staff surveys and Investors in People took place every 4 years with 1 of them happening every 2 years. Both had cost implications
- Real push across the Local Government Strategic Partnership to work with the private sector

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

## **17. SCHOOL DEFICITS/ACADEMY CONVERSIONS**

Further to Minute No. 82(6), Joyce Thacker, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, and Joanne Robertson, Finance Manager, presented a report on the financial deficits attached to the conversion of Rawmarsh School and Swinton Brookfield Primary Schools to Academies.

It was important to note that only 'Sponsored' Academy conversions (where a school was in deficit) resulted in the deficit falling onto the Local Authority. Where the school was a 'Converter' (not sponsored) any deficit was funded by the Department for Education.

The current main Policy for school's deficits was contained in Rotherham's Scheme for Financing Schools:-

#### Planning for Deficit Budgets

Expectation that schools which identified a financial deficit could clear its deficit balances and that the budget plan would demonstrate how it could be achieved. If this could not be achieved, a school must seek approval for a licensed deficit.

#### Licensed Deficits – applicable to Secondary Schools only

The scheduling of repayments of deficits at Council-maintained schools were the subject of a 3 year spending plan which incorporated a maximum repayment term of 3 years. The deficit would represent no more than 5% of the school's delegated budget. This could be extended to 5 years in exceptional circumstances.

Any such arrangement could only be entered into with the authorisation of the Strategic Director and Director of Finance representative.

The school must submit a recovery plan which provided robust evidence of the size of the financial problem and how it would be addressed. Once authorised, the recovery plan would be monitored and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

Interest would not be charged during the terms of the repayment. However, charges would be incurred on the initial or maximum balance (whichever was the greater) if the submission was not addressed within the timespan.

The report also referred to the proposed changes to Rotherham's Fair Funding Scheme for proposed Academy conversions where schools were in deficit. The proposed changes to the Fair Funding Scheme had not been as a result of Rawmarsh but recognition of the potential risk to the Council's budget. It ensured that schools had a better understanding of what the expectation of them was but the power to remove the budget had always been there. Consultation on the proposed changes would close on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2014, with feedback to the Schools Forum on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

Rawmarsh Academy had seen a number of significant changes and had been transformed into a vibrant learning community. There had been a number of discussions with the Executive Head Teacher, Director of Schools and Lifelong Learning and the Head of the School Effectiveness Service regarding the School's attainment. Marked improvement had

already been seen and it was felt that the funding had been required to achieve such.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- 75% of Rotherham's schools were "good" or better and 78% of children attended schools that were "good" or better
- The deficit to the Local Authority was expenditure within the financial year against revenue within the CYPS budget - there were no further costs once the school had converted. The school did not have to repay the deficit
- The Local Authority had no control over a school once they became an Academy
- 27% of Rotherham's schools had converted to Academies with the number increasing
- Work was ongoing with all Head Teachers to try and avoid 1 School's decision to academise not affecting another's feasibility
- The DfE had no contingency plan in the case of an unsuccessful Academy and its pupils; it would fall upon the Local Authority to take the pupils on board. However, there was robust financial monitoring in place
- The issue was included on the Risk Register

Resolved:- That the work undertaken to mitigate the revenue impact upon the Local Authority of deficit budgets in schools that were likely to become a sponsored Academy be noted.

## **18. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended (information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person, including the local authority).

## **19. DISTRICT HEATING UPDATE**

Tom Bell, Strategic Housing and Investment Service, gave a 6 monthly progress update on the Scrutiny recommendations and presented the report that had been considered by the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods at her meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 (Minute No. 16 refers).

The submitted report contained the investment requirements and funding needed to implement an improvement plan over the next eight years. This robust approach to assessing the condition of each of the 37 district heating schemes had resulted in the following recommendations:-

- 10 schemes should be retained and benefit from further investment;
- 6 schemes should be retained, but reduced in size to achieve efficiencies;
- 20 schemes (all within the Fitzwilliam estate at Swinton) should be replaced with an alternative solution;
- the scheme at Beeversleigh should be replaced with an alternative district heating;
- the investment in new fuel stores for three Bio Mass systems, subject to Renewable Heat Incentive grant funding being obtained.

Discussion ensued on the report with a number of issues clarified regarding:-

- Number of owner/occupiers on the Fitzwilliam estate
- Facility for tenants to use mobile technology to make payments
- Security measures built into the equipment to help alleviate incidents of tampering
- Fuel charges

Resolved: (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted in 12 months.

## **20. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Self Regulation Select commission be held at the Town Hall, Rotherham on Thursday, 18th September, 2014 commencing at 3.30 p.m.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Self Regulation Select Commission</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18th September, 2014</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring for the period ending 30th June 2014</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

## 5 Summary

This report provides details of progress on the delivery of the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 based on performance for the first 3 months of the financial year. It is currently forecast that the Council will overspend against its Budget by £6.752m (+3.2%).

Members will recall that when we set the 2014/15 Budget there was recognition that there was the potential for this to be a challenging year with the need to manage service demands very closely and that the level of balances reflects this potential increase in financial risk in the system.

The main reasons for the forecast overspend are:

- The continuing service demand and cost pressures for safeguarding vulnerable children across the Borough;
- Cost pressures arising from some schools converting to academies;
- Income pressures within Environment and Development Services and ICT;
- Demand pressures for Direct Payments within Older People and Physical and Sensory Disability clients;
- Additional, property costs from the continued rationalisation of the Council's buildings as part of the efficiency drive to reduce operational costs; and
- Some savings targets are currently pending delivery in full in 2014/15.

Cabinet has agreed the implementation of the opportunity for staff to apply for Voluntary Severance/Voluntary Early Retirement and where this can be supported these savings will help to reduce the in-year financial pressure and also contribute to closing the budget funding gap for 2015/16 and beyond.

As the current forecast outturn is significantly different to budget, Cabinet is asked to support the implementation of the same successful 3 stage strategy (section 7.4 of this report) used in 2013/14 to bring spend in line with budget by the end of 2014/15.

The above actions will mitigate the current level of forecast overspend and assist the Council to deliver a balanced outturn and preserve its successful track record in managing both its in year financial performance and its overall financial resilience.

## **Recommendations**

**Self Regulation is asked to note the request to Cabinet to:-**

- **Note the current forecast outturn and significant financial challenge presented for the Council to deliver a balanced revenue budget for 2014/15;**
- **Approve the three Stage strategy to address the forecast overspend as detailed in this report, to bring spend in line with budget by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and:**
- **Agree that MP's are notified of concerns relating to budget pressures falling on the Council as a result of some Academy Conversions and implementing the requirements of the Care Bill.**

## 7.1 Proposals and Details

This report presents details of spending against budget by Directorate covering the first 3 months of the 2014/15 financial year – April 2014 to June 2014 – and forecast costs and income to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

## 7.2 The Overall Position

Directorate/Service	Annual Budget 2014/15 £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/15 £'000	Forecast Variance after Actions (over(+)/under(-) spend) £'000	%
Children & Young People Services	43,163	45,873	+2,710	+6.3
Academy Conversions (Deficit)	0	167	+167	+100.0
Neighbourhoods & Adult Services	73,838	75,505	+1,667	+2.3
Environment and Development Services	45,757	46,579	+822	+1.8
ICT	2,409	3,574	+1,165	+48.4
Resources	11,169	11,163	-6	-
Central Services	32,549	32,776	+227	+0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>208,885</b>	<b>215,637</b>	<b>+6,752</b>	<b>+3.2</b>
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	82,509	82,463	-46	-0.1

Appendix 1 to this report provides a detailed explanation of the key areas of forecast over / underspend by Directorate. The summarised position for each Directorate is described below.

### **Children & Young People's Directorate (+£2.877m forecast overspend)**

The forecast overspend for Children's Services is largely due to pressures within the Children & Families Safeguarding Service. A further pressure (+£167k) relates to schools whose finances are in deficit when they convert to academies leaving the Council responsible for funding their accrued deficit.

The number of looked after children requiring placements at the end of June 2014 was 395, a reduction of 5 since the end of March 2014.

Pressures on budgets for provision of Out of Authority Residential placements (+£2.254m) and the provision of independent Foster Care placements (+£114k) are the main service pressures. The cost of placements has increased as children are presenting with more complex needs. The service is looking at how

they can find suitable, alternative, increased value for money placements to meet the needs of these young people.

Children's Social Care services remain under pressure despite the services' proactive approach to drive down costs including:

- Continued operation and challenge by the Multi-Agency Support Panel
- Successful work undertaken by the Commissioning Team which has resulted in the commissioning and re-commissioning of service provider contracts with significant cost reductions/cost avoidance (£321k) to date in 2014/15.

Children's services continue to look for ways to reduce spend.

**Environment & Development Services including Internal Audit, Asset Management, Communications & Marketing and Policy & Planning (+£822k forecast overspend)**

The Directorate is currently forecasting an overspend of +£822k due to pressures in Streetpride (+£340k), Planning, Regeneration and Customer Services (+£195k) Asset Management (+£259k) and Communications (+£28k). The Business Unit is reporting a balanced budget at this stage in the financial year.

The forecast overspend assumes that the Winter Pressures budget is sufficient to contain costs incurred over the Winter months (2014/15). It should however be noted this budget overspent by +£139k in the mild Winter of 2013/14.

**Neighbourhoods and Adult Services including Public Health, Commissioning, Procurement, Performance & Quality and Cohesion (+£1.667m forecast overspend)**

Overall the Directorate (including ring-fenced Public Health funded services) is forecasting an overspend of +£1.667m. Within this, Adult Services are forecasting an overspend (+£1.291m) and Neighbourhood services a forecast underspend of -£24k. Commissioning, Procurement, Performance & Quality and Cohesion services are forecasting a collective overspend of (+£400k). Key Directorate pressures include budget savings from previous years not fully achieved in respect of additional continuing health care (CHC) funding plus recurrent pressures on demand for Direct Payments within Older People and Physical and Sensory Disability clients.

There is also a recurrent budget pressure within Commissioning in respect of a savings target from previous years which is pending full delivery.

Public Health Services are currently forecasting a balanced Outturn. (Ring-fenced funding).

The forecast position for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services is made up of a number of under and overspends, detailed in Appendix 1.

### **Resources Directorate (+£1.159m forecast overspend)**

Overall the Directorate is forecasting an overspend of +£1.159m. This is predominantly in respect of income pressures within the ICT service.

### **Central Services (+£227k forecast overspend)**

There are currently two key pressures within Central Services. Rotherham's share of the pension deficit in respect of winding down Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (LGYH) (£80k) and Rotherham's share of the costs for the Economic Regeneration Team within the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority (£147k).

### **7.3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (Forecast underspend -£46k)**

The Housing Revenue Account is forecasting a £46k reduction in the transfer from reserves compared with the agreed budget. The HRA had budgeted to use £1.440m from reserves but current forecasts only require £2.110m, a reduction of £46k.

### **7.4 Strategy to address the forecast overspend**

Cabinet will recall that when we were faced with a significant forecast overspend in the first quarter of last year (2013/14) a 3 Stage strategy to address the forecast overspend was implemented as below:

**Stage 1** – Directorates should consider appropriate actions which could be implemented to address the forecast overspend. This should include exploring all opportunities to generate additional income and where it may be possible to downsize staffing complements, where it is possible and appropriate to do so. It is proposed that this is undertaken before the end of the Council's summer recess when the impact on the forecast outturn position will be reassessed.

**Stage 2** – In the event that Stage 1 does not effectively address the forecast overspend, Directorates should consider what non-essential planned expenditure could be 'slipped' into the next financial year.

**Stage 3** – If Stage 2 does not fully address any residual forecast pressure, a moratorium on all non-essential spend should be implemented. The criteria for essential spend being consistent with that applied in previous years:

- Is contractually committed
- Essential for the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults;
- Required to meet health and safety requirements;
- Spend is required to avoid a false economy;
- Spend which is highly sensitive to local Members or local communities

This strategy was successful in 2013/14 and the Council delivered an outturn slightly under budget.

Cabinet is asked to note that Stage 1 of the strategy has been implemented and to agree that the Chief Executive implements Stages 2 and 3, if necessary, at the appropriate time.

## **7.5 Stage 1 – Management Actions**

**In line with Stage 1 of the above strategy, Directorates are currently reviewing opportunities to mitigate the forecast overspend. These include:**

- Continued close scrutiny of spend across all Directorates
- Finance clinic arranged to agree further management actions (NAS)
- Ongoing review of high cost care packages to ensure essential spend only (NAS)
- Pursuing Continuing Health Care actively on behalf of customers
- Placement panels continue to scrutinise planned care packages to ensure VFM
- De-LAC-ing children placed at home on care orders (they either need to be home and safe, not on orders) or in care with contact
- Agreeing Special Guardianship residence orders with support and carrying out properly agreed matches with long term foster carers
- Work with children and young people on the edge of care so that we can reduce the teenage population in care
- Look at what we've learnt from the intensive work that Family Recovery Programme (FRP) and Families for Change (FFC) have done
- Consider extending the use of Multi-systemic therapy (CYPS)
- Look at the support we provide to adopters, foster carers and special guardians; and children's relatives and friends.
- Work with team managers and service managers (and partners) to look at how we better provide packages of effective care, and maintain our gatekeeping (CYPS).
- Heritage Services restructure
- Additional income generating opportunities via Business Centres, Markets, Theatre, Libraries and Museum
- Bring forward the planned investment in LED lighting to reduce energy costs
- Renegotiate waste disposal rates
- Increased income generation through improving the all-day parking offer at Sheffield Road car park
- Generate additional Country Park income through invest to save measures
- Wider selling of Insurance expertise
- Selling of valuation services to Academies across South Yorkshire
- Continue the programme of property rationalisation
- Options report being prepared regarding ICT services.

## **7.6 Agency, Consultancy and Non-Contractual Overtime Costs**

It is proposed that details of spend on Agency, Consultancy and Non-Contractual overtime costs will now be included in revenue monitoring reports every 6 months.

## **7.7 Collection Fund**

At this early stage of the financial year it is forecast that the budgeted level of Council Tax and Business Rates will both be achieved.

## **8. Finance**

The financial issues are discussed in section 7 above.

Management actions need to be identified and implemented across all Directorates to bring projected spend in line with Budget limits by the end of March 2015.

## **9 Risks and Uncertainties**

At a time of economic difficulty and tight financial constraints, managing spend in line with the Council's Budget is paramount. Careful scrutiny of expenditure and income across all services and close budget monitoring therefore remain a top priority if the Council is to deliver both its annual and medium term financial plans while sustaining its overall financial resilience.

Although both Council Tax and Business Rates collection levels are currently on target there remains a risk that this could change during the remaining months of the year.

The current forecast assumes that costs associated with the Winter Pressures will be contained within budget. In 2013/14 these costs exceeded budget by £139k.

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

The delivery of the Council's Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan within the parameters agreed at the start of the current financial year is essential if the objectives of the Council's Policy agenda are to be achieved. Financial performance is a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework.

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

- Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2014/15 Report to Council 5th March 2014.
- Strategic Directors and Service Directors of the Council

**Contact Name:** Stuart Booth, Director of Financial Services, ext. 22034  
[Stuart.Booth@Rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:Stuart.Booth@Rotherham.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Key reasons for forecast over / underspends

#### **Children & Young People's Services (+£2.877m forecast overspend)**

The key factors contributing to the forecast overspend are:

##### **Academy Conversions - Deficits (+£167k)**

The forecast over spend is due to provisions for the forecast deficit positions on the following schools when they convert to academies in 2014/15:

Rawmarsh School: a Sports College - £100k (This is in addition to the £300k provided for in the 2013/14 accounts)

Swinton Brookfield - £47k (This is in addition to the £39k provided for in the 2013/14 accounts)

Rawmarsh Monkwood - £20k

##### **Special Education Provision (+£45k)**

The forecast overspend is partially due to the projected number of placements in SEN Complex Needs placements (£27k) - 25 current placements & 4 potential new ones. This also includes a forecast overspend on supplies in the Children in Public Care Team (£5k) & a forecast under-recovery of income in the Education Welfare Team due to a change in legislation which no longer allows them to charge Academies (£34k). These forecast overspends are partially offset by forecast underspends (-£21k) on staffing due to vacancies in the Education Psychology Team and Learning Support & Autism Team.

##### **Safeguarding, Children and Families Service Wide (+£36k)**

The forecast overspend is mainly on legal fees (+£62k) which is due to an increase in the number of cases going to court and agency costs for the Director of Safeguarding post (+£28k). These forecast overspends are partially offset by forecast underspends in Business Support teams due to income from NHS & some staff not being in the pension scheme (-£54k).

##### **Child Protection Teams (+£1k)**

This forecast overspend is due to a slight over spend on staffing in the Safeguarding Unit.

##### **Children in Need Social Work Teams (+£50k)**

This forecast overspend is due to Agency staff costs & additional staff appointments over establishment within the Children in Need teams to better maintain business continuity rather than having to recruit expensive agency staff to cover periods between staff leaving and new staff commencing employment in post.

##### **Looked After Children - LAC (+£2,611k)**

The service is forecasting an overspend mainly due to out of authority residential placements (+£2,254k) and independent fostering placements (+£114k). This is partially offset by a forecast underspend on the Remand placements budget (-£34k).

The Adoption Reform Grant that was first received in 2013/14 was reduced by £746K in

2014/15. This grant significantly mitigated LAC budget pressures in 2013/14 on a temporary basis.

Further details of placements are below:

Placement Type	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15 as at 30th June		Actual Number of placements as at 30 June 2014
	Average No. of placements	Average Cost of Placement £ per week	Average No. of placements	Average Cost of Placement £ per week	Average No. of placements	Average Cost of Placement £ per week	Average No. of placements	Average Cost of Placement £ per week	
<b>Out of Authority Residential</b>	18	3,022	21.1	3,206	25	3,245	30.7	3,081	31
<i>R1 Accommodation only</i>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	11.2	1,659	11
<i>R2 Accommodation &amp; therapy</i>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	9.3	2,693	9
<i>R3 Accommodation, therapy &amp; education</i>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	7.6	3,900	9
<i>R4 Parent &amp; Baby</i>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	0	0	0
<i>Secure</i>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	2.5	2,698	2
<b>Remand</b>	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	1.6	3,154	1.3	287	1
<b>Independent Fostering Agencies</b>	125	887	121	874	107	879	104.3	854	98
<i>Standard</i>	U/A	U/A	74.8	745	66.1	759	60.6	744	56
<i>Complex</i>	U/A	U/A	27.2	938	24	1,105	30.2	976	30
<i>Specialist</i>	U/A	U/A	19	1,287	16.9	998	13.5	1,098	12
<b>In-house Fostering</b>	158.8	230	162	246	165.2	261	171.5	270	177
<b>Note:</b> U/A - This detailed breakdown was unavailable in past years									

### ***Out of Authority Residential***

- The number of children in residential out of authority placements as at end of June 2014 is 31 (no change since 31 March 2014 but an increase of 6 since 31 March 2013).
- The average number of placements has increased from 25 in 2013/14 to 30.7 in 2014/15, so far, which is an increase of 5.7 (22.8%). At an average cost of £3,081 per week this 5.7 increase equates to a cost of £913k per annum.
- Due to the increasing complexity of children's needs that are going into residential out of authority placements & despite successful negotiations by the Commissioning team to minimise the cost of these placements, the average cost per week of these placements has increased from £3,022 in 2011/12 to £3,081 currently – an increase of 2%. However, as shown in the table above, the current average cost per placement is less than the 2013/14 average of £3,245 – a reduction of -5%.
- The average number of placements in the same period has risen by 12.7 (70.6%) from 18 to 30.7.
- From 1 April 2013 children's remand placements were fully funded by the Local Authority & RMBC was provided with a national grant of £78k in 2013/14 to cover these additional costs. The allocation for 2014/15 has been reduced to £53k. The cost of these placements in 2014/15 so far is £19k. At the end of June 2014 there was 1 remand placement (a reduction of 1 since 31 March 2014).

### ***Independent Fostering Agencies***

- The number of children in Independent foster Care as at end June 2014 is 98 (a reduction of 4 since the end of March 2014 & a reduction of 20 since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013).
- The average cost of a placement has reduced by £33 or 3.7% since 2011/12.
- The average number of placements during the same period has decreased by 20.7 (16.7%).

***In-house Fostering***

- The number of children in in-house fostering placements as at end of June 2014 is 177 (an increase of 10 since the end of March 2014).
- The cost of a placement has risen by an average of £40 or 17.4% since 2011/12.
- The average number of placements during the same period has increased by 12.7 (8%)

The number of looked after children was 395 at end of June, a reduction of 5 since the end of March 2014.

Fostering Services are forecasting an overspend on Fostering allowances (£172k) & Residence Orders (£21k) due to having more children placed than planned (see table below) & also due to some placements costing more than the budgeted average. This is partially offset by a forecast staff cost underspend in the Fostering team (-£39k).

Adoption Services are forecasting an overspend on Special Guardianship Orders (£44k) due to having more children placed than planned (see table below) & a small overspend on allowances (£6k) & also due to some placements costing more than the budgeted average. These are offset with slight forecast underspends on the LAAC Team (-£1k), Adoption Team (-£2k) & Inter Agency costs (-£2k).

The table below shows the current placements numbers compared to the plan used when budget setting for 2014/15:

Placement Type	Actual No. of placements as at 30 June 14	Planned No. by this stage of the year	No. of placements above plan	Average Cost per week used for budget setting £	Total Approximate Additional Cost for the next 9 months £'000	Cost Avoided for the next 9 months - assuming an IFA placement would have been used (£854 Per week) £'000
In-House Fostering	177	168	9	264	93	207
Adoption - with means tested allowance	92	92	0	167	0	0
Residence Orders	132	129	3	129	15	85
Special Guardianship	84	78	6	118	28	172
					<b>135</b>	<b>464</b>

Although these additional placements are contributing to the service overspend, the table shows that if these placements had instead resulted in Independent Fostering placements, this would have cost RMBC an additional £464k for a 9 month period.

Other forecast overspends within this service are (£55k) in the LAC Service due to Agency costs of £47k & a Care package £21k offset by staff vacancies -£21k & (£23k) within in-house Residential homes due to Regulation 33 requiring us to use an independent reviewer £19k & £4k on the use of agency staff cover.

**Disability Services (-£33K)**

This service is forecasting an underspend due to delays in recruitment for 2 posts within the outreach team (-£20k) & reduced use of the cover budgets at Cherry Tree & Liberty residential homes (-£13k).

**Environment & Development Services (+£822k forecast overspend)**

The above forecast overspend assumes that the Winter Pressures budget is sufficient to contain costs incurred over the Winter period – in the mild Winter last year the costs exceeded budget by +£139k.

**Asset Management (+£259k)**

The main pressure within the Asset Management Services is an unbudgeted pressure +£200k within Land and Property Bank, with +£52k overspend Community Buildings. Other smaller pressures are +£8k unfunded costs for the barriers for the English Defence League and +£23k within facilities services due staffing costs and a forecast under-recovery of income, also, some staffing related costs are creating a pressure +£18k within Internal Audit.

Some small savings, -£42k across the wider service are partially mitigating the pressure.

**Business Unit (£0k)**

The Business Unit is currently forecasting a balanced outturn.

**Communications (+£28k)**

The forecast pressures within this service are from staffing within the Communications Team +£21k and +£8k on marketing events.

**Regeneration, Planning, Customer and Cultural Services (+£195k forecast overspend)**

Customer Services is showing a net pressure **+£218k** mainly due to some historical savings not yet being achieved and the need to retain staff to meet service demands. This is being reviewed on an ongoing basis and there are some staff savings which have helped to reduce the pressure.

Cultural Services are showing a small forecast underspend **-£17k** from Theatres, Boston Castle and Museums, and these are able to mitigate some pressures on the Arts budget.

Regeneration and Planning are reporting a small forecast underspend **-£6k**. The Business Centres are showing a forecast underspend due to increased occupancy levels, **-£40k**. Planning are reporting a **-£31k** forecast underspend due to reducing consultancy costs, other smaller forecast underspends are reported from Building Control and Partnerships, totalling **-£9k**. However, some forecast pressures across the service are also being reported, Markets **+£29k** due to planned repairs due to the deteriorating state of existing buildings. RIDO is funding a replacement IT package, and has a staff cost pressure **+£43k**.

**Streetpride ( +£340k forecast overspend)**

Network Management are reporting a pressure **+£343k**, of which +£384k is related to Parking due to reduced forecast income from parking permits, based on previous years income levels that receipts will be less than budget, and furthermore, the impact of Tesco opening later this year.

Waste Services are reporting a forecast underspend **-£66k**. Waste collection is forecasting an underspend of -£119k, in the main due to WEEE rebate income, whereas waste disposal is reporting a forecast pressure +£55k due to waste arisings running at a 3% increase rather than the 1% budgeted increase, the waste PFI is expected to be slightly underspent -£2k.

Leisure and Green Spaces are reporting a forecast pressure of **+£28k**, mainly due to an under-recovery of income from allotments +£31k, other smaller pressures and small savings are mitigating this with some staff savings -£3k

Community Services are reporting a pressure of **+£56k**, due to an expected overspend on cleansing highways +£30k, staffing costs +£15k and +£11k pressure due to a new kennel contract.

Corporate Transport Unit is showing a forecast underspend due to changes in transport provision **-£21k**.

**Neighbourhoods & Adult Services (+£1.667m forecast overspend)**

**Adult Services** are currently forecasting an overspend of **+£1.291m**. The key underlying budget pressures include:

**Older People (+£928k)**

Forecast increase in Direct Payments (+21 clients) over budget (+£259k) and overall forecast overspends on Domiciliary care (+£22k) plus independent sector residential and nursing care (+£1.066m) due to recurrent pressure on meeting savings target from previous years in respect of additional continuing health care income, this is after additional income from property charges is being received. These forecast pressures are being partially reduced by a number of forecast underspends including: Savings on maintenance contracts and energy costs in the Rothercare service (-£58k), higher than anticipated staff turnover within Assessment & Care Management and community support, plus additional non-recurrent income from Health (-£361k).

**Learning Disabilities (+£406k)**

There is a forecast overspend on Day Care (+£178k) due to specialist provision required for 6 unfunded transitional placements from Children's services (demographic pressure) plus a recurrent budget pressure on the provision of transport (+£204k). There is also a delay in meeting an agreed budget saving for employment and leisure services (+£111k) and additional costs due to staff cover within In House Residential care (+£79k). These forecast overspends are partially mitigated by additional client discharges in excess of budget last month from residential care (-£145k) and an overall underspend on Supported Living schemes due to receipt of additional funding from health (-£21k).

**Mental Health (-£176k)**

There is a projected underspend on the residential care budget due to 6 client discharges greater than budget since April (-£142k) plus additional underspends within mental health day care, community support and direct payments (-£34k).

**Physical & Sensory Disabilities (+£179k)**

Recurrent cost pressure on Direct Payments (+£307k / 16 clients) is reduced by forecast underspends within residential and domiciliary care (-£108k) and savings within the advocacy contracts (-£20k).

**Supporting People (-£46k)**

Efficiency savings on subsidy contracts have already been identified against budget (-£46k).

**Neighbourhoods General Fund (-£24k)**

The projected year end outturn position for Neighbourhoods shows a forecast under spend of (-£24k).

The main reason for the forecast underspend is higher than expected staff turnover within Trading Standards and Furnished Homes.

**Commissioning, Policy & Performance and Procurement** services are forecasting an overall overspend of +£400k due to a recurrent budget saving target for commissioning which is currently pending delivery in full.

**Public Health (Forecast Balanced outturn)**

This service is funded by a ring fenced specific grant from the Department of Health. For Rotherham this is £14.176m for 2014/15. The service is currently forecasting a balanced outturn.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

The overall forecast as at end June 2014 is that the HRA will outturn with a use of its working balance (reserves) of £1.394m a slight reduction of -£46k from the original (planned) budget.

Currently forecasts show a slight underspend on Supervision and Management due to staff vacancies.

**Resources Directorate (+1.159m forecast overspend)**

**ICT** – The service is currently forecasting a pressure of +£1.165m. This relates to a forecast under-recovery of income due to reduced spend across the Council. The Director of Audit and Asset Management is preparing a paper for SLT to consider the options available to

mitigate this forecast pressure.

**Legal Services** – A forecast overspend of +£83k due to staff cost pressures.

**Human Resources & Payroll** are forecasting an underspend of -£66k largely in respect of additional income generation.

Financial Services (including Revenues & Benefits) is currently forecasting a balanced outturn.

**Management savings** are also forecast across the service amounting to -£23k.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Self-Regulation Select Commission</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18th September 2014</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Outcomes</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>NAS – Performance &amp; Quality</b>

**5. Summary**

This report provides a current position statement by exception, based on available performance measures for all of the 11 key delivery outcomes contained within the council's corporate plan.

**6. Recommendations**

- **Note the current position against each of the Corporate Plan outcomes, including the proposed interventions and corrective actions;**
  - **Forward any comments/concerns arising from the report to the relevant Cabinet Member and/or Strategic Director for their attention.**
-

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Approach

Each of the 11 outcomes from the corporate report has been allocated either 3 or 5 measures in agreement with service directors. The measures allocated will be RAG rated dependent on its individual performance. The measures combined will then RAG rate the overall outcome as follows:

Outcomes with 3 measures				
Outcome RAG	Measure RAG			Description
	1	2	3	
Red	R	R	R	Not meeting targets; adverse Direction Of Travel; actions giving cause for concern; requires <b>major</b> intervention by SLT level.
	R	R	G	
	R	A	A	
Amber	A	A	A	Slight variation from targets; some actions behind program; requires <b>minor</b> intervention Directorate level.
	A	A	G	
	R	G	G	
	R	A	G	
Green	G	G	G	Meeting or exceeding targets; actions progressing well; no intervention required at this time.
	A	G	G	
N/A			Cannot be assessed e.g. due to lack of data	

Outcomes with 5 measures						
Outcome RAG	Measure RAG					Description
	1	2	3	4	5	
Red	R	R	R	R	R	Not meeting targets; adverse Direction Of Travel; actions giving cause for concern; requires <b>major</b> intervention by SLT level.
	R	R	R	R	A	
	R	R	R	R	G	
	R	R	R	A	A	
	R	R	R	G	G	
	R	R	R	A	G	
Amber	R	R	A	A	A	Slight variation from targets; some actions behind program; requires <b>minor</b> intervention Directorate level.
	R	R	A	A	G	
	R	R	A	G	G	
	R	R	G	G	G	
	R	A	A	A	A	
	R	A	A	A	G	
	R	A	A	G	G	
	R	A	G	G	G	
	R	G	G	G	G	
	R	G	G	G	G	
Green	A	A	G	G	G	Meeting or exceeding targets; actions progressing well; no intervention required at this time.
	A	G	G	G	G	
	G	G	G	G	G	
N/A					Cannot be assessed e.g. due to lack of data	

The same principle will apply to the outcomes which will RAG rate the Priority as a whole.

7.2 Scorecard – Period 1

Priority	Outcome	Measures
1. Stimulating the local economy & helping local people into work	1. We will use the Councils buying power & influence to increase the use of the local supply chain & local labour	1. Increase council trade spend in the local economy
		2. a) Encourage employment of apprentices b) Increase the number of apprenticeships set out in external contracts
		3. Implement a local Living Wage for council staff from 1st October 2014.
	2. We will market Rotherham as an attractive business location by investing in initiatives to promote business growth	1. Increase overall employment rate amongst working age residents
		2. Increase Number of Business Births / Start Ups per 10,000 Resident Population 16+ years old)
		3. Ensure at least 85% enterprises based in the Council's 4 incubation centres survive for at least 3 years.
		4. Increase the % of Commercial and Industrial floor space across the borough which is occupied
		5. Determine 80% % of Major Planning Applications Processed Within 13 Weeks
		6. Determine 85% of Minor Planning Applications Processed Within 8 Weeks.
		7. Determine 95% of Other Planning Applications Processed Within 8 Weeks
	3. We will focus on lifelong learning to improve the qualifications, skills and economic wellbeing of children, young people and their families	1. Increase the % of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths
		2. Reduce the number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
		3. Increase the numbers of people who have a Level 3 qualification at age 19 - narrowing the gap
		4. Increase the % of people aged 19+ supported through a learning programme who have:
		5. Increase the % people with a level 2 qualification for whom ESOL
2. Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence	1. We will intervene early to prevent problems developing and protect children, young people, families and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect	1. Reduce repeat incidents of reported domestic abuse
		2. Increase safeguarding alerts allocated to a manager within 24 hours & strategies held with 10 working days
		3. Increase the number of service users who received a review of their support plan during the year
	1. As above	4. Increase the % contacts into CYPS where outcome decision was made in 24hrs
		5. Reduce the no of children becoming LAC within the year
		6. Reduce the % of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
	2. We will ensure that all adults in need of support and care get help early and have more choice and control to help them live at home	1. Increase the number of service users who have choice and control of their social care support packages and receive a personal budget
		2. Increase the number of service users who have a new assessments completed within 28 days from first contact
		3. Through improving community based support, reduce the number of service users over 65 who are being admitted to permanent residential homes (24 hour care)
	3. Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean & well maintained	1. We will make sure that Rotherham's roads and footpaths are safe to use and that their condition is at least as good as the national average
2. Reduce the numbers of Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - 5 year rolling average		
3. Maintain the condition of Principal Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average		
4. Maintain the condition of Non -Principal Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average		
5. Maintain the condition of Unclassified Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average		
2. We will improve the quality of public spaces through better management of street cleansing and grounds maintenance		1. Decrease the % of surveyed sites not meeting acceptable standards of street cleanliness;
		2. Following re-inspection of Grounds Maintenance works ensure no more than 5% defective / not to standard works
		3. Decrease the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections
3. We will reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and ensure people feel safe where they live		1. Reduce the levels of crime (total crime, burglary dwelling, vehicle & ASB)
		2. Decrease the % of people who's perception of ASB in their area is high.
		3. Increase the resolution of ASB cases

<b>4. Helping people to improve their health &amp; wellbeing &amp; reducing inequalities within the borough</b>	<b>1. We will work with communities to deliver services that are tailored to local conditions</b>	1. Increase the number of service users who can buy the support they need themselves through a direct payment
		2. Increase the number of people with a Learning Disability who are in employment
		3. Increase the number of people with Mental Health issues who are in employment
		4. Take up of NHS health check programme by those eligible - health check offered
		5. Take up of NHS health check programme by those eligible - health check take up
	<b>2. We will respond quickly to people's needs, mitigating the effects of poverty and helping them to thrive</b>	1. <i>(This measure is currently under development.)</i>
		2. Increase healthy life expectancy at birth
		3. Increase the % of target number of families 'turned around' after help and support from the families for change co-ordinators
	<b>3. We will ensure that people are able to live in decent affordable homes</b>	1. Increase repairs completed within target timescales
		2. Increase responsive repairs completed right first time
		3. Reduce the time taken to let empty council properties

Please note that some measures do not have a RAG status due to either performance being reported annually or being unavailable due to the new measure being baselined.

## 7.3 Trend Analysis (2014-15)

Outcome	Period 1 June	Period 2 Sept	Period 3 Dec	Period 4 Mar
We will use the Councils buying power & influence to increase the use of the local supply chain & local labour	Not Available			
We will market Rotherham as an attractive business location by investing in initiatives to promote business growth	Not Available			
We will focus on lifelong learning to improve the qualifications, skills and economic wellbeing of children, young people and their families	Green			
We will intervene early to prevent problems developing & protect children, young people, families & vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect	Green			
	Green			
We will ensure that all adults in need of support and care get help early and have more choice and control to help them live at home	Amber			
We will make sure that Rotherham's roads and footpaths are safe to use and that their condition is at least as good as the national average	Not Available			
We will improve the quality of public spaces through better management of street cleansing and grounds maintenance	Not Available			
We will reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and ensure people feel safe where they live	Green			
We will work with communities to deliver services that are tailored to local conditions	Green			
We will respond quickly to people's needs, mitigating the effects of poverty and helping them to thrive	Green			
We will ensure that people are able to live in decent affordable homes	Green			

Please note that some outcomes do not have a RAG status due to performance measures either being reported annually or unavailable due to baselining.

#### **7.4 Corporate Plan Outcomes**

We can confirm that no outcomes during quarter one of 2014-15 were rated red, therefore no further detail is provided. Any relevant further detail regarding any Amber or Green measures can be found in the comments on Appendix B – Performance Measures.

Performance for a large number of the indicators is not available until year end. Therefore, where all or majority of the indicators are not available the overarching outcome has not been RAG rated.

The Performance & Quality team are currently working alongside colleagues within CYPS to develop a proxy child poverty indicator (4.2.1).

The services are having regular discussions to establish the correct measure, ensuring the indicator is fully measurable, as well as being meaningful.

#### **8. Finance**

Budgets should be aligned to ensure the successful achievement of the Corporate Plan and its priorities and outcomes.

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

Any reduction in financial and/or staffing resources could impact on the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The risk should be mitigated by ensuring that there is a clear 'golden thread' from the priorities, through service planning and team planning.

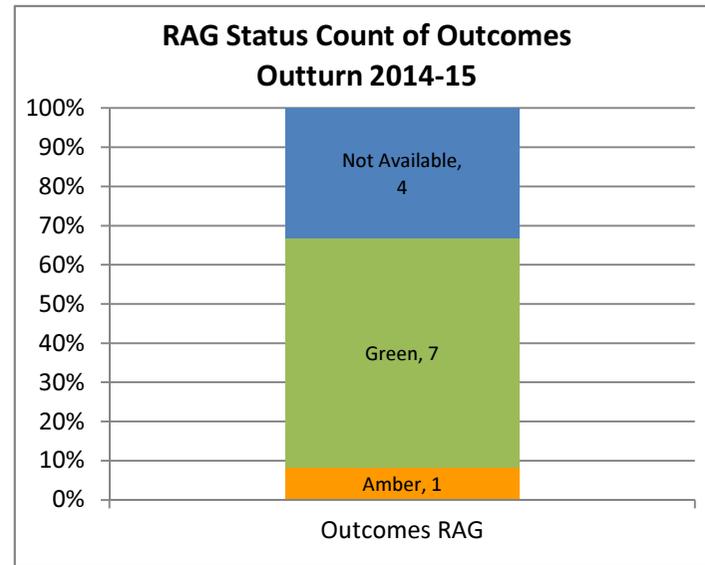
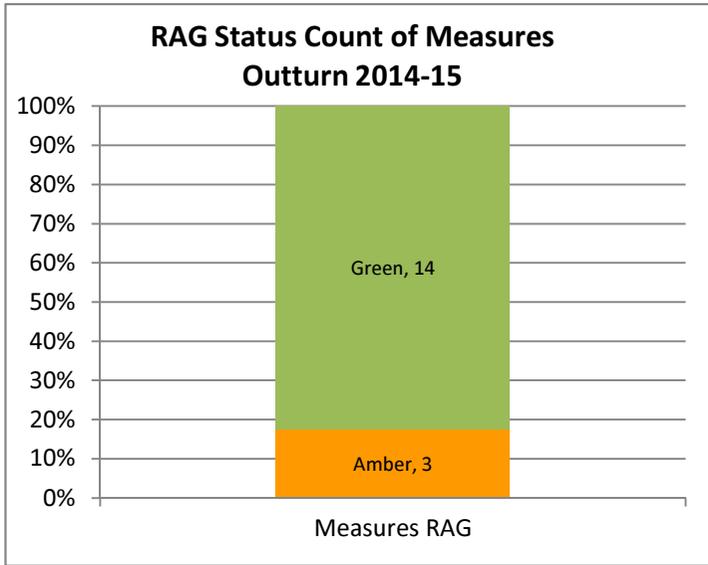
#### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Rotherham MBC Corporate Plan, 2013-2016, Service planning, Team planning and PDR's for staff all link to this report.

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

The performance data contained within this report has been provided by Directorates following approval from their Directorate Management Teams.

**Contact Name:** *Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, ext 22511*  
*Dave Roddis, Performance and Quality Manager, ext. 23781*



**Corporate Plan Priority 1: Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work**

						Performance												
Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
<b>We will use the council's buying power and influence to increase the use of the local supply chain and local labour</b>	1.1.1 (Corporate)	Increase council trade spend in the local economy	High is better	Annual	37.00%	Annual Measure					Not Available		Cllr Wyatt	Tom Cray	Simon Bradley			Target based on average spend across the Yorkshire and Humberside region.
	1.1.2 (Corporate)	a) Encourage the employment of apprentices proportionate to the size of the directly employed workforce within RMBC	High is better	Quarterly	Ratio of 1 per 170 employees	Annual Measure							Cllr Wyatt	Phil Howe	Simon Cooper			In quarter 1 the ratio of apprentices in RMBC is 1-157.
		b) Increase the number of apprenticeships set out in external contracts	High is better	6 Monthly	12	Annual Measure							Cllr Wyatt	Tom Cray	Simon Bradley			Suppliers cannot be selected based on geographic location and tender documents must not be written in a way that unfairly disadvantages certain categories of bidders.
	1.1.3 (Corporate)	Implement a local Living Wage for council staff from 1st October 2014.	High is better	Annual	100% (1500 staff)	Annual Measure							Cllr Lakin	Phil Howe	Simon Cooper			Annual Measure
<b>We will market Rotherham as an attractive business location by investing in initiatives to promote business growth</b>	1.2.1 (EDS)	Increase overall employment rate amongst working age residents	High is better	Annual	2013/14 is a baseline year	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 66.2%)					Not Available		Cllr Beck	Paul Woodcock	Simeon Leach			Annual Measure
	1.2.2 (EDS)	Increase Number of Business Births / Start Ups per 10,000 Resident Population 16+ years old)	High is better	Annual	2013/14 is a Baseline year	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 35)							Cllr Beck	Paul Woodcock	Simeon Leach / Tim O'Connell			Annual Measure
	1.2.3 (EDS)	Ensure at least 85% enterprises based in the Council's 4 incubation centres survive for at least 3 years.	High is better	Annual	85% or above	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 85%)							Cllr Beck	Paul Woodcock	Simeon Leach / Tim O'Connell			Annual Measure
	1.2.4 (EDS)	Increase the % of Commercial and Industrial floor space across the borough which is occupied	High is better	Annual	85% or above	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 88%)							Cllr Beck	Paul Woodcock	Simeon Leach / Tim O'Connell			Annual Measure
	1.2.5 (EDS)	Determine 80% % of Major Planning Applications Processed Within 13 Weeks	High is better	6 Monthly	80.00%	6 Monthly Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 90.7%)							Cllr Smith	Paul Woodcock	Bronwen Knight			6 Monthly Measure
	1.2.6 (EDS)	Determine 85% of Minor Planning Applications Processed Within 8 Weeks.	High is better	6 Monthly	85.00%	6 Monthly Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 85.11%)							Cllr Smith	Paul Woodcock	Bronwen Knight			6 Monthly Measure
	1.2.7 (EDS)	Determine 95% of Other Planning Applications Processed Within 8 Weeks	High is better	6 Monthly	95.00%	6 Monthly Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 93.41%)							Cllr Smith	Paul Woodcock	Bronwen Knight			6 Monthly Measure
<b>We will focus on lifelong learning to improve the qualifications, skills and economic wellbeing of children, young people and their families</b>	1.3.1 (CYPS)	Increase the % of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	High is better	Annual	65.00%	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 63.6%)					Green		Cllr Rushforth	Dorothy Smith	Karen Borthwick / Karen Hopkins			Annual Measure
	1.3.2 (CYPS)	Reduce the number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)	Low is better	Annual	6.00%	6.30%				Green		↑	Cllr Rushforth	Dorothy Smith	Debi Scott / Collette Bailey			At the end of Q1 we have achieved an average of 6.3% against a Q1 target of 6.6%, which is on track to meet the annual target which will be measured as an average across the Nov, Dec and Jan returns. Performance at the same time last year was 7.7%, therefore showing a considerable improvement this year.

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
	1.3.3 (CYPS)	Increase the numbers of people who have a Level 3 qualification at age 19 - narrowing the gap	High is better	Annual	TBC	Annual Measure (2013 - Gap between Rotherham and National = 6.9%)							Cllr Rushforth	Dorothy Smith	Marie Boswell			Currently working with service to set a target.
	1.3.4 (CYPS)	Increase the % of people aged 19+ supported through a learning programme who have: <b>a)</b> Obtained a formal qualification <b>b)</b> Progressed / working towards another level <b>c)</b> Obtained or got a better job	High is better	Annual	<b>a)</b> 50% <b>b)</b> 35% <b>c)</b> 10%	Annual Measure							Cllr Rushforth	Dorothy Smith	Julie Roddis			At present 24% of all learners are working towards an accredited outcome, a 14% increase on the 10% during the last academic year. Work is continuing to progress towards the 50% target. Achievement figures are not yet available as the courses are still ongoing. Similarly progression rates will not be available until after the end of the academic year. Our current progression rate is 14% but is only a partial record.
	1.3.5 (CYPS)	Increase the % people working towards a level 2 qualification for whom ESOL	High is better	Annual	10% increase	Annual Measure (2013/14 - Outturn 201)							Cllr Rushforth	Dorothy Smith	Julie Roddis			RMBC do not offer any full ESOL level 2 qualifications but are currently supporting 201 learners on 11 courses to work towards Entry Level and level 1 ESOL qualifications. Achievement rates are not available until the end of the academic year which runs from August to July.

**Corporate Plan Priority 2: Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence**

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Performance				Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments	
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4										
We will intervene early to prevent problems developing and protect children, young people, families and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect	2.1.1 (Adults)	Reduce repeat incidents of reported domestic abuse	Low is better	Quarterly	28.00%	29.00%				Green	Green	↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Sam Newton			Indicator shows slight rise but is not of concern as we would expect repeat incidents at MARAC level prior to cessation of the abuse.	
	2.1.2 (Adults)	Increase safeguarding alerts allocated to a manager within 24 hours & strategies held within 10 working days from receiving the alert.	High is better	Monthly	99%	94.28%				Amber	Green	↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Sam Newton			Volume of activity accumulates in year incrementally improving to target each quarter. Indicator is currently rated as amber with a direction of travel "no change", monitoring of this indicator takes place at weekly SMT performance meetings enabling actions/performance plans to be developed if consistent deterioration in performance is identified.	
	2.1.3 (Adults)	Increase the number of service users who received a review of their support plan during the year	High is better	Monthly	93.2%	33.07%				Green	Green	↑	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Michaela Cox				
	2.1.4 (CYPS)	Increase the % contacts into CYPS where outcome decision was made in 24hrs	High is better	Quarterly	Baselining	53.9%					Green	Green	↑	Cllr Lakin	Jane Parfremont	Deborah Johnson			As part of the implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and regional performance improvement work. Contact processes and system are to be reviewed.  In Q1 480 out of 890 contacts went on to referrals.  This is a local measure and we are currently baselining performance before working with service to set a realistic but aspirational target for 2015/16.
	2.1.5 (CYPS)	Reduce the no of children becoming LAC within the year	Low is better	Quarterly	TBC	Annual Measure (2013/14 - Outturn 126 becoming LAC within the year / 394 LAC in total)					Green	Green		Cllr Lakin	Jane Parfremont	Deborah Johnson			35 children entered care / 40 children left care / total LAC = 391  Target to be agreed by the new Social Care Director who is joining in August 14.  All decisions regarding care proceedings will continue to ensure the best interests and outcomes for the child. This may result in numbers increasing rather than decreasing but is an accented risk
	2.1.6 (CYPS)	Reduce the % of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	Low is better	Quarterly	13.3% (TBC)	5.70%					Green	Green		Cllr Lakin	Jane Parfremont	Deborah Johnson			In Q1 6 children out of 106 became subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. Target to be agreed by the new Social Care Director who is joining in August 14.

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
We will ensure that all adults in need of support and care get help early and have more choice and control to help them live at home	2.2.1 (Adults)	Increase the number of service users who have choice and control of their social care support packages and receive a personal budget	High is better	Monthly	81%	75.08%				Amber	Amber	↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	David Stevenson			A new national definition was received in June 2014, which no longer includes Occupational Therapy (OT) activity, as the new definition is expected to include only clients in receipt of long term support. Indicator currently rated as amber with a direction of travel "no change", however Rotherham's score has improved in terms of numbers of people in receipt of a personal budget and outturn consistently since 2010/11 from 50.7% (2010/11) to 80.3% (2013/14) and Rotherham is currently ranked top in terms of regional performance and 23rd nationally on this indicator.
	2.2.2 (Adults)	Increase the number of service users who have a new assessments completed within 28 days from first contact	High is better	Monthly	TBC - new baseline 13-14	89.07%				Amber		↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Michaela Cox			This indicator has improved throughout the quarter and is comparable to 13/14 year end outturn (90.73%). Please note that performance is currently unvalidated.
	2.2.3 (Adults)	Through improving community based support, reduce the number of service users over 65 who are being admitted to permanent residential homes (24 hour care)	Low is better	Monthly	650.7 (317 admissions)	109.34 (51 admissions)				Green		↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Michaela Cox			

**Corporate Plan Priority 3: Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained**

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Performance				Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4									
We will make sure that Rotherham's roads and pavements are safe to use and that their condition is at least as good as the national average	3.1.1 (EDS)	Reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - 5 year rolling average	Low is better	Annual	80.60%	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 87.4%)				Not Available		Cllr Smith	David Burton	Tom Finnegan Smith / Stuart Savage			Annual Measure	
	3.1.2 (EDS)	Reduce the numbers of Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - 5 year rolling average	Low is better	Annual	16.10%	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 17.6%)						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Tom Finnegan Smith / Stuart Savage			Annual Measure	
	3.1.3 (EDS)	Maintain the condition of Principal Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average	Low is better	Annual	6%	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 3%)						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Colin Knight / Steve Finley			Annual Measure	
	3.1.4 (EDS)	Maintain the condition of Non - Principal Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average	Low is better	Annual	8%	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 7%)						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Colin Knight / Steve Finley			Annual Measure	
	3.1.5 (EDS)	Maintain the condition of Unclassified Roads so their condition and % in need of structural repair is at least as good as the national average	Low is better	Annual	16% See Comments	Annual Measure (2013/14 Outturn - 19%)						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Colin Knight / Steve Finley			Annual Measure	
We will improve the quality of public spaces through better management of street cleansing and grounds maintenance	3.2.1 (EDS)	Decrease the % of surveyed sites not meeting acceptable standards of street cleanliness; a) Litter b) Detritus c) Graffiti	Low is better	4 Monthly	11.00%	4 Monthly Measure				Not Available		Cllr Smith	David Burton	Steve Hallsworth / Shirley Hallam			Performance will not be available until the end of July 14.	
	3.2.2 (EDS)	Following re-inspection of Grounds Maintenance works ensure no more than 5% defective / not to standard works	Low is better	Quarterly	=>5%	Not Available						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Steve Hallsworth / Richard Jackson			Performance will not be available until the end of July 14.	
	3.2.3 (EDS)	Decrease the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections	Low is better	Quarterly	See Comments	20.79% (Est.)						Cllr Smith	David Burton	Adrian Gabriel / Bob Morrison			Performance is an estimate only. Actual performance will not be available until the end of July 14.	
We will reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and ensure people feel safe where they live	3.3.1 (Housing)	a) Reduce the level of <u>total Crime</u>	Low is better	Monthly	Lower volume of Total Crime per 1000 population than peer Most Similar Group (MSG) forces.	-7.00%				Green	Green	↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Steve Parry			After a difficult year 2012/13, Rotherham has made an excellent start to the current year and after the first quarter is the best performing district in the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) area for Total Crime. Greater focus on the management of offenders, alignment of resources and a re-focus of the partnership approach has contributed to
		b) Reduce the level of <u>burglary dwelling</u>	Low is better	Monthly	Lower volume of Burglary Dwelling per 1000 households than peer MSG forces.	-37.00%						↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Steve Parry			

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
		c) Reduce the level of <u>vehicle crime</u>	Low is better	Monthly	Lower volume of Vehicle Crime per 1000 population than peer MSG forces.	-30.00%						↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Steve Parry			this significantly improved position.
		d) Reduce the level of <u>anti-social behaviour</u>	Low is better	Monthly	Reduce gap between ASB volumes and the national picture	0.00%						↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Steve Parry			At the end of the first quarter Rotherham's performance against reported ASB was showing no change to the same period last year.
	3.3.2 (Housing)	Decrease the % of people who's perception of ASB in their area is high.	Low is better	Quarterly	Reduction in % of people who think ASB is a 'big' or 'fairly big' problem in their area.	Not Available							Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Steve Parry			Your Voice Counts data for Qtr 1 not yet available.
	3.3.3 (Housing)	Increase the resolution of ASB cases	High is better	Monthly	96.50%	97.88%				Green		↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	Paul Walsh			

**Corporate Plan Priority 4: Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within the borough**

Outcome	Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	Good Performance	Frequency of Reporting	Year End target	Performance				Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	DOT	Cabinet Member	Director	Performance Lead	Perf. Clinic	Scorecard	Comments
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4									
We will work with communities to deliver services that are tailored to local conditions	4.1.1 (Adults)	Increase the number of service users who can buy the support they need themselves through a direct payment	High is better	Monthly	16%	14.95%				Green	Green	↑	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	David Stevenson			Current scores calculated using 13/14 denominator (no. of service users)
	4.1.2 (Adults)	Increase the number of people with a Learning Disability who are in employment	High is better	Monthly	7.1%	6.26%				Green		↔	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	John Williams			
	4.1.3 (Adults)	Increase the number of people with Mental Health issues who are in employment	High is better	Monthly	7.5%	5.69%				Green		↑	Cllr Doyle	Shona McFarlane	Alison Lancaster			
	4.1.4 (Health)	Take up of NHS health check programme by those eligible - <u>health check offered</u>	High is better	Quarterly	TBC	Not Available							Cllr Rushforth	John Radford	Sally Jenks			Performance unavailable due to quarterly time lag.
	4.1.5 (Health)	Take up of NHS health check programme by those eligible - <u>health check take up</u>	High is better	Quarterly	TBC	Not Available							Cllr Rushforth	John Radford	Sally Jenks			
We will respond quickly to people's needs, mitigating the effects of poverty and helping them to thrive	4.2.1 (CYPS)	<i>(This measure is currently under development.)</i>									Green							(This measure is currently under development.)
	4.2.2 (Health)	Increase healthy life expectancy at birth.	High is better	Annual	TBC	Annual Measure							Cllr Rushforth	John Radford	Michael Holmes			Annual Measure
	4.2.3 (CYPS)	Increase the % of target number of families 'turned around' after help and support from the families for change co-ordinators	High is better	Quarterly	100.00%	46.00%				Green			Cllr Lakin	Jane Parfremment	Karen Potts			46% represents performance that is slightly above trajectory to achieve 100% of families 'turned around' by April 2015. Rotherham's performance is also above national average.
We will ensure that people are able to live in decent affordable homes	4.3.1 (Housing)	Increase repairs completed within target timescales	High is better	Monthly	99.00%	99.35%				Green	Green	↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	John Brayshaw			
	4.3.2 (Housing)	Increase responsive repairs completed right first time	High is better	Monthly	92.00%	98.46%				Green		↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	John Brayshaw			
	4.3.3 (Housing)	Reduce the time taken to let empty council properties	Low is better	Monthly	25 days	21.81%				Green		↑	Cllr McNeely	Dave Richmond	John Brayshaw			

		Red		Amber		Green		Not Available	
		Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG	Measure RAG	Outcome RAG
Priority 1	1.1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	1.1.2	0		0		0		0	
	1.1.3	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	1.2.2	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.3	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.4	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.5	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.6	0		0		0		0	
	1.2.7	0		0		0		0	
	1.3.1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	1.3.2	0		1		0		0	
	1.3.3	0		0		0		0	
	1.3.4	0		0		0		0	
	1.3.5	0		0		0		0	
Priority 2	2.1.1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	2.1.2	0		1		0		0	
	2.1.3	0		0		1		0	
	2.1.4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	2.1.5	0		0		0		0	
	2.1.6	0		0		1		0	
	2.2.1	0		1		0		0	
	2.2.2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
2.2.3	0	0		1		0			
3.1.1	0	0		0		0		0	
3.1.2	0		0	0	0				
3.1.3	0		0	0	0				
3.1.4	0		0	0	0				
3.1.5	0		0	0	0				
3.2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
3.2.2	0		0		0		0		
3.2.3	0		0		0		0		
3.3.1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	
3.3.2	0		0		0		0		
3.3.3	0		0		1		0		
Priority 4	4.1.1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	4.1.2	0		0		1		0	
	4.1.3	0		0		1		0	
	4.1.4	0		0		0		0	
	4.1.5	0		0		0		0	
	4.2.1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	4.2.2	0		0		0		0	
	4.2.3	0		0		1		0	
	4.3.1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	4.3.2	0		0		1		0	
4.3.3	0	0		1		0			

	Qtr 1 14-15 Measures RAG	Qtr 1 14-15 Outcomes RAG
Red	0	0
Amber	3	1
Green	14	7
Not Available	0	4
	17	12

<b>ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>
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<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>Self Regulation Select Commission</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>18 September 2014</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Complaints – Annual Report (April 2013 – March 2014)</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>All</b>

**5. Summary**

This report presents information about complaints made between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services complaint regulations

The figures in the report include details of the number of complaints, compliments and Councillor Surgery enquiries received by the Council and each Directorate area has provided information and a breakdown summary.

In total over the last 12 months the number of complaints received by the Council is **672** (0.5% increase - **668** received 2012-13).

Overall **98%** of all complaints were responded to within the timescales promised, compared to **98%** (2012-13) and **94%** (2011-12).

**6. Recommendations**

That the commission note the contents of the report, its findings and recommendations.

## 7. Proposals and Details

The Annual Report (Appendix 1) sets out the Councils performance with regard to Complaints for the last financial year. In 2013-14 there has been continued improvement in the way that complaints are dealt with across the Council. Complaints are treated as excellent customer insight into the quality of services and all complaints are used to learn from and improve service delivery and inform policy changes. The management of complaints and the quality assurance processes in place has contributed to the reduction in complaints escalating through the complaint procedure, ensuring that we swiftly put things right when things go wrong and work with the customer to resolve their dissatisfaction.

### Headline Results April 2013 to March 2014

- A very small increase in the number of formal complaints (at all levels), **672**. (**668** received 2012-13), a small increase for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services and Environment and Development Services and a decrease for Children and Young People's Services. Less informal complaints\* received, **811**. (**1206** received 2012-13)
- More Councillor Surgeries were received, **714**. (**572** received in 2012-13).
- The same number of complaints were responded to within timescales, **98%**. (**98%** in 2012-13).
- Less complaints (at all stages) upheld, **193**, **28%**. (**256**, **38%** upheld 2012-13).
- The same number of Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2, **7%**, **50**. (**7%**, **48** escalated in 2012-13)
- The Ombudsman investigated more complaints, **38** complaints but upheld less, **5**, **13%** (**30** investigated and **8** upheld **27%** in 2012-13)

The creation of a centralised complaint function in 2012 and improvements made following the Council's review of complaints has continued to show benefits, both in terms of performance and the experience of customers. This has been achieved despite a decrease in the number of staff across the Council responsible for dealing with complaints. The efficiencies in the service and the best ever performance and experience of customer can be considered as a significant and successful improvement to the complaint service.

We are pleased to report that, working with front line services and customers, we have maintained a high level of performance and at the same time maintained qualitative approach to complaint handling. All complaints are quality assured and considered for learning and improvement. We have also continued to improve the access to our complaint service and improved the experience of customers using the complaint procedures.

The report also identifies trends in complaints relating to changes and improvements to Council services. We are beginning to see complaints as a result of the Council's budget reductions and other national external factors. Complaints have also been received relating to reductions in service, such as the Council's grass cutting service and from customers who are affected when services have been removed. Complaints also increased for the Housing Income Service reflecting the difficult financial times customers are facing. We also saw increases in complaints about damp in Council properties which is

partially attributable to fuel poverty which has been exacerbated by welfare benefit reforms such as the spare bedroom subsidy.

## Complaints by Directorate

### **Neighbourhoods and Adult Services**

In **Adult Social Services**, **76** complaints were received; this is a reduction from **88** last year and underlines the progress made in responding to customers concerns before they become formal complaints. Satisfaction with adult social care services has also increased, Rotherham has the best satisfaction rates in Yorkshire & Humberside.

Trends in complaints were regarding delays to services and information provided, waiting times for COT assessments and delays processing some social care assessments led to a number of complaints. Customers also made complaints about an absence of information or advice, particularly around the financial assessment process. Learning actions have been taken to address all issues and procedures updated and staff informed.

The front line social work teams completing assessments for customers received the most complaints. Complaints were received if the complainant wanted to challenge the outcome of the assessment, usually relating to the level of care to be provided. Complaints were received in other service areas including, Learning Disabilities – complaints were received about the transportation review, Direct Payments – regarding audits completed and Rothercare – regarding the provision of assistive technology equipment.

In **Housing and Neighbourhood Services** **341** complaints were received. Just over half of all new Stage 1 complaints in the period (**165, 51.72%**) were linked to repair services delivered by the Contract and Service Development Teams, the repairs contractors and the Strategic Housing Investment Team. The most common issues being the delay in repairs, damp and roof leaks, which in part was due to the gales in the third and fourth quarter of the year. Actions, detailed in the report have been put in place to address these issues in 2014-15.

The trends suggest lessons learned and reported in 2012-13 have been applied. Complaints about the repairs contractors have reduced by **12%**. One reason for this is the dramatic reduction of complaints about missed appointments. The next highest numbers of complaints (70, 21.94%) were made about services provided by Housing and Communities, this represents a drop of almost one fifth on last year. This reduction has been driven by a significant reduction in complaints about the action of staff enforcing tenancy breaches, the figures support the view that officers have improved how they communicate when taking enforcement action.

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

In total **73** formal complaints were received. Complaints were received in relation to communication, customer care, information about action taken and delays in information being provided. The number and type of these complaints are consistent with those received in the previous 6 months.

In addition complaints were received relating to decisions made in response to allegations made in respect of children, the sharing of sensitive information with families and concerns raised by young people about other young people which they live with in residential care.

### **Environment and Development Services**

The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride Services and were specifically around services delivered by Network Management where customers complained about the content of standard letters, lack of maintenance of road surfaces and number of pot holes evident across the borough along with lack of feedback received from Streetpride Connect contacts. Complaints were also received relating to Waste Management and problems being experienced with Waste Collections crew re-siting bins in the wrong location and assisted collections being missed. In Leisure and Community Services there are some indications that customers are complaining about Council budget reductions. They received a number of complaints relating to removal of litter bins, lack of litter picking, reduced grass cutting service and removal of toilet facilities at Rosehill Park.

### **Former Resources Directorate**

The total number of complaints received for Former Resources Directorate was **48**, representing a decrease over the last year from **69**. The decrease can be attributed to an improvement in the way that complaints are reported rather than a decline in the standard of service. Improvements in the way that the Council deals with complaints overall has led to a better engagement with services who are able to better identify when a complaint should be responded on a formal basis.

The Revenues and Benefits Service (Benefits Assessment) and Local Taxation received the highest number of complaints. These were mainly regarding advice and information provided by staff.

## **8. Risks and Uncertainties**

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

The current financial decisions the Authority is making is also affecting the number of complaints received (see full report for details), changes to services drive the level of complaints received.

This year the Complaint Team has assisted with an unprecedented number of Councillor e-casework enquiries. This positive trend is expected to continue as more Councillors are finding benefit in managing their casework electronically.

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

The complaints report reflects the Policy and Performance Agenda requirements of both national Government and the Council. These include;

- Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).
- The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- Localism Act 2011.
- Corporate Complaint Procedure.
- Rotherham's local plans including corporate and service plans.

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

- Appendix 1 Complaints Annual Report (April 2013 – March 2014)

#### **Contact Names:**

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

# Annual Report

April 2013 to March 2014

## Complaints

Rotherham  
Metropolitan  
Borough Council   
Where Everyone Matters

# Executive Summary

This report provides information about complaints made between **1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014** to the Local Authority, under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services Complaint Regulations.

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

**In total over the last 12 months the number of complaints received by the Council is 672 (0.5% increase - 668 received 2012-13).**

The continuous improvement in complaint handling (less complaints escalating through the complaints procedure, complaints upheld, less Ombudsman complaints upheld) is as a result of the creation of a centralised complaint function in 2012. The Complaints Team has allowed for a standardised approach to complaint handling and has allowed for the improvements seen in recent years to be maintained. All complaints are quality assured and all are reviewed for learning and service improvement. The team continues to work for the customer to make sure they are provided the best and most appropriate response to their concerns.

We are pleased to report that, working with front line services and customers, we have maintained a high level of performance and at the same time maintaining a qualitative approach to complaint handling. As well as complaint quality assurance and learning and improvement from complaints we have also continued to improve the access to our complaint service and improved the experience of customers using the complaint procedures.

The efficiencies in the service and the best ever performance and experience of customers can be considered as a significant and successful improvement to the complaint service.

Overall **98%** of all complaints were responded to within the timescales promised, compared to **98%** (2012-13) and **94%** (2011-12). This continues the Council's progressive approach to performance management, leading to year on year improvement. All Directorate leads are targeted to achieve 100% performance.

## Complaints Results April 2013 to March 2014

↑	More formal complaints (at all levels) received, <b>672</b> . ( <b>668</b> received 2012-13)
↑	More complaints for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services received, <b>417</b> . ( <b>413</b> received 2012-13)
↔	Same number of complaints for the former Resources Directorate received, <b>48</b> . ( <b>69</b> received 2012-13)
↓	Less complaints for Children and Young Peoples Services received, <b>73</b> . ( <b>76</b> received 2012-13)
↑	More complaints for Environment and Development Services received, <b>113</b> . ( <b>110</b> received 2012-13)
↑	More Councillor Surgeries were received, <b>714</b> . ( <b>572</b> received in 2012-13)
↔	The same number of complaints were responded to within timescales, <b>98%</b> . ( <b>98%</b> in

	2012-13)
↓	Less complaints (at all stages) upheld, <b>193, 28%</b> . ( <b>256, 38%</b> upheld 2012-13)
↔	The same number of Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2, <b>7%, 50</b> . ( <b>7%, 48</b> escalated in 2012-13)
↑	More complaints about quality of service were received, <b>325</b> . ( <b>291</b> received 2012-13)
↓	Less complaints about actions of staff were received, <b>119</b> . ( <b>138</b> received 2012-13)
↓	The Ombudsman investigated more complaints, <b>38</b> complaints but upheld less, <b>5, 13%</b> ( <b>30</b> investigated and <b>8</b> upheld <b>27%</b> in 2012-13)
↓	Less compensation awards made, <b>£1037</b> . ( <b>£1433</b> in 2012-13)
↓	Reduction in external complaint investigation costs in CYPs, <b>£19,494</b> . ( <b>£24,384</b> in 2012-13)
↑	More compliments recorded by the Complaints Team, <b>753</b> . ( <b>714</b> recorded in 2012-13)
↑	More informal complaints* received, <b>811</b> . ( <b>1206</b> received 2012-13)

\* Please note, informal complaints are defined as contacts by customers who are expressing dissatisfaction but the Council has been previously unaware of the concern and has not had an opportunity to put things right. These complaints have been dealt with and resolved to the customer's satisfaction at this first point of contact and as a result the customer has not wanted to enter formal complaint proceedings. This is done with the agreement of the customer and it means that a large number of enquiries are dealt with much quicker and at less cost to the Council.

An example would be a report of an outstanding repair to a Council property. The customer is unhappy but it can be very quickly resolved without need of a detailed investigation.

The Directorate Complaints Team has continued to maintain recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Learning from all Complaints to identify service improvements
- Less Ombudsman complaints upheld
- Improved performance on enquiries responded to in time
- Reduced the number of informal complaints received
- Maintained the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure
- Less complaints upheld
- All responses are quality assured
- Has assisted with more Councillor Surgery enquiries
- Has reduced compensation costs
- Has reduced CYPs investigation costs
- Increased the number of compliments recorded

## Complaint Trends

We have continued to improve the way that complaints are dealt with across the Council. Complaints have reduced slightly and we have maintained high performance. We continue to quality assure all complaints and consider all complaints for learning and improvement. This has contributed to the reduction in complaints escalating through the complaint procedure. There is a continued commitment to putting things right, we consider the best and most

efficient way to provide a response to the customer. Services are also encouraged to deal with any concerns at the earliest opportunity before concerns become complaints.

- We are beginning to see complaints as a result of the Council's budget reductions and other national external factors. Complaints have been received relating to reductions in service, such as the Council's grass cutting service and from customers who are affected when services have been removed. Complaints increased for the Housing Income Service reflecting the difficult financial times customers are facing. We also saw increases in complaints about damp in Council properties which is partially attributable to fuel poverty. Fuel poverty itself has been exacerbated by welfare benefit reforms such as the spare bedroom subsidy.
- Due to changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the Housing Ombudsman can also investigate complaints made against the Council. In addition the Local Government Ombudsman changed the way it categorised its decisions following investigation, they now clearly state if a complaint is upheld or not upheld or whether there is any evidence of maladministration or injustice. The potential of these judgements negatively impacting on the reputation of the Council means that now any complaints where resolution has not been found and could escalate to the Ombudsman are reviewed and considered, managers and the Complaints Team have to be fully satisfied that all possible action has been taken to resolve the complaint.
- We have reduced the amount paid in compensation to customers. Compensation awards can be defined as small payments for low level quantifiable costs identified by customers. In some cases we have also awarded for inconvenience caused. A reason for the reduction is that managers investigating complaints are encouraged to consider other solutions before a financial settlement is offered.
- Complaint investigation costs in Children's Social Services have also decreased, although some costs were carried over into this financial year, this reduction is due to the work to reduce the number of complaints escalating through to Stage 2 of the Complaint Procedure. Improvements to the quality of responses at Stage 1 has led to investigation costs being reduced. It is expected that a further reduction will be evident in 2013-14.

## **Improvements from Complaints**

Complaints are an opportunity for the Council not only to put things right but to improve the service it offers, some of the changes that have been made from complaints are as follows; (full details are in the learning from complaints sections throughout the report)

- The "It's Your move" and bidding process in Housing has been re-engineered
- Replaced all communal facility cupboards with key pads to avoid future delays.
- The allocation process was amended and training given to allocation officers to advise prospective tenants of the presence of asbestos.
- Updated the internet with a list of garage sites, plans, Frequently Asked Question information and application forms to allow greater self-help and reduce avoidable contact.

- Changed the eligibility criteria to access the Memory Café service, we now have flexibility based on capacity, it is open to all on request subject to review every 6 months.
- Briefed all staff, including those working out of hours and reminded them to provide information and advice about the financial assessment process for Adult Social care. We have also looked at what written information is available to customers, including online information.
- Reviewed and made clearer its eligibility criteria for children with disabilities accessing and being assessed for services.
- Amended advice offered to customers, regarding Council Tax, over the phone to set up arrangement to pay where an acceptable level of re-payment has been offered.
- Amended procedure where customers are asked to provide employer details as part of arrangement to pay (Council Tax) and they refuse the call / interaction is take by a Senior Officer and judgement made on the best way forward.

### **Neighbourhoods and Adult Services**

In **Adult Social Services**, **76** complaints were received; this is a reduction from **88** last year and underlines the progress made in responding to customers concerns before they become formal complaints. Satisfaction with adult social care services has also increased, Rotherham has the best satisfaction rates in Yorkshire & Humberside.

Trends in complaints were regarding delays to services and information provided, waiting times for COT assessments and delays processing some social care assessments led to a number of complaints. Customers also made complaints about an absence of information or advice, particularly around the financial assessment process. Learning actions have been taken to address all issues and procedures updated and staff informed.

The front line social work teams completing assessments for customers received the most complaints. Complaints were received if the complainant wanted to challenge the outcome of the assessment, usually relating to the level of care to be provided. Complaints were received in other service areas including, Learning Disabilities – complaints were received about the transportation review, Direct Payments – regarding audits completed and Rothercare – regarding the provision of assistive technology equipment.

In **Housing and Neighbourhood Services** **341** complaints were received. Just over half of all new Stage 1 complaints in the period (**165, 51.72%**) were linked to repair services delivered by the Contract and Service Development Teams, the repairs contractors and the Strategic Housing Investment Team. The most common issues being the delay in repairs, damp and roof leaks, which in part was due to the gales in the third and fourth quarter of the year. Actions, detailed in the report have been put in place to address these issues in 2014-15.

The trends suggest lessons learned and reported in 2012-13 have been applied. Complaints about the repairs contractors have reduced by **12%**. One reason for this is the dramatic reduction of complaints about missed appointments. The next highest number of complaints (**70, 21.94%**) were made about services provided by Housing and Communities, this

represents a drop of almost one fifth on last year. This reduction has been driven by a significant reduction in complaints about the action of staff enforcing tenancy breaches, the figures support the view that officers have improved how they communicate when taking enforcement action.

*See appendix 1 for further details*

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

In total **73** formal complaints were received. Complaints were received in relation to communication, customer care, information about action taken and delays in information being provided. The number and type of these complaints are consistent with those received in previous 6 months.

In addition complaints were received relating to decisions made in response to allegations made in respect of children, the sharing of sensitive information with families and concerns raised by young people about other young people which they live with in residential care.

*See appendix 2 for further details*

### **Environment and Development Services**

The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride Services and were specifically around services delivered by Network Management where customers complained about the content of standard letters, lack of maintenance of road surfaces and number of pot holes evident across the borough along with lack of feedback received from Streetpride Connect contacts. Complaints were also received relating to Waste Management and problems being experienced with Waste Collections crew re-siting bins in the wrong location and assisted collections being missed. In Leisure and Community Services there are some indications that customers are complaining about Council budget reductions. They received a number of complaints relating to removal of litter bins, lack of litter picking, reduced grass cutting service and removal of toilet facilities at Rosehill Park.

*See appendix 3 for further details*

### **Former Resources Directorate**

The total number of complaints received for the Former Resources Directorate was **48**, representing a decrease over the last year from **69**. The decrease can be attributed to an improvement in the way that complaints are reported rather than a decline in the standard of service. Improvements in the way that the Council deals with complaints overall has led to a better engagement with services who are able to better identify when a complaint should be responded on a formal basis.

The Revenues and Benefits Service (Benefits Assessment) and Local Taxation received the highest number of complaints. These were mainly regarding advice and information provided by staff.

*See appendix 4 for further details*

# New Developments in 2013-14

The Complaints Team continued to make improvements in complaint handling, continued to make sure that customers receive the best response possible. We continue to look for ways to improve the service to customers, through consultation with managers, staff training, learning from complaints and customer feedback.

We have continued to deliver on previous year on year improvements, including;

- Maintained the highest performance for dealing with complaints ever – 98% in timescale.
- Through learning from complaints reduced the number of complaints for a 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year across the Council.
- Reduced number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure (Stage 2 and Stage 3).
- A better experience for customers making a complaint.
- Improved the learning and service improvement from complaints.
- Improved customer satisfaction, as evidenced in best practice models that exist across the council.
- Procedures strengthened for all complaints to be dealt with and resolved at the earliest opportunity.
- Improved process for filtering out service requests (received by the Complaints Team) at point of contact so that they are dealt with promptly for the customer.
- All complaints continue to be subject to learning from complaint procedures. Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints are subject to special consideration by the services responsible in collaboration with the Complaints Team.
- Service redesign based on complaints and enquiries received, supported by the Complaints Team.
- New reporting framework to Children and Young People's Services Leadership Team and Safeguarding Children and Families Management Team.
- Improved access to the complaints procedure for children in care and children with disabilities.

In addition, the following actions have been completed and embedded in 2013-14;

- Reviewed statutory responsibilities for Children's and Adult Social Care and revised structures accordingly in line with legislative guidance and best practice.
- Strengthened guidance and training around apologising and early resolution to reduce complaints time and costs and ensure that this is embedded into general customer service at front end.
- Reviewed the commissioning of independent investigator and independent person at Stage 2 to reduce costs.
- Reviewed the handling of school complaints
- Introduced new complaint procedure for Housing to accommodate requirements in complaint handling due to the Localism Act 2011.
- New Designated Tenant complaint panel and Designated Person procedures.
- Accommodated complaints received from Public Health Services.
- New webpage for complaints, all new advice and information available.

- New complaint advice literature.
- New Quality Assurance procedure for all MP enquiry responses.
- Outcome of investigations by the Ombudsman Services are subject to a Director led management review.

Finally working with Self Regulation Select Commission we have;

- Reviewed advice to Managers to allow them to better consider requests for compensation.
- Any complaint trends, e.g. any increases in the number or type received, are discussed with managers.
- All complaint processes aligned.
- Complaint webpage refreshed – contact information fully available.
- Review of how commissioned services deal with complaints.
- Continued to work with managers to make sure complaints are resolved as early as possible and we always apologise when appropriate.

## **2014-15 Improvement Actions**

The following improvement actions are ongoing into year 2014-15;

- We will continue to improve learning and service improvement from customer feedback.
- We will review the quality of complaint responses in light of new requirements from dealing with MP Enquiries and Local Government Ombudsman enquiries.
- All customer responses (all Directorates) will be quality assured to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Specific training and feedback will be provided to staff to further improve the quality of investigation and response.
- All Ombudsman decisions will be considered for learning and improvement.
- We will continue to strengthen guidance and training around apologising and early resolution to reduce complaints time and costs and ensure that this is embedded into general customer service at front end.
- Publish performance with regards to complaints to customers including learning and improved outcomes.
- Put in place a consistent training programme for all investigating officers and Members.
- Develop an online mandatory complaints handling training package for all staff and managers.
- The Complaints Team will review how it performance manages the e-case surgery system to ensure best value and it can manage an anticipated increase in usage of the system.

## Appendix 1

### Directorate Performance in 2013-14

#### Neighbourhood and Adult Services

Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate complaints are split into statutory (Adult Services) and non statutory complaints (Housing and Neighbourhood Services). As of this year complaints for Public Health have also been reported under this Directorate.

The combined results for the whole Directorate are as follows;

**The total number of complaints received for Neighbourhood and Adult Services was 417 (Total received in 2012-13 – 413)**

**Overall 100% of all complaints were responded to within the timescales, compared to 100% in 2012-13.**

↓	Total number of complaints upheld was <b>128</b> . ( <b>177</b> in 2012-13)
↑	Number of complaints escalating: - <b>29</b> Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2. ( <b>25</b> in 2012-13)
↓	<b>£915</b> compensation payments. ( <b>£1240</b> in 2012-13 )
↑	Number of Councillor Surgeries received was <b>340</b> . ( <b>261</b> in 2012-13)
↓	Number of Compliments received was <b>373</b> . ( <b>450</b> in 2012-13)
↓	Number of informal complaints <b>245</b> . ( <b>377</b> in 2011-12)

#### Adult Services

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

**Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services was 76 (Total received in 2012-13 - 88)**

**Overall 100% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales.** This performance again benchmarks the best against the regional Yorkshire and Humberside Local Authority complaints group based on numbers received (15 Local Authority areas).

#### Headline Results 2013-14

↓	Number of complaints, <b>76</b> , decrease from <b>88</b> received 2012-13.
↑	The proportion of complaints (at all stages) upheld, <b>24</b> , increase from <b>16</b> upheld in 2012-13.
↓	The number of complaints escalating, <b>11%</b> , <b>8</b> Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2, from <b>67</b> Stage 1 complaints. Decrease from <b>12%</b> in 2011-12. ( <b>9</b> Stage 2 complaints and <b>75</b> Stage 1 complaints)
↓	Complaints about quality of service, <b>30</b> , decrease from <b>52</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	Complaints about actions of staff <b>20</b> , decrease from <b>23</b> in 2012-13.

↔	1 Upheld Ombudsman complaint from 6 decisions
↔	Total compensation awards made £0, £0 in 2012-13.
↓	External complaint investigation costs, £0
↑	Number of Councillor Surgery's received was 16, increase from 15 in 2012-13.
↓	Number of Compliments received was 118, decrease from 147 in 2012-13.
↓	Number of informal complaints received, 38, decrease from 40 received in 2012-13.

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

- Reduced the number of complaints received.
- Reduced the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Maintained performance at 100%.
- Promoting and increasing accessibility of the complaints procedure through the development of new internet pages, SMS, and new advice leaflets.
- Learning from complaints – all complaints interrogated for learning.
- No compensation paid.

### Top complaint issues

Complaints in Adult Social Services reflect the range of services offered by the Directorate. Common themes in terms of the types of complaints received were regarding information and delay.

Customers complained over delays in assessment, both in terms of social care and Occupational Therapy assessments. The **Occupational Therapy Service** received complaints around waiting times for assessments but in Social Care complaints were regarding issues specific to individual teams and Social Workers, about how successfully cases are managed by individuals and teams. In response work was completed to address any individual problems and the service as a whole has looked at ways to improve its case management procedures.

Absence of information provided to customers also generated complaints, customers complained if they were not given enough information about their care arrangements or about the financial assessment process. Again learning from complaints has considered the type and level of information that it provided.

In terms of the service areas in Adult Social Care, the services dealing with the largest number of customers, **Assessment and Care Management** has dealt with the majority of complaints. These were mostly regarding the outcome of care assessments. Customers complained if they felt that the level of care was not adequate to meet their needs or that they felt that the type of care offered was not appropriate, for example complaints were received if a family felt that their family member required residential care rather than community care.

Complaints were received by the **Safeguarding Service**; both perpetrators and victims family's raised concerns about the outcome of the process. Complaints will always centre on the outcome of the procedures. Although the complaint procedure will not consider complaints about the outcome, it will consider complaints about how the outcome is reached and if safeguarding procedures have been followed. Out of the 7 complaints received only one was from a perpetrator, a care provider with concerns about a contract default notice that had been

served. The other complaints were raised by family members of victims, two complaints about how they felt they had been dealt with throughout the process and three complaints about how the safeguarding investigation had been conducted and what information had been considered.

The **Learning Disabilities Service** received complaints regarding the transportation review; family members raised concerns about the outcome of the assessments under the review. This is further evidence that changes to services due to financial pressures are generating complaints.

Finally, complaints were received regarding **Assistive Technology**, this is a relatively new service offered by the Council and as such had not received complaints previously. Complaints were received as more equipment is made available to customers and more services are provided reflecting the demand for its services. The complaints were regarding delays in assessment for equipment, which have now been addressed.

### **Councillor Surgeries**

**16** Councillor Surgery enquiries were received regarding Adult Social Care Services (**15** in 2012/13). They were in the main requests for Occupational Therapy assessments, usually relating to access to properties. Other requests were received asking for social care assessments to be completed. These were all directed to appropriate channels and the request completed.

### **Compliments**

**118** compliments were received regarding Adult Social Care Services, some examples are as follows;

Compliment for the **Community Occupational Therapy Service** “Nothing needs to be changed as far as I am concerned. She was a lovely person, very efficient and I can't believe how quickly work was carried out”.

Compliment for the **Assessment Team** “Passion and professionalism that restores faith in this much needed service. She is such a friendly, but professional and sensitive person”.

Compliments for **Enabling Service** “Very satisfied – helped me to get on my feet again. Thank you very much.” “The service you all gave was amazing - we were so very grateful. Please pass on my thanks”. “Very pleased with the care I received”.

Compliment for **Unplanned Review Team** “for responding promptly and efficiently in arranging respite care”.

Compliment for **Davis Court** “Just wanted to say a massive thank you for the care and support received”.

Compliment for the **Planned Review Team**. “Thanks for all your help in facilitating the smooth transition of care and respite to new providers”.

### ***Housing and Neighbourhood Services***

Housing and Neighbourhood Services' complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint Procedure.

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

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

There was a **5%** increase in the number of complaints, 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 and Housing Ombudsman Service.

#### **Headline Results 2013-14**

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) was <b>341</b> representing a comparative <b>5%</b> increase on the <b>325</b> received in 2012-13.
↑	<b>319</b> New (stage 1) complaints were received representing a comparative <b>5%</b> increase on the <b>305</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	The total number of complaints fully upheld was <b>104</b> representing a comparative <b>35%</b> reduction on the <b>161</b> upheld in 2012-13.
↑	<b>21</b> complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 compared to <b>16</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	<b>1</b> was escalated from stage 2 to stage 3 compared to <b>3</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	Complaints about lack of service decreased from <b>85</b> in 2012-13 to <b>45</b> a 47 % reduction.
↓	Complaints about delays in service decreased from <b>48</b> in 2012-13 to <b>43</b> a 6% reduction.
↓	Complaints about actions of staff decreased from <b>72</b> in 2012-13 to <b>59</b> an 18% reduction.
↑	There were <b>160</b> new complaints about the quality of service representing a 74 % increase on the <b>92</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	There were <b>2</b> complaints about the lack of information compared to <b>3</b> in 2012-13.
↑	There were <b>10</b> complaints about the cost of the service compared to <b>2</b> in 2012-13.
↓	<b>£915</b> in compensation awards made, compared to <b>£1,240</b> in 2012-13.
↓	<b>207</b> informal complaints were received in the period, representing a significant reduction on the <b>337</b> received in 2012-13.
↔	<b>No</b> Ombudsman investigations were received. <b>None</b> received in 2012-13.
↑	Number of Service Requests received was <b>434</b> , increase from <b>300</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of Councillor Surgeries received through the e-casework system was <b>324</b> , increase from <b>246</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	Number of Compliments received was <b>250</b> , decrease from <b>303</b> in 2012-13.

The number of complaints has risen by **5%** and responded to in an average of **7.28** days. Although the number of complaints have slightly increased fewer have been fully upheld at stage 1 and although there was an increase in complaints reaching stage 2, only **5** were upheld. Only one customer wished to progress to stage three and this was a case held over from 2012-13, the case was not upheld by the Complaints Panel. The figures suggest an improvement in case handling, this view is supported by the fact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) or Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) did not fully investigate a single complaint about the service for a second successive year.

Although the number of complaints have slightly increased fewer have been fully upheld.

## Top complaint issues

**Table 1 Complaints by Service Area**

Service Area	Stage 1 *Complaints	% of total complaints
Contract & Service Development Team	85 – (81)	26.65%
Contractors	57 – (66)	17.86%
Housing & Communities	70 – (86)	21.94%
Housing Options	40 – (36)	12.54%
Safer Neighbourhoods	16 -- (14)	5.02%
Strategic Housing Investment	23 – (14)	7.21%
Business Regulation	3 -- (3)	0.94%
Housing Finance	16 -- (3)	5.02%
CSC/Connect	9 -- (2)	2.82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>319 – (305)</b>	<b>100%</b>

**\*2012/3 complaint numbers are in the brackets**

An improving trend has been shown by the 12% reduction in complaints received about Willmott Dixon Partnership and Mears the Council's two repairs and maintenance contractors. This continues the year on year reduction in the number of complaints about the contractors and the use of "tool box talks" to promote service improvements to the workforce. It is noticeable that the number of complaints about missed appointments has dramatically reduced.

Similarly complaints about the Housing and Communities department are down 19% with a noticeable reduction regarding complaints about the actions of staff. The department deals with issues such as breaches of the Council's tenancy agreement and anti-social behaviour, the reduction may reflect lessons learned about conflict management.

Complaints about Housing Income are up from a small number in 2012-13. The complaints do not appear to reflect a deterioration of service; issues raised include rent arrears and service charges and in all probability reflect the difficult financial times customers are facing. The service will monitor complaints to identify any trend and service improvements.

Complaints about the Strategic Housing Investment Team have increased, again from a small number. There is no immediate identifiable trend, although the most common complaint was a result of contractor's actions/damage.

The service has treated every complaint as a learning opportunity and has sought to improve the service and customer experience by again targeting improvements in those areas of highest volume of complaints.

Analysis of complaints by service and type has continued to inform service improvements helping the directorate make decisions to realign resources. The following are examples of how the service has been realigned.

### **Complaints about condensation related damp**

The year saw a trend of complaints and service requests about damp, in the vast majority of cases the damp proved to be condensation rather than rising or penetrating damp caused by disrepair. The increase in this type of complaint has locally and nationally been attributed to fuel poverty which has been exacerbated by welfare benefit reforms such as the spare bedroom subsidy or "Bedroom Tax".

Traditionally condensation has been treated as a "lifestyle" issue and tackled through education. However learning from complaints and assessing the growing impact of fuel poverty has informed a new approach for 2014-15. This has culminated in the use of specialist Condensation Company to recommend and advise the Council on ventilation solutions it could implement rather than advise customers who may not have the capacity to adequately heat their homes. The outcome will help minimise condensation and its impact on tenant's health and help sustain the Councils stock.

### **Empty Homes**

There were a number of complaints about the standard of empty homes let resulting in a reorganisation and the team being brought within the Contract and Service Development Team in the last quarter of 2013-14. This has resulted in increased monitoring of the contractors by Contract and Service Development officers and a holistic approach to empty homes, which looks beyond the letting of the property. It is anticipated this approach will see a reduction in complaints about empty homes in 2014-15.

As an example the Contract and Service Delivery Team have addressed the issue of gas and electricity services not being connected when the property is let by forming a partnership with British Gas, which commenced on the 1 April 2014. This means the contractors have gas and electricity available to complete necessary tests before the customer moves in and avoids lengthy delays the customer may experience when arranging for the utilities to connect the service.

### **Gale damage and roof leaks**

A succession of gales at the end of the third quarter and beginning of the fourth quarter of 2013-14 and persistent rain caused a significant number of complaints about delays completing repairs as the contractors and their sub-contractors were faced with batches of hundreds of additional roof repairs generated over a short period of time. The volume of additional repairs resulted in lengthy delays before some repairs were completed.

Learning from the gales the Contract and Service Development Team, has changed its practice and if faced with severe gales in the future, will inspect and prioritise all gale damage and refer through to the contractors in a prioritised order. This will not impact on the overall time to complete all jobs but will ensure that gale damage affecting the Council's property

causing most disturbance to customers will be prioritised and dealt with as soon as reasonably possible.

### Access to Key Choices

Customers were experiencing significant telephone delays after they have been transferred to the Property Shop. To address this the following action was taken resulting in improved access and no further complaints about delays have been received.

- The available resources to respond to calls was improved by
  - Reviewing officers skill sets and ensuring greater generic working.
  - Call patterns monitored and resources more effectively targeted.
  - Officers will receive refresher training on the use of the CC6 system.
  - Call handling and wrap up times will be emphasised in 1-2-1's to ensure quality and efficiency.
- The dedicated bidding line was changed so that callers only have to make one call and more calls go direct to the call handlers.
- A green, amber and red system was introduced, to warn of impending service failure on response time and allow managers to intervene. Arrangements were put in place to ensure if the average response nears the service standard then the Call Centre Manager will ensure that calls will be taken by the Contact Centre and arrange for the Allocation Team to phone back when the number of calls reaches a more manageable level.

### Councillor Surgeries

Service Area	Number of Surgeries
Contract & Service Development	122
Housing & Communities	100
Housing Options	58
Safer Neighbourhoods	28
Strategic Housing Services	10
Housing Finance	3
Business regulation	2
Repairs connect	1
Total	324

**324** Councillor enquiries were received via the Council's e-case surgery system in 2013-14 a rise of a quarter from the 246 reported in 2012-13. Approximately 90% of these related to services received by existing or perspective council tenants. Repair issues comprised almost half (**152**) of all enquiries, the issues being most commonly repair request, damp, leaks, perceived repair delays and gates and fencing. The next highest number of enquiries received were those received regarding neighbourhood management issues (**85**) the dominant issues being raised were tenancy management (**38**) ASB/nuisance (**26**) and grounds maintenance/estate services related issues such as trees and hedges (**21**).

The Housing Options service received the third highest number of enquires (**51**) with almost all relating to customers request for re-housing.

It should be noted the figures are based on enquiries received through the e-case surgery system and do not include any enquiries sent direct to officers.

## **Compliments**

**250** compliments were received regarding Housing and Neighbourhood Services, some examples are as follows;

Compliment for Nicola Bratley, **Furniture Solutions Team** "big thank you to you and your team, many thanks and I will spread the word about your amazing service, the men were brilliant polite and helpful nothing was too much trouble for them."

Compliment for **Housing Options**, Barry Senior, "he was very caring and understanding of my application. Barry was really helpful he deserves an email of praise and is a credit to your team".

Compliment for Steph Lowrie, **Rotherham South** "both the new tenant and her mum praised how thorough you had been during the IYM meeting and how knowledgeable you were when answering their questions. They were very pleased with the meeting and spoke very highly of you".

Compliment for **Morrison FS** "Stewart and Dan and all the work lads who have helped. Thank you so much you have given me freedom in my house."

Compliment for **Willmott Dixon** "very friendly efficient and very clean workers... from my experience all your workmen have been absolutely brilliant... and are welcome in for a cuppa anytime".

Compliment for Linda Hopkins, **Community Protection Unit**, "I would like to thank you for your prompt attention you have given to the problem we had with dog fouling in our street. As promised the signs were put up and they seem to have done the trick. Please pass on my thanks to the team responsible FULL MARKS".

Compliment for **Aid and Adaptations Team** "Thank you very much". "Everybody I spoke to on the phone or personally was pleasant and obliging and thanks a lot." "Very happy with all of the Adaptations Team and workmen, thank you." "Would not change a thing, everything excellent. "Very good." "I would leave you as you are perfect. Thank you very, very much."

## **Public Health**

No formal complaints were received

1 enquiry from a MP was received – regarding the changes to the Ministry of Food.

5 Compliments were received;

- "Big thank you to you all for making my filming session into a wonderful experience ( I had really been dreading it ) by putting me at ease and reassuring me throughout that it was going well."

- “Thanks to everyone who gave up their time to host us last week.”
- Compliment in support of Local Chronicle Award Application (Heart Town Project)
- “Thanks for all your help and support in trying to reduce crime in the Rotherham area.”
- “Massive thank you from all of us. The films are fantastic – the quality and content is superb and they really do the nominees justice. It has been a real pleasure to work with you.”

## Learning from complaints

1. A customer complained they had come top in the bidding for a property which was then let to another applicant after they failed to attend an "It's Your Move" interview. The interviewing officer was adamant messages were left on the customer's phone and the customer claims not to have received them.

In response to their concerns we have;

- The "Its Your move" and bidding process has been re-engineered to provide a written auditable trail to ensure there is adequate written, auditable notice of the "Its Your Move" process and consequence of failure to attend. This will mean customers do not miss out on the home of their choice and the Council is protected from any liability and reputational damage.

2. Several customers complained about distress caused by the annual rent increase letter for garages, which includes a Notice to Quit on the rear. The wording of the annual garage rent increase letter has not changed for many years, the letter in effect says in a very formal way if the customer does not wish to pay the new rent the garage licence can be brought to an end.

In response to their concerns we are;

- Removing the Notice to Quit from the 2015-16 letter because there is no reasonable reason to include the Notice to Quit because there is effective monitoring in place and garage licences can be brought to an end swiftly if there are breaches of the licence.
- Replacing all communal facility cupboards with key pads to avoid future delays.

3. A new tenant complained about an asbestos garage, the garage should have been removed prior to letting. The complaint raised the issue of new lettings and the notification of asbestos.

In response to this problem;

- A report was designed to extract information from APEX and put it into a standard easy to read letter for new tenants identifying the type and location and level of risk of asbestos in each room.
- An easy to read advice leaflet was designed to reassure customers.
- The allocation process was amended and training given to allocation officers to advise prospective tenants of the presence of asbestos.

4. A number of complaints were made about missed appointments at the start of the year for jobs which a contractor was adamant none had been made. The issue affected those jobs where no appointment dates has been made such as variation orders where the contractor was reasonably awaiting materials and cannot make an appointment until they arrive.

In response;

- The Complaints Team investigated and identified the last date of the Contractors planning period was translating as the appointment date on ROCC, resulting in the tenants being given false appointment dates by Rotherham Connect call handlers when they have looked on ROCC. The cause was identified by examining how the two IT systems used by RMBC and the contractor interface. The Contract and Service Development Team have altered ROCC's tolerances to ensure the end of the planning period cannot now appear on ROCC as an appointment.

5. A complaint was received regarding the poor standard of advice and information on the location, availability and applications for Council garages.

In response to the complaints concerns we have;

- Placed plans and support information on the intranet to help call centre staff more adequately respond to service requests.
- Updated the internet with a list of sites, plans, Frequently Asked Questions information and application forms to allow greater self-help and reduce avoidable contact.

### Learning from complaints – continued

6. Customer complained that their family member could not use the Memory Café service, as she was in residential care.

In response to their concerns we;

- Changed the eligibility criteria to access the service, we now have flexibility based on capacity, it is open to all on request subject to review every 6 months.

7. Customer not given any information regarding the financial assessment process and possible charges for care following the end of the 6 week enablement period.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Briefed all staff, including those working out of hours and reminded them to provide information and advice about the financial assessment process. We have also looked at what written information is available to customers, including online information.

### New Developments during 2013-14

- Complaints have reduced as work around putting things right at the earliest opportunity continues to impact on the way we respond to customers concerns.
- All complaints continue to be subject to learning from complaint procedures. Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints are subject to special consideration by the services responsible in collaboration with the Complaints Team.
- Outcome of investigations by the Ombudsman Services are subject to a Director led management review.
- New Housing complaint procedure has been agreed and implemented, all Housing complaints are subject to a two stage process. New information and advice is available to customers, in writing and on line.
- Information and advice relating to Adult Services complaints was reviewed and has been refreshed, new information is available on line in writing.
- The Complaints Team met with the Housing Ombudsman in November 2013 to understand its approach to complaints and trends of complaints received by other social landlords.
- The Empty Homes Team were brought within the Contract and Service Development division; this has improved the service by giving access to quality assurance officers in the Contract and Service Development Team. It has also overcome silo working and promoted a more holistic approach, not least because repair issues arising from the letting of properties will have to be addressed within the division, meaning there is a greater incentive to get it right first time.
- Analysis of service requests received by the Complaints Team was used to help redesign the Council's website to improve access to services. This has improved access by creating clear direct access to individual services on the website. It has also improved the Complaints Team's efficiency because it no longer has to process and forward on large numbers of service requests such as reports of neighbour nuisance.
- The layout of the Property Shop was redesigned to improve the confidentiality of interviews following a complaint.

## **2014-15 Improvement Actions**

- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform service improvements and the Complaints Team's focus. The Service will monitor the implementation of improvement plans generated by individual complaints.
- Continue to reduce the numbers of complaints received and to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Continue to analyse complaints by service and type will continue to inform service improvements.
- Work with Rotherfed to assist with the creation of a Tenant Complaint Panel in Rotherham.
- Work with Members and MP's to allow them to maintain their role as Designated Persons in Housing complaints.
- E-learning package for complaints handling and investigation will be developed for all staff and managers.
- Focus on improving the quality of Stage 1 complaint investigation and responses to drive service improvements and customer satisfaction.
- The Complaints Team will work closely with the CIVICA implementation manager to ensure the complaints investigation maximises the opportunities offered by the implementation of CIVICA.
- The Complaints Team will continue to identify service sector best practice by attending the Housemark Complaints benchmarking group to aid service improvements
- The Complaints Team will review how it performance manages the e-case surgery system to ensure best value and it can manage an anticipated increase in usage of the system within existing reducing resources.

## Appendix 2

### Directorate Performance in 2013-14

#### Children and Young People Services

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

The Service records customers and complaint points as is required under their regulations.

**The total number of complaints received was 73. (76 received in 2012-13)**

**Overall 77% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to 84% (2012-13).**

A total of 16 complaints were responded to out of timescale. The reason for complaints been dealt with over time were in the main due to the complexity of complaint investigations and the availability of key persons relevant to the investigation. Unfortunately, some complaints were also responded to out of time due to a failure in business continuity and business planning.

At all times customers were kept informed of the delay and were offered an unreserved apology. The complaint team will work with all managers to increase the number of complaints responded to in timescale and improvement actions have been implemented.

#### Headline Results 2013-14

↑	Number of school complaint enquiries, <b>107</b> . Increased from <b>81</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of enquiries from MPs, <b>18</b> . Decreased from <b>23</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of enquiries from Local Government Ombudsman, <b>8, 1 Upheld</b> . Decreased from <b>14, 8 Upheld</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of complaints at all levels, <b>73</b> . Decreased from <b>76</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of Stage 1 complaints, <b>70</b> . Increased from <b>68</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of Stage 2 complaints, <b>3</b> . Decreased from <b>6</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of Stage 3 complaints, <b>0</b> . Decreased from <b>2</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of complaints escalating from Stage 1 to Stage 2, <b>3, 4%</b> . Increased from <b>6, 9%</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of complaints upheld at all levels, <b>24, 34%</b> . Decreased from <b>38%</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Percentage of complaints at all levels responded to in timescales, <b>77%</b> . Decreased from <b>83%</b> in 2012-13.
↓	External complaint investigation costs, <b>£19,494</b> . Decreased from <b>£22,039</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of Councillor Surgery enquiries <b>5</b> . Increased from <b>2</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of informal complaints received, <b>108</b> . Decreased from <b>119</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of compliments received <b>133</b> . <b>31</b> received in 2012-13.
↑	Total compensation paid <b>£250</b> . Increased from no compensation paid in 2012-13.
↑	Complaints about quality of service, <b>42</b> , increase from <b>35</b> received in 2012-13.
↑	Complaints about actions of staff, <b>22</b> , increase from <b>20</b> received in 2012-13.

## **Top complaint issues**

### **Content and timeliness of assessments and reports**

Customers raised complaints about Initial and Core Assessments, Case Conference Reports and Court Welfare Reports.

Customers are entitled and encouraged to share their views with the relevant social worker as part of the assessment and child in need or child protection process and their views can be recorded in the appropriate section of the assessment. However, complaints about court reports are not considered via the complaints procedure and customers are advised to discuss their concerns with their legal representative.

### **Communication and Customer Service**

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

### **Actions, Conduct and Professionalism of Staff**

Complaints are usually made in addition to the customers main complaint issues. In most cases there is little evidence to support or disprove the complaint being made as the customer has raised concerns about the way verbal information has provided to them or the attitude of the member of staff.

### **Sharing of sensitive information**

A small number of complaints were regarding the information shared about the complainant, with other persons.

There are specific exceptions in law for information to be shared when it relates to the protection of a child.

### **Response to referrals**

A small number of complaints were regarding the decisions made in response to allegations received concerning the welfare of children. These complaints are usually made if the complainants believes either that the allegations are malicious and the Council should not have taken any action; or that the Council has not acted on information given and therefore has not taken concerns seriously from the point of view of the complainant.

### **Actions of other young people in Children's Homes**

A number of complaints were received by young people about the disruption and emotional impact resulting from the behaviour of other young people who they live with in residential units.

### **School Complaints**

School complaints cover a diverse range of issues which include:

- Bullying by pupils

- Actions, conduct and professionalism of the head teacher and other school staff
- Complaints from parents of pupils who have been excluded from school
- Pupil attendance issues
- School uniform issues
- Examination issues

### **Councillor Surgeries**

6 Councillor Surgery enquiries were received, they were regarding various issues relating to both children's social care and schools and education services.

### **Compliments**

133 compliments were received regarding Children's Social Care Services, some examples are as follows;

"[Social Worker] made her feel very comfortable and didn't judge the situation. She was helpful and friendly and was very good with my son." – Compliment from parent about the support received from a social worker.

"The Portage Service was only actively involved with us for about 6 months, but their devotion and achievements were beyond beliefs or our anticipations and could only wish that their services were accessible well beyond their remit." – Compliment from parent whose child received support from the Portage Service.

".... has been a light within for us during this long process, especially when we were in the darkness....She has been incredibly dedicated and has seen us through the complicated adoption process of the....boys." – Compliment from Parents regarding the level of support received during the adoption process.

"...would like to say a big thank you to all the Social Workers, the Management and all the Fostering Team for all the help and support she had received during her years as a Foster Carer." – Compliment from Foster Carer.

### Learning from complaints

1. Customers complained that they had not received Residence Order Allowance for a child in their care despite them having submitted all the information required for the final assessment. Customers were unhappy about how long it had taken to process their application for Residence Order Allowance.

Immediate steps were taken to ensure that the application for Residence Order Allowance was completed without further delay.

In response to a number of customers' concerns we have;

- Reviewed all previous complaints made about applications for Residence Order Allowance and Special Guardianship Allowance.
- The Local Authority is currently undertaking a review of the process in consultation with staff to address the issues that cause delay in the process.

2. A customer complained to the Local Government Ombudsman that the Council had taken too long to arrange an assessment of their child's needs and too long to deal with their complaint.

The Local Government Ombudsman acknowledged that the Council had now completed an assessment of the child's needs and had completed consideration of their complaint. The Council apologised for the delays and recognised the injustice this caused by making a payment to the complainant.

In response to this complaint the Council has:

- Reviewed and made clearer its eligibility criteria for children with disabilities accessing and being assessed for services.
- Reviewed and revised the procedure for dealing with complaints at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

### New Developments 2013-14

- Introduction of a new reporting framework including monthly reporting to Children and Young People's Services Leadership Team and Safeguarding Children and Families Management Team.
- Re-focus on performance management of complaints at all stages.
- Introduction of new performance management process for Stage 2 Complaints to ensure that complaints are handled within timescales.
- Introduction of quality checks on response letters.
- Review of process for capturing learning from customers.
- Introduction of process to capture feedback from people who receive a service from children's social care; including capturing compliments and complaints.

## **2014-15 Improvement Actions**

- Continue to reduce the number of complaints dealt with through the formal complaints process by working with teams to take immediate actions to put things right at the earliest opportunity and achieving resolution for our customers.
- Implement new process for capturing and reporting learning from complaints.
- Training scheduled to be delivered to managers in October/November 2014 focussing on response and resolution at Stage 1; to improve the quality and effectiveness of Stage 1 complaints process.
- Re-introduce processes to capture the satisfaction of customers with the complaints handling process.
- Improve access to the complaints procedure for children in care and children with disabilities by improving the quality of information provided to them and opportunities to tell us their views.
- All complaints responded to out of time are reported to DLT on a monthly basis. Managers are asked to provide reasons for the delay in response.

## Appendix 3

### Directorate Performance in 2013-14

#### Environment and Development Services

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

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received was **113**. This represents a slight increase over the last year from **110** to **113**. However **391** informal complaints have also been received.

Overall **99%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales. Only one complaint was dealt with out of time which was due to an administration problem when the complaint was received. The customer was offered a full apology.

#### Headline Results 2013-14

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) <b>increased</b> from <b>110</b> in 2012-13 to <b>113</b>
↓	Complaints regarding Streetpride <b>59, 52%</b> (2012-13, <b>64, 58%</b> )
↑	Complaints regarding Planning, Regeneration & Cultural Services <b>49, 43%</b> (2012-13, <b>46, 42%</b> )
↓	Total number of complaints upheld was <b>29, 26%</b> (2012-13, <b>42, 38%</b> )
↓	A slight decrease in the number of complaints escalating has been seen:- From <b>14</b> in 2012-13 to <b>13</b> for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2 in 2013-14
↓	Complaints about quality of service decreased to <b>53, 47%</b> (2012-2013, <b>67, 61%</b> )
↓	Complaints about actions of staff reduced to <b>14, 13%</b> (2011-2012, <b>32, 28%</b> )
↑	Three compensation awards were made, in total <b>£548.50</b> . Increased from <b>£93.40</b> in 2012-13.
↑	<b>1</b> Ombudsman investigation upheld from <b>16</b> enquiries. <b>12</b> received in 2012-13 <b>None</b> Upheld.
↑	Number of Councillor Surgeries received was <b>361</b> , increase from <b>303</b> in 2012-13.
↑	Number of Compliments received was <b>249</b> . <i>The majority of compliments (123) received related to Leisure &amp; Community Services and the wild flower displays along the central reservations into the town centre.</i> Increase from <b>224</b> received in 2012-13.
↓	Number of informal complaints <b>decreased</b> to <b>391</b> . In 2012-13 <b>578</b> were received.

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

- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers
- Improving the quality of responses to customers
- Improving satisfaction of the complaint management process
- Learning from all Complaints to identify service improvements

### **Top complaint issues**

#### **Streetpride**

The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride Services and were specifically around services delivered by Network Management in relation to the conduct and service provided by Civil Enforcement Officers within the Council's Parking Services Team. Other complaints received related to the condition of the roads and footpaths around the borough and increased problems with parking on grass verges.

**Leisure and Community Services** received a number of complaints relating to removal of litter bins, lack of litter picking, reduced grass cutting service, advice offered relating to tree survey's and removal of toilet facilities at Rosehill Park.

**Waste Management** received complaints relating to lack of response to reports of missed bin/box collections and attitude of staff at a Household Waste Recycling Site.

#### **Planning, Regeneration Cultural & Customer Services**

Complaints were received around the service offered by Cultural and Customer Services specifically relating to advice offered to customers and waiting times across some of our Customer Service Centres.

Example complaints;

*Complaint* - Customer complained about the lack of payment facility at Aston CSC over lunchtime period

*Resolution* – Introduce a back-up procedure for taking payments. This has been fully communicated to the staff at Aston to eliminate the lunchtime pressure point. Cash payment machine installed which will be available for customers to use mid-October 2013

*Complaint* - Customer complained about the delay in seeing an adviser whilst visiting Riverside House

*Resolution* – Apology offered for the fact that a delay occurred and the customer wasn't advised that they could make an appointment without having to join a queue and wait. Staff reminded of need to offer appointments to customers. Customer also advised that to try and reduce the waiting times we are making every effort to make customers aware of all the channels that can be accessed to make contact with the council: online, phone and using locality sites. We are hopeful that this will alleviate some of the pressures faced at Riverside House.

Complaints were also received relating to services offered by the Planning Service specifically around advice offered to customers and perceived procedural failures.

### **Councillors Surgeries**

**361** enquiries were received in the last year. The highest number out of all Council Directorates, (**324** received in Housing and Neighbourhood Services). The vast majority being related to services delivered by Streetpride primarily Network Management (**87**) and Leisure and Community Services (**95**).

Issues related to Leisure and Community Services were concerning, nuisance motorcycles, overgrown footpaths, overhanging trees, tree pruning, grass cutting, additional dog bins, accumulation of leaves, accumulation of weeds and litter. Issues relating to Network Management Service were trees overhanging the highway, potholes, on street parking problems, street lighting, parking on grass verges, drainage problems and footpath repairs.

Enquiries were also received relating to the Highway Design and Transportation Service (**32**) regarding road markings, parking regulations/enforcement and parking problems around schools. Waste Management Service (**6**) received enquiries relating to missed collections and bulky item collections.

### **Compliments**

**249** compliments were received regarding EDS, some examples are as follows;

#### **Leisure and Community Services**

Over **120** individual compliments were received relating to the wild flower display planted in the central reservations across the borough.

- Following successful litter pick Golden Smithies Lane is considerably improved.
- Clean-up on Eldon Road Playing Fields, Eastwood – Thank you.
- Customer called to thank the Council for cutting the hedges near to her property. She now doesn't have to take her life in her hands to cross the road.
- Good job done when carrying out grass cutting work.

#### **Network Management**

- Restored faith in the Council as a verge repair was carried out quickly.
- Compliment received regarding the speed/efficiency of carrying out a street lighting repair.
- Thank you to the Drainage Team who quickly attended to a blocked gully in Wentworth.
- Thank you to the Parking Services Team for cancelling a Penalty Charge Notice.

- Compliment received relating to the road improvements taking place near the bus station – Drummond Street/Centenary Way – Should have been done a long time ago.
- Thanks to the workforce on Doncaster Road – “They were courteous, helpful and really good.”
- They helped in car parking, crossing the road and aiding the elderly who walked through the works”.

### **Waste Management**

- Mrs Ellis says the staff at Warren Vale recycling site are always very helpful and cheerful and always smiling.
- Mrs Pearson called to say “Thank you to Mandy” for arranging for the fly tipping to be removed so promptly.
- Compliment to the Waste Management Crew – “They do a wonderful job” - They are always polite and happy and go out of their way to help.
- Child Minder called to thank the Waste Management Crew – “Overwhelmed with the crew. The crew waved through the window to the boys she looks after and then showed them the empty bin”.
- Compliment to the staff at Magilla Recycling Site – “They are always helpful and polite. Today they have excelled themselves. Two members of staff were a great help in taking items off me to recycle in the correct skips without me asking. I am sure they have the same attitude to all the users of the centre and they should be congratulated on their friendliness, helpfulness and making a trip to the recycling site much less of a chore”.
- “Thank you to Rotherham and your department for another impeccable year of local services.”

### **Customer and Cultural Services**

- “Rotherham Registrars has been fantastic and offers an excellent service in comparison to other Councils.”
- “Thank you for Sue Hartley - very knowledgeable and with great customer care skills.”
- “Thank you for the professional and empathetic way you treated me after my father’s death.”
- “Congratulations to Lisa and team - brilliant evening event with crime novelist.”
- “Tom Gray is such a polite, friendly, knowledgeable, funny young man and a credit to your service. He is also very willing and hardworking. Tell him thank you for all he does.”

- “Excellent customer service shown at Rawmarsh CSC by Julie (officer23).”
- “Registrars staff were so kind when she telephoned – Wanted to say a big thank you to all concerned.”

### **Planning Service**

- Compliment regarding Planning Process – AMP/Waverley

### **Building Control**

- “Thank you for help and advice shown by Phil Muffett.”

### **Regeneration Service**

- “Tim O’Connell - Thank you for dealing with my complaint so swiftly - it is appreciated  
Congratulations on the Town Centre.”

### **Learning from complaints**

1. A customer complained that they were wrongly advised by a switchboard operator how many people were in the queue to speak to a Streetpride operator.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Apologised to the customer for the operator not transferring the call correctly, review internal procedures for dealing with this situation in the future and re-trained staff.

2. A customer complained that he had made 4 separate reports to Streetpride Connect about vehicles driving over grass verges but had received no response and increasing damage was being caused to the verges.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Apologised to the customer, reminded the Highway Inspectors of need to provide feedback to customers in a timely manner.
- Communicated with all households on the road reminding them that it is an offence to drive over verges to access driveways and advised that enforcement action could be taken.

### **New Developments 2013-14**

- EDS Directorate Management Team receives a monthly performance report which identifies all new customer complaints received along with service improvement opportunities to reduce the likelihood of similar complaints being received in the future.

**2014-15 Improvement Actions**

- Environment and Development Services will continue to assist the service to make service improvements based on the outcomes of the complaints received and on what our customers have told us are their main concerns.
- The Directorate lead will work with management and staff to improve customer care around; information and advice, seek to continue to reduce complaints regarding actions of staff and lack of service. The team will continue to highlight the need for improvements where customers express a concern regarding quality of service.
- Training will be provided in complaint handling to all managers and senior staff in EDS on an on-going basis.

## Appendix 4

### Directorate Performance in 2013-14

#### Former Resources Directorate

The Former Resources Directorate's complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure, Tell Us Your Views.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Resources was **48**. This represents a decrease over the last year from **69** to **48**. In addition **67** customer informal complaints have also been received.

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

#### Headline Results 2013-14

↓	Number of complaints (at all levels) was <b>48</b> , <b>30%</b> decrease from 12 month total in 2012-13 – <b>69</b>
↓	Total number of complaints upheld was <b>12</b> , <b>25%</b> compared to <b>20</b> , <b>29%</b> (12 month total) in 2012-13
↑	Increase in the number of complaints escalating:- From <b>3</b> in 2012-13 to <b>5</b> for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2 in 2013-14
↑	Complaints about quality of service <b>40</b> , <b>83%</b> (2012-13, <b>42</b> , <b>61%</b> )
↓	Complaints about actions of staff <b>4</b> , <b>8%</b> (2012-13, <b>8</b> , <b>11%</b> )
↑	<b>2</b> compensation awards made of <b>£122.50</b> , (2012-13, <b>1</b> , <b>£100</b> )
↑	<b>1</b> Ombudsman investigation upheld from <b>8</b> enquiries. <b>1</b> received in 2012-13 <b>None</b> Upheld.
↓	Number of Councillor Surgeries received was <b>8</b> , decrease from <b>16</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of Compliments received was <b>3</b> , decrease from <b>9</b> in 2012-13.
↓	Number of informal complaints was <b>67</b> , <b>decrease</b> from 12 month total in 2012-13 – <b>132</b>

Former Resources Directorate maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- All complaint and informal complaints quality assured
- More timely responses to customer enquires
- More learning from all complaints issues identified

#### Top complaint issues

#### Revenue and Benefits

The majority of complaints for the Directorate were received in Revenue and Benefits. These complaints were mostly regarding how people had been dealt with by staff and the advice that they had been provided. Complaints were received around delays in processing benefit applications.

### **Local Taxation**

Complaints were received relating to information and advice provided. Customers raised issues relating to inaccuracy of information held and time taken to resolve issues of concern.

### **Councillor Surgeries**

Only **8** Councillor Surgery enquiries were received in the year, the majority being related to services delivered by Revenues and Benefits. Issues relating to Revenues and Benefits - Benefits Assessment (**3**) Revenues and Benefits – Account Management (**2**), Local Taxation (**2**) and Legal Services (**1**) - The types of enquiries received related to the way customers were affected by changes in legislation relating to housing benefit (bedroom tax) and advice around fines and recovery. Enquiries were also received around advice regarding arrears and payments concerning local taxation. Legal Services received enquiries relating to land ownership.

### **Compliments**

**2** compliments were recorded regarding services delivered by the Former Resources Directorate as follows;

- Compliment for Legal Services; “Thank you for your help and support with this today and over the last couple of days – it’s been very much appreciated.”
- Compliment for Local Taxation service. “Yvonne was such a delight to talk to, she offered me so much advice in such a friendly professional manner and nothing was too much trouble for her.”

## Learning from complaints

1. A customer complained about the manner in which the Council has acted in recovering an outstanding Council tax debt.

In response to their concerns we have;

- Provided the customer with an apology
- Internal systems revised to ensure that additional checks are carried out on accounts prior to handover to bailiffs
- Paid £50 as a goodwill gesture

2. A customer complained that as part of a benefits assessment they had supplied a copy of their passport to the Council. On return of the personal documents via Royal Mail the passport was missing.

In response to their concerns we;

- Apologised to the customer but confirmed the passport was in the envelope sent 1<sup>st</sup> class post via Royal Mail
- Revised procedure so that all personal details are dispatched registered post and double checked/signed by 2 Council officers before leaving the building
- Paid £72.50 as a goodwill gesture via cheque payable to Passport Office

3. A customer complained that Council Tax arrears had wrongly been passed to Recovery/Bailiffs when an acceptable level of re-payment had been made by the customer. The Council refused to set up an arrangement to pay as the customer was unwilling to provide employer details to allow an attachment to earnings application to be made if the arrangement wasn't adhered to.

In response to their concerns we;

- Amended advice offered to customers over the phone to set up arrangement to pay where an acceptable level of re-payment has been offered.
- Amended procedure where customers are asked to provide employer details as part of arrangement to pay and they refuse the call/interaction is taken by a Senior Officer and judgement made on the best way forward.

## New Developments 2013-14

- Improved the quality assurance process for all responses. Complaints Team supporting managers to check 100% of response letters.
- Improved complaint investigations and responses, all investigating managers will make direct contact with the customer before responding to the complaint.
- Improved learning and service improvements from complaints, 100% of complaints considered for potential learning.

## 2014-15 Improvement Actions

- Revised training programme for investigating manager's to be introduced, bespoke training to be developed incorporating discussions around learning from complaints.