

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

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

**Date: Friday, 18th February, 2005**

**Time: 10.00 a.m.**

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

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January, 2005 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency (Presentation by Jane Woodford) (Pages 3 - 10)
5. Draft Corporate Plan - Progress Report (herewith) (Pages 11 - 67)
6. Exempt from the Press and Public  
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 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial assistance provided by the Council).
7. Grant Aid Funding Issues - Update (report herewith) (Pages 68 - 78)  
(Exempt under Paragraph 5 of the Act – report contains information relating to financial assistance provided by the Council)
8. Date of Next Meeting - 18th March, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**  
**21st January, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair); Councillors Burton and Sangster.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ali.

**26. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER, 2004**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, held on 3rd December, 2004, be approved as a correct record.

**27. FIRM FOUNDATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Partnership Officer (Voluntary and Community Sector) concerning the document 'Firm Foundations', published in December, 2004, by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit. 'Firm Foundations' contained the Government's framework for community capacity building, which is defined as "activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities".

The report included the six principles underpinning Government action to produce change and also identified the four priorities for action. It was noted that the Community Development Strategy for Rotherham and the Council's commitment to community planning were evidence of the Council's effective engagement with the public.

The report also referred to the importance of Community Partnerships as "anchor organisations" within the community sector infrastructure and the problems they will face with the impending loss of external funding.

Members debated the practical application of the aims and objectives of 'Firm Foundations' throughout the Rotherham Borough area. Particular reference was made to the need to develop a comprehensive package of learning opportunities to support everyone involved in community engagement and to address the issue of sustainability.

Resolved:- (1) That the close alignment of local progress in Rotherham, in terms of community development support and community planning, with the Government's priorities as set out in 'Firm Foundations', be noted.

(2) That initiatives to embed community development values and skills across the Council be supported.

(3) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting concerning the ways in which the Council may continue to support community development and the sustainability of the voluntary and community sector

infrastructure.

**28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting be held on Friday, 18th February, 2005, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

**Report to: Cabinet Member (Community Planning and Social Inclusion) & advisors**

**Meeting date: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005**

**Report by: Jane Woodford, Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency Ltd**

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## **Support from RMBC**

RCUDA has been supported by RMBC since 1995 when credit union development was funded as part of the borough's anti-poverty strategy. The initial funding of £29,676 was for a full time development worker with running costs and the service was to be delivered through Voluntary Action Rotherham. Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency (RCUDA) became an independent company limited by guarantee in 1999 with its own management committee and established its offices at the Guardian Centre, Drummond Street. In addition to the grant RMBC has always provided an office base for RCUDA.

The RMBC grant funding for RCUDA had remained at the same level for several years but there is to be an increase in 2005/06.

The anti-poverty strategy also included additional support for a credit union for council employees (Rothersave) through a seconded worker and grant funding, which comes to a formal end at the end of March 2005.

## **Key achievements**

### **Credit unions**

In 2003 RCUDA achieved the major objective of establishing a credit union service providing 100% coverage of the Borough. Anyone living or working in the borough can join a Rotherham based credit union. In order to achieve this RCUDA has provided:

- development support
- training
- guidance and assistance in compliance with the Financial Services Authority's regulatory regime

- support to the directors and staff (paid and volunteer) of all the credit unions in Rotherham
- support in securing external funding and employment of staff

The borough-wide service is provided by the following credit unions:

- **LASER Credit Union Ltd.** Established in February 2003 and based with RCUDA in the Guardian Centre, LASER serves people living or working in the area of the borough to the west and north of the M1 and M18 motorways. RCUDA provides LASER, our newest credit union, with support in the day to day operation of the credit union, support of staff (volunteers and paid), and applications for funding. RCUDA currently employs two members of staff (part-time) to undertake work on behalf of the credit union. LASER currently operates collection points in Brampton, Rawmarsh and Kimberworth Park, and members have the facility to make cash transactions via Rothersave and at RCUDA's office. LASER is actively involved on RCUDA's Board of Directors and the Credit Union Forum.
- **Rothersave Credit Union Ltd** which is for employees and councillors (and their families) of RMBC. RCUDA continues to provide training and support to Rothersave which is now approaching the point where it is no longer dependent on grant funding. The funding supplied by the borough has enabled it to achieve some key economies of scale and have accessible town centre premises. Rothersave is actively involved on RCUDA's Board of Directors and plays a key role in the Credit Union Forum.
- **Ryton Credit Union Ltd.** Based in the south east of Rotherham, Ryton serves just under half of the borough and membership of this credit union is available to everyone living or working in their area. Established as a new credit union based in Dinnington in 1997, Ryton extended its area of operation to include Maltby as a response to a request for a merger with St Mary's credit union. RCUDA provides ongoing support to Ryton's employees and in the development of funding applications. Ryton currently operates out of shop premises in Kiveton Park (the lease ends in March 2005) and at the DART Office in Dinnington. Ryton is actively involved on RCUDA's Board of Directors and plays a key role in the Credit Union Forum.
- **St Joseph's (Dinnington) Credit Union Ltd.** This small church based credit union makes few demands on RCUDA and provides much valued support to the Rotherham Credit Union Forum and the Board of RCUDA. One of its directors is also a director of UKCU, a national credit union trade body. It is the only wholly voluntary organised and run credit union in the borough. It is currently considering the direction of its future development, as the demands of regulation become increasingly onerous.
- **TransaveUK** (formerly Mainline Credit Union Ltd) which provides a service for employees of First Group. TransaveUK is now a national credit union with over 5000 members and is one of the fastest growing credit unions in the country. Its head office is located at the Midland Road Garage, Rotherham. TransaveUK is actively involved on RCUDA's Board of Directors and is committed in its support for the movement in Rotherham.

The credit unions network with each other via the Rotherham Credit Union Forum which was established with the support of RCUDA to enable the credit unions to have a voice and contribute to national and regional debates.

## Training

A key element of RCUDA's work is training. RCUDA has always worked very closely with the Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and since 2000 has had a franchise contract with the college for the delivery of credit union training. This requires RCUDA to maintain very high standards of training development, delivery, achievements and administration. The franchise agreement results in a small amount of income for RCUDA. RCAT is represented on our Board of Directors and takes an active interest in our work.

## Additional funding

RCUDA has played a significant role in bringing in additional resources for credit unions and credit union development. Since 1995 RCUDA has had a direct involvement in securing an additional **£473,691** for the credit union movement in Rotherham.

RECHAR, SRB, NOF, income from training and Aimhigher are all funds directly acquired and managed by RCUDA.

RCUDA took the lead role in the bids to Yorkshire Forward, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Key Fund, Awards for All and Northern Rock. Additional funds (not listed) have been acquired by the credit unions themselves.

Funding source	Year	Amount(£)	For
RECHAR	1997-1999	40,000	RCUDA development
SRB5	2000-2002	44,700	RCUDA development
SRB6	2002-2005	101,010	RCUDA development
NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND	2002-2007	47,918	LASER Credit Union – Brampton collection point
TRAINING (INC RCAT)	Annually	10,000	£1000 - average income for training delivered by RCUDA
YORKSHIRE FORWARD	1999-2002	30,000	Ryton Credit Union – Development of collection points
COALFIELDS REGENERATION TRUST	2003-2005	120,563	Ryton Credit Union – 2 full time workers to develop Kiveton Park premises
NORTHERN ROCK	1998-2001	7,500	Rotherham Credit Union Forum – computers, promotion and volunteer expenses
AWARDS FOR ALL	2003	5,000	RCUDA - equipment
KEY FUND	2001	14,000	LASER Credit Union – equipment
KEY FUND	2004	5,000	LASER Credit Union – Rawmarsh collection point
KEY FUND	2001	13,000	Ryton Credit Union – equipment
Aimhigher	2004-2005	35,000	RCUDA – two pilots in Rotherham linking credit unions with access to higher education
Total		473,691	

## Additional achievements

Behind these major achievements lies an impressively strengthened infrastructure of less easily quantified developments which include:

- RCUDA supporting the credit unions over the introduction of vastly increased regulation by the Financial Services Authority in July 2002.
- RCUDA establishing a strong business ethic within the credit union network.
- RCUDA supporting the local network for credit unions - Rotherham Credit Union Forum.
- RCUDA supporting the extensive recruitment and training of volunteers to become directors of the credit unions and collectors and other officers. This has involved a considerable "skilling up" of volunteers.
- RCUDA stimulating raised awareness of the existence and benefits of credit unions through promotional initiatives including use of local media, events, presentations, bus, newspaper and Yellow Pages advertising, posters, leaflets etc.
- RCUDA establishing itself regionally and nationally as an organisation committed to best practice in credit union development.
- RCUDA establishing partnership working to promote credit unions.

## Overview of credit unions in Rotherham

There are five credit unions in Rotherham who, at the end of September 2004 were in the following position:

Credit union	Number of members	Assets (£)	Loans given to date
LASER CU	224	50,846	£43,956
Rothersave CU	1106	966,016	£2m
Ryton CU	465	74,543	To be provided
St Joseph's CU (1988)	190	32,000	£160,000 approx
Transave CU	5400	3,040,095	£8.55m
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,285</b>	<b>4,163,500</b>	

## National profile

RCUDA has established a considerable reputation locally, regionally and nationally as a professional and well run organisation, committed to good practice in credit union development and training and as an employer. Its employees are members of the National Association of Credit Union Workers and the manager, Jane Woodford, has been involved at a strategic and policy level as chairperson for 3 years, and currently to do with training issues. RCUDA fields enquiries from, and offers support and advice to, all parts of the country on credit union related matters.

Since its inception RCUDA has played a key role in establishing and maintaining the only nationally validated accredited training programme for credit unions. This has involved it in partnership working with Northern College, the National Association of Credit Union Workers and the National Open College Network.

Over recent years current RCUDA staff have also been involved in liaison groups and discussions between the credit union national trade bodies, HM Treasury and credit union regulators, initially the Registry of Friendly Societies and more recently the Financial Services Authority. This has enabled the experience of Rotherham credit unions to be brought to bear on the development of national policy, credit union regulation and proposed changes in legislation.

### **Government policy, financial literacy and debt awareness**

Throughout its existence, RCUDA has always striven to link into other relevant initiatives, both locally and nationally. It is currently a partner or is involved in the following local initiatives:

- Brampton Healthy Living Centre
- GP Debt Referral Project, Valley Healthy Living Centre
- Rotherham Debt Awareness Project

As Rotherham credit unions continue to develop RCUDA anticipates an increased engagement with initiatives addressing financial literacy and financial inclusion. In particular we wish to explore the implications for Rotherham of the following:

- HM Treasury's report 'Promoting financial inclusion' (December 2004) - highlights the fact that 'one in twelve households in the UK lacks access to a bank account'. This can lock families into a cycle of poverty and exclusion, high cost credit or borrowing from illegal lenders resulting in greater financial strain and unmanageable debt.

The report highlights South Yorkshire as one of the locations with a high percentage of the population who are considered "financially disengaged". The summary of policy actions includes clear reference to credit unions, given additional resources, as playing an important role in promoting financial inclusion.

- "Back office" support for credit unions – piloted by Birmingham CUDA
- Child Trust Funds – credit unions as possible organisations for channelling the funds
- Community banking – the development of a wider range of services to tackle financial exclusion and strengthen credit unions
- Consumer Credit – a white paper aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency in the consumer credit market
- Debt awareness – links with local and national initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of debt issues and in the availability of face-to-face money advice
- Financial literacy – highlighting the role of credit unions in raising the level of financial literacy particularly amongst the financially excluded
- Savings Gateway – possibly using credit unions to encourage low-income people to start saving

RCUDA aims to explore and learn from each of these initiatives with a view to developing similar activities in Rotherham. Some are already well underway.

### **Case studies**

The people who are members of the credit union are from all backgrounds, ages and occupations, and credit unions actively promote the credit union as a service for everyone. However the benefits are most keenly felt by those whose access to credit and savings facilities is limited:



### **Member A**

A young man, just separated from his wife and child, studying as a nurse on a bursary. Unable to open a bank account because his new tenancy had not been confirmed, he was able to take out a loan for Christmas to cover his bills and to buy furniture for his new flat.

### **Member B**

A middle aged man was not able to borrow from anywhere else because of his health record was able to take out a loan from the credit for furniture. He has said how much he appreciates the friendly, personal and helpful way the credit union deals with him.

### **Member C**

A young married woman with one child, heavily involved with doorstep lending used her first loan to clear her debts, a subsequent loan for a holiday and now has savings which she has never had before. She, her husband and her child are all members. **Member C was featured in a video “Minimising Debt at Christmas” produced with NHS funding for doctor’s surgeries, post offices etc. This was the result of joint work between RCUDA and the Rotherham Debt Awareness Project.**

### **Member D**

A older woman with limited education, of Eastern European origin. Before she joined the credit union had hardly ever been on holiday. Joined the credit union about 6 years ago and has been able to go on holiday every year since using her credit union account and has been able to visit her family abroad.

### **Member E**

A middle aged woman with an alcoholic husband and very limited income uses the credit union to cover her essential bills.

### **Member F**

A relatively well off woman has saved up in the credit union for a surprise golden wedding party for her husband.

### **Key challenges**

RCUDA is a well established organisation with a strong reputation in the credit union development field and a proven track record in working towards and achieving its targets. It is approaching its 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence during which there are plans to celebrate past achievements and publicise future plans. It is not without its challenges which include:

- The scope of the work is now much greater than it was in 1995 and it is clear that to advance the cause of credit unions it will be necessary to diversify and move into areas hitherto unexplored. If the main focus is to be financial inclusion there is an important task in determining which aspects we should concentrate on and how we take our initiatives further.
- Community credit unions are fragile and the road to sustainability is still long and strewn with obstacles. HM Treasury’s report ‘Promotion of financial inclusion’

acknowledges the need to increase the capacity of these credit unions and we hope this will result in the availability of funding direct to Ryton and LASER. However, local support is essential if Rotherham credit unions are to secure and benefit from this potential national support. RCUDA can provide much of the necessary support, but ongoing volunteer involvement at all levels of the credit union will always be essential. Access to inexpensive or free premises plus a level of continuing financial support will be necessary for the foreseeable future. Community credit unions will only be able to compete effectively with high cost credit companies, cheque cashers and doorstep lenders if a range of resources and skills are available to support them.

- Credit union regulation is extensive, expensive and complicated. The skills needed to interpret and implement them are considerable. Keeping credit union workers and volunteers up to speed is an additional capacity building task.
- RCUDA will benefit enormously from support from RMBC but recognises that additional funding must be maximised in order to make most effective use of our current resources. This is not only a challenge in itself but also a very time consuming exercise. RCUDA is exploring charitable status but it is looking increasingly unlikely that this will be possible, making it even more difficult to access some forms of funding.
- The skills in credit union work required are specialist and in short supply – finding people who are appropriately skilled to undertake the work may prove difficult.

### **Future plans for the sector and RCUDA's role**

RCUDA's immediate plans are:

- To hold a planning day with board members and employees to revise our strategy. This will require a restructuring of RCUDA, a possible change of direction, a possible change of image and name, a business plan for 3 years, revised job descriptions and a revised work plan.
- To plan a ten year celebration/relaunch of the organisation during 2005 to promote the agency, highlight our success to date and future plans especially in relation to financial inclusion/literacy.
- RCUDA is exploring the possibility of acquiring charitable status, although we are currently being advised that because credit unions are not charitable it is unlikely that this will be possible, making it even more difficult to access some forms of funding. If charitable status is not available to us we will explore the appropriateness or otherwise of becoming a Community Interest Company once the legislation is in place.
- To revise RCUDA's aims and objectives with the possibility of acquiring charitable status. A change in emphasis will require amendments to our constitution.
- To pursue "Investors in People" status.
- To conduct research into current initiatives and develop an appropriate delivery plan.
- To instigate additional services for credit unions, including "back office" and possibly "internal audit" services.
- To ensure the success of the Aimhigher project linking credit unions and access to higher education. If successful this could lead to further funding and it could also be a clear avenue into developing the financial literacy arm of our work.

RCUDA will continue to expand its support for all the credit unions in Rotherham with a particular focus on the community credit unions. One of the strengths of credit unions in Rotherham has always been the close co-operation within the network and we will continue to support this. We are looking to encourage joint working and the sharing of resources and initiatives. It is highly likely that there will be future mergers of credit unions and an increasing level of economies of scale. This will never be at the expense of the

philosophy which values the principles of community based initiatives involving co-operation, self help, voluntarism and democratic control and is rooted in the prime objective of tackling financial exclusion.

Jane Woodford  
Manager - Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2005

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Community Planning / Social Inclusion Cabinet Member and Advisers</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18th February 2005</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Draft Corporate Plan – Progress Report</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	Chief Executives Department

**5. Summary**

This report details progress made to date towards developing a new Corporate Plan for the Authority; presents the first draft and sets out further work needed to complete it and other areas of work it will impact upon. The report also outlines proposals for the consultation process.

**6. Recommendations**

- 1. That Members consider the draft Corporate Plan and how it could be improved**
- 2. Endorses the format and direction the Corporate Plan is taking and proposals for the consultation process**

## **7. Progress and future work requirements**

A task group of Corporate Officers from Policy and Partnerships and Performance and Quality has been set up under the CX's Department charged with developing the Corporate Plan, the current draft is shown at Appendix 1. The task group has worked closely with Programme areas to identify and collect information and to construct the SMART objectives required.

The format and style follows as closely as possible the need to produce a document that is short, clear and focused, with the main body of the document containing the detailed strategic objectives and targets set out under the Themes.

As part of the work, other Local Authority corporate plans; national policy direction and requirements including PIs; the evidence base for suggested actions; previous consultation outcomes and a wealth of other information has also been taken into consideration in order to produce the best plan possible.

The draft has been informed by detailed discussions with each Programme Area's senior managers. Considerable thought has been put into developing SMART (Specific, Measurable Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) targets. Whilst constructing SMART targets has not proved easy, the process has been extremely valuable and will prove beneficial in the future as a result of the experience and expertise gained. It is clear that this is difficult and cutting edge work, there are few other Local Authority corporate plans with longer term strategic but SMART objectives to learn from. Also, in some areas e.g. community engagement and citizenship, there is little national policy or national targets to go on, and sometimes there is a lack of academic work which helps us in formulating local ambitious but achievable outcomes.

### **Service Planning**

Service Plans will draw upon the aims; objectives and targets contained in the Corporate Plan [and Community Strategy when it is drafted] and set out how they are to be contributed to and what will be delivered over the next year. This process will ensure that the aims, objectives and targets set out in the Corporate Plan will be translated into action by the council over the coming year.

### **Consultation**

The Corporate Plan will need high quality input from members, staff, and the public in general. This will be done in the following ways.

### **Member input**

- a) **Members.** A full member seminar is being arranged for 31<sup>st</sup> January. This will introduce the draft Corporate Plan, invite comment, and solicit additions, deletions etc, Further members seminars are planned for the second draft and final stages.
- b) **Scrutiny Panels** The draft Corporate Plan will be presented to each Scrutiny Panel from 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February by CXs Staff together with appropriate Executive Director s. Scrutiny Panels will look at the current draft and make comment.
- c) **PSOC.** PSOC will scrutinise the final version of the Corporate Plan on 11<sup>th</sup> March,
- d) **Leaders Meeting** A first draft of the Corporate Plan will be presented at Leaders meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January, a second draft in February; with Cabinet endorsement of the final version on 23<sup>rd</sup> March
- e) As part of the public consultation,[see below], Members will be able to attend the public meetings to be organised around the borough, involving Area Assemblies and Parish Councils

Further it is proposed to establish a senior Member group to advise on the process, content and Member engagement. This has been discussed at the Leaders group and supported.

### **Senior Managers**

A] Heads of Service were invited to a meeting in December to discuss the identification of SMART targets and to look at how the Corporate Plan would be shaped and to be briefed on next steps and work required.

B] Following this meeting CX staff met each Programme Area SMT individually to go over their specific area and how it could be improved/developed

C] Further input will be gathered at forthcoming Heads of Service Meetings and with Executive Directors.

D] A workshop with Heads of Service, the CPA task group and M3 mangers is proposed for February to consider the second draft, and to consider the draft Community Strategy.

### **Staff**

Programme Areas, will be responsible for conducting their consultation programmes with their staff and for inputting results into the Corporate Plan process, again a process for recording information and inputting to CXs will be developed and PAs will be advised.

C] Unions have been consulted already informally and are supportive and will be consulted formally in February

## **Public**

Members are asked to note that we are not proposing to consult on the detailed content of the plans, nor the specific wording in the vision statement but rather the overall vision and direction and to ask what particular needs local people have and what they want to see improving in the future. Public consultation will include a workshop held with the Network of Partnerships and Voice, area based events involving Area Assemblies and Parish Councils, focus groups and so on.

B] Analysis will be undertaken of previous and current consultation exercises to identify the messages we have already been sent.

C] A media plan to assist and contribute to the consultation will be developed

## **Partners**

It is proposed to consult Partners at second draft stage in February. The CX'S Task group is heavily involved in the process for the Community Strategy. The Director of the LSP, together with Heads of Service in CXs and the Assistant Chief Executive meet regularly to review progress and to coordinate the writing of the first draft and RMBC officers have been involved in brainstorming workshops conducted with LSP partner involvement.

### Amendments to the Vision Statement

Feedback during presentations on the vision and from LSP partner's work on the Community Strategy have resulted in suggested changes to the wording of the vision statements. These suggestions are constructive and enhance the vision. The suggested new wording is attached at Appendix 2 with the original words for comparison at Appendix 3. The LSP partners will need to agree the re-wording.

## **8. Finance**

The Corporate Plan will have significant implications for how the council decides what services it will deliver and to what design and delivery standards. The Corporate Plan as the Councils contribution to the Community Strategy will guide and influence spending decisions for the duration of the plans lifetime.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The Corporate Plan will need to satisfy the planning needs of the Council as well as being “fit for purpose” as judged by the various government inspection regimes. Failure to be judged so, or to be materially unaligned with the developing Community Strategy could adversely impact on future CPA rating of the Council.

The primary purpose of the Corporate Plan is to enable the council to better deliver services, to improve well being, to set out our Community Leadership objectives and to ensure excellent standards of governance and employment.

Risk assessment in the future will need to be aligned to the plan.

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

There are major implications for the policy and performance agendas. From a policy perspective all policies are being reviewed to ensure compatibility with the new Themes of the Authority. New policies may need to be developed. The format of the Corporate Plan, with its emphasis on performance and measurability will contribute to re-enforcing a performance management culture.

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

As previously reported to CMT and Cabinet with regard to the new Vision and Corporate Plan

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**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PLAN**

**2005 – 2010**

**First Draft, 20 January 2005**

**Foreword from Leader and Chief Executive – to be inserted**

**Introduction**

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Corporate Plan sets out what the Council plans to do over the next five years, through to 2010, to achieve its vision for Rotherham.

It describes how the council itself will strive for excellence in all the services it provides, and as an employer of some 15,000 staff across the borough, but also how it will work with all its partners to ensure a shared sense of vision and belonging for all communities and residents.

Local solutions to local problems can only be achieved if there is joint working, and the delivery of services is co-ordinated across all sectors of the community.

This plan demonstrates how the Council will continue to support:

- the Rotherham Partnership, which brings together public sector organisations across the borough, as well as business, community and voluntary sectors,
- the Community Strategy, which is the framework by which the partnership sets out its vision for improving economic, social and environmental well-being in Rotherham, and
- the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which set out partners' intentions for action in various priority areas within the borough.

The Council has an important role to play in community leadership, as a public body which is democratically accountable to the local people it serves, so the contribution it makes delivering the priorities described in the Community Strategy is particularly valuable.

**A new Corporate Plan**

Rotherham Borough comprises a diverse and vibrant blend of people, cultures and communities. It is made up of a mix of urban areas and villages all interspersed with large areas of open countryside. About 70% of the borough is rural in nature, but it is well connected to all areas of the country by its proximity to the motorway and inter-city rail networks. In 2005, Robin Hood Doncaster / Sheffield Airport opens to bring international links to the borough's doorstep.

Currently at 251,000, Rotherham's population is increasing steadily, as people are attracted to the borough to enjoy the good quality of life and economic opportunities, a trend expected to continue for many years ahead. In common with the rest of the UK, Rotherham has an aging population with the number of people aged over 70 expected to grow by 70% over the next 25 years. The borough's ethnic minority population is 3.1% in 2005.

Rotherham is changing – and changing fast. As the borough moves forward, adapting to economic and social changes, so it becomes increasingly important for all partners to articulate their common vision for the future through the development of a new Community Strategy.

In turn, the Council has to revisit how it will support the delivery of that strategy through its own priorities and targets. This document – the third corporate plan produced by the Authority – outlines how this will happen.

The Council as an organisation is changing too.

From being rated as 'weak' by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2003, it achieved the improved status of 'fair' in 2004, and was among the top ten most improved Councils in the country. The Commission stated in its 'Direction of Travel' report in 2004 that the Council:

*"... has made significant improvements in housing and all services affecting the quality of the local environment over the last year... Refuse and street care services are efficient and responsive... The council's hard work has resulted in the delivery of better quality housing services... The Council is now well placed to improve the way it works and the services it provides to local people."*

During 2004, other inspections of the Council's Regeneration, Supporting People and Waste Management activity all concluded that the services provided were 'good'. Two Housing-related inspections, including the Council's Repairs and Maintenance service, noted the dramatic improvements made and the promising prospects for the future. Through a Benefits Fraud Inspection in 2004, the Benefits Service identified as one of two local authorities which should share best practice nationally.

Against this backdrop of ongoing change and performance improvement, this new Corporate Plan reflects the Council's current position against previous plans, and presents even more ambitious targets for the future.

It is critical that these targets and priorities are shaped by the views of local communities, and that the Council remains focused on meeting the priorities and expectations of residents across the Borough. This Corporate Plan is therefore informed by views expressed formally and informally to Council Members and officers, as well as a more focused consultation with residents, which has enabled the Authority to check that what it is delivering remains in line with their expectations.

### **The Current Position**

Rotherham Borough is making good progress. There have been major improvements across all the main headline indicators with significant advances in skills and educational attainment, the economy, crime and the fear of crime, employment (which as its highest level since records began), the natural and built environment.

A 'State of the Borough' report, published in 2004, outlined Rotherham's position against a number of key indicators, and formed the basis for many of the objectives within this Corporate Plan. For example:

- A growing economy – between 1996 and 2003, there was a 3.4% increase in VAT registered businesses in the borough (compared to just 0.9% for the Yorkshire & Humber region).
- Dealing with crime and the fear of crime – domestic burglary rates fell by 24% in 2003/4 to be the lowest in South Yorkshire and residents stating they 'were very concerned about being a victim of crime' fell from 51% in 2003 to 27% in 2004.
- Better employment prospects – latest figures in 2004 showed that Rotherham's employment rate of 75.8% was above the national average (in 2000, our rate was 7.3% below).
- A good natural and built environment – in 2004 residents' satisfaction with our parks and open spaces increased to 70% in 2004 (from 62% in 2001).

However progress in many areas has not been fast enough to bring local performance up to the national average, and in a handful of areas the Borough has slipped back against the national average. There is also some evidence that not everyone is equally benefiting from the progress, and consequently there are still inequalities amongst groups in the borough. The overall picture therefore is one of strong progress but further work needs to be done to bring the Borough up to the best performing areas and close inequalities. In addition, a 'Policy Review' undertaken within the Council in 2004, showed that many of our policies and plans were not working together properly to address all the needs of the community, and that from the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and other strategic plans needed to be 'refreshed' to ensure better alignment so that RMBC worked well both as 'one Council', and with its key partners.

## Our Vision

During 2004, the Council and its partners worked together to develop a new vision for the Borough which would steer progress across the Borough over the next five years, and still further to the year 2020. This vision is built around:

- 5 priority themes which direct the future work of Council services and
- 2 cross-cutting themes which need to underpin everything the Council does.

These themes are interrelated with action in one theme influencing action and outcomes in the others. The sum is therefore more than the parts, the vision will be brought about by action across all of the themes.

### OUR PRIORITY THEMES

**Rotherham Learning** Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.

**Rotherham Achieving** Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide high quality of life amongst Rotherham's beautiful countryside.

**Rotherham Alive** Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are active, live life to the full, and have fun. Rotherham will celebrate its history -building on the past, and creating and welcoming the new. People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic, physical and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.

**Rotherham Safe** A place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with good quality homes for all, and accessible local facilities and services. There will be attractive buildings and public space; peaceful and thriving communities free from crime, drugs and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, children will be safe from harm and neglect, a preventive approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.

**Rotherham Proud** Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active

citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.

**OUR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

**Sustainable Development**

Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.

**Fairness**

All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and qualities will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

In addition, the Council will adopt its own theme of striving to be Excellent Council, improving the way it works and its efficiency and effectiveness as an organization and as an employer.

The vision and this Corporate Plan is drawn from an understanding of the borough's current position, and where we want to be, but key to its formulation has been the views of residents and communities. Under each of the themes in the Plan details of "what you told us" through consultation are summarised, but some overall key messages are:

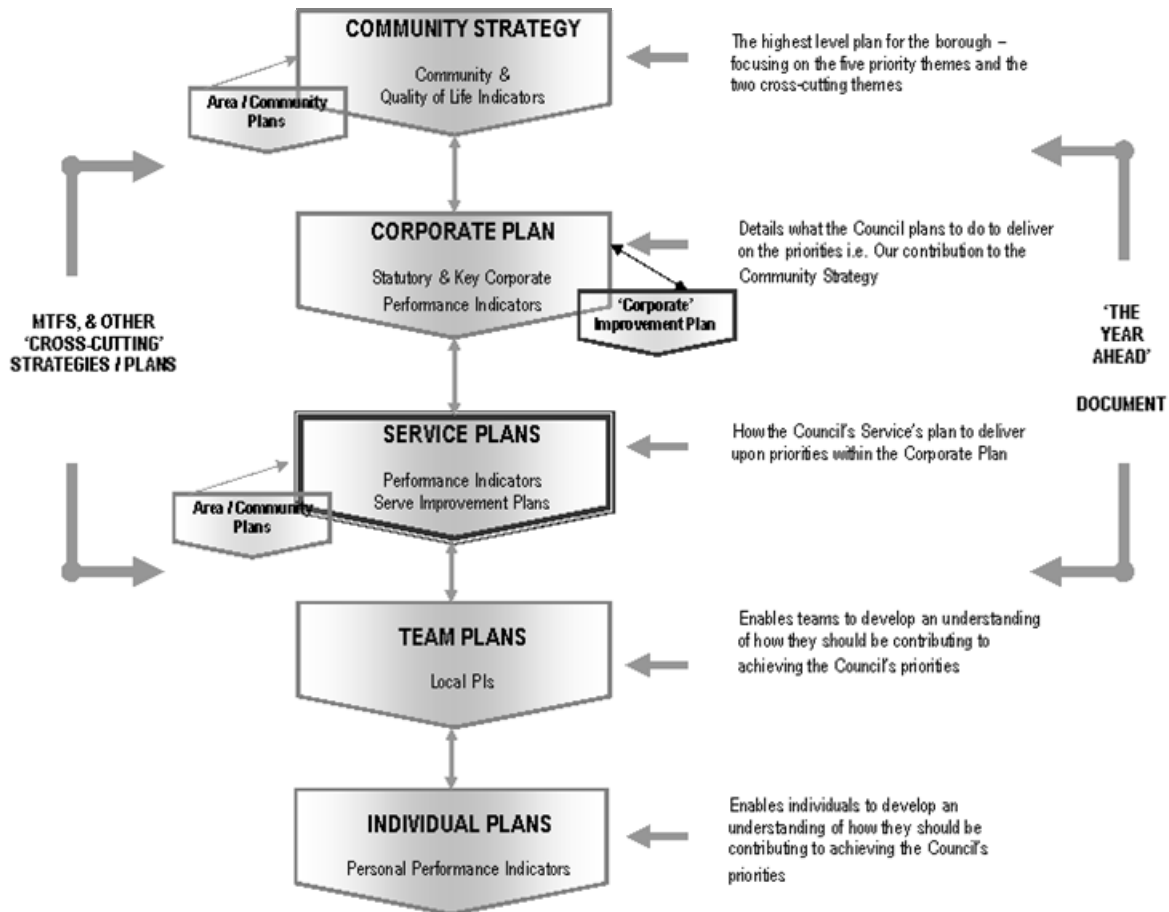
**What you told us – about the Borough and the Council**

- to be inserted following consultation

**Our Planning Framework**

It is vital that all our plans and strategies are 'joined up' and can be seen to work together to achieve clear, tangible improvements, which benefit the community. The Community Strategy and Corporate Plan in particular are designed to be coordinated, and so identify the Council's specific contributions to overall community well-being.

The flow chart below shows how the Council's own planning framework supports the delivery of the Community Strategy, cascading objectives down to service and individual plans, and making sure that all our staff understand their own contribution to delivering community-wide improvements.



In addition to these plans, a key focus of partnership working through the Community Strategy and the supporting Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is the reduction of inequalities and deprivation. The partnership will deliver specific actions in targeted areas - Rawmarsh, Kimberworth Park, Masborough, Central Rotherham, Dinnington, Maltby, Wath and Brinsworth and in the pockets of deprivation and for communities of interest that are marginalised and whose needs are not met, to ensure that social, economic and environmental 'gaps' are closed between these communities and the rest of the Borough by 2010. The Council's Corporate Plan indicates where our key actions contribute to this strategy. However this plan will be complemented by Area and Community plans, and strategies for particular communities of interest such as for Children and Young People and for older adults.

### The Future Challenges

The Council operates within a fast changing policy context. There are many national, regional and local policy drivers that will shape the future direction of the Borough. These are developed in the Plan itself, but key issues include:

There has been a major drive on improving outcomes for Children. The Children's Bill, published in 2004 is one of the most significant pieces of legislation regarding children's services for years, paving the way for the transformation of social care, education and health services for children. The Government has also committed itself to a dramatic decline in child poverty. *RMBC is pushing ahead with comprehensive plans for a major reorganisation of the way it delivers Children's and Young People's Services.*

Nationally there continues to be a focus on neighbourhood renewal with multi-billion pound flagship initiatives such as the Communities Plan offering major opportunities to improve the quality of life for people, tackling poverty, inequalities, deprivation, crime and anti-social behaviour and to

improve the quality of public spaces and buildings. *RMBC itself has is developing a specific focus on Neighbourhoods and their development, and through the establishment of an Arms Length Management Organisation will be seeking to make extensive investment in its housing stock, and its future management. A masterplan for the regeneration of Rotherham town centre, investment in educational and cultural facilities using the Private Finance Initiative and the establishment of a network of Council 'First Stop Shops' are all features of the renewal agenda which is reflected in this Plan.*

There has been a major shift in Government regional policy – devolving responsibilities to the regions, including Regional Development Agencies and the Northern Way; increasing the amount of support and investment focused on the narrow regional disparities and working together on housing, planning, transport and rural issues. At the sub-regional level there has been a major drive on enhancing and strengthening the integration of policy making at the South Yorkshire level through initiatives such as the South Yorkshire Objective 1 Programme and South Yorkshire Spatial Study. *Working with partners across the region to ensure that Rotherham can exploit all opportunities and funding streams for the benefit of its residents will be a key feature of working over the next 5 years.*

The Council has a clear agenda for its future as an organisation, as set down by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment which judges all local authorities. Corporately, RMBC will be focusing on how our **ambitions, priorities, capacity and performance management** of the Council, with our partners, lead to the achievement of outcomes for the 'Shared Priorities' agreed for Local Government. This forms the basis of our Plan to be an Excellent Council by 2010.

The Shared Priorities themselves are key drivers for many of the actions in this Corporate Plan, with their focus on **sustainable communities and transport, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities, older people and children and young people.**

### What we aim to Achieve

<p>The heart of this Plan is the series of Action Plans – one for each priority and cross-cutting theme - which set out, in terms which are both strategic and meaningful, what the objectives for the Council will be over the period up to 2010. The Plan doesn't show everything the Council does – all Services produce their own plans which set out in detail how they will support the delivery of the theme vision – but the Corporate Plan sets out what the key objectives and actions are for the Council. The Action Plans are on the following pages.</p>
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## Context and challenges

**“Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.”**

- Education is a key national priority and one of the shared priorities between national and local government. Research consistently identifies success in education and training as a route out of poverty, increasing people's self-confidence, and ensuring people have the necessary skills to take advantage of new employment opportunities.
- The Government has introduced a series of reforms in education and training. These pave the way for a transformation of the educational system for children, adult learners, parents and employers including more choice and personalisation, greater freedom for schools and possibly major changes in the qualifications system. The five major outcomes for children, published in the Children Bill together underpin all of the factors necessary to support positive learning outcomes for every child.
- Skill levels in Rotherham's workforce at an all time high but despite improvements lag behind the national and European norms. Improving the skills and qualifications of the Borough's existing and potential workforce is key to improving prosperity and quality of life. Good quality crèche and early years provision at the heart of local communities will place a renewed value on education and engage children and their parents at the earliest stage.
- Educational attainment is improving in Rotherham but still lags behind the national average. In 2003/04 44.4% of year 11 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE A\* to C passes compared to 52.9% nationally. The achievement of some of the most vulnerable groups remains a concern which is being addressed.
- There will be significant job growth in those occupations requiring higher skill levels, with a growing proportion demanding first degrees from applicants. For those who possess these skills the picture is generally very good, with high and growing incomes, and sustained employment. The unskilled face great difficulties as the amount of unskilled jobs continues to fall, and will be concentrated in lower paid and less secure jobs and occupations. Skills shortage is a growing concern for all employers in the Borough, including the Council by far the largest employer in Rotherham. These shortages are particularly acute in some higher skills occupations such as ICT and social work.
- Differences between adult educational attainment locally and nationally are largest amongst those with the higher qualifications. The most recent figures show the percentage of the working age population qualified to at least NVQ level 2 at 58.4% compared to 65.3% nationally, however the percentage qualified to at least NVQ level 4 is only 17.3% compared to 25% nationally.
- Rotherham has a higher rate of economically active adults with no qualifications than the England average - 31.7% compared to 26%. There are also significant variations at the local level with rates from 24% to over 42% in Rotherham's wards.



- Adult Education enrolments are increasing but at less than 1% of all 15-59 year olds Rotherham's rate in 2002 was amongst the lowest in the Region.
- There has been a major focus on improving early years provision. Local surveys show that local people are generally satisfied with the provision of early education for 3 to 4 year olds in Rotherham with 77% (with children aged 0 – 14) satisfied with the provision in their local area.
- The Council in partnership with a special purpose company, Transform Schools, to deliver its major schools PFI project. The overall goals are to improve the learning environment, levels of educational attainment and increase community use. This project includes the construction of ten new schools and substantial upgrade and refurbishment of a further five. It covers a mix of secondary and primary schools and includes energy management, repairs and maintenance, cleaning and catering.
- The contribution offered by informal learning opportunities by participating in culture and leisure, and from out of school learning (e.g. homework clubs, youth service activities) will need to be used to its fullest potential to improve both academic and social education in the borough.

### **What you told us**

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

Performance across the board in Education has improved in recent years but there remains a number of significant issues to be addressed:-

- Key Stage 2 (age 11) results have risen in recent years compared to the average for England as a whole (94.9% of national figure). Following a slight decline in 2002/03 there was a significant improvement in 2004.
- Rotherham's GCSE performance improved relative to the national figure in 2003 (83.1% of the national figure), however a significant and fairly constant gap still exists between local and national attainment. The percentage of pupils in Rotherham achieving no GCSE passes (A-C) is broadly in line with national figures following a gradual improvement over recent years.
- The percentage of school leavers entering further education in Rotherham has begun to fall following several years of increasing rates.
- The proportion of people from Rotherham entering and graduating from higher education has risen at a faster rate than in the UK in recent years, with over 1,000 graduates each year originating from the Borough
- Differences between adult educational attainment locally and nationally are largest amongst those with higher qualifications, with NVQ4+ attainment showing the greatest disparity and the poorest improvement in Rotherham, despite a large increase in people from Rotherham graduating from higher education each year. Focus needs to be on removing the contributory factors which have led to wide variations in educational attainment (post 11 age) across the wards in the borough.
- Targets for adult learning need to be considered with the LSC following the ending of the existing development plan in 2006.

### *External views*

Rotherham has moved a long way since a critical OFSTED inspection of the Local Education Authority in 2000. Since then improvements have been made to leadership, management and budgeting, and improved provision for the most vulnerable children, including a strategy for Special Education Needs. A follow-up inspection in 2001 noted a positive direction of travel.

In 2004, an Audit Commission review of Special Education Needs noted the sound progress made in implementing the SEN strategy, the development of inclusive practice and the need to reinforce inclusion and embed it within practice in schools.

A most recent Inspection commended the provision of the Rotherham's Schools Music Services as providing outstanding curriculum support to schools across the borough. This is one example of the breadth of learning activities which this Corporate Plan seeks to take forward.

**Our Plans to make Rotherham Learning**

Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.

Our Priorities	Our objectives
Maximising potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce the difference between the national average and Rotherham's percentage of 10 year old pupils, in schools maintained by the Local Authority, achieving level 4+ in;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English; 5.6% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> <li>○ Mathematics; 4.8% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> <li>○ Science; 2.7% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Reduce the difference between the national average and Rotherham's percentage of 13 year old pupils, in schools maintained by the Local Authority, achieving level 5+ in;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English; 5.6% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> <li>○ Mathematics; 4.8% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> <li>○ Science; 2.7% (2003) to at most 0% by 2010</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Increase the percentage of 13 year old pupils, in schools maintained by the Local Authority, achieving 5+ ICT from 68.3% in 2003 to the national average level of attainment for ICT in 2010.</li> <li>▪ Reduce the difference between Rotherham's percentage of 15 year old pupils, in schools maintained by the Local Authority, achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C and the national average level of attainment from -8.5% in 2003 to at most, -5% by 2010.</li> <li>▪ A reduction of 0.1% in the total absence targets for both primary and secondary each academic year to reach a level of 5.2% in primary and 7.8% in secondary by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that no schools in the borough are in special measures by 2010</li> <li>▪ Reduce the number of pupils permanently excluded during the year from all schools maintained by the Local Authority per to 1.03 per thousand pupils by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Reduce by x% the gap in educational attainment between those living in neighbourhood renewal areas and the borough average by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of 16-18 year olds in education, training or employment to 90% by 2010</li> <li>▪ Ensure that all 3year olds, whose parents/guardians wish them to access a place, receive a good quality, free early years education place in the voluntary, maintained or private sector by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that 95% of 15-year old Looked After Children in mainstream schools achieve 1 GCSE A*-G or equivalent by 2010.</li> </ul>
Proving available and accessible life-long educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce by at least 20% [or equivalent] the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ Level 2 or equivalent by 2010</li> <li>▪ Improve access to the internet for local people through the use of libraries and other means to 95% of the population by 2010</li> <li>▪ Ensure all school buildings and facilities are sufficient, in good condition and suitable by 2010.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase year on year the number of adults and young people taking part in cultural activities that have contributed to their learning and or skills development</li> </ul>
<p>Developing skills, creativity and innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure all schools are engaged in a broad range of both formal and informal and informal Business Enterprise activities by 2010</li> <li>▪ To be confirmed; ECALS: Ensure all schools are involving students in the organisation of the school through 'Voice and Influence' by 2010</li> <li>▪ All secondary schools to be designated specialist schools with one or more specialisms by 2010</li> </ul>

## Context and challenges

**“Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide high quality of life amongst Rotherham’s beautiful countryside.”**

- 'Promoting the economic vitality of localities' is one of the shared priorities between central and local government. Local authorities have a key role in by supporting business improvement, providing positive conditions for growth and employment, improving adult skills, and helping the hardest to reach into work.
- There has been a major shift in Government regional policy - devolving powers and responsibilities from Central Government to the Regions and increasing the amount of support and investment focused on narrowing regional disparities
- National and regional initiatives such as Northern Way and Urban Renaissance sets out a strong role for cities and larger towns in driving economic growth and prosperity, and South Yorkshire as a growing sub-region will have a significant role to play in those developments.
- Reform of European Union and National 'state aid' will result in major changes in the availability of regeneration funds, such as Objective 1 and Regional Selective Assistance, locally.
- The sub-region has benefited from having access to large amounts of public funding for regeneration and Rotherham continues to maximise those opportunities.
- There has been strong local economic and social progress. The Borough's unemployment rate for example has fallen from its peak of 22% in the mid 1980s to less than 3%. There is a continued need to ensure a good range of employment opportunities
- However, deprivation and poverty are still major challenges. Official figures show that Rotherham is the 63<sup>rd</sup> most deprived borough in England. Also not all areas and people have benefited equally have from the economic and social progress. In a recent survey 14% of local people considered that their earnings/income only allowed them to have a 'poor' or 'very poor' standard of living.
- The impact of deprivation continues to be focussed in certain geographical areas such as in and around the Town Centre and groups including the unemployed, Black & Minority Ethnic, single mothers, people with ill health and those with low skills or incomes. There is less deprivation but it is more concentrated and intense.
- The economy is making good progress but there are still structural weaknesses, productivity levels (about 80% of the UK average) continue to lag behind the national average, there is an over-representation of sectors forecast to decline, and an under-representation of small businesses.
- A series of studies and local consultation have pointed to the need to revitalise Rotherham Town Centre, and reinforce its role as a hub for cultural, economic and civic activity. A strategy for taking this forward is now in place and will deliver over the next 15 years.
- National policy developments such as the Haskins Report on rural policy and the Quality Parish Council Initiative will provide major opportunities to strengthen the provision of key services to Rotherham's rural areas.

- Local surveys show transport to be a top priority for local people. Satisfaction levels with local bus services are high (61% in 2003/04) and above the national average (54%), but over the last two years have fallen by 2 percentage points, nationally over the same period they increased by 4 points
- The average earnings in Rotherham are only 87% of the national average (2003).
- The number of VAT registered companies is less than the national average (303 per 10,000 head of the population) at 186 per 10,000 head of the population

### What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

One of the Council's key local performance indicators is reducing the gap between national and local employment rates. By 2004, the gap had been closed and was actually showing an employment rate that was 0.9% higher than the UK average. We need to ensure that these new jobs are sustainable and increase the skill and income of the local population.

Improvements also need to be sustained in the borough's economic inactivity rate, which is now down to 23% (still behind the national rate of 21%). This will involve health and well-being initiatives as well as economic developments.

The most recently reported survey of business activity in the borough (in 2003-4) showed a continued improvement in vacancy rates in retail premises (down to 7.0% in the town centre). Clearly there needs to be continued focus on retail development and the town centre.

Transport is a growing issue for economic regeneration and recent performance shows that the condition of principal and non-principal roads is continuing to improve, with a reduction (to 10% in 2004-5) of principal roads needing strengthening.

In terms of strategic planning, the Council has improved its capacity to deal with planning applications, and will meet government targets for determining applications (such as 60% of major applications within 13 weeks). However it is clear that improvements are needed in the % of new homes being built on previously development land.

### *External views*

The 2004 Inspection of Regeneration viewed the council's approach to regeneration to be 'good', citing a clear commitment, and good partnership working, to tackle economic, social and environmental problems caused by the borough's industrial past. Major redevelopments such as the Dearne Valley, and the Magna Centre were viewed as leading the way for sustainable employment and a wide range of activity in social and environmental regeneration was seen as leading to improved social well-being. However it was recognised that prospects for the future rested on a clearer vision for longer-term regeneration, development of areas outside the Town Centre, and plans for resourcing following the ending of funding streams from 2006.

A Regular Performance Assessment of Environment in 2004 noted the strengths of the Council's planning system, and the holistic approach to regeneration and strategic planning, addressing the integration of economic, environmental and social issues. The council's effective protection of the natural and built environment was also noted. However this assessment also detailed a number of weaknesses in integrating transport in the borough and linking new areas of employment, and plans for more sustainable transport. Transport is a sub-regional responsibility, but the Council will focus on this area as a specific priority.

Rotherham Council has achieved two Beacon Council Awards – one for 'Removing Barriers to Work' and one for 'Fostering Business Growth'. We are also currently short-listed for a further Beacon award for 'Supporting New Businesses' and 'Asset Management' (Check and update on status in April).

Two years ago, RMBC received a critical inspection of housing benefits. As a response an action plan was implemented and in the first year of the RBT partnership, a top (4-star) rating was achieved, and as a result of this rapid improvement, the service was one of only two selected nationally for a best practice review. Improvement continues with the average number of days to process a new claim falling to 23 days, well above the national standard of 36 days

## Our Plans to make Rotherham Achieving

Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide high quality of life amongst Rotherham's beautiful countryside.

Our Objectives – we will	
A Prosperous place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of a volunteer bureau and volunteering, and the involvement of RMBC staff, to achieve 300 active volunteers by 2010</li> <li>Achieve 150 new Inward Investors (including local expansions) by 2010</li> <li>Reduce to and maintain a 7% floor space vacancy rate of industrial and commercial property by 2010.</li> <li>Increase the average weekly wage to achieve the national average by 2010</li> </ul>
Minimising inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups in line with the regional average by 2008 and in line with national average by 2010.</li> <li>Ensure that 7% of all new housing will be deemed affordable housing by 2010.</li> <li>Support at least 50 social enterprises by 2010 contributing to increased wellbeing in most disadvantaged areas and groups.</li> </ul>
A Vibrant mixed and diverse economy and flourishing local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the rate for new business survival rates from x in 2004 to X by 2010</li> <li>Increase the number of graduates per population to x in Rotherham by 2010</li> <li>Increase the number of new start-up businesses accommodated in Council businesses and managed work space units to X</li> </ul>
An excellent town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that a significant proportion of the Town Centre Master Plan is developed and implemented by 2010</li> <li>Reduce vacancy rate of Town Centre premises to 5% by 2010</li> <li>Increase footfall in the Town Centre by 5% per annum up to 2010</li> <li>Improve user satisfaction of the Town Centre to achieve 75% by 2010</li> <li>Bring in £20m of additional external funding for improvements in culture and leisure facilities, including a new cultural centre and town centre swimming pool by 2010</li> </ul>
Sustainable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Local Transport Plan by 2010, creating an accessible, integrated, sustainable transport system for economic, social and environmental well-being</li> <li>Develop and commence implementation of a light rail system by 2010</li> <li>Ensure 90% of residents can access employment opportunities by public transport within 30 minutes by 2010</li> </ul>
Revitalised rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural areas to meet locally identified needs, including transport, shops, enterprise and financial services and readily available one-stop access to all council services by 2010.</li> <li>Develop and accord with parish councils to improve service delivery and communication with parish councils by 2005</li> </ul>



## ROTHERHAM ALIVE

### Context and challenges

*“Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are active, live life to the full, and have fun. Rotherham will celebrate its history -building on the past, and creating and welcoming the new. People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic, physical and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.”*

- National policies such as the Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier White Paper and the Shared Priority 'Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities paves the way for an increased and enhanced role for local authorities in promoting healthy life styles and providing an environment where people can enjoy their lives to the full.
- Good progress has been made in improving and health and reducing inequalities. Teenage pregnancies are down and life expectancy has improved for both men (up to 75.2) and women (up to 76.4) for example.
- The Borough however continues to perform poorly on most of the key health related measures with life expectancy and its proportion of its population with long-term limiting illness, teenage pregnancy rate together with deaths from heart disease, circulatory disease and various cancers all higher than the national levels for example. In a recent survey 29% of people in Rotherham considered that their health was only 'fair' or 'poor'.
- There are marked local variations in health, with people in the less disadvantaged neighbourhoods living an average eight years longer than those in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Over 20% of the Borough's neighbourhoods are within the top 10% most deprived population nationally suffering from health deprivation official figures show.
- Rotherham has an ageing population, with the number of people aged over 75 expected to rise considerably (up 68%) over the next 25 years. The majority will enjoy good health and activity; for some the extra years will be happy, but not for all. Dementia, arthritis, hearing and vision problems and diabetes are some of the chronic conditions that are on the increase as Rotherham's population ages.
- Poor life-style is a growing issue. The latest lifestyle survey shows that 34% of residents are overweight, with 17% classified as obese. 48% did no regular moderate or strenuous exercise, 35% did not eat any fruit or vegetables on a regular daily basis and 25% were smokers.
- Rotherham has a strong cultural, creative and artistic heritage, which contributes to be improved with developments such as Magna, Rother Valley Country Park and Clifton Park Museum. However, participation and satisfaction levels are relatively low. The latest customer satisfaction survey shows satisfaction with museums and galleries falling to 37%. Participation in cultural activity at 12.7% of households in 2003 is well below the national (20%) and Yorkshire and Humber average (16%). Investment in new facilities, such as a town centre theatre and swimming pool, are key to addressing this.
- Nationally and locally there has been a major focus on building on delivering an excellent start to life through initiatives such as Sure Start, the development of Children's Centres and the expansion of nursery provision.
- Paragraph about substance misuse

### What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

Raising everyone's quality of life is a core element of this Corporate Plan. Providing facilities to enable people to have active lives has been a challenge for the Council over recent years., and presently, we know we need to make steps to increase the number of people visiting the borough's libraries, museums, leisure and play facilities. For example, we will be looking to raise the number of visits to libraries from 5,000 per 1,000 population in 2003/04, and the number of swims above 3,300 per 1,000 population.

This will be possible by an ambitious development plan for culture and leisure services in Rotherham, involving completion by 2008 of a strategic and sustainable network of indoor sports facilities and the modernisation of the Clifton Park Museum. With the refurbishment of some key facilities, we will be looking to see major improvements in customer satisfaction with the facilities (with by 2007 70% of people being satisfied with libraries, 70% with parks, at least 54% with sports and leisure and 46% with arts and museums). A new town centre theatre and library, and swimming pool are planned as part of the town centre masterplan.

### *External views*

Quality of life issues have been assessed in a Regular Performance Assessment of Culture in 2004. A key area which needs tackling by the Council is the promotion of benefits of cultural activity to increase participation, well-being self-esteem and lifelong learning, more 'joined up' working in relation to services to young people and raising the profile of culture and leisure in the authority. A clearer strategy for health promotion is needed. However, the range of potential facilities available to Rotherham people, including green spaces, the refurbished museum and arts and sports development services are noted as a strength for future improvements. The award of Charter Mark to the Libraries service in 2004 was a clear indication of the high standards of service libraries can provide to the community.

The Inspection of Children's Services of 2004 noted that children and their families received health care, education and other services which promoted children's life chances and were responsive to their needs. Two key national children's priorities under the government's 'Every Child Matters' initiative are 'Health' and 'Enjoyment & Achievement' and the Council will be progressing actions to give young people the best start in life through its Children's and Young People Services.

The Inspection of Regeneration noted that there are encouraging examples of success in delivering improved social regeneration, which recognises community well-being and the impact of culture and leisure activities on regeneration. A joined-up approach to improving quality of life will therefore be of key importance to Rotherham MBC over future years of the regeneration of the borough.

**Our Plans to make Rotherham Alive**

Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are active, live life to the full, and have fun. Rotherham will celebrate its history, building on the past and creating and welcoming the new. People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic, physical and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.

<b>Our Priorities – we will</b>	
<p>People will feel good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure xx% of Rotherham population feels that the Council makes a positive contribution to improving their quality of life by 2008 (baseline to be set during 2005/06)</li> <li>• Ensure that by 2010 95% of adult residents and young people who participate in cultural activity state that it has a beneficial impact on their quality of life</li> <li>• Deliver an Older Person's Strategy by 2010 in order to raise the cultural and civic participation of older people by x% and thus improve well-being</li> <li>• Reduce inequalities in health by 10% by 2010 as measured through infant mortality and life expectancy at birth</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of people satisfied with the quality of their local environment to 80% by 2010</li> </ul>
<p>Active people who live life to the full</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide state of the art leisure facilities across the borough by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the numbers of individual sessions in Rotherham's swimming pools from 700,000 in 2003-04 to 875,000 in the first full year of operation of the Borough's new network of pools, and just under a million a year by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the number of adults and young people aged 16 and above who participate in at least 30 minutes of exercise 3 times a week to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Ensure that by 2010 the profile of cultural facilities users matches the local population profile</li> <li>• Achieve 26,800 attendances per 1,000 head of population a year to cultural facilities by 2010</li> <li>• Develop in partnership with local groups and schools, major community arts, media and heritage projects and facilities in at least 5 areas by 2010</li> <li>• To increase the number of people who are receiving direct payments by 250% by 2010.</li> <li>• Increase the number of people accessing intermediate care and rehabilitation services by 30% by 2010</li> <li>• Reconfigure residential services for older people by developing 3 residential care homes, 3 resource centres and 3 Extra Care Housing facilities by 2009.</li> <li>• Improve the percentage of all journeys made by walking and cycling by X</li> </ul>
<p>Celebration of our history and cultural, artistic and creative activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide state of the art facilities through a new Arts Centre, Theatre and Central Library by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the number of creative industry new businesses by x% each year</li> <li>• Support development of radio station for Rotherham and new media initiatives at community and borough level, ensuring inclusion of opportunities for hard to reach groups</li> <li>• Develop and promote Rotherham's woodland estate to increase usage by 100% by 2010</li> <li>• All Libraries, museums, leisure facilities and major parks to achieve national standards for these services by 2010</li> </ul>

<p>Good health and healthy lives</p>	<p>Work with partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce under 18 year old conception rate in Rotherham to 28.3% by 2010.</li> <li>• Reduce suicide rates to xx per thousand by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of schoolchildren who eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce the % of obese children under 11 by x% each year</li> <li>• Reduce the % of children and young people who smoke to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce the proportion of under 25s who use illegal drugs by X% by 2010</li> <li>• To improve the protection of health by work with the Health Protection Agency and Primary Care Trust to prevent infections, disease, food related illness, disabilities, and early deaths. Target to be set within the Public Health Strategy 05/06 [need more clarity]</li> <li>• Continue to implement winter and fuel poverty warmth programme to ensure ill health prevented and hospital admissions reduced related to hypothermia</li> <li>• Improve health outcomes for people with long-term conditions through work with the Primary Care Trust to improve care and support and housing conditions</li> <li>• Provide a range of high quality play facilities for children by January 2007</li> <li>• 45% of Looked After Children participate in a cultural or sporting activity by 2008.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of adult admissions to long term care to 85 per 1,000 people by 2010.</li> <li>• The waiting time for an assessment of need to be undertaken will be a maximum of 1 month by 2010.</li> <li>• Adult and Older Clients receiving a review as a % of adults clients receiving a service will be 100% and such reviews will take place at least annually (unless circumstances dictate a review quicker) by 2010</li> </ul>
<p>Investment in the next generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support and develop Sure Start activity and mainstream successful initiatives to all areas of deprivation in Rotherham by 2010</li> <li>• Ensure that the Voice and Influence programme is developed and resourced to ensure a flourishing youth cabinet and organisation which are able to influence the Council's Local Strategic Partnership and other partners to respond to children's and young peoples needs</li> <li>• Ensure that all new parents have access to <u>positive parenting classes and Family Learning by 2008</u></li> </ul>

## Context and challenges

**“A place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with good quality homes for all, and accessible local facilities and services. There will be attractive buildings and public space; peaceful and thriving communities free from crime, drugs and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, children will be safe from harm and neglect, a preventive approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.”**

- Community safety, decent housing and the local environment are key priorities nationally, and are consistently identified through local research and consultation as significant areas of concern for Rotherham residents.
- The Government's flagship 'Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future' programme is one of the most significant Government developments for many years. It offers major opportunities to the Council to ensure that all social housing is decent, improve open spaces and parks, tackle pockets of low demand housing and abandonment, improve design quality and the street scene and create safe communities.
- Government Bills such as Building Communities, Beating Crime together with the Shared Priority 'Safe and Strong Communities' reinforce local authorities key role and contribution in addressing crime and anti-social behavior, through for example wardens, CCTV, better design and joining-up of agencies services and activities.
- Crime rates in Rotherham are relatively low (4th lowest of 36 metropolitan authorities) but burglary and vehicle crime are above the national average. There are also 'hot spots' where rates are very high. Fear of Crime at 27% is falling (down from 51% in 2002) but remains a major concern of local people. A recent customer satisfaction survey identified crime as the top thing local people would most like to be improved.
- Consultation and research shows that most people in Rotherham are satisfied or fairly satisfied (63%) with the area in which they live. However this is not uniform across the Borough, and satisfaction rates vary considerably between communities from 76% to 58%.
- A major challenge will be the maximization of the opportunities presented as a result of the 'Decent Homes' investment and the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder. The majority (78% in 2003) of the Council's housing stock is non-decent, and a small but significant number of the Borough's overall housing stocks are at risk of low demand and abandonment.
- Rotherham's housing stock is amongst the most affordable in the Country but steeply rising house prices relative to incomes means that home ownership is increasingly becoming more difficult for some people.
- In future years there will be a significant increase in the demand for new homes, mainly fuelled by an increase in one-person households, which are forecast to grow by 7,000 by 2012.
- Rotherham has a good built and natural environment with many good quality open spaces, listed buildings of national significance and plants and wildlife that are important for local biodiversity. Much of open Rotherham is protected through its Green Belt designation. A Green Spaces Strategy will be implemented to raise the profile and develop the usage of Rotherham's open spaces.
- Local surveys show that protecting and enhancing this good built and natural environment to be a top priority for local people. At 70% (2003/04), satisfaction with parks and open spaces is high and improving (up from

62% in 2000/01). Satisfaction with cleanliness of public land has improved significantly, from 46% to 58% in the three years from 2001 to 2004.

- The Civil Contingencies Bill provides local authorities with major new responsibilities and duties for avoiding, preparing for and dealing with emergencies and civil contingencies.
- Drug abuse is a major concern, and there has been a focus on support for drugs users. This has made real progress with increasing numbers of drug users seeking treatment.
- The Council has a responsibility to ensure a high quality in design and construction of its buildings to create a good legacy for succeeding generations.
- The Council will ensure that its own transport is safe, effective and efficient.

### What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

The Rotherham Partnership has set reducing the fear of crime as a key indicator in its Community Strategy. To date, the percentage of people 'very concerned' about being a victim of crime has halved (from 51% in 2002). Additionally, there are a series of challenging targets in Rotherham's local PSA with Government focused on community safety issues. These include reductions in people killed or seriously injured on Rotherham roads (down to 127 in 2003), the number of burglaries (down to 2046 in 2003-4 from 2681 in 2002-3). A further LPSA (Local Public Service Agreement) target concerns the number of problem drug users in treatment programmes. The 2003-4 target of 722 was not met, and the issue will be a future priority for the Council and its partners.

The Council contributes to the aim of making Rotherham Safe through a number of services, and performance levels for key activities include:

- A revised stock condition survey identified that 78% of Council homes were not meeting the decency standard at 1 Apr 2003. The challenge to bring homes up to this level by the Government target by 2010 will be a key objective to improve the environment of local estates further.
- In terms of creating stable and safe communities, re-let times for our Council houses has reduced from 22.84 days in 2003-4 and is forecast to be down to 16 days in 2004-5. This is a dramatic improvement on recent years (re-let times were 98 days in 2001-2). Furthermore the % of new tenancies that last more than 12 months is now forecast to reach 98%, which again is a measure of the stability of our communities.
- Effective regulation, waste management, maintenance of the highway infrastructure and emergency planning all contribute to a safe environment, and all are extensively measured through local and national Key Performance Indicators.

### *External views*

The ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) 'indicative' inspection of October 2004 found that Rotherham's estates were clean and tidy, free of litter and graffiti mainly due to high quality service provision through Streetpride. It was also found that there is a wealth of positive community-based safety initiatives such as neighbourhood wardens but that the Council's approach to planning and handling reports of ASB needed development, especially as crime and anti-social behaviour is a matter of highest concern for residents.

The Repairs & Maintenance inspection of April 2004 noted a well developed and managed decent homes programmes (with over 3000 homes brought up to the standard since 2002), although there was a higher level of properties requiring work to meet the standard than expected. Additionally voids were re-let quickly and to a very high standard, which supported stable communities.

The inspection of Waste Management services, rated 'good' in October 2004, noted in particular efficient and effective refuse collection and street care services, and exceeding statutory targets on street cleanliness and recycling, although there was a need to set targets to reduce fly-tipping, dog fouling and graffiti.

In addition the Council has undertaken a number of independent Scrutiny Reviews which have informed the implementation of a Domestic Violence Policy, the design of the Streetpride initiative, the strategy towards Housing-related Anti-Social Behaviour and off-road motorbiking and related vehicle nuisance.

**Our Plans to make Rotherham Safe**

A place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with good quality homes for all, and accessible local facilities and services. There will be attractive buildings and public space; peaceful and thriving communities free from crime, drugs and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, children will be safe from harm and neglect, a preventive approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.

<b>Our Objectives – we will</b>	
<b>Our Priorities</b> Safe, clean, green and well-maintained neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of residents with high or acceptable levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the streets to 95% by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of residents with high or acceptable levels of satisfaction with the condition of highway and footpaths to 80% by 2010</li> <li>• Deliver a clear set of overarching customer defined neighbourhood standards by 2006 which will help ensure the delivery of safe, clean and green neighbourhoods [revised and improved annually]</li> <li>• Increase opportunities to recycle and minimise waste creation through the development of the waste management partnership resulting in an increase in recycling rates to 35% by 2008 and further improvements to 2010</li> </ul>
Decent homes for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a good (2 star) ALMO Housing service in terms of cost, efficiency and service delivery by 2005 and look to achieve an excellent (3 star) service by 2006 to draw down funding to deliver decent homes</li> <li>• Achieve the Decent Homes Standard for all council properties by 2010</li> <li>• Ensure that all Council properties achieve secured by design standards by 2010 to reduce domestic burglary</li> </ul>
Attractive buildings and public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have reviewed all conservation areas by 2010</li> <li>• Have adopted a supplementary planning document of design by 2010</li> <li>• Ensure 80% of public buildings are accessible to disabled persons by March 2010</li> <li>• Ensure high quality design and construction of the Council's new building work</li> </ul>
Streets free from crime, drugs and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up and support warden or CCTV schemes in all 'hotspot' neighbourhoods identified in conjunction with the police</li> <li>• Have the lowest overall crime rates for all metropolitan areas in Yorkshire and the Humber by 2010</li> <li>• Business crime [EDS to provide]</li> <li>• Establish a joint intelligence protocol with the police working on shared boundaries and resources to target more effectively and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Reduce by [50 per cent] the incidence of anti-social behaviour reported to the council by 2007 and further improve year on year</li> <li>• Ensure that 75% of vulnerable people feel safe, or free from bullying and intimidation by 2010</li> </ul>
Environments and people protected and nurtured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of bullying incidents in schools by 50% by 2010</li> <li>• Provide xx additional units for emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence within the borough by March 2007</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of re-registrations on the Children Protection Register to 15% by 2008.</li> <li>• 80% of children under 16 who have been looked after for 2.5 or more years will have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are adopted.</li> </ul>
Accidents and hazards minimised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of people killed in road traffic accidents by 10% each year</li> <li>• Ensure the Council's own transport is well maintained, safe, effective and efficient</li> <li>• Ensure the borough has high quality emergency planning procedures which are recognised as best practice by 2010</li> </ul>

## Context and challenges

**“Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.”**

- National policies such as Civil Renewal Bill and Freedom of Information Act together with initiatives aimed at promoting E-Government and different forms of voting have offered greater opportunities for local people to participate in and shape the Council’s decision making processes, and for neighbourhoods, parishes, voluntary and community sector to influence and deliver local services.
- At the last local election in 2004 the turnout was relatively high at 43% but was down from the turnout of 51% in the 2003 local elections. The number of people registering to vote is falling, and at a rate well above the national average.
- The number of people involved in local community and voluntary organisations is increasing up to 22% in 2004 (from 20% in 2002). However to achieve a vibrant and sustainable communities, a voluntary sector that plays a major role in improving Rotherham’s quality of life, there is a need to increase the number of volunteers in the borough through a supported and consistent approach to encouraging volunteering.
- In a recent survey, when asked to what extent the Council takes notice of the views of members of the public more people disagreed with the statement that they could influence decisions affecting their local area (39%) than agreed (28%).
- Rotherham has one of the highest rates of its population acting as unpaid carers to family members, friends, neighbours or others. At 12.2% the 2001 Census shows that it is 14<sup>th</sup> highest in the Country.
- In recent years there has been a major and on-going shift in national policy towards Older People. There has been a move away from focusing public services on the most vulnerable people (only 15% of the older population), and towards a broader approach and enables all older people to remain as independent for as long as possible and live their lives to the full.
- Rotherham has one of the highest rates of its population acting as unpaid carers to family, friends and neighbours. At 12% in 2001 it was the 14<sup>th</sup> highest in the Country.
- Rotherham’s ageing population coupled with the high levels of ill-health (22.4% of the population suffers from long-term limiting illness; compared to 17.4% nationally) will have major implications for future and health and social care.
- The perception of the Borough is generally low or poor. In a recent consultation exercise local people were asked to select one of five statements which best described their opinion of Rotherham - 31% thought that Rotherham was best described as "a place still struggling to overcome the decline in its traditional industries and its many social problems". The majority were, however, more cautiously optimistic and there was some feeling that difficulties that the area has suffered in the past are being overcome, although gradually.
- Much of south and west of Rotherham is integrated functionally with Sheffield, and looks to the City for leisure, retail and cultural opportunities.

- The image of the borough from an outside perspective, whilst improving, can still be negative due to its historic role as an old industrial town. Sharing and engaging Rotherham people in the regeneration of the Borough and ensuring successes and improvements are well communicated will contribute to how proud people feel of where they live.

### What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

The work of the Council is central to making people proud of Rotherham. Overall satisfaction levels with the Council overall are reasonable. Between 2000/01 and 2003/04 the level increased by 1 percentage point to 55%, in comparison with a 10 percentage point decline in satisfaction with Councils nationally. Rotherham's rate is equivalent to the national average, and above the All Metropolitan Borough's averages, but there is much to be done in increasing the positive view of Rotherham people with the Council and with the borough. This will build on the significant increase in the level of satisfaction with household waste collection, parks and open spaces and cleanliness.

The Council supports, amongst other 'pride' initiatives, a Youth Council, Citizens Panel and many community organisations and local quality of life indicators will need to be set to properly assess how people can influence decisions and get involved in the life of the borough.

In terms of being a caring place and providing care services to sections of the community, notable progress has been made in the Council's efforts to support adults with mental health, learning and physical disabilities to live at home independently, but future stretching targets for providing home care for older adults may need to receive renewed attention through the Council's Older People Strategy. Preventative work is reducing the actual numbers of looked after children in the borough (down to 6.2 per 1000 children) and to look after children through fostering and adoption services, but again focus will need to be maintained during the period of the Corporate Plan and through the integration of Children's Service under the Government's Every Child Matters agenda.

### *External views*

The Regeneration inspection of May 2004 (resulting in a 2\* good rating) noted that the Council's wide range of activity in social and environmental regeneration has led to increased social wellbeing, but recommended that community leadership is strengthened and coordination of community-based plans improved. An external Audit of Democratic renewal and an internal review of the Democratic process have set out various recommendations for improving people's involvement in decision-making.

The overall Commission for Social Care Inspection performance review report for Rotherham Social Services in 2004 noted several key issues including that:

- The numbers placed for adoption is showing year on year improvement and continues to be an area of strength for the Council
- Hard work has taken place to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy
- Outcomes for care leavers have been improved through the council's work with partner agencies
- A main focus for the Council in services to adults is on promoting independence and choice
- There are examples of innovative work in employment schemes for people with learning disabilities, development of mental health services and timely provision of services to people following assessment.

However the Commission for Social Care Inspection also note some key areas for improvement which are key to this Corporate Plan. These include:

- Modernisation of day services so that users are provided with increased choice and control over the services they receive
- Investment in mental health services need to continue to ensure outreach and intervention
- The take up of direct payments needs a significant promotion to increase take-up and again increase independent living

## Our Plans to make Rotherham Proud

Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.

Our Priorities	Our objectives
Pride in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the % of residents who are satisfied with overall services provided by the council to 60% by 2007 and to be above national average by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the positive perception of local people to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Improve the % of people satisfied with their area as a place to live to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Increase the population of the borough by 5% to 2010 [EDS to add]</li> </ul>
Citizenship & Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the turn out rate at local elections by 10% compared to the position pre-postal elections</li> <li>• Increase the % of schools having democratically elected school councils to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools to have elected representatives on the Rotherham Young People's Parliament by 2010</li> <li>• Ensure participation of local community groups is representative of the local population by 2010</li> <li>• To increase the involvement of children and their families in the planning, delivery and review of services to 95% by 2008.</li> </ul>
Supporting Vulnerable People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a good (2 star) Adult Social Services in terms of cost, efficiency, service delivery by 2006 and look to achieve excellent (3 star) by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce the number of vulnerable people by 5% each year for key client groups (eg homeless, domestic violence, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy)</li> <li>• Maintain the top quartile performance in helping the number of older people to live at home by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce the number of children in the top 20% most disadvantaged wards living in workless households to xx% by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce the number of children who are bullied or who experience harassment to below the national average by 2010</li> <li>• Develop an overall Borough wide strategy for Older People by August 2005.</li> <li>• All carers assessed and reviewed in the year as a % of people assessed who have a carer will be 100% by 2010.</li> </ul>
Strong Sustainable Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people who participate in community organisations to 25% by 2010</li> <li>• Help establish a range of effective, sustainable community organisations within the most deprived parts of the borough by 2010</li> </ul>
Involvement in local decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the involvement of the elderly, young and Black and Minority Ethnic groups to ensure that everyone is at the heart of decision making by 2007</li> <li>• Deliver new local area agreement/compacts using intelligence from the community planning framework by 2006</li> <li>• Establish a range of networks for all communities of interest to ensure participation in local decision making</li> </ul>

- Increase the % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area to xx% by 2010
- Establish new area assembly models within the framework of the Local Strategic Partnership which clearly links to the council's democratic decision making process by 2006

## Context and challenges

*“Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.”*

- Through national obligations such as the duty to take into the account the elements of Local Agenda 21 in the preparation of the Community Strategy councils have been given a key role and responsibility to ensure sustainable development at the local level.
- The delivery of sustainable development under-pins all the themes of the Corporate Plan. For example the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth is a key theme of Rotherham Achieving. This section focuses on the other key aspects of sustainable development not covered elsewhere in the Plan.
- Air quality in the Borough is generally good. There are however a few pockets of poor air quality. Increases in road transport are identified as the key contributor to these pockets of poor air quality, especially adjoining the M1 and the M18.
- Recent years has seen a dramatic increase in the level of recycling in the Borough up from less than 4% to over 15% in three years. However, much of the Borough’s waste still continues to be disposed of in land fill sites. Legislation such as the European Unions’ Landfill Directive will place significant constraints on the Council’s ability to dispose of waste in landfill sites.
- The Borough’s natural environment is one of its greatest assets. The vast majority of the Borough is open in nature, and agricultural is by far the greatest land-use. Much of the Borough is designated as of national significance including Green Belt, Ancient Monument and Sites of Special Scientific Significance that need to be protected and enhanced.
- The Council’s record in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases is amongst the best of any local authority in the Country, and is one of a few to have all its electricity needs met from electricity generated from “green” sources. Rotherham and the wider Region however is not on track to meet its targets and it is forecast that there will be an overall rise in carbon dioxide emissions over the period 1990 to 2010 without further action. Increases in road and air traffic are identified as key contributors to current and forecast emissions.
- National and Regional policy reflect the need to increase the use of ‘brownfield’ land to accommodate new development. They set a high target of 60% of all new housing developments in the Borough to be built on ‘brownfield’ land over the next few years.
- Both national and regional policies require more sustainable building practices to improve the energy and environmental standards of new development. This also requires new housing to be built at a much higher density than previously.
- Car dependency is increasing leading to more congestion and pollution, and constraining economic growth. The latest customer satisfaction survey shows that over 62% of people think that the level of traffic congestion has got worse over the last 3 years (just 4% think it got better). This will worsen with Regeneration of Rotherham generating more economic activity and indeed increases in population.
- Interest in protecting the environment has been enhanced through encouraging local environmental projects in schools and the community. Encouraging residents to take more

responsibility for their environment will be achieved through more effective community planning and local involvement.

### What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

The Council focuses closely on sustainability issues through its Best Value Performance Indicators. Our performance on key indicators has been encouraging in recent years, for example the % of household waste which has been recycled has risen from 10% to around 14% from 2003/4 to 2004/5, mainly due to new facilities such as Household Waste Recycling Centres.

A national priority is the development of new homes built on previously developed land. We are working towards the current 60% target, but a review of housing policies in the Local Development Framework will allow a reconsideration of priorities over future years.

### *External views*

In 2004, Rotherham has received some positive messages from external bodies. The Regeneration Inspection noted that improving the environment is an important factor in regenerating neighborhoods and Rotherham residents have seen positive change. 'Streetpride' has been a very visible initiative to devolve responsibility and delivery of council environmental services to a more local level". Additionally it was stressed that successful improvements have been made to the public spaces in Rotherham town centre, but these have had limited impact on a number of buildings that are unoccupied and becoming run-down, despite their intrinsic historic and architectural value.

The council was commended for supporting a range of local environmental projects, including renewing and improving habitats for migrant birds in former coal workings; providing match funding from its own resources to applicants for funding to fund such projects as country park access, Swinton heritage trail and Wath skate park; and commissioning services from the Groundwork Trust.

The Waste Inspection noted the efficient refuse service that is accessible and responsive to users, there has been a reduction in the amount of municipal and household waste, supported by an extensive recycling infrastructure. The Council also won an award for most improved score in the Business In the Community Environment Engagement Index survey in 2003 and in 2004 came 4<sup>th</sup> in the local authority sector.



**Our Plans to ensure Sustainable Development in Rotherham**

Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.

<b>Our objectives – by 2010 we will</b>	
<b>Our Priorities</b>	
The Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be the best performing by Introducing a green waste collection service for all households [x thousand] by December 2006</li> <li>• Introduce a range of waste minimisation initiatives so that a maximum of 60% waste goes direct to landfill Achieve 50% increase in recycled waste arising from Council Buildings</li> <li>• Increase the Energy Efficiency rating of local authority homes from X% to Y%</li> <li>• Continue to ensure that 100% of Council buildings are supplied by green electricity</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of new homes built on previously developed land to 60% by 2010</li> <li>• Reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions per square metre of Council properties by X%</li> <li>• Increase the number of days when air quality is moderate or higher from X to Y</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of sites of special scientific interest in favourable condition from X to Y</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of river lengths that are good or fair biological quality from X to Y</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to economic regeneration, reducing inequalities, sustainable communities and transport are elsewhere in the Plan</li> </ul>

## Context and challenges

**“All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and qualities will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.”**

- With a population of around 251,500 Rotherham Borough comprises a diverse and vibrant mix of people, cultures, and communities. 52.10% (by area) is rural and the rest is urban. According to the 2001 Census, 96.9% of Rotherham’s population is white, with 3.1 per cent of the population from black and minority ethnic communities. The largest black and minority ethnic group is Pakistani at 1.9%. The Census revealed 6 major different faiths and 15 different ethnicities, including Kashmiri, Chinese, Yemeni, Indian, and West African.
- Rotherham also has other significant communities of interest including disabled people, travellers, and a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community. There is a wide range of other lifestyles, experiences and backgrounds, which we would wish to see acknowledged and celebrated.
- Promoting equality of opportunity, reducing inequalities, challenging discrimination and prejudice, and promoting good community relations is now firmly part of the Government’s modernising agenda for the public sector. All councils are expected to place issues of fairness at the heart of policy and decision making, and using their civic leadership role demonstrate their commitment to an increasingly diverse population with varying needs.
- Legislation is increasingly underpinning the fairness agenda with recent extensions to the race relations and disability discrimination law, new laws on religion, belief and sexuality, and proposed new laws to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age. Coupled with existing legislation on race, gender, disability, Human Rights, and equal pay, the fairness agenda is a key theme of activity that the Council must address over the forthcoming years.
- In Rotherham, we have a long history of welcoming, and integrating diverse cultures, faiths and communities into the Borough. We believe that each and every one of those who choose to come to Rotherham alongside those who are born here can make a rich contribution to the sustainability of the area, both economically and socially. However we are aware that there are people in our Borough who fear harassment and persecution. There are communities, which feel, disadvantaged and unheard, and there are levels of misunderstanding between those of different age, class, sexuality, geographical location, race, faith and culture. There is a need to develop infrastructures to support communities of interest, several of whom do not have organisations that represent them.
- Rotherham ranks as the 63<sup>rd</sup> most deprived districts nationally using the Government’s 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Thus reducing inequalities in income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, the living environment and crime are key challenges for the Council to overcome with its partners if we are to ensure no one is disadvantaged because of where they live or the community they belong to.
- Approximately 52% of the population are women and issues such as domestic violence, safety, affordable childcare, teenage pregnancy, and access to health services, housing,

and employment and training, are gender specific issues which the Council needs to address.

- We acknowledge the need as a local authority to be close to the communities we serve. This means understanding the needs and wishes of the people we are serving and delivering services appropriate to them. Fairness means ensuring that all communities have equal opportunity to influence in local decision-making and access to employment and services. All communities have a diversity of views and interests within them. When making decisions, the Council needs to weigh those different views and demonstrate to local people how they had an influence.

### **What you told us**

- to be inserted following consultation

## The Current Position

### *Our Performance*

- Much work has been done to research, understand and map patterns of deprivation and inequality in Rotherham. This has enabled the Council and its partners to take to focus action and resources on key interventions to meet the specific needs and priorities of communities of interest.
- We have delivered against all 10 Neighbourhood Renewal Floor targets. This means that we have, for example: increased the employment rates of groups such as lone parents and ethnic minorities; improved life expectancy and reduced number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents; increased the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at A\*-C; reduced the fear of crime; and made improvements in the standard of social housing available.
- Through our Reachout surveys we know that 45% of those surveyed agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, and 58% agree that their local area is a place where people of different ages get on well together.
- The Council has worked with partner agencies, such as Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum, MAARI and the SRP, to increase the confidence of women and BME communities to report domestic violence and racial harassment. This has resulted in an increase in the number of reported incidents and improved multi-agency work to tackle the causes racial harassment and domestic violence.
- The Council has undertaken a wide range of research and engagement activities to understand the needs of the diverse population of Rotherham which has led to service improvements for example, identifying the needs of the local LGBT community, developing a BME Housing Strategy, and Voice and Influence work to ensure young people are able to influence the policy and decision making of the Council.
- Rotherham will introduce Civil Partnership Registration towards the end of 2005, which is a major step forward in recognising the legal status of same sex couples, and will build on our commitment to the Equality Standard

### *External views*

The ALMO Indicative Inspection noted that the Council is responding to the diversity of its communities to ensure fair and equal access to lettings and that information is available in a range of different languages and formats. The Waste Management acknowledged that the service took into account the views of customers and stakeholders and responded to the diversity of the community by working in deprived areas to improve access to services. The Inspection of the Regeneration Plan noted that physical and environmental regeneration is fully integrated with social inclusion, to ensure the maximum outcome in improved wellbeing for residents.

In the recent Charter mark Award gained by our Library Services it was noted that we provided a good range of services to the local black and minority ethnic communities. Similarly the inspection of Waste Management noted we were meeting the needs of disabled people and had actively engaged in consultation with local residents to gain a more detailed understanding of customer needs with the aim of meeting the needs of different social and cultural groups.

The inspections have also pointed out areas for improvement. We need to take further action to develop our understanding of diversity, and strategies for involving and consulting with groups. Key recommendations include the need to focus on training in equalities and diversity, to improve monitoring information on ethnicity and to develop strategies which articulate the Councils agreed approach to specific needs within the borough e.g. from older peoples and BME groups.

In addition the Council needs to:

- Improve access to information and services
- Make consultation more inclusive of all population groups.
- Identify diverse needs and gaps in services.
- Ensure that monitoring and survey data is broken down by ethnicity, gender and disability
- Ensure consistency in service delivery and increase the representation of the workforce
- Work with partners and contractors to address equality agenda
- Develop an Interpretation and Translation Policy

**Our Plans to make Rotherham Fair**

All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and qualities will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

<b>Our objectives</b>	
<b>Our Priorities</b> Equal Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase by 50% access and participation rates from homeless people, travellers, teenage parents, lone parents, and BME communities in training and employment opportunities by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase the percentage of people from BME communities, LAC, lone parents, LGBT communities, and those on low incomes accessing sports, leisure, and green spaces by 50% by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase by 50% the take up of: free school meals, Rothercard, income support, carers and disability benefits, and health benefits by disadvantaged communities by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase participation in the Council's consultation exercises from all communities of interest by 50% by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase the satisfaction of Ethnic Minority businesses with the Council in terms of (1) accessibility of contracts and (2) support from the Council in relation to business opportunities by 50% by 2010.</li> </ul>
Access To Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council's website will meet the RNIB national standards for website accessibility by 31/12/2005.</li> <li>▪ Summaries of all key Council plans, documents and strategies will be available in Arabic, Chinese Farsi, French and Urdu and accessible in large print, Braille and audio cassette by 2010.</li> <li>▪ All relevant Council owned buildings are accessible to disabled people by 2010.</li> <li>▪ All communities are equally satisfied with the Council as a whole and with individual services by Programme Areas by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Establish a partnership Interpretation and Translation service by 2007.</li> </ul>
Tackling Prejudice & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in the number of people who report that their local area is one where people of different backgrounds get on well together by 50% by 2010.</li> <li>▪ Increase the confidence within BME communities that the Council is dealing with racially motivated crime and disorder by 50% by 2010</li> <li>▪ Increase in the number of refuge places available to victims of domestic violence by 100% by 2010.</li> </ul>
Ensuring all our priorities encompass an equalities approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fully implement the cross cutting theme of fairness in the Community Strategy by 2010.</li> </ul>

## RMBC - An Excellent Council

Rotherham Council intends to work in the following ways in order to achieve the vision for Rotherham as set out in the Community Strategy and this Corporate Plan.

We will be....

- A learning council - which listens, learns and is progressive.
- An achieving council - demonstrating leadership and ambition for Rotherham. We will be effective and act and be regarded with confidence. RMBC will be a champion for the Borough and its people, we will be a talented council and provide inspiration to achieve the Boroughs goals
- A Council, which is alive - passionate and visionary. We will engage and seek to empower local people and partners. Our employees well being will be a key priority. We will be known as a fun and creative organisation.
- A safe council - demonstrating honesty and integrity in all that we do, we will be worthy of respect of local people and partners.
- A proud council - proud of the Borough, our work and our staff. We will operate democratically, transparently and accountably, and be inclusive and fair. We will be responsive and accessible. Our contribution within the borough will be recognised and valued.
- We will also ensure sustainable development and fairness in all of our work

### Key Challenges Ahead

- In 2004, RMBC achieved a 'fair' rating, and was one point from 'good' in terms of the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) system. However, Comprehensive Performance Assessment is becoming more stringent, and the council will therefore need to understand the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection regime, notably the judgement of corporate **ambition, priorities, capacity and performance management**, and address issues raised in previous Comprehensive Performance Assessment and external inspections;

### *Ambitions*

- The Council needs to ensure its profile remains high, and that the borough is marketed effectively. Rotherham Council will want to ensure that its values and priorities are reflected in all external planning and action that affects local citizens.
- Rotherham MBC has a significant procurement partnership through its relationship with Rotherham Brought Together (RBT). Council partnerships need to be maximised to ensure better deliver of services and efficiencies to free up funds for re-investing in priority areas e.g. through efficient purchasing and supply-chain management.

## *Priorities*

- The Government's expectation around localisation of services and the engagement of communities will be even greater over the next few years. More encouragement is needed to utilise the private/voluntary sector in the delivery of services together with pressure to reduce cost of services; and more involvement by local communities in the design and delivery of services is expected to develop.
- Achievement of vision for the borough will draw upon community engagement and partnership working. Communities, (and staff) will need to be consulted more effectively and more involved in decisions and plans that affect them. Communities will have a greater influence in the design and delivery of services.
- As well as concentrating on improving quality of life and service provision in Rotherham, there is a need for the Borough to be more outward facing, and to be aware of and influential in its role within South Yorkshire and the Yorkshire and Humber region to ensure Rotherham benefits from the opportunities for improvement and funding and that Rotherham plays its part in lending its expertise to national regional and sub regional developments.
- As we are increasingly part of a more global economy and become more and more exposed to diverse, international, cultural influences, the Council wants to promote and benefit from international relationships, with communities and businesses.

## *Capacity*

- Following on from the formation of RBT (Connect) Ltd set up to address a number of important issues the partnership has made significant in-roads which have started to address the transformation of the Council's services to customers. RBT is committed to work with the Council in providing high quality customer services – when and where required, providing efficient support services, allowing Council resources to be targeted to Customer 'front office' provision, making the Council more efficient and fit for purpose and to achieve Government targets in technology developments.

## *Performance Management*

- The Government has directed that efficiency improvements and savings amounting to 2.5% of the Council's budget are to be found by local authorities each year.
- There is renewed attention on efficient use of resources and value for money in the public sector, and the Council's approach to financial management and mitigating risks will continue to be a priority. Council's need to demonstrate a stronger link between resources, spend and performance and an assessment of the impact on communities.



## Current Performance

### *Ambitions*

- The council is ambitious for Rotherham as demonstrated by a number of recent developments – Children Services, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) partnership with developers to build new schools, RBT strategic partnership, Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets negotiated between the government and the Council to deliver stretching improvement targets, but ambitions and indicators for improving the quality of life need developing and mechanisms for assessing this at neighbourhood level/area level needs improving.
- The council has a good history of partnership working such as with, and through Rotherham Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership. The council has worked with a range of other partners in developing longer term ambitions for Rotherham, for example to develop the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), the construction partnership and through various Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes, and in the regeneration of the town centre.
- The Council through its partnership with RBT Connect Ltd has benefited from significant investment in its ICT infrastructure and technology, is seeing the transformation of its Customer services through the development of the Contact Centre and also efficiency savings through improved approaches to procurement.
- Councils with high Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scores perform well in communications and marketing. Rotherham MBC has strengthened its corporate communications team and will continue to focus on continuous improvement of communicating and marketing key messages about the Council and the borough.
- Understanding and shaping the council's ambitions around diverse needs is still a challenge. The commitment is clear but not yet demonstrated fully through service delivery eg disability access or e-government targets. The Council is at level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, but is seeking to deliver real improvements which will achieve Level 3 in 2005.

### *Priorities*

- External Inspections of the council over the last 18 months have been positive and recognised the promising prospects for improvements. However, inspectors have noted the need for better alignment between Rotherham's Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan. The Community Strategy and Corporate Plan needs to identify longer term sustainable outcomes in many areas, and be closely aligned; this Corporate Plan has been developed as the Council's contribution to the Community Strategy and thus these issues have been addressed.
- The council is actively developing solutions to communication problems through networks, working groups and sharing learning across programme areas. Against this an under-resources research function limits understanding of citizen need and how engaging

citizens can shape services design and delivery. The council's emerging Priority Themes do have a strong citizen and community focus and many council services are now concentrating more focus on users' needs eg street pride, housing management, revenues and benefits;

- The Council has several examples of good practice plans, e.g. asset management, education, regeneration – it now needs to ensure all its plans and other key strategies help underpin its ambitions. A policy audit has identified a number of gaps in the planning and policy framework which will be addressed – all corporate policy and plans will be refreshed and aligned to this Corporate Plan during 2005/06.

*Capacity*

- The Council is accredited as an Investor in People, but needs to maintain a focus on the development of its staff to create a flexible, highly-skilled workforce.
- The council has an open and professional approach to decision making. However, effectiveness of decision making at Area Assembly level and how it informs wider decisions across the council is under review, including a review of the role and impact of Cabinet, Scrutiny and Audit committees within an ethical framework.
- The Council needs to continue strengthening its corporate governance arrangements as recommended by external audit.
- Much work has been undertaken on the equalisation of the terms and conditions of service for Council employees – this development will be completed by 2007 and a performance culture linked to career progression will be established across the workforce.
- The Council is active in the South Yorkshire Partnership and engages positively in sub-regional and regional events, strategies and lobbying. In order to maximise the opportunities made available through these now and developing networks, the Council needs to have a clearly understood vision for the Borough and agreed priorities, as demonstrated in this plan.

*Performance Management*

- The council has been classified as "Fair" in 2004 after its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) refresh following a considerable improvement in services and a range of key Performance Indicators. It was rated as one of the top 10 fastest improving Councils in the country. In addition, overall satisfaction has risen with the authority against a backdrop of falling satisfaction nationwide.
- Our Corporate Health Indicators show strong performance in areas such as % of Council Tax collected and energy consumption; fair performance, in areas such as representation in the top 5% of wage earner who are women or from minority communities. The

needs to improve a number of areas including the % of invoices completed within 30 days; the % of authority buildings that are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant, sickness rates and in % of services delivered electronically.

### External View

- In 2004 the council improved its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) rating from 'weak' to 'fair' and was publicly praised by the Audit Commission for being in the top 10 most improved councils for services. Whilst prospects for improvement of that assessment are good the council recognises that there is considerable work to be completed before it attains its ambition of being an "Excellent" authority.
- Inspections have pointed to a few weaknesses, which need to be addressed. These include diversity issues. There is also a need to improve governance arrangements, data quality and financial management.
- The council has been successful in attracting funding and support for improving itself at the organisational and corporate level. These include support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for capacity building and diagnostic and development work with the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA). Feedback from these external indicate that the Authority is taking the right actions in improving itself and in its capacity to achieve.
- The Council is recognised for its leading and strong participative roles in a number of national e-government projects. This leadership actively needs to be built upon and skills learnt applied back in the Council.

RMBC – An Excellent Council	
Our Objectives	
<p><b>Learning</b></p>	<p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a staff and management development programme in line with best practice, so that 100% of M3 (middle) managers have completed the initial programme by 2007 and all staff have a guaranteed 3 development days from 2006</li> <li>- Increase by % the extent of staff who feel they can influence decision making within the council-base line needed</li> <li>- Ensure 30 Members have undertaken the Improvement &amp; Development Agency (IDeA) leadership programme [or similar] by 2008 and external recognition is achieved for the council's approach to member development</li> <li>- Ensure that Rotherham MBC's intranet and website is rated as one of the best (i.e. in the top quartile) by 2007 and continuous improvement demonstrated to 2010</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieving</b></p>	<p>Ambitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure a significant improvement (against the current baseline) is made to the image of Rotherham both inside and outside the Borough by 2010</li> <li>- Ensure that xx% of residents find it easy to access local services</li> </ul> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieve 2.5% efficiency savings each year, starting in 2005 in line with the government requirements</li> <li>- Achieve £30m in procurement savings with the partnership with RBT</li> </ul> <p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workforce strategy – to have a workforce strategy in place for the whole Council by April 2006</li> <li>- Improve employee satisfaction by 10% by 2006, from the baseline set in 2004 and demonstrate further improvements to 2010</li> </ul> <p>Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) – to become an “Excellent” Authority by 2008</li> <li>- Support for inspections – Achieve ‘promising or excellent’ prospects for improvement for all inspections</li> <li>- 60% of core indicators to be above the national average by 2008</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alive</b></p>	<p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce a staff health and welfare programme from 2005 to improve working conditions and ensure a reduction in the number of accidents at work</li> <li>- Increase by 10% the extent of staff who are content with their work-life balance by 2008 with further improvements to 2010</li> <li>- Achieve 25% of staff to be working at or from home by December 2007 to increase productivity, improve sustainability and reduce sickness levels</li> <li>- Reduce sickness levels to below the national average by 2006, with further reductions to ensure Rotherham MBC is in the national top quartile by 2008.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Safe</b></p>	<p>Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish robust corporate governance arrangements in line with best practice and requirements of external audit by 2006 and demonstrate improvements year on year</li> <li>- Maintain a maximum score for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) use of resources section by 2006 which reflects financial management, value for money and financial standing</li> <li>- Ensure that the annual Performance Plan has no qualified Performance Indicators from 2005/06 onwards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proud</b></p>	<p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community/user involvement and consultation – Develop strategies to ensure that robust involvement and consultative arrangements are in place to inform Council plans by 2006</li> <li>- Area assemblies - Review and implement improvements so that participation from communities in local decision-making is improved by 2006</li> <li>- Support to community and voluntary sector / compact</li> <li>- External affairs, including succession planning for end of Objective 1.</li> </ul> <p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitution and political arrangements and conduct – robust new arrangements to improved decision making in place by September 2005</li> <li>- Increase by 10% the number of employees feeling proud to work for the council by 2006 [baseline 2004 survey] and further improvements to 2010</li> </ul> <p>Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop coordinated systems for handling complaints so that by 2007 60% of complainants are satisfied with the council's approach</li> <li>- Achieve national awards for excellence service year on year</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainable development</b></p>	<p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and implement a sustainable development policy</li> <li>- Procurement – ensure the council's buy local policy is developed with the constraints of procurement and best value</li> <li>- Ethical framework—or in fair? Or safe?</li> <li>- Internal recycling – environmental management strategy – need including</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fairness</b></p>	<p>Ambitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent to which that your local area is one where people different backgrounds get on well together.</li> <li>- Reduce racial harassment and discrimination to top quartile performance.</li> <li>- Reach Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2007.</li> </ul> <p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have a workforce that is representative of the community is serves at all levels by 2010.</li> <li>- Increase the % of the top 5% earners that are (a) women or (b) from BME communities to the top quartile of Councils by 2008.</li> <li>- All Council staff to receive equality and diversity training by 2008.</li> </ul>

## Financing the Plan

The Council has an approved Policy Review and Budget Allocation Policy which sets out an outline timetable over an annual cycle for the review of corporate priorities prior to the determination of resource allocation in order to set the revenue budget.

This process is underpinned and informed by a Medium Term Capital Programme and a Medium Term Financial Strategy, both of which cover a 3 year time-span. The Capital Programme has its own set of weightings to attach to proposed schemes/initiatives which are used to identify appropriate recommendations to Members so as to match most successfully the policy priorities with resources available.

The revenue consequence of successful capital proposals feed through into the Medium Term Financial Strategy so as to identify, for prioritisation, the costs associated with servicing any borrowing entered into and operating any asset created. A similar approach is adopted with respect to the Prudential Framework for Capital Investment although the existence of major capital projects due for assessment and appraisal in the near future has militated against any significant use of the unsupported credit approval facility to date.

**The council's key corporate priorities, as articulated in this Corporate Plan, will be set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and will help to inform the passage of individual proposals/pressures through into the appropriate budget round, thereby serving to align resource allocation with key priorities.**

As the medium term plans become more detailed and priority focused, work will be refined so as to concentrate on value for money issues, set firmly in the policy context, in a way which will help to support an improved CPA rating for the Council.

### How we know we are on track

The Council has a rigorous approach to monitoring and managing its performance and risks, with its senior management and Cabinet Members considering performance reports on a quarterly basis. They will be assessing progress against this plan each quarter, and an annual progress report will be issued to the public every year. We will measure our success in how we are delivering against **all the objectives in the Plan** through a combination of relevant indicators including:

- National Best Value Performance Indicators
- Local key Performance Indicators
- Annual surveys of residents
- Government department targets and standards
- Community Strategy targets
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy floor targets
- Industry standards and assessments

In addition a corporate programme of research and evaluation will assist the Council to measure progress over the longer term in both quantitative and qualitative ways

**RMBC – Your Council**

RMBC has 63 Members representing the 21 wards in the Borough. The Council's Cabinet, which comprises the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and 'Portfolio Holders' take key decisions on Council matters. A number of Scrutiny Committees, on which non-Cabinet members sit, hold the decisions of the Cabinet and the Council to account. All meetings of Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees are open to the public. In addition RMBC is devolving responsibility for many local decisions to its 7 Area Assemblies, and community involvement at these meetings is actively encouraged. Supporting the Members are the officers of the Council, within each of its 'Programme Areas'. These programme areas are headed by the Council's corporate management team.

There are various ways of getting involved in the Council's activities. Apart from attending Council meetings you can attend area assemblies, get involved in community planning, log on to the Council website, contact Councillors through their individual websites.

We are also interested in your views on this Plan and what it says about the future direction of the Council. Any thoughts you have would be welcomed, by sending us the attached feedback form.

**Feedback form**

## **Revised Wording**

### **Rotherham Borough Council**

#### Vision for the Borough and Key Priorities

Our vision for the borough in the next twenty years is to achieve the following goals-these are set out in five priority themes, and two cross cutting themes.

#### **Rotherham Learning**

Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose,. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.

#### **Rotherham Achieving**

Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide high quality of life amongst Rotherham's beautiful countryside

#### **Rotherham Alive**

Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are active, live life to the full, and have fun. Rotherham will celebrate its history -building on the past, and creating and welcoming the new.

People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic, physical and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.



## **Rotherham Safe**

A place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with good quality homes for all, and accessible local facilities and services. There will be attractive buildings and public space; peaceful and thriving communities free from crime, drugs and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, children will be safe from harm and neglect; a preventive approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.

## **Rotherham Proud**

Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.

## **Cross Cutting Priorities**

There are two themes, which underpin and cut across all the priorities in the vision

### **▪ Sustainable development-**

Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.

### **▪ Fairness**

All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and qualities will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

## **An integrated approach**

**The vision is conceptualised as more than the sum of the parts outlined here. To achieve the vision we not only need to take action in all of the themes and cross cutting priorities, each needs to take account of and**

**work in conjunction with other priority areas,. For example the Rotherham Achieving theme needs to work with the Rotherham Alive theme on ensuring cultural industries are included in the drive for prosperity, and to support disabled people into work should they wish it. An integrated approach, both to planning, action and supporting structures will be essential to delivery.**

## Appendix 3

### Rotherham Borough Council

#### Vision for the Borough and Key Priorities

Our vision for the borough in the next twenty years is to achieve the following goals-these are set out in five priority themes, and two cross cutting themes.

#### **Rotherham Learning**

Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose,. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Life long educational opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be understood to be skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.

#### **Rotherham Achieving**

Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Wealth will be shared and inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide wonderful quality of life amongst Rotherham's beautiful countryside

#### **Rotherham Alive**

Rotherham people will feel good; they will be active and live life to the full, have fun and have good lives

Rotherham will celebrate its history -building on the past, and creating the new.

People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.

#### **Rotherham Safe**

A place where neighbourhoods are clean and green, with decent homes for all. There will be lovely buildings and public space; peaceful but thriving

communities with streets free from crime, and fear of crime and violence. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, a preventive approach will be taken to minimise accidents, hazards and to develop resilience.

## **Rotherham Proud**

Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported, people will care for each other. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.

## **Cross Cutting Priorities**

There are two themes, which underpin and cut across all the priorities in the vision

- **Sustainable development-**

Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.

- **Fairness**

Equal opportunities access to services and the necessities of life are everyone's right. Rotherham will tackle prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

## **An integrated approach**

**The vision is conceptualised as more than the sum of the parts outlined here. To achieve the vision we not only need to take action in all of the themes and cross cutting priorities, each needs to take account of and work in conjunction with other priority areas,. For example the Rotherham Achieving theme needs to work with the Rotherham Alive theme on ensuring cultural industries are included in the drive for prosperity, and to support disabled people into work should they wish it. An integrated approach, both to planning, action and supporting structures will be essential to delivery.**

By virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted