

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

**Venue: Council Chamber, Town
Hall, Moorgate Street,
Rotherham**

Date: Thursday, 21 October 2004

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Questions from members of the public and the press.
4. Declarations of Interest.

FOR INFORMATION

5. A Framework for the Delivery of Animal Health and Welfare (Pages 1 - 5)
- presentation by Jeremy Jones, Veterinary Officer, State Veterinary Service
6. The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 - The Landfill Regulations 2004
(Pages 6 - 11)
- report of the Waste Strategy Manager
7. Choice Based Lettings (Pages 12 - 33)
- report by the Head of Housing Services

FOR DECISION

8. Fly Tipping Review (Pages 34 - 47)
- the Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services to report the Corporate Management Team's response to the Review Group's recommendations

FOR MONITORING

9. Budget Monitoring - April to July, 2004 (Pages 48 - 57)
- Finance and Accountancy Manager to report
10. Minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services held on 20th September and 11th October, 2004 (Pages 58 - 68)

MINUTES - FOR INFORMATION

11. Minutes of the Scrutiny Panel held on 23rd September, 2004 (Pages 69 - 76)
12. Minutes of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 24th September, 2004 (Pages 77 - 84)
13. Minutes of the Asylum Seekers Working Party held on 29th September, 2004 (Pages 85 - 87)
14. Exclusion of the Press and Public
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:-

FOR MONITORING

15. Budget Monitoring - April to July, 2004 - Waste Services DSO and Housing Services DSO (Pages 88 - 94)
(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority)

FOR INFORMATION

16. Demonstrating Competitiveness in Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Services of Housing Services DSO (Pages 95 - 119)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 1 and 8 of the Act – employees of the Council/provision of work or supply of goods/services)

Date of Next Meeting:-

Thursday, 18 November 2004

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor Atkin

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Hall

Councillors:-Burke, Clarke, Hodgkiss, Jackson, McNeely, Nightingale, Rushforth, P. A. Russell, Vines,
The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright), Mr. D. Alderson, Mr. D. Willoughby, Mr. S. Lavin, Mr. J. Lewis and
Mr. S. Hawkins

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny
	Date:	21st October 2004
	Title:	A framework for the delivery of services in Animal Health and Welfare
	Programme Area:	Housing & Environmental Services

5. Summary

An agreement between Local Authorities, DEFRA and the Welsh Assembly Government covering a framework to deliver risk based approach to Animal Health enforcement.

6. Recommendations

That Members receive the report and welcome the new working partnership.

That Members endorse the report and consider the offer of a presentation from the State Veterinary Service of DEFRA.

7. Proposals and Details

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in 2001 is the most recent event to raise awareness of Animal Health issues. It also highlighted the extent to which The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), through its Chief Veterinary Officer, is accountable in these matters to Parliament and the European Union. Local Authorities were highly involved during FMD, as they worked with The Departments to deal with the outbreak. This demonstrated the value of local and central government working in partnership.

The Local Authorities involved in animal health and welfare form a wide-ranging and diverse group, differing in size, structure and availability of expert resources. Although a national consistency of approach to enforcement of legislation is desirable, the capacity to respond to the risks and requirements inevitably differs among the 200 or more Authorities responsible.

In the period following the FMD 2001 outbreak, the initiative has been to develop the relationship between Local Authorities and The Departments. This is being done in partnership by developing and piloting a framework agreement to address these and associated issues. This will help to provide greater consistency and will take account of the increased range of activities required of Local Authorities – where things like licensing, data capture and traceability of livestock have increased in scale and in importance. It will also provide much better data and management information for all parties.

The framework gives The Departments a new opportunity to ensure that Local Authorities are better informed of their requirements and that key information on veterinary risk and priorities is properly communicated and included.

The framework is an agreement on the principals of how service is delivered. It has benchmarks for service standards and lays down criteria to be met. The agreement has been designed to meet the needs of both central and local government. It is intended to be robust enough to produce comprehensive plans and data, sufficient to link with outcomes, and to provide assurance on compliance with legislation at senior levels in government. It will support bids for finance or other resources, whether these are made locally or centrally.

It is flexible enough to allow delivery within local arrangements and priorities. It recognises that Local Authorities are autonomous bodies, with a wide range of different functions, where accountability to the public, and decision making, ultimately rests with elected members.

The Framework agreement will be linked to and consistent with The Departments' business strategies such as the animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

The objectives in developing and testing a framework agreement are to:

- Improve communication between The Departments and Local Authorities by working more in partnership;

- Introduce a more risk-based and focused approach to enforcement;
- Achieve greater consistency;
- Develop best practice;
- Give clear direction and achieve better planning;
- Have better informed people;
- Produce better management information;
- To raise the profile of animal health and welfare work.

The Framework Agreement aims to assist in the delivery of improved health and welfare services through facilitating prioritisation of enforcement activities.

With a well-developed framework, successfully piloted and implemented this will achieve outcomes that include:

- Effective disease control;
- A well educated and compliant farming industry, capable of greater self-regulation;
- Sound welfare practices;
- Identifying and dealing consistently with breaches of legislation and best practice; and
- Sound evidence to provide assurance to central government and to support the Departments' Public service Agreement objectives.

8. Finance

Local Authorities' activities on animal health and welfare are normally funded as part of the general arrangements between central government and local government, the overall contribution from central government being announced annually in the Standing Spending Assessment (SSA).

The normal arrangements were supercede by special arrangements brought about by the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) emergency. Local Authorities had a significant role to play in dealing with FMD, resulting in high workloads and new/additional activity. These additional activities went far beyond the levels that were normally required of Local Authorities, pre-FMD. As Local Authorities were not funded at these levels, DEFRA and HM Treasury put special arrangements in place to enable Local Authorities to claim the excess expenditure directly from central government.

The special finance arrangements in place for 2002/3 and for 2003/4 continue the funding principals that operated during the FMD outbreak of 2001/2. For 2004/5 onwards, the funding is expected to revert to the normal arrangements between central and local government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The activity framework has been structured in a way consistent with other Government departments' frameworks. It is for the Authorities to benchmark their service provision against the relevant standards. The Departments will review the total service provision against risk on a regional basis.

In the future, and after consultation, performance standards may be set. Monitoring may be used to ensure that the level of service delivered across England and Wales is appropriate to risk. Use of the framework may identify under-provision of service against risk and requirements, or alternatively an over-provision.

It is hoped that by using the activity framework, and the reports provided by the associated management information framework and AMES database, that everyone will be much better informed, and therefore in a stronger position within their respective organisations. Local Authorities will be in a position to better understand the Departments' needs, which have not been spelt out clearly in the past.

10. Policy & Performance Agenda Implications

1. **Regeneration:** Provides sustainable neighbourhoods of quality by ensuring a level playing field across the farming community and ensuring diverse employment opportunities and a good environment.
2. **Equalities Issues:** No negative or adverse effects
3. **Sustainability:** A close working relationship between Local Authorities and The Departments is essential for effective disease control. The framework brings together a working partnership between central government and local government with the aim of providing better services to the public.
4. **Health Implications:** Prioritises health promotion and awareness amongst primary producers of food.
5. **Safer Rotherham:** Reduces breeches of legislation that have an impact on animal and human health.
6. **Human Rights:** No implications, contained within existing statutory powers.
7. A) **Alignment with Corporate Plan and LSP priorities:** Improves health for all and encourages safe and inclusive communities; links to a place for everyone, a place with active and involved communities and provides a progressive, responsible accessible provision of service; will enable the shaping and influence upon service delivery according to need
B) **Alignment to cross cutting issues:** Contributes to the economic and environmental well being of communities and has no negative or adverse effect on any group within the community.
9. **Inspections:** No external or proposed inspection
10. **Performance Generally:** Within DEFRA performance indicators
11. **Performance Indicators:** Within DEFRA performance indicators

11. Background Papers and Consultation

DEFRA, *A framework for the delivery of services in Animal Health and Welfare*

The Framework Agreement has been designed, after consultation with stakeholders to meet the needs of both central and local government. Consultation with stakeholders has been through the project working and management groups and also through other technical and project groups working on animal health and welfare issues. Other stakeholders in the farming and livestock industries have been and will continue to be consulted. The framework was produced in partnership between LACORS on behalf of Local Authorities, DEFRA and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The initial pilot programme started with 24 Local Authorities at the beginning of October 2002. The next stage of the pilot process involving the entire Welsh region started at the beginning of April 2003. The entire pilot process has been working to the framework agreement since the beginning of April 2004.

There will be a series of reviews which will inform the further development of the framework, its application and needs for the future to assure that the basic principles are sound, and the strategic fit good. Ongoing review and development will take place throughout the pilot period, prior to the implementation of a final, formal full Framework Agreement for England and Wales for the financial year 2004– 2005.

Local Authorities have had a statutory responsibility for the enforcement of animal health and welfare legislation for a long time. There is now a large body of such legislation, much of which states that it is 'to be enforced by the Local Authority'. DEFRA and the Welsh Assembly Government – Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department (ARAD) referred to in this report as 'The Departments' rely on this local government service to ensure compliance with the legislation. Over time the legislation has become more complex and the degree of risk has increased. The potential impact of non-compliance with legislation, especially where it relates to disease control, can be significant.

Contact Name : *Tony Lowe, Animal Health Inspector, tony.lowe@rotherham.gov.uk*

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	21 October 2004
3.	Title:	Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 – The Landfill Regulations 2004
4.	Programme Area:	Housing and Environmental Services

5. Summary

The Government has just announced the provisional allocation of landfill allowances which will be made to the Council under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, through “The Landfill (Scheme Year and Maximum Landfill Amount) Regulations 2004 for each year from 2005/06 to 2019/20. This issue has been reported to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services on 20th September 2004.

6. Recommendations

That Members:

- **NOTE THE LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LANDFILLING OF MUNICIPAL WASTE GENERATED BY ROTHERHAM.**
- **NOTE THE DIVERSION OF BIODEGRADABLE WASTE THROUGH THE LANDFILL PERMIT SCHEME IS GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WASTE STRATEGY FOR ROTHERHAM.**

7. Proposals and Details

The Government through the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 (the WET Act), has introduced The Landfill Regulations 2004 (the 2004 Regulations), to ensure that all local authorities contribute to the United Kingdom meeting its obligations under the EC Landfill Directive to reduce the level of biodegradable waste going to landfill to 35% of the 1995 level by 2020. There are interim target years where statutory reductions to 1995 levels have to be achieved, these being 2009/10 (75% of 1995 level) and 2012/13 (50% of 1995 level). The scheme will operate from 1st April 2005.

Each waste disposal authority has now received details of the provisional allocation of allowances they will receive for the period 2005 to 2020. The permit allocation reflects a year on year reduction in the amount of biodegradable waste the Council will be allowed to landfill to ensure the 2020 target for the United Kingdom is achieved.

An initial analysis of our allocation does indicate that based upon the trends in waste growth in Rotherham and the continued development of our recycling infrastructure, the Council will exceed its permit allocation with effect from the 2007/08 financial year.

The development of a Waste Strategy for Rotherham will need to consider the options that are available for processing the waste we generate on a long term basis to ensure we comply with the requirements of The Landfill Regulations 2004.

8. Finance

The diversion of biodegradable waste away from landfill will require investment in the development of waste processing facilities. The initial options appraisal by external consultants for our Waste Strategy is indicating that the cost of waste management will increase by £2.5 million to £3 million per annum to ensure compliance with Landfill Directive requirements.

The 2004 Regulations do provide for the trading, banking and borrowing of permits, however market conditions will prevail under the scheme. It is therefore difficult to predict when trading conditions could provide benefits or cause difficulties for the Council.

It is important to note that "the WET Act" does provide for penalties being levied on Local Authorities in certain circumstances. These are:

- Where Local Authorities exceed their allowances a fine of £200 per tonne may be levied
- If the UK fails to meet the target year diversion rates for 2009/10, 2012/13 and 2019/20, the European Commission will levy a fine of £0.5 million per day on this country. The current Government advice on this matter is that all/some element of this fine will be passed on to failing local authorities.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The development of our Waste Strategy has taken account of a 1.27% growth in household waste collected through the refuse collection service. This will mean that based on current forecasts there will be a need to divert waste away from landfill sites in the financial year 2007/2008.

If waste growth exceeds our current predictions, markets for recycled materials such as green waste are not secured, or waste treatment facilities are not procured by the Council or in conjunction with sub regional partners, the ability to divert enough biodegradable waste away from landfill will lead to the Council exceeding the permitted targets levels earlier than predicted. The Council will then be liable to fines under the terms of the WET Act 2003.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The development of a Municipal Waste Management Strategy and procurement of waste processing facilities is crucial to the Council meeting its future obligations under the terms of the WET Act 2003.

The failure to meet our obligations under this Act will affect the delivery of key performance indicators, which may lead to the levy of penalties or intervention by the Government on the Council.

- BV 82a - % of waste recycled – 12.2%
- BV 82b - % of waste composted – 9.9%
- BV 82c - % of waste used for heat and power – 0%
- BV 82d - % of waste landfilled – 77.9%
- BV 84 - Kg's of waste collected per head – 565kgs
- BV 86 – Cost of Waste Collection per household - £46:03
- BV 87 – Cost of waste disposal per tonne - £25:62
- BV 91 - % population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables – 96.4%

The development of a long term strategic plan for the management of municipal waste ensures that we will “Promote Sustainable Development” by ensuring our actions do not impair the quality of life for those who will live learn and work in the Borough in the future.

A recycling only option will not achieve our landfill diversion targets.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

EC Landfill Directive - 1999

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003

The Landfill (Scheme Year and Maximum Landfill Amount) Regulations 2004

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme: Provisional Allocation of Allowances – DEFRA 11th August 2004

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme – 29th August 2003

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme Consultation Outcome – April 2004

Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services – 20th September 2004

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APPENDIX Provisional Allocation of Landfill Permits

Year	Description	Tonnes
Base Year	This takes the amount of BMW landfilled in 2001/02 by the WDA and adjusts it so that the sum of all WDA's base year figures equal the national total of 15.64m/t. BMW landfilled is uplifted by 0.5% to achieve this	98,811
2005/06	A reduction equivalent to 10% of the difference between BMW landfilled by the WDA in the base year and the 2009/10 target for the WDA	94,759
2006/07	A reduction equivalent to 15% of the difference between BMW landfilled by the WDA in the base year and the 2009/10 target for the WDA	88,682
2007/08	A reduction equivalent to 20% of the difference between BMW landfilled by the WDA in the base year and the 2009/10 target for the WDA	80,579
2008/09	A reduction equivalent to 25% of the difference between BMW landfilled by the WDA in the base year and the 2009/10 target for the WDA	70,450
2009/10	Each WDA's allocation is based on its percentage contribution to England's 2001/02 MSW arisings (28.8 m/t), applied to England's target of 11.2 (i.e. 75% the total amount of BMW reported in 1995). The 2012/13 allocation is equal to $(a/28.8m) \times 11.2m$.	58,295
2010/11	A reduction of equal instalments between 2009/10 and 2012/13 targets.	51,806
2011/12		45,317
2012/13	Each WDA's allocation is based on its percentage contribution to England's 2001/02 MSW arisings (28.8 m/t), applied to England's target of 7.46 m/t (i.e. 50% of the total amount of BMW reported in 1995). The 2012/13 allocation is equal to $(a/28.8m) \times 7.46m$.	38,829
2013/14	A reduction of equal instalments between 2012/13 and 2019/20 targets.	37,163
2014/15		35,498
2015/16		33,832
2016/17		32,166
2017/18		30,501
2018/19		28,835
2019/20	Each WDA's allocation is based on its percentage contribution to England's 2001/02 MSW arisings (28.8 m/t), applied to England's target of 5.22 m/t (i.e. 50% of the total amount of BMW reported in 1995). The 2019/20 allocation is equal to $(a/28.8m) \times 5.22m$.	27,170

Key to Table

BMW – Biodegradable Municipal Waste
WDA – Waste Disposal Authority
MSW – Municipal Solid Waste

Key Decisions of Government

1. **Commencement Date** – The scheme will be implemented from 1st April 2005.
2. **Scheme Year** – Scheme years will operate from 1st April to 31st March.
3. **Allocation of Allowances** – Allowances are to be allocated from the beginning of the scheme all the way through until 2020.
4. **Scheme Review** – The Government will hold the first scheme review in 2007. The need for and timing of future reviews will be assessed according to the findings of the first review.
5. **Potential for Waste Disposal Authorities allocations to increase between 2005 and 2010** – Authorities will be allowed to retain an increasing profile of allowances between 2005 and 2010 to reward the efforts these authorities have already made to divert waste away from landfill.
6. **Calculation of Landfill Rate** – For the purpose of calculating initial allocations, the landfill rate of each Waste Disposal Authority will be calculated using a mass balance approach.
7. **Borrowing of permits** – The limit on borrowing will remain at 5% of the next year's allocation. The Government does not wish to inhibit trading or delay investment in new facilities that might result from allowing a higher borrowing requirement.
8. **Registration of Brokers** – As the use of brokers is not compulsory, the Government believes that outside any requirements of Financial Services legislation, it is a matter for Waste Disposal Authorities to set their own contract conditions. DEFRA will not establish a register of brokers.
9. **Suspension of trading on permits** – The trading of permits will only be suspended in the most exceptional circumstances. The Secretary of State's powers to suspend trading will be defined in the Regulations.
10. **Non monetary trading** – The Government has agreed that non monetary trading will be permitted.
11. **Measures to encourage trading** – The Government will introduce a full communications strategy up to and following on from the launch of the scheme.
12. **Public Access to the Register on Trading** – The public will only have read only access to all details on the register, except the prices paid in individual trades for confidentiality purposes.
13. **Waste Disposal Authority access to the register** – The Government agrees that local authorities should make their own decision about who should be authorised to register trades.

- 14. Monitoring System** – The Government will use a mass balance approach as the monitoring system. It is considered this offered the best balance between accuracy and cost.
- 15. Reporting to the Environment Agency** – The Government recognises that it may be difficult for Waste Disposal Authorities to provide accurate data within one month of the end of each quarter. Therefore, the reconciliation period will be extended to three months at the end of each quarter.
- 16. Financial Penalties** – The Government proposes to fix the level of financial penalty at £200 per tonne.
- 17. Supplementary Penalties** – There is no reason why an authority should incur any penalties. However, if a Waste Disposal Authority chooses to exceed allowances in a target year, it seems fair and equitable that the Waste Disposal Authority face the consequences, rather than the cost of the breach being shared out among all Waste Disposal Authorities. The Government will therefore reserve the right to pass some, or all, of any fine imposed by the European Council for Justice on to the WDA(s) responsible for the breach.
- 18. Penalties for failing to provide monitoring information** – The financial penalty for failing to provide the necessary monitoring information is £ 1,000.
- 19. Penalties for failing to provide information on banking and borrowing** – As Waste Disposal Authorities will need to input details of all banking and borrowing onto the register before the transaction is confirmed, the Government's view is that it will not be necessary to make use of the power in the WET Act to impose penalties on Waste Disposal Authorities which fail to provide this information.
- 20. Waiving or Suspending Penalties** – The Government will issue guidelines on which any decision to suspend or waive penalties will be based. These guidelines will be publicly available.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	21st October, 2004
3.	Title:	Proposal to Implement a Choice-Based Lettings Policy
4.	Programme Area:	Housing and Environmental Services

5. Summary

The attached report sets out the background to the concept of choice based lettings, and details the issues that will need to be addressed, with particular reference to continuing to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people in a fair and equitable manner.

6. Recommendations

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO NOTE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT:

- **CABINET MEMBER TO APPROVE THE PROPOSALS FOR A CHOICE BASED LETTINGS POLICY.**
- **THAT OFFICERS CARRY OUT FURTHER FEASABILITY WORK ON A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A PROPERTY SHOP, ABLE TO PROVIDE OTHER KEY SERVICES.**
- **THAT OFFICERS DEVELOP FURTHER, MATTERS RELATING TO THE APPROACH TO CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS, AND PROCEDURES, AND RETURN WITH A FINAL REPORT PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION**

7. Proposals and Details

An effective choice-based lettings scheme is an essential pre-requisite of an ALMO delivering excellent housing management services.

The Audit Commission issued guidance in its publication – “ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services” in March 2003, in which it clarified that choice based lettings would be a key feature of any ALMO. In September 2004, Rotherham will receive its ALMO indicative inspection, so it is important that a strategy is in place to deliver choice based lettings by April 1st 2005 when the ALMO is scheduled to commence.

Consultation has been carried out with Wath and Swinton Area Housing Panel, ROPES (support for older people), the Homelessness Review and Strategy Group, the Domestic Violence Forum. It has also been discussed at the BME conference held in June 2004, and at the Homelessness Multi-agency event in 2003. The report was approved at Delegated Powers, Cabinet Member, Housing & Environmental Services on 30th July 2004

8. Finance

Implications arising from administrative costs of publicising and implementing the scheme.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Any change in allocations policy must ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are still addressed, and that the Council’s statutory obligations are met. Policies must be delivered in a transparent way to ensure they are fair, and seen to be fair. Certain types of property will necessarily still need to be allocated on the basis of need due to its limited supply or adaptation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Choice-based lettings will significantly contribute to sustaining communities and neighbourhoods, by emphasising that people can choose for themselves where they want to live, rather than have the housing provider do it for them. In this way, people are more likely to remain in their tenancy and their neighbourhood because they have been responsible for making that choice.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

“Quality and Choice: A decent home for all” – DETR, December 2000

“ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services” – Audit Commission, March 2003.

“Piloting Choice-Based Lettings” ODPM, May 2004

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ROTHERHAM HOUSING
SERVICES

Choice-based Letting Scheme:

Proposal for Implementation

July 30th 2004

Content

1. Executive Summary
2. Background Information
3. The Rotherham Strategic Context
4. Features of Pilot CBLs
5. Principles of Rotherham CBLs
6. Scheme Details
7. Equality Impact Assessment
8. Community Cohesion
9. Scheme Monitoring
10. Conclusion
11. Recommendation

1. Executive Summary:

1.1 The Government has set out its approach to lettings policy in its White Paper of 2000, "Quality and Choice: A decent home for all". Choice-based lettings (CBLs) have been piloted in 27 areas of the country, been evaluated as successful, and have been complemented by changes to the Homelessness Act. The Audit Commission has defined them as a measure of excellence for ALMOs.

1.2 The proposals for a CBL actively support key elements of the various strategies adopted within Rotherham, including the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and Housing Strategy.

1.3 There have been 27 pilot CBLs set up which have been evaluated and defined as successful. Measures of success include higher numbers and types of applicants using the service, higher levels of customer satisfaction due to the simplified and transparent processes used, and improved performance on voids management.

1.4 The principles of Rotherham's CBL are set out, including a commitment to simplicity and transparency of processes, the need to use recent Housing Needs data to inform scheme development, the mainstreaming of diversity issues and need to safeguard the interests of vulnerable applicants, customer focused rather than process driven, e-enabled, and providing a 'fit' with other key parts of the service.

1.5 The details of the scheme set out to address work to be done prior to commencement, any restrictions on the principle of choice, how applicants will access the service and issues of eligibility and ineligibility, how vulnerable applicants will be supported to use the service, how the service will prioritise bids, letting selection criteria, feedback, risk issues, resource implications, and roles of key staff.

1.6 The report makes clear that the service must address diversity and community cohesion issues in Rotherham, and clarifies the importance of service monitoring, performance measures, and evaluation.

1.7 It concludes that a Choice-Based Lettings policy must be adopted for several reasons, all supportive of the Borough's strategies to sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

2. Background Information

2.1 In December 2000, the Government published its White Paper on the future of housing, ***“Quality and Choice: A decent home for all”*** Chapter 6 dealt with promoting choice through lettings in social housing, and set out three measures:

- to legislate to facilitate more choice-based lettings (CBL) approaches;
- to support and evaluate pilot schemes to test CBL approaches,
- to promote CBL more generally.

In addition, the Homelessness Act 2002 amended Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, to enable revision to the allocation of social housing. The amendments to Part 6 facilitate allocation schemes which offer tenants a more active role in choosing accommodation.

2.2 Providing choice and responsibility to individuals to address their housing needs is the cornerstone of Government policy, requiring social housing providers to re-evaluate their current allocation schemes. The Government has set a target that requires all Allocation Schemes to be choice-based by 2010.

2.3 The paper made clear that lettings policies must be married to the problems which can arise where there is a concentration of poor and vulnerable households within areas of social deprivation, and the consequent need to promote sustainable communities. The link is made to education, and the need for housing services to consult with education depts about lettings policies' impacts on local schools. There is a further need therefore that all social housing providers consider jointly, the approach to lettings policy to make best use of stock and to ensure service excellence.

2.4 A programme of 27 CBL pilots was set up between April 2001 and March 2003, examining different approaches to providing choice in various housing market contexts. The ODPM produced its evaluation ***“Piloting Choice Based Lettings”*** in May 2004. Key findings from the pilots were:

- Numbers of households registered for social housing increased following the launch of CBL, including more working households and members of minority communities;
- Customers welcomed the transparency of CBL – customer feedback indicated pilots established more transparent and simple systems that were perceived to increase choice;
- CBL requires the active participation of customers – customers felt the benefits outweighed the additional effort on their part;
- The continued prioritisation of vulnerable households ensures they are able to access housing, including the most popular;
- All Authorities who participated in the pilots have indicated their enthusiasm and intended continuation;

- The most obvious failing was an inability to engage with the private sector. The evaluation points to the lack of an accreditation scheme as the principle cause (Rotherham has recently approved its own Landlord Accreditation Scheme);
- CBL advertising cycles impose discipline on housing services which resulted in improved performance, especially on re-let times;
- The most frequent cause of problems was procurement and implementation of IT to run CBL systems.

2.5 In March 2003, the Audit Commission published its Housing Guidance Paper “ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services”. Clearly linked to Government priorities, it sets out the criteria for defining ‘excellence’. The fifth of twelve priorities states, “choice-based lettings established or being planned”.

3. The Rotherham Strategic Context:

3.1 The proposed CBL scheme should support:

- **Regional Housing Strategy** for Yorkshire and Humberside (2003). CBLs will support Objective 1 – **Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal**; and Objective 4 – **Fair access to quality housing for all groups**. In the former objective, progress towards neighbourhood management, supported by the ALMO will enhance customer choice through being customer driven; in the latter objective, improved partnership working with RSLs on allocations issues like shared waiting lists will be developed.
- Rotherham’s **Community Strategy**; CBLs will primarily support Priority 4 ie. **Safe and Inclusive Communities** – ensuring individuals and communities offer a better quality of life.
- **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy**; CBLs primarily supports Priority 1 – improving the life chances of children and young people, via development of a **Young Person’s Housing Strategy** (for development in 2004/05),
- the Corporate Plan; CBLs will primarily support Key Priority 4 – **A place to live**, Key Priority 6 – **A place with active, involved communities**, and Key Priority 7 – **A place for everyone**.
- the **Housing Strategy**, CBLs will support two of the Strategy’s main challenges ie. “**Develop Neighbourhoods** – to create neighbourhoods where people want to live now and in the future”; and “**Provide Fair Access & Choice** – to ensure that there is a choice of suitable housing and that it is accessible”.
- the **Shadow Supporting People Strategy**; CBLs will support the partnership between social services, housing, health and probation, with particular reference to meeting the needs of hard to reach groups, and the development of supported housing schemes`.

- the **ALMO**; CBLs have been identified as a pre-requisite in defining excellence in housing management by ALMOs, by the Audit Commission.

3.2 Demand for some Council homes in certain areas, using current allocations policies, is diminishing. One bed bungalows and one/two bed ground floor flats have little or no demand. During 2002/03 approximately 9.3% of the total stock had no waiting list, equating to 2332 properties located throughout the Borough. Some estates have a high turnover, mainly due to abandonment and some groups of tenants who are unable to sustain tenancies without support. Turnover of properties in 2003/04 totalled 2039, an average of 169 per month. However, the implementation of Local Lettings Policies, measured by HES14, has demonstrated that turnover can be reduced by more flexible management and sensitive approaches to allocations. Local lettings policies have been successful due to the changes to target client groups eg. HIP figures for 2003/04 show 1,444 'difficult to let' (individual properties) and 1,355 'low demand' (clusters of 50 or more).

Annual terminations for the five year period 1999 - 2004:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
2624	2454	2593	2423	2039

3.3 Generally terminations for the last five years have averaged at 2500, but there has been a significant increase in Right to Buy sales since 2002/03, resulting in reducing termination trends. However, there are also indications that work around sustainability has had a positive effect (See comments re HES 14 in 3.2) CBL is designed to support and add impetus to this trend.

Monthly terminations for 2003/2004 are as follows:

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
145	154	141	163	206	211	166	155	146	217	149	186

4) Features of Pilot Choice-Based Lettings Schemes:

4.1 Pilots operated weekly or fortnight advertising cycles. Most pilots labeled properties in a way that restricted who could apply for them. (Appendix 3 - Property Advertisement.) Labels relating to minimum age were extensively used.

4.2 Advertising models require households to 'bid' for properties. At close of a 'bidding' round, a short list of 'bidders' is drawn up and the household with the

earliest date of application is offered the property, (once their details have been verified)

4.3 Most pilots advertised vacant properties regularly through a range of advertising media.

4.4 The effective choice provided by CBLs throughout the pilots depended on local housing markets, and scheme design. **Allowing all applicants to 'bid' for any vacant property while having a large number (of vacancies) relative to demand levels offers applicants the widest range of property from which to choose.** However, most pilots grouped properties, to restrict the types of applicant who are entitled to 'bid' for vacancies. This approach can mean that applicants do not see properties for which they may wish to 'bid', resulting in longer waiting than necessary. The problem is not always a shortage of properties per se, but of vacant properties of a particular type or in a particular location. While frustrating, applicants are aware of what is or is not available, and are experiencing what is – in effect – the rented housing market.

4.5 Publishing feedback on letting outcomes was one of the pilot's weaker areas, From the customers perspective there was considerable demand for individual feedback on what had happened to their 'bids' for accommodation.

4.6 **To protect the interests of vulnerable and excluded groups, information on vacancies and processes must be widely available in appropriate formats including minority languages.** Systems must support those who might have difficulties with the CBL process on their own. Ensuring that timely information on vacancies reaches households is an issue when providing services to excluded households.

4.7 The most common approach to supporting vulnerable and excluded groups was to seek co-operation of a network of statutory and voluntary organisations to assist their clients to use CBLs. An issue with adopting a decentralised approach is that not all vulnerable groups have a representative organisation to provide support. In this context, neighbourhood service provision will play a crucial role.

4.8 The key features of CBLs is that applicants "choose to be considered for a property", rather than officers 'drip-feeding' offers of properties to particular applicants, and that of the scheme adapting changes in legislation affecting housing need.

4.9 **Sheffield City Council** - initially operated their CBL system in the South of the City, but now operate citywide. They found that:

- the refusal rate reduced
- customers liked the system, but preferred adverts with photographs
- customers asked for more information about services in the locality of the property

- they coordinated and managed the pilot through a paper based system which was time consuming; this was replaced with OHMS Needs Module and applicants are able to register expressions of interest online
- to avoid impact on BVPI 68 property advertisements were produced during the termination notice period
- Interest was mainly from residents of Sheffield rather than people living out of the borough, although out of borough applicants were not penalised.
- The properties are advertised weekly. At the close of the bidding period 50% of the properties are allocated to the person with the earliest dated application and 50% are allocated to persons with a priority.i.e homeless, vulnerable and special needs.

4.10 First Choice Homes Oldham – an ALMO managing on behalf of Oldham MBC. Thirty per cent of all empty properties are general lets that people can put a bid for. Information on available properties is posted every Thursday morning at all Housing Offices and in the “Instant Homes “ Property Shop. Interested applicants enter a bid against the property of their choice. All bidders have to be registered, have a clear rent account and no record of legal action against them. Properties are advertised for seven days. The person who has been on the waiting list for the longest time is the successful bidder.

6.3 First Choice Homes Oldham also operate an immediate access service; this enables customers to access ready (low demand) properties using a quick and easy registration process. Properties are offered on a first come first served basis. Anyone can apply for a home through the Instant Homes shop including exiting tenants and unregistered applicants.

Since opening the shop has: -

- Received an average 70 new enquiries per week;
- Established a free phone number, which is the most frequent method of contact. The free phone receives on average 50 calls per day.
- Established a Website, which is increasingly popular as a means of accessing the service and is updated daily.

5) Principles of Rotherham Choice-Based Lettings Scheme:

5.1 This proposal is characterised by the clear commitment to providing customers with simple and accessible means to exercise their choice of rented accommodation, making their own decisions about what they live in, and where it is. By so doing, customers are likely to benefit from sustainable tenancies and become part of sustainable communities.

5.2 The Housing Needs Analysis 2003, identified that there are complex and diverse housing needs in the borough. (See appendix 4 “Fair Access and Choice” – Key Factors). This CBL proposal seeks to address these.

5.3 The re-focusing of service provision and rationalisation of policies will address both needs and choice by accepting that demand is changing continuously. Equality and diversity issues need to be 'mainstreamed' so that hard to reach groups' aspirations (or choices) are met, as well as their needs, and that issues of commonality (ie. shared interests of whole communities and neighbourhoods) are addressed through rationalisation.

5.4 The CBL will be customer focused, rather than system driven. Other than the need to be transparent, processes will have to directly contribute to the customer's successful securing of a home of their choice. They will be seen to be fair and easy to understand by customers.

5.5 The CBL must be e-enabled to benefit from contemporaneous updating, and to enable applicants to access continuously current information. The CBL can operate using a weekly/fortnightly advertising cycle, but this should be a short term measure only.

5.6 The CBL will provide an operational 'fit' with the furnished tenancy scheme, launched in May, as applicants will be able to also choose whether their home is furnished, part-furnished or unfurnished.

6) Scheme Details:

Prior to commencement:

6.1 Housing Services will need to communicate with all applicants already seeking social rented homes ie. registered on the waiting list. Automatic transfer of such applicants to a CBL database, or following the launch of CBLs, offers them the opportunity to re-register, update their requirements, and be informed of what the CBL is about.

6.2 Communicating the change and explaining how the new system works to members of hard to reach groups and vulnerable individuals will require sensitivity to specific circumstances. There is likely to be increased telephone calls and personal visits to Neighborhood Offices following launch of the CBL scheme, but this can be minimised if appropriate information is prepared and circulated beforehand

6.3 Housing Services will need to make full use of traditional means of communication as well as e-communications. Language and disability issues will need to be factored in.

6.4 Information about vacancies needs to be accessible to all applicants, and those means of access must be widely known and understood. All applicants, and perhaps more importantly potential applicants, must know the service exists and how to use it. Choice will also need to be factored in to the accessing of the service.

6.5 Advertising vacancies is the key characteristic of the CBL process,

and the range of outlets from which these can be accessed is crucial, and assumes the existence of an effective database. Property Shops (loosely based on estate agent features), are geographically limited, though usually based in busy town centres for maximum exposure, and even where the principles are extended to the reception areas of other Council offices in outlying districts. Use of a website is increasingly the most effective means of access, and has the added bonus of being able to be updated contemporaneously. Many of the pilots chose to update information weekly or even fortnightly because they were using traditional outlets such as local newspapers' weekly property insert. This runs the risk of information being out of date and therefore useless to applicants, and would create peaks and troughs in activity during the advertising cycle and may delay voids turnround, which daily electronic updating would preclude. However, the Service would have to appreciate that e-communications will not be the favoured means of access with large numbers of the most hard to reach groups eg. the elderly, and any individuals without access to computers or an understanding of how to use them.

6.6 The pilots have considered 'open' or 'closed' systems. Closed means distributing advertisements for vacancies only to applicants who are registered with the CBL, and is considered cost-effective. Open means anyone – registered or not – can access the service. The latter is more in line with the aims of CBLs, is inclusive, and would be the recommended approach.

Restrictions:

6.7 The guiding principle behind CBLs is to minimise the restrictions placed upon choice. However, certain criteria are required to ensure transparency, and that the Council's statutory obligations are met.

6.8 There should be no restriction on the level of information to be made available about vacant properties. As with an estate agency, the purpose is to give applicants as much information as possible to enable them to make an informed – and sustainable – choice. It is intended therefore, applicants will be able to access photographs (inside and out), floor plans, and details of local amenities and distances, as well as 'traditional' lettings information – size, location, age restrictions etc.

6.9 There should be no restrictions on advertising, but clearly this needs to be guided by cost effectiveness. The key vehicle for advertising will be the website. Elsewhere in this report are proposals for a dedicated property shop in the centre of Rotherham, linked to transformation of specific appropriate reception points to be agreed with and linked to the corporate accommodation strategy. Building on the lessons learnt from estate agents, customers will also benefit from property mailing lists, and mailshots. Local RSLs will be offered use of these outlets (it is customary to charge for this).

Bidding:

6.10 Standard procedure would be to enable all applicants to express interest in as many available properties as they wish which are advertised or e-enabled. They may prioritise these if they wish.

6.11 Applicants to whom the authority has a statutory homeless duty, or who have been given a priority assessment, and who do not have a defined special need (eg. a 4-bed or adapted home, or a limited location) will have a time limited period in which to bid for properties. After that, if they have not been successful a review of their priority will be undertaken with the applicant, to ensure there have been no problems that the service was not aware of. The time limit of the priority could be extended if no appropriate property has been advertised. Conversely, if the applicant has ignored or refused appropriate opportunities, they may lose their priority, and will be re-classified with all other general list applicants.

6.12 Applicants will bid via any or all of the recognised channels ie. telephone through Rotherham Connect, online via the website on either a personal PC or a touchscreen facility available under future 'access to services' arrangements,, in person at a future Property Shop and/or council offices, e-mail. SMS text messaging or in writing.

6.13 Applicants will express interest and arrange accompanied viewings. This will not preclude other applicants also expressing an interest, but they will be done in date – and time – order ie. first come, first served. The database will need to show where properties are under consideration, so applicants are aware of the situation when making enquiries. Any applicant who is not yet registered will need to do so, if their interest is firm, to enable security and eligibility checks to be carried out prior to an offer being made.

Ineligible bids:

6.14 Any restrictions placed upon vacancies (eg. adapted dwelling) need to be clearly publicised to prevent ineligible bids ie. applicants could bid for properties for which they do not meet the requirements.

Non – bidders:

6.14 Opening up the bidding process to all applicants will not necessarily result in all applicants bidding. General list applicants will bid as and when they identify a property they are interested in. However, it will be necessary to monitor non bidding applicants where they have a priority award, to identify their reasons for not doing so when apparently appropriate properties become available. It will also be necessary to monitor bids from applicants to areas which their circumstances would define as unsuitable (eg a domestic violence case bidding to be near an abusive partner from whom they have fled). It is to be expected that areas in high demand will attract significant interest and that large numbers of applicants may become frustrated if they make regular bidders due to the fact that they are accumulating waiting time and do not have immediate need or desire for rehousing, and feedback will need to

address this. Evaluation of non- - bidders will identify those that have limited support network or are unable to access information on properties available.

Vulnerability:

6.15 It is a given fact that the CBL must not exclude or disadvantage members of “vulnerable groups”. The definition of vulnerability is open to interpretation but it can include older people, persons with mobility problems, homeless households, people with disabilities, young people at risk, victims of harassment and fleeing domestic violence, and members of minority communities. This is not exhaustive and extends to other groups and/or individuals who are experiencing extreme difficulty.

6.16 Vulnerability to exclusion or disadvantage could arise from different issues arising from CBLs:

- Lack of access to information on vacant properties
- Lack of access to mechanisms for bidding
- Difficulties making informed choices and identifying an appropriate bidding strategy

Individuals who are vulnerable do not necessarily fit "the norm" and officers and agencies will need to be sensitive to their needs. To avoid people being excluded will require the scheme to be communicated effectively to all internal and external statutory and voluntary agencies who provide support and advocacy services.

6.17 Key types of support required are:

- home visits to explain the revised system and establish the amount of support;
- mailshots of advertising material and bidding documentation to individuals who are housebound or unable to access the system using other means;
- sending advertising material/bidding documentation to advocates and agencies;
- inform applicants to alert them to vacancies that are to be advertised;
- officer time talking through the advertised properties with the applicant
- enabling a proxy to be nominated to bid on the behalf of the applicant;
- viewing a property accompanied by advocate (support worker);
- ensuring materials/documentation meet the requirements of other language users, disabled people, and people with low levels of literacy.

Prioritising and Shortlisting:

6.18 To differentiate priority applicants from general ones, ‘time limited priority cards’ will be used. Holders of priority cards will have precedence to be shortlisted for vacancies available; however the categories of applicant eligible for a priority card will be tightly defined, and will include:

- homeless
- individual applicants awarded priority assessment
- statutory overcrowded

6.19 Applicants with priority will be encouraged to use the CBL wherever possible, thereby securing accommodation to meet their urgent housing need by their own efforts. As part of this, certain properties which are classed as 'low demand' will all be available to priority and general applicants alike on the 'first come, first served' principle. The aim of prioritising specific applicants, as well as meeting statutory requirements, is to increase their chances of bidding successfully and thus being housed quicker.

6.20 To ensure a balance between need (priority) and choice (unrestricted access), it is proposed that a 50/50 approach to allocation of high demand available property is undertaken. In practice this will mean every available home will be offered alternately to priority and general applicants. In instances where no priority cases are seeking rehousing, or a specific property type, then all offers will be made to the general register. In considering the allocation, regard will be given to the property criteria, and applications with the earliest dates of application.

6.21 All significantly adapted, and 4 bed homes will be allocated outside the CBL system on an assessment of need basis.

Shortlisting Information:

6.22 Once the bidding period is closed, a shortlist for each property will be drawn up from the individuals who have placed bids within the parameters of priority or general applicants. They will be ranked in date order, and information will be forwarded to the landlord for an offer to be made. No assumptions will be made re applicants, and the "gate-keeping role" must not hinder an applicant accessing accommodation.

6.23 Under CBLs, decisions will be transparent, and scrutinised much more closely – including by customers - and are more likely to be challenged.

6.24 Upon letting a vacancy, the short list for that property will be archived to prevent its future use.

Letting Selection:

6.25 Extensive checks on information provided by applicants will not be undertaken when they register, but only after they have made a successful bid, so as to minimise delays between expressing interest and having an offer confirmed. In a case where support needs are identified at the start of the CBL process, the system will rely on self-identification and/or diagnosis by the applicant or their support agency. Checks will be made on previous landlords for outstanding arrears, anti-social behaviour or other serious breaches of tenancy agreements.

6.26 In the case of rent arrears, the rent account should be clear or reducing by agreement for 13 consecutive weeks. Exceptions to this will be considered through the assessment panel. Potentially sensitive lettings will not be made through the CBL system, but be referred for a formal assessment.

6.27 To avoid delays, verification must commence on the day that the Neighbourhood Team receives the shortlist. Decisions to bypass applicants because they fail verification checks may be contested, so officers must ensure their decisions are justified based on pre-determined criteria. An audit trail must support any action undertaken and be recorded on the application, with the applicant immediately informed. Applicants failing to satisfy the verification checks must be given the opportunity to respond immediately, to ensure no blanket exclusion is being undertaken, but will need to be closely managed to ensure undue delays to letting don't accrue.

6.28 Applicants who are repeated bidders then refused offers of accommodation will be offered advice on how to rectify their situation. In cases where applicants make successful bids, are offered vacant properties but then refuse them regularly without good reasons, may be warned that further refusals will result in their applications being suspended.

6.29 Viewing of properties will only be undertaken by applicants shortlisted for the property after bidding has closed, and will be done in order of listing,

Refusals:

6.30 CBL is based on applicants expressing interest in properties rather than being 'drip-fed' properties by officers they may or may not want. There is an expectation that the proportion of properties refused by applicants should therefore decrease, an issue identified by the Audit Commission in their re-inspection of repairs and maintenance services. This will further reduce void times and improve housing management performance.

6.31 Whether the process impacts on refusal rates depends on local factors and stock condition. Information on refusal rates is an important source of data for understanding what is happening in communities and is an early indication of difficulties that may be developing in relation to communities and their sustainability. Analysis of refusal rates will inform community master planning and responses to housing management issues.

Feedback:

6.32 Feedback on outcomes has a crucial role in CBLs. The aim is to promote greater transparency in the allocation of properties. Publishing feedback allows subsequent bidders to assess the local social housing market. In principle this enables applicants to formulate better informed bidding strategies. It should therefore encourage applicants to take a more realistic view of options for meeting their housing needs.

6.33 It is proposed that feedback be undertaken through the same channels as those advertising properties. Individual feedback is impractical, and there are data protection issues, to ensure that individual privacy is not compromised. It is proposed that general feedback be provided on a monthly basis, thereby ensuring the advertising cycle is not compromised. eg.

Locality	Approximate Waiting Times
East Herringthorpe	B
Canklow	A
Brinsworth	I C
<p><u>Key:</u></p> <p>A = Vacancies readily available (Direct Homes) B = Waiting time up to 12 months C = Waiting time over 12 months and up to 2 years D = Waiting time over 2 years</p>	

Risk issues:

6.34 The strategy for an effective CBL scheme is assessed as medium risk, and this is identified in the table below.

Area of Risk	Risk Rating High, Medium or Low	Safeguards
CBL scheme receives low priority in the Programme Area strategy	Low	Policy is a key definition of housing management excellence to meet requirements of ALMO
Level of applications increases beyond the capacity of turnover to meet expectations	Medium	Encourage RSLs and Private Landlords to participate in the CBL scheme
Bidding process fails to attract sufficient interest for vacant properties	Medium	Promote scheme through all means available,
Vulnerable applicant groups are less frequent bidders than other households	Medium	Appropriate means of access identified for all potential applicants..
Different types of property attract varied bidding activity	Medium	Bidding patterns monitored and intervention strategies undertaken for property types affected.
Homelessness strategy adversely affected	Medium	Monitoring and intervention to ensure statutory obligations are

		met.
Members of BME Communities not participating in CBLs	Medium	Scheme publicity devised to meet information needs of communities. Safeguards built into scheme to maximise access and benefit.
Resources are not available to deliver CBLs	Medium	Additional resource requirements assessed and secured.
Overwhelming requests for individual feedback on bids submitted	Medium	Feedback delivered monthly to all applicants highlighting supply and demand issues
Lack of involvement by RSLs and Private landlords	Medium	Promotion of CBLs through Housing Association Liaison Group and Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
Excessive level of activity/ contact by applicants following CBL launch	Medium	Deploy staffing resources to meet demand and identify SMART ways of delivering service.
Serial bidders who subsequently refuse successful offers	Medium	Possible suspension of application.
Negative impact on Void Turnaround time	Medium	Examine processes for inefficiencies and remedy.
Inadequacy of IT systems	High	Service with RBT to identify remedies and implement

Resource implications:

6.35 The largest potential use of resources is if Rotherham chooses to develop its own 'Property Shop'. Local Authorities who have done so report a transformation in the public's perception of them as housing providers, when linked to CBLs. Such service outlets move providers away from being the housing option of last resort for desperate people, and attract people and client groups who have previously not considered council housing as a lifestyle choice. The addition of other landlords promoting their properties within a single and simplified administrative process is a further attraction. Such shops need to be located in busy commercial/retail centres with significant numbers of passing pedestrians eg. bus and train stations are favoured locations. Provisional costings for such a facility have been identified as follows:

Item	Expenditure
Shop Rental	20,000
Rates	7,500
Electricity – Standing Charge	300
Electricity – Consumption	500
Heating - Gas	1,000
Water	1,000
Stationery	1,500
Alarm System	2,000
Cleaning	6,000
Tel lines Rental/Calls	3,500
Postage	7,000
Carpets	4,500
Furniture	4,000
Decoration/advert displays	3,000
Purchase/Installation of computers	6,000
Total	67,800

6.36 Costs of such a shop can be offset by accommodating other key and related services. It is suggested that a separate report be submitted on the issue of developing a Property Shop and how it would be managed from the ALMO, following more detailed work. Other key centres of the Borough need to be considered also eg. Wath, Dinnington, Maltby.

- **Housing Option Team** - Offering independent Housing Advice and a range of Housing Options to customers with the development of their own Personal Housing Plan
- **Furnished Home Scheme** - The Furnished Tenancy Scheme, introduced on 1st May 2004, could operate from this site in conjunction with the Property Shop.
- **Energy and Efficiency Team** - the Energy Team by being based in the shop could assist with the funding. It has a small income from the Energy Saving Trust for work it carries out under the Sth Yorkshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. It could make a contribution of £2,000 each year to the shop's running costs, and for the first time, Rotherham would have a high profile site for energy efficiency advice. There are similar outlets in Kirklees, Oldham and Leicester, with Sheffield developing a renewable energy centre on its inner ring road.

6.37 Alternatives and additions to such a shop include:

- Weekly/fortnightly property advert mailing list - to distribute to vulnerable applicants who cannot access I.T. or who are unable to visit the Neighbourhood Offices.

- Articles in key publications eg. Open House and Rotherham Matters.
- Newspaper advertisements - to advertise weekly in the local press is expensive. Costs range from £250 for a full page in the ad-mag to £6000 for a full page in the Rotherham Star. Sheffield use the ad-mag weekly and have had a good customer response rate, but Oldham have found that this form of advertising is not necessary as it wasn't widely used by customers. They have found that the Property Shop, a website and – significantly – 'Word of Mouth' are the most effective methods.

6.38 Evidence from the pilots demonstrates that customers view property adverts from a wide range of media sources, and it was clear that the telephone is the most convenient way of accessing the scheme. However, many favoured visiting a Neighbourhood Office to view adverts prior to making a bid. Touchscreen facilities are valuable for customers without I.T. skills, and could benefit customers with impaired eyesight.

6.39 The Neighbourhood Team Leader, supported by Neighbourhood Champions, will be the key point of contact and will coordinate lettings for their respective Neighbourhoods. They will ensure:

- Inspection and Property details;
- Presentation of vacant properties in advertising material;
- Co-ordination of other local housing providers in the CBL;
- Overseeing co-ordination and collation of bidding process, including input of bids received by the Neighbourhood Team;
- Assessment and verification of bids following the close of bidding;
- Offering of the property;
- Overseeing marketing initiatives, such as Roadshows
- 'Audit trailing' bid processes.

6.40 The "Housing Options (Advice) Team's " role will be:

- Independent Housing Advice via telephone, interviews etc;
- Offering the widest range of Housing Options to applicants within a Personal Housing Plan;
- Production of promotional materials and information, including managing information displayed on website;
- Inputting the bids received in the Property Shop (if developed) onto the OHMS system;
- Integrate property information from private landlords and RSLs;
- Joint work with advocacy services - health and social care, probation, self help groups etc.

7) Equality Impact Assessment:

7.1 Rotherham MBC is committed to principles set out in the Equalities Standard for Local Government. A key element of the Equalities Standard involves carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA'S) on all existing,

changing and new policies, to ensure they do NOT have an adverse impact on a particular client group.

7.2 It is essential to note the needs of a wide range of groups and individuals to ensure that there is equality of access. As wide a range as possible of organisations and users should be involved in the development process, including health, social services, voluntary bodies and support networks/agencies. These are key links to helping people access this service. Experience of the pilots show that older people are less likely to use the scheme; the intention is to move to assessed need for older people to access Sheltered Schemes.

8) Community Cohesion

8.1 CBLs are intended to improve community cohesion, and will increase opportunities for applicants to move between neighbourhoods and communities. In exercising their choice, it is recognised that some applicants will need support to enable them to maximise the benefits from their decision.

8.2 Choice is a pre-requisite to achieving equality of access to social housing. Through CBLs, applicants will be responsible for decisions on the type and location of accommodation to meet their needs, based on availability. Availability will also be a limit to the decisions that can be made. The exclusion of 4 bed properties from the CBL scheme, with allocation of these via the housing register to larger families based on individual need is the most obvious example of this.

8.3 To enable applicants to make their own decisions, they will require comprehensive information about the system, and how properties will become available for letting, as well as information on the properties themselves. This will be provided with reference to different groups including hard to reach ones, and via a range of accessible methods:

- Promotional material and property adverts displayed at Neighbourhood Offices, other council service outlets, transport interchanges, shopping facilities, places of worship, and interactive websites.
- Weekly (then daily) bulletins of properties available in the area, including property type, current landlord, location and amenities.
- In line with corporate strategy, utilisation of current IT capability eg. touchscreens placed in accessible places.
- Use local media and free press via inserts and 'advertorials', and explore use of local radio, including hospital radio.
- Feedback on successful lettings will also be available via appropriate publications and outlets. This would include the property, the number of valid responses, and the determined factor, which is the length of time on the waiting list. This would be published with the following week's

advertisements, which will be displayed on the Internet, in Neighbourhood Offices and in the local press. It enables customers to judge their likely chances of obtaining a similar property. A frequently asked question and answer leaflet should be developed.

9) Monitoring the Scheme:

9.1 The collation of robust data is essential to ensure that operation of CBL improves current performance targets, and is transparently fair. One of the key findings of the pilots has been improved turnround of empty properties. While Rotherham is already performing strongly on this, the introduction of CBL will clearly help to maintain this.

9.2 A further impact has been the decline in refusal rates, and reductions in transfer requests. This is an output within the repairs SIP that was identified by the 2004 Audit Commission inspection. Another key monitoring task will be to ensure that sufficient properties of appropriate type or quality are let to vulnerable applicants, and to identify applicants who are not bidding.

9.3 CBL supports joint work between the local authority, RSLs and the private sector, so there must be safeguards for data protection, and published assurances to applicants.

9.4 In accordance with the Government's policy targets on E-Government by 2005, we will utilise appropriate IT to provide access the CBL. There are several funding sources, including implementing E-Government and Local Government Pathfinder Schemes

10) Conclusions:

10.1 Whilst the CBL concept embraces choice and flexibility, it has also been demonstrated that it supports sustainability of tenancies, by reducing turnover. The corollary of this is greater sustainability of communities and neighbourhoods. The current allocation scheme should therefore be amended in favour of a CBL scheme.

11) Recommendations:

- **Approval be given to the implementation of Choice-Based Lettings in Rotherham**
- **That officers carry out further feasibility work on the proposal to develop a Property Shop, able to provide other key services.**

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	21st October 2004
3.	Title:	Fly Tipping; Scrutiny Review
4.	Programme Area:	Housing & Environmental Services and Economic Development Services

5. Summary

The report presents the considerations of the Corporate Management Team into the findings of the Scrutiny Review of Fly Tipping. This report provides analysis of the recommendations arising from the Review.

6. Recommendations

The Environment Scrutiny Panel receive the comments of the Corporate Management Team and consider the policy and resource risk/benefit implications of the Review Group's proposals.

7. Proposals and Details

1. The Scrutiny Review Group reported to the Environment Scrutiny Panel on the 26th August 2004 and from their findings twelve recommendations were made.
2. Corporate Management Team were requested to consider the report's recommendations and identify the risk/benefits of the findings.
3. The twelve recommendations have been assessed and summary of the Corporate Management Team's assessment is detailed in Appendix 1.

8. Finance

1. Several of the recommendations are already planned and within resource allocations made within either Streetpride or Environmental Health Service Plans.
2. To progress other recommendations will require funding which is outside current priorities. Several within Appendix 1 are recognised as meriting consideration within the Medium Term Financial Plan, commitment to these four areas total £175,000, including mainstreaming of £104,000 NRF funding for the Environmental Warden team.
3. Development of IT compatibility and web site development will require RBT engagement and firm costings agreed. No detail is available at this time.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to finance recommendations highlighted for MTFP inclusion will result in reduced enforcement and education in relation to environmental crime in the borough, an area indicated by the Audit Commission Inspectors in the recent Waste Inspection as being best practice. Implications not to fund the Environmental Warden team will result in the loss of key strategic delivery to improve local environmental standards and also damage public confidence in the Council's commitment to cleaner and sustainable neighbourhoods.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The review presents recommendations directly relevant to the sustainable communities/neighbourhoods agenda and highlights the integrated nature of environmental crime across the Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone.

The issues addressed in the review directly relate to CPA and Best Value review of Waste Management. Fly tipping and many of the matters covered in the review and reflected in the recommendations were covered in the recent Waste Management inspection.

Several existing policies of the Council are challenged by the recommendations of the review e.g. subsidy of bulky item collection, removal of community skips provision. To vary current policy would have implications for the Council's sustainable waste management priority and significant financial requirements detailed in Appendix 1.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Environment Scrutiny Panel; Minute 39 of 26th August 2004
Scrutiny Review Group Report; Fly Tipping, August 2004
Corporate Management Team; Minute 4th October 2004

Contact Name :

Tom Cray: Executive Director, Neighbourhoods

Adam Wilkinson: Executive Director, Economic Development Services

**Corporate Management Team
Consideration of Scrutiny Review Fly tipping Report**

	Recommendations	Comments	Indicative Cost to implement
13.1	<p>Joint working arrangements</p> <p>a) Consider through the Neighbourhood Management Strategy the creation of one team per neighbourhood area to deal with all environmental related issues.</p>	<p>a) Agreed. This will be considered through the developing Neighbourhood Management approach of the Council. Local neighbourhood Clean Teams will be explored to work with communities to drive up the local environmental standards. Several issues, however, are pertinent in terms of current resource and working arrangements which would cause difficulty in deployment to local teams undertaking solely environmental work:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o There is a significant number of specialist operations in environmental maintenance, e.g. graffiti removal (3 specialist teams/machines operating across the borough), gully cleansing (2 machines), mechanical road sweeping (3 machines), fly tip removal (2 lorries with cranes) etc. o The total number of Council staff working on purely environmental maintenance is limited. Much of this resource is concentrated in specific areas (e.g. both the Neighbourhood Wardens and Green/Clean teams operate in Rawmarsh). Having regard to this and that specialist cleansing operations could not be included in area teams, there is unlikely to be sufficient critical mass in each of 7 neighbourhood areas to cover for absences or workload peaks. o Currently in the Streetpride Service most maintenance work (i.e. both street cleansing and basic highway maintenance) is carried out in 3 area teams based on the parliamentary constituencies. A Strategic Partner 	Not quantifiable at this stage

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13.2	<p>b) Develop procedures between Programme Area to stipulate how fly tipping reports are to be dealt with and to ensure an audit trail exists for each service request.</p> <p>c) Create a Streetpride Accord between Programme Area's that gives ownership of the Streetpride concept to all contributing parties. The document would set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Roles and responsibilities o Financial commitments o Service Standards o Identify a Streetpride co-ordinator within each Programme Area. 	<p>for Streetpride Services (Grounds Maintenance) has been appointed that will now better integrate grounds maintenance work with street cleansing. It is then proposed to go on to work with the Strategic Partner to fully integrate street cleansing, grounds maintenance and highway maintenance activities (with an element of multi-skilling) into 7 area based teams covering all maintenance activities and not just environmental issues.</p> <p>b) Actioned. Recommendation already implemented in July 2004 through a change request to RBT.</p> <p>c) Agreed. To be accommodated within service plan commitment to marketing of Streetpride</p>	<p>Within existing revenue budget</p>
13.2	<p>RBT</p> <p>a) Consider setting up a dedicated Environmental Streetpride Team to process all service requests relating to environmental issues such as fly tipping, fly posting, graffiti, dog fouling and street littering.</p>	<p>a) Not agreed. The recommendation is not favoured because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o There are 6 staff in Rotherham Connect dedicated to handling Streetpride calls and this will increase to above 9 staff when the full range of 160 Streetpride processes are taken into the Contact Centre. If a separate team was set up dedicated to environmental issues only then this would not have the critical mass necessary to cope with absences or peaks in workload. In addition, in quiet periods there would be insufficient 	<p>£25,000 for additional staff and loss of flexibility if implemented</p>

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	<p>b) Create one Service Level Agreement between RBT and the 'Streetpride' function.</p> <p>c) Review IT systems to create compatibility with Fly Capture and Flair.</p>	<p>calls to keep one member of staff fully employed on purely environmental issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The vision behind Streetpride is that a dedicated team would deal with all street/maintenance issues on a single golden number without passing the caller on. The proposal for a separate environmental team would necessitate either a separate golden number or the passing on of callers. o Customers often have multi issue service requests concerning both the conditions of the built environment and environmental issues such as fly tipping and graffiti. Contact Centre staff need to be skilled in the full range of Streetpride issues to be able to provide the public with a joined up service. <p>b) Actioned. A detailed set of Service Level Agreement between RBT and RMBC (incorporating Streetpride) has been in existence since August 2003. This includes a range of service measures such as the time to answer calls, caller satisfaction, etc and provides for improved targets in future years.</p> <p>Agreed. To be reviewed as part of overall I.T. compatibility review as part of Streetpride Connect Phase 2. Requires detailed scoping and assessment by RBT</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Not quantifiable at this stage</p>
<p>13.3</p> <p>Budget</p>	<p>a) Urgently review how Environmental Wardens will be funded in the financial year 05/06 and in future years.</p> <p>b) Resolve outstanding financial commitments to RBT in relation to Streetpride.</p>	<p>a) Agreed. Issue paper to include the required mainstream funding within Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>b) Actioned. Financial commitment agreed in principle July 2004.</p>	<p>£104,000 MTFF</p> <p>N/A</p>

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13.4	<p>Enforcement</p> <p>a) Increase the number of prosecutions</p> <p>b) Increase the number of fixed penalty fines issued for littering and small scale fly tippers</p>	<p>a) Reservation. Enforcement and taking of legal proceedings follow clear guidelines and protocols to ensure principles of the adopted Enforcement Concordat are followed. In accordance with these protocols where case evidence is assessed to require offenders to be taken to court this is carried out. To implement the recommendation would require change in protocols with consequent resource implications for both the enforcement team and legal services.</p> <p>In assessing the required change of enforcement protocols the relative low levels of fines issued by the Magistrates' Court should be borne in mind. Whilst we seek publicity of all prosecutions, unfortunately the low level of fines (typically £150) reduces the deterrent effect. An additional recommendation is suggested that the Environmental Scrutiny Panel ask to meet the Rotherham Magistrates' to make the case for the environment and higher sentencing.</p> <p>b) Agreed. The Council, via the Environmental Warden team, is a top performer in the number of fixed penalty fines issued. To increase numbers further will require additional focused proactive enforcement and effective actions from the "Eyes and Ears" roll out. An additional Warden is recommended to provide proactive enforcement and to allow capacity to process evidence.</p>	£30,000 MTFP
13.5	<p>Marketing and Publicity</p> <p>a) Increase the number of Themed Banners across the Borough ensuring that the subject of each banner is relevant to the</p>	<p>a) i. Agreed. Increased number of banners.</p> <p>NB. banners increased from 100 to 200 in April 2004</p>	Within

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	<p>area in which it is displayed</p> <p>b) Increase the publicity relating to the legal penalties for fly tipping and the environmental damage caused by it.</p> <p>c) Increase publicity for the Household Waste Recycling Centres including opening hours and access arrangements.</p>	<p>carrying 8 different messages (e.g. litter?, Dog fouling?, Street light out?, etc). Further increase to 300 banners in spring 2005 is planned at a cost of £11,000.</p> <p>ii. Not agreed. That the subject of each banner needs to be relevant to the area in which it is displayed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The banners are designed to engage with the public and promote community responsibility on a wide range of Rotherham Streetpride functions. It is firmly considered that all of the themed messages are relevant to Rotherham people in promoting this aim wherever they are placed. In addition, most of the themed messages are relevant to almost all areas (i.e. graffiti is in fact a problem in many rural areas where the culprits are less likely to be observed.). o A protocol for the banners exists which provides for the banners to be rotated at intervals to refresh the public's interest (NB rotation was positively reported in the recent CPA Waste Management Inspection). Constraints on the location of banners would make rotation more difficult). <p>b) Reservation. A phased publicity campaign has been planned for in Spring 2005 with budget estimate of £10,000.</p> <p>To enhance into wider campaign is outside current resources eg . Additional elements of campaign; Bus Shelter £15,000, Rotherham Record £13,000, Publicity, Material £25,000</p> <p>c) Actioned. A new leaflet was issued in Spring 2004, outlining the summer and winter opening hours of the Household Waste Recycling Centres and the criteria for permit/non permit access to the sites.</p>	<p>existing revenue budget</p> <p>£3,100 if implemented</p> <p>£55,000 dependant on scope of campaign</p> <p>N/A</p>
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13.6	<p>d) Arrange a leaflet drop to all households in the Borough on the Recycling Waste and Fly Tipping subjects.</p> <p>e) Produce a 'Householders Waste Pack' offering a range of information on the recycling services provided by RMBC.</p> <p>f) Produce a 'Commercial Waste Pack' advising businesses on all aspects of waste disposal including the Councils own Commercial waste Collections Service.</p> <p>g) Organise an annual public exhibition of Waste Management</p>	<p>The leaflet has been distributed to all housing offices, libraries and Household Waste Recycling Centres. The supply of these leaflets is regularly replenished.</p> <p>d) Reservation. Would be part of publicity campaign in 13.5(b) above. The development of this leaflet will be to coincide with "Spring Clean" week in 2005. Arrangements will be made to investigate the feasibility of distribution through Rotherham Matters.</p> <p>e) Reservation. A range of leaflets on household waste issues are currently available through council premises. There is a need to produce a folder for collection purposes, this will require reprioritised funding.</p> <p>f) Reservation. There is a need to develop a commercial waste package to advise businesses on waste minimisation, recycling and commercial waste collection. Requires additional resource via Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>g) Agreed. The Rotherham Show provides the opportunity to promote the full range of Waste Management services provided by the Council.</p> <p>The Waste Management Unit exhibition vehicle currently undertakes roadshows/local galas throughout the year.</p>	<p>Cost included in 13.5(b) above</p> <p>£10,000</p> <p>£10,000 MTFP</p> <p>Contained within Revenue Budgets</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
13.6	<p>Strategy</p> <p>a) Update the Environmental Action Strategy to reflect a more robust approach to tackling fly tipping and other environmental crime in the light of the Governments direction and recent legislation.</p>	<p>a) Agreed. Review of the current strategy is to be complete by December 2004. The new draft Environment Strategy should be ready in February 2005.</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>

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	<p>b) Agreed. Will be included in the ASB Strategy Action plan together with other environmental crime interventions</p> <p>c) Reservation. The inclusion of low level environmental crime as a consideration when developing the crime and disorder strategy would be welcomed by the Safer Rotherham Partnership, however, issues that would need detailed consideration have been raised by the SRP. These include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The SRP is currently under no obligation under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to consider low-level anti social behaviour and environmental crime in their strategies. ii. The inclusion of environmental crime would increase work for the SRP in relation to the Audit of crime and disorder carried out on a three year basis. iii. Any work to reduce environmental crime through the SRP would clearly have resource issues. It is not clear whether the involvement of environmental crime would include management of the RMBC enforcement resources and whether it would change the lines of accountability of those resources to report to the SRP. iv. The SRP receive allocated resources from the Home Office on a yearly basis eg BCU and Building Safer Communities funding. If environmental crime reduction were to be included there would be a need for additional resources to carry out work. Existing funding is already stretched to address current crime and disorder issues without the addition of new 	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Not quantifiable at this stage</p>
<p>b) Ensure that the Anti Social Behaviour Action Plan details how the powers set out in the 2003 Act will become operational with particular reference to the stop and search powers.</p> <p>c) The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and the Crime and Disorder Strategy need to align to reflect the councils commitment to Environmental Crime and the Streetpride concept.</p>		

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		issues.	Within existing resources
13.7	<p>d) Develop stronger strategic links with the Police through the Strategic Police Authority and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.</p> <p>RMBC Website</p> <p>a) Develop further the website to contain detail on how the council tackles all environmental issues.</p> <p>b) Provide concise information on all services relating to waste, environment and Streetpride.</p> <p>c) Enhance the links between sites dedicated to different Programme Area's</p> <p>d) Complete existing 'headings' that contain no information</p> <p>e) Provide on line reporting to the Rotherham Connect Streetpride Team</p> <p>f) Provide online service requests for collection services e.g. Bulky Items and Commercial Waste Collections.</p>	<p>d) Agreed. Commenced via new Neighbourhood Standards Manager</p> <p>a) to d) Actioned. All completed June 2004 in joint improvement made by Streetpride Service and Housing & Environmental Services.</p> <p>e) Agreed in principle:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On line reporting to Rotherham Streetpride (www.rotherham.gov.uk/streetpride which is handled by staff in the Streetpride Service) has been in existence since June 2004. Currently this only receives about 10 reports per week compared with about 750 calls per week to the Streetpride golden number. o The financial viability of the website reports being handled by the Rotherham Connect Centre will be examined when the outstanding Streetpride Connect phase 2 processes have been brought into the Connect Centre later this year. <p>f) Agreed in Principal Service enquiries are currently received "on line" through www.rotherham.gov.uk. There is a need to develop a customer friendly service request form "on line" to request these services.</p> <p>- There will be a requirement to investigate with</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>RBT to provide costing in response to Change Request</p> <p>RBT to provide costing in response to</p>

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13.8	<p>Community Skips</p> <p>a) Reinstate the provision of Community Skips until the Landfill Site at Thurcroft is opened in September 2005.</p>	<p>Corporate Finance Audit Section, on line payment options for the bulky item service.</p> <p>- There is a need to visit commercial waste premises to determine contract type, container storage and access requirements to provide the service.</p>	Change Request
13.9	<p>Bulky Waste Collection Service</p> <p>a) Review the cost of this service with a view to providing a free collection service for all users.</p>	<p>a) Not agreed. The cessation of the community skip service has been agreed by Members as a consequence of legislative changes limiting the types of waste that will be accepted at landfill sites.</p> <p>Items such as refrigerators, tyres and asbestos are subject to strict re-processing procedures or disposal in specific "hazardous waste" landfill sites.</p> <p>The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations and Batteries Directive will provide further legislative burdens on what can be landfilled.</p> <p>It is considered that the location of the landfill site does not have any significance on the provision of the service. There are local private and council Waste Management facilities within the Rotherham area for householders to dispose of waste.</p> <p>Also bulky item service prices have been held at 2003/04 rates for the current year.</p>	<p>£100,000 if policy change (£300/skip/ lift rising with landfill tax)</p> <p>£120,000 if policy changed</p>
13.9	<p>Bulky Waste Collection Service</p> <p>a) Review the cost of this service with a view to providing a free collection service for all users.</p>	<p>a) Not agreed. The Bulky Item Service has been subject to an annual price review and approval by Members.</p> <p>The service is currently subsidised by approximately 50% in cost terms to the customer.</p>	£120,000 if policy changed

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		<p>Rothercard holders obtain a 50% discount on the current scale of charges.</p> <p>The imposition of a charge on this service has been considered a “good waste minimisation” practice in some waste management inspections.</p> <p>The provision of a free service would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significantly increase the cost of operating the service. - Would affect a number of the waste management performance indicators. <p>There is a need to develop a capacity within the social enterprise sector to develop “re-use” schemes as an effective waste management option for bulky waste.</p> <p>b) Actioned. The Waste Management Unit contacts the customer to provide details of the day and date of collection upon receipt of payment for the service.</p>	
<p>13.10</p>	<p>b) Provide appointment times for householders so that they know when to put out the item of rubbish out for collection</p> <p>Blue Bag/Green Bin Recycling Scheme</p> <p>a) Review the timing of collections and rationalise these so that householders do not have numerous days to remember for each collection.</p>	<p>a) Not agreed Recycling Services provided for and on behalf of the Council have been aligned to the current household waste collection schedules.</p> <p>Blue bag, blue box and green waste kerbside collections take place on an alternate week basis on the same day as refuse collection.</p> <p>b) All householders have been supplied with calendars indicating the days of collection for recycling services</p>	
<p>13.11</p>	<p>Education and Schools</p> <p>a) Progress the work being undertaken with CLLL and produce an action plan to ensure implementation of educational activities in schools and adult education are progressed</p>	<p>a) Agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Existing education campaign for secondary schools in place (“Toxic” campaign) o Streetpride and environmental issues have been included in a Council wide environmental education 	<p>£30,000 MTFP</p>

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		<p>booklet produced in September 2004 for all teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Production of a Strategy and Resource Plan for education is a key step within the Streetpride Service Action Plan with a completion target of 5/05. <p>The provision of education activities on waste issues has internally been addressed through external funding bids.</p> <p>The requirement for implementing education activities and adult education requires funding through revenue budgets to ensure continuity in the long term. Recommended campaign /education co-ordinator to address environmental crime and broader waste agenda</p> <p>This will be subject to inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>	
<p>13.12</p>	<p>Scrutiny Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Waste Management Review – look at waste minimisation and recycling. b) Review how RBT services are delivered to Programme Area's. Look at how Service Level Agreements are drawn up and how flexible these are in term of reflecting changing demands for service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agreed. Included in Scrutiny Review Annual Work Plan. b) Subject to Scrutiny Panel Officer determination 	

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel	
2.	Date:	21st October 2004	
3.	Title:	Budget Monitoring April to July 2004	
4.	Programme Area:	Housing and Environmental Services	

5. Summary

The following budget monitoring reports are attached together with detailed appendices for the period April 2004 to July 2004:

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Members are informed of the projected out-turn budget position for the first third of the year. The report identifies the impact of the Right to Buy on budgets and consequent recalculations of housing subsidy for both the current and last financial years.

Housing and Environmental Health General Fund

Details of Projected out-turn for the first third of the year together with detailed appendices of the budget position.

6. Recommendations

MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO

- **ACCEPT THE REPORTS**
 - **APPROVE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE HRA BUDGET**
-

7. Proposals and Details

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Most spending on the HRA is expected to be in line with budgets, with the exception being the Area Assembly budget which was transferred to Housing and Environmental Health Services Programme Area with effect from April.

Housing and Environmental Health General Fund

It is currently estimated that income and expenditure on General Fund Services in the Programme Area during 2004/05 will be in line with the net budget of £11.8m.

8. Finance

The financial implications of the report are considered in section 7 above and 9 below.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Year-end position is based on a projection and the situation could change as the year progresses.

Contingency of £0.5m built into 2004/05 budget to address either reduced income or increased cost as a result of projected increase of RTB and demolitions.

Implications of the restructure will have an impact on HRA expenditure.

Housing and Environmental Health General Fund

Year-end position is based on a projection and the situation could change as the year progresses.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

No implications for the council's policy and performance agenda over and above those identified when the budget was set have been identified.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Annual Budget report to Cabinet 23 February and Council 10 March 2004.

This report is one in a series of regular monitoring reports. It is the essential first report in respect of 2004/05, although details of the spending and income for the first quarter of the financial year were available in August this is the first cabinet member meeting to which the figures could be reported and it was considered appropriate to provide members with the latest information available.

Contact Name : Anne Ellis, Finance and Accountancy Manager, Ext 3421, anne.ellis@rotherham.gov.uk

PROPOSAL FOR HRA BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS 2004/05
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CODE	ITEM	AMOUNT
J01040	Recharges Increased costs of central services	£200,000
J01054	Strategic Management Appointment of Head of Neighbourhood Development for 6 months and related services	£55,000
J01040	RCCO To replace lost Major Repairs Allowance in support of the Housing Improvement Plan	£900,000
J01040	Additional Contribution for restructure Major changes within Programme Area including pension costs	£100,000
J01040	Transformation Team Salaries Resourcing for additional staff secondments	£70,000
J01040	Neighbourhood Management & Development As a major step change is planned in the operation of the Programme Area additional resources are required to support this change through training and development	£100,000
J01055	Interim Project management for ALMO	£150,000
J01055	Accomodation for ALMO HQ Estimated provision for lease of office	£250,000
J01045	Choice based lettings	£25,000
JDSO	Area Offices & Other Items Net adjustment in respect of other savings now deferred pending restructure	£34,000
J01040	Contingency	£20,000
TOTAL		£1,904,000

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Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council						
Housing & Environmental Services						
Environmental Health - Waste Collection and Waste Disposal (Client)						
Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings						
1st April 2004 to End of Jul 2004 (Period 4)						
Budget Projections 2004/05:						
Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:						
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year-End %	Comments and Action Proposed
Waste Collection						
General	Employees	252,408	252,408	0	0.00%	Spend of 33% of total budget
Household	Supplies/Contracted Services	3,314,142	3,312,000	-2,142	-0.06%	Spend below budget on agency costs
Commercial	Supplies & Services	-52,868	-54,411	-1,543	2.92%	Income above budgeted level
Recycling	Income	1,420,996	1,426,996	6,000	0.42%	
C.A.Site Management		384,419	387,419	3,000	0.78%	
Waste Disposal						
General	Employees	177,049	185,830	8,781	4.96%	
Disp.of Waste	Agency & Contracted Services	3,360,085	3,361,085	1,000	0.03%	Current spend 34% total budget
Maint.of Old Landfills		60,920	60,920	0	0.00%	
Total Potential Variation for Year:				15,096	0.17%	
2004/05 'Target' Budget (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				8,917,151		
2004/05 Probable Outturn (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				8,932,247		

General Fund

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL		General Fund				
Programme Area: Service Unit:		Housing & Environmental Health Services Environmental Health - Excluding Waste Strategy				
Budget Projections 2004/05: Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:		Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings 1st April 2004 to End of Jul 2004 (Period 4)				
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year-End %	Comments and Action Proposed
Management and Admin	Employee/Supplies & Services	530,843	538,151	7,308	1.38%	Slight overspend on salaries (34% of budget)
Occupational Health	Employee	126,565	124,600	-1,965	-1.55%	Underspend on all areas
Food & Drugs	Employee	518,540	515,500	-3,040	-0.59%	
Consumer Protection	Employee/Transport/Income	394,469	394,469	0	0.00%	
Licensing	Income	58,413	56,500	-1,913	3.27%	spend of 42% of total budget
Laboratory Services	General	0	0	0	0.00%	
Animal Health & Dog Control	Employee	77,047	75,000	-2,047	-2.66%	Underspend on all areas
Pollution Control	Employee	418,935	415,000	-3,935	-0.94%	
Pest Control Service	Employee	65,929	68,566	2,637	4.00%	spend of 42% of total budget
Clinical Waste Service	Income	82,698	85,179	2,481	3.00%	spend of 42% of total wages budget
Litter & Dog Fouling Enforcement	Employee	102,687	107,821	5,134	5.00%	spend of 42% of total wages budget
Cemeteries	Premises	105,856	101,000	-4,856	-4.59%	spend of 48% of total budget
Crematorium	Premises/Employee	-443,410	-440,500	2,910	0.66%	
Total Potential Variation for Year:				2,714	0.13%	
2004/05 'Target' Budget (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				2,038,572		
2004/05 Probable Outturn (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				2,041,286		

ROTHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL							General Fund	
Programme Area: Housing & Environmental Health Services							Housing General Fund Excluding Asylum Seekers	
Service Unit: Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings							1st April 2004 to End of Jul 2004 (Period 4)	
Budget Projections 2004/05: Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:								
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year-End %	Comments and Action Proposed		
HGF Management and Admin	Employees	120,730	121,937	1,207	1.00%	Wages slightly over budget 34% of total for year		
Lighting of Staircases	Agency & Contracted Services	17,050	17,050	0	0.00%			
Cleaning of Communal Dwellings		12,234	12,234	0	0.00%			
RTB Flat Service Charges		-425	-425	0	0.00%			
Neighbourhood Wardens		64,000	65,920	1,920	-3.00%	Wages slightly over budget		
N Valley Wardens		20,000	20,000	0	N/A			
District Office - Admin Support	Employees	0	0	0	0.00%			
Community Caretakers		139,603	139,603	0	0.00%			
Rush House		22,030	22,018	-12	-0.05%	All slightly under budget		
Homelessness	Supplies & Services	90,604	87,886	-2,718	-3.00%	All slightly under budget		
Robond		25,000	25,000	0	0.00%			
SYHA Voids		5,000	5,000	0	0.00%			
Medical Mobility & Community Care	Employees	30,269	30,269	0	0.00%			
Housing Needs		41,240	41,240	0	0.00%			
Agency, Grants & Enforcement	Income/Employees	94,113	98,819	4,706	5.00%	Overspend on wages		
Housing Regeneration	Employees	34,710	36,445	1,735	5.00%	Overspend on wages		
Policy & Planning	Employees	73,650	67,758	-5,892	-8.00%	Spend of only 23% of total budget		
Home Energy Advice		12,436	12,436	0	0.00%			
Minor Fixings	Supplies & Services			0	N/A			
Agency & Grants (SRB Work)	Income	-163	-163	0	0.00%			
Anti Social Behaviour		54,289	54,289	0	N/A			
Interest - Hous Associations	Income	0	0	0	N/A			
Business Unit		0	0	0	N/A			
Finance & Accountancy		0	0	0	N/A			
Total Potential Variation for Year:				946	0.11%			
2004/05 'Target' Budget (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				856,370				
2004/05 Probable Outturn (Excluding Central and Financing Charges):				857,316				

ROTHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL						
Housing & Environmental Services						
Housing Revenue Account						
Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings 1st April 2004 to End of July 2004 (Period 4)						
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year- End %	Comments and Action Proposed
Quality Assurance	Employees	90,089	85,000	-5,089	-5.65%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Housing Strategy	Employees	131,517	120,000	-11,517	-8.76%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Tenant Involvement Unit		181,195	175,000	-6,195	-3.42%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Housing Needs		140,130	135,000	-5,130	-3.66%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Responsive Repairs, Voids & 10 Yr Plan		904,968	904,968	0	0.00%	
Home Energy Advice		40,701	40,701	0	0.00%	
Programmed Works		355,133	355,133	0	0.00%	
Housing Revenue Account Management & Administration	Employees/Supplies & Services	4,506,481	4,630,000	123,519	2.74%	General Overspend. NB. This Budget includes contingency of £0.5m
BRU Management Allocations & Advice		51,154	51,154	0	0.00%	
Medical Mobility & Community Care		279,522	271,000	-8,522	-3.05%	
Homelessness		94,653	94,653	0	0.00%	
		107,117	107,117	0	0.00%	
Housing Regeneration	Employees	244,195	230,000	-14,195	-5.81%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Agency Grants & Enforcements		86,159	86,159	0	0.00%	
Housing Strategy Management		101,403	101,403	0	0.00%	
District Heating		663,630	663,630	0	0.00%	

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL						
Programme Area: Service Unit:			Housing Revenue Account			
Budget Projections 2004/05			Housing & Environmental Services			
Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:			Housing Revenue Account			
Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings			1st April 2004 to End of July 2004 (Period 4)			
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year- End %	Comments and Action Proposed
Lighting of Staircases		51,150	51,150	0	0.00%	
Lifts		12,050	12,050	0	0.00%	
Community Caretakers		259,263	259,263	0	0.00%	
Cleaning of Communal Dwellings		36,702	36,702	0	0.00%	
Wardens		1,858,395	1,858,395	0	0.00%	
Other Communal Services		2,870	2,870	0	0.00%	
Maintenance of Aged Person's Gardens		35,000	35,000	0	0.00%	
Council House Sales Expenses		2,800	2,800	0	N/A	
Ground and Property Rents		201,540	201,540	0	0.00%	
Dwelling Insurances		0	0	0	0.00%	
Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme		940,800	940,800	0	N/A	
Rothercare		12,472,496	12,472,496	0	0.00%	Processes relating to supporting People grant are being reviewed.
Housing Repairs		2,723,285	2,660,000	-63,285	-2.32%	Spending will be closely monitored
District Offices		131,501	131,501	0	0.00%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Rent Recovery		66,354	66,354	0	0.00%	
Anti Social Behaviour		206,747	195,000	-11,747	-5.68%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
Housing Management		450,000	450,000	0	N/A	
Bad Debt Provision						

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL Housing Revenue Account						
Housing & Environmental Services Housing Revenue Account						
Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings 1st April 2004 to End of July 2004 (Period 4)						
Budget Projections 2004/05 Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:						
Service Division	Expenditure / Income Head and Description of Over / Under Spend	Current Budget £	Projected Outturn £	Potential Variation to Year-End £	Percentage Variation to Year-End %	Comments and Action Proposed
N. Wardens Safer Homes		48,000 50,000	48,000 50,000	0 0	0.00% 0.00%	
Almo Development Green & Clean Asset Management		750,000 190,000 4,000,000	750,000 190,000 4,000,000	0 0 0	0.00% 0.00% 0.00%	budget includes extra provision for project managers and premises Increase in interest changed
Other Income		-	581,000	0	0.00%	Includes increased level of de minimis receipts
Government Subsidies Housing Rents		16,776,000 48,812,000	16,776,000 48,812,000	0 0	0.00% 0.00%	Negative subsidy has been revised to reflect recalculation in light of above threshold number of sales etc Rent income now includes Rebates

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
20TH SEPTEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors N. Hamilton, Jack and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

72. ANNUAL CUSTOMER SERVICES AND COMPLAINTS 2003/04

The Customer Services Officer submitted the annual Customer Services and Complaints report for 2003/04.

Despite an increase in the number of complaints received, the Programme Area's performance had improved on complaints. 78% of stage 1 complaints were resolved within the target time compared to 64% in 2002/03. Effective recovery action had been initiated during the second quarter of 2003/04 which had resulted in performance outturns of 66% for quarter 2, 90% for quarter 3 and 97% for quarter 3. 100% performance had been delivered on stage 2 and 3 of the Council's Complaints Procedure compared to 39% and 77% in 2002/03 respectively.

20 Ombudsman enquiries had been received in the year compared to 21 in 2002/03. No cases had been classified as maladministration and 5 resolved by local settlements.

Of the 1,001 Councillors Surgeries received, 92% had been resolved within target time compared to 82% in 2002/03 and 53% in 2001/02. Rotherham Connect was an important measure of the Programme Area's commitment towards customer care, accessibility of its services and e-government. This commitment was reinforced by the performance with 99% of the 285 enquiries received dealt within the target response time.

The outstanding results had been achieved through sound performance management using a range of innovative customer focused activity and by adding extra monitoring controls and performance measures to improve customer services.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following points made:-

- Approximately 12,000 customer satisfaction surveys were sent out with a return of 650. The Audit Commission was happy with the robustness of the consultation process.
- The results of the telephone call monitoring should be shared with RBT.
- Any items of concern in the annual report will be picked up in the quarterly performance monitoring report.
- That quality control checks be carried out of the final letter sent out as a result of a Councillor Surgery enquiry.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and progress made be noted.

(2) That the ALMO Project Board be made aware of the progress made.

73. WASTE AND EMISSIONS TRADING ACT 2003 - THE LANDFILL REGULATIONS 2004

The Head of Environmental Health reported on the Government's announcement of the provisional allocation of landfill allowances which would be made to the Council under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 through The Landfill (Scheme Year and Maximum Landfill Amount) Regulations 2004 for each year from 2005/06 to 2019/20. There were interim target years where statutory reductions to 1995 levels had to be achieved. The scheme would operate from 1st April, 2005.

Each waste disposal authority had now received details of the provisional allocation of allowances they would receive for the period 2005 to 2020. The permit allocation reflected a year-on-year reduction in the amount of biodegradable waste the Council would be allowed to landfill to ensure the 2020 target for the United Kingdom was achieved.

An initial analysis of Rotherham's allocation indicated that, based upon the trends in waste growth in Rotherham and the continued development of the recycling infrastructure, the Council would exceed its permit allocation with effect from the 2007/08 financial year.

For those local authorities that exceeded their allowances a fine £200 per tonne may be levied. It was currently projected that Rotherham would face an increase of approximately £2.5M in disposal costs to comply with the Legislation.

Resolved:- (1) That the long term implications for the landfilling of municipal waste generated by Rotherham be noted.

(2) That the diversion of biodegradable waste through the landfill permit scheme be given full consideration as part of the development of a Waste Strategy for Rotherham.

(3) That the report be referred to the Environment Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet to keep them fully informed of the situation.

74. PETITION - BOARD PROPERTIES ON NEARCROFT AND BARBER BALK ROAD, WARD 21

In accordance with Minute No. 34 of 19th July, 2004, the Head of Housing Services reported on proposed action to be taken.

It was proposed that ongoing monitoring by the police and Council Officers continue, in liaison with the residents in the area, and address any issues that arise. It was also intended to rehouse the tenant of No.

**3CCABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES -
20/09/04**

45 Barber Balk Road as soon as possible and seal off the site pending demolition (due to commence in November, 2004).

Resolved:- (1) To note the actions taken.

(2) That the issue of marketing sites by Economic and Development Services before demolition commenced be discussed at the future joint meeting of the Cabinet Members for Economic and Development Services and Housing and Environmental Services.

75. RECYCLING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of the above Group held on 9th September, 2004, attended by Councillors Wyatt (in the Chair); Atkin, Littleboy, Senior and Walker, were noted.

(The Chair authorised consideration of the following item to enable Members to be informed of the Programme area's current performance.)

76. 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2004/05

The Performance and Development Officer submitted the 1st quarter performance report of 2004/05.

82% of Indicators were achieving their quarterly control target with action in place to ensure all the year end targets were achieved. Despite targets being stretched, this was an improvement from the previous quarter where 76% of Indicators had met the outturn target. Currently 83% of those performance indicators that related directly to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment were on track to meet the year end targets.

When compared to the All England figures, Housing Services had 2 Indicators that had moved up a quartile place with 6 remaining static compared to the same period last year. Environmental Health had 2 that had moved up a quartile place, 4 having remained the same and 1 dropping a place, although in line with projected national trend. The Programme Area currently had 6 Indicators in the top quartile compared to 3 Indicators at the same stage last year.

An action plan had been developed utilising customer feedback to deliver improvements in both the short, medium and longer term which had already seen a rise in the level of satisfaction from 75.5% in March, 2004 to 80% in July, 2004.

The Programme Area's performance management network had been externally validated by HouseMark which had praised the strides forward made.

Resolved:- That the report and progress made be noted.

77. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

78. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR APPLICATIONS EXCEEDING DELEGATED POWERS

1. Finance

As a result of a meeting between Neighbourhood Services and Social Services on 10th September, 2004, attempts were being made to identify further funding for the discretionary element of adaptations. If not successful the issue would be raised with the Executive Directors.

Resolved:- That a report be submitted in 2 months' time on the possible partnership working arrangements.

2. Applications

The Head of Housing Services submitted 3 Disabled Facilities Grants (private sector) and 3 Disabled Facilities adaptations (public sector) for consideration.

(i) Public Sector Applications

Resolved:- That application Nos. 17938, 18528 and 18409 be approved in the sum of £66,840.00:-

(a) substantially in accordance with plans and specifications submitted by the Head of Housing Services;

(b) within a period of 12 months of the application being approved.

(ii) Private Sector Applications

Resolved:- That, subject to (1) above, application Nos. 17933, 18633 and 17516 be approved in the sum of £75,000.00 (mandatory) and £40,014.86 (discretionary):-

(a) substantially in accordance with plans and specifications submitted by the Head of Housing Services;

(b) within a period of 12 months of the application being approved.

(Councillor Jack declared a personal interest in application No. 18528 and did not take part in any discussion thereon.)

(Exempt under Paragraphs 4, 5 and 8 of the Act - contains names and addresses of applicants requesting financial assistance from the authority)

(The Chair authorised consideration of the following item to enable the petition to be processed.)

79. PETITION - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Democratic Services Manager submitted a petition containing 6 signatures regarding the anti-social behaviour on Vines Close, Masborough.

Resolved:- (1) That the petition be received.

(2) Head of Housing Services investigate the matters raised and submit a report thereon in 1 month.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Authority)

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
MONDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors Hall, N. Hamilton and Kaye.

Apologies were received from Councillors (none).

80. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT MODELS AND IMPROVEMENT TOOLS

The Performance and Development Officer presented a report which identified the performance improvement models available to improve customer satisfaction and efficiency of the Housing Service, now and throughout the development of the ALMO.

Many local authorities and ALMOs had chosen to adopt performance improvement tools to help them manage strategically and deliver against the national modernisation agenda. The Government's 'modernisation agenda' encouraged all public sector organisations to make use of one of 4 main quality modals (European Foundation for Quality Model, Charter Mark, Investors in People and ISO 9001).

The Investors in People award achieved by the Council in June, 2003, recognised the significant improvements put in place to develop people, skills and learning. The Council and Programme Area had successfully implemented continuous improvement programmes recently through the use of EFQM business excellence model. However, a more holistic balanced set of measures (customer relationships and internal processes) that reflected the different drivers that contributed to superior performance was required.

The costs involved will be broken down when applications were submitted to both assessment centres during the next 2 years. It was estimated to be in the region of £21,000 for ISO 9001 plus £2,000 annual audits and £2,000 for a Charter Mark assessment. A more detailed breakdown of costs would be submitted during 2005/06.

Discussion ensued on the staffing resources required. It was expected that the Transformation Team would support this project through their business process re-engineering work and no additional secondments required.

Resolved:- That House Services apply for external quality accreditation (subject to a more detailed financial breakdown) in:-

(1) ISO 9001 for the Repairs and Maintenance Service by September, 2005.

(2) Charter Mark for the Landlord Service by April, 2006.

81. HOUSING DISREPAIR CLAIMS

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report setting out the impact of the current management strategy for dealing with disrepair claims (Section 11.82).

In the first 6 months of 2003/04, the number of cases had risen to such an extent that it was having a serious negative effect on the Repairs budget. Additional legal assistance had been recruited to support a more assertive approach. Publicity material was also issued stating that spurious cases would be contested with the utmost vigour.

As at 28th September, 2004, the number of cases had fallen during the 12 months period from 267 live claims to 161 despite having received 67 new claims during that period. 173 claims had settled comprising:-

51 cases where payment was required (average £4,555.00 per claim)
90 cases where no payment was received (potential saving of £409,950.00)
32 cases where the Council would receive costs.

Of the 51 cases where payment was required, the amount paid as at 28th September was £197,266.45 (£114,928.45 during 2003/04 financial year and £92,338.00 during 2004/05). However, costs remain to be paid on 7 of the cases and are likely to be paid during 2004/05 (£35,000).

Of the 32 cases where the Council would receive costs, the total sum of £121,101.73 was due of which £101,578.28 had already been recovered during 2004/05 financial year.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

82. REGENERATION OF VOID FLATS, WATH UPON DEARNE

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report proposing the regeneration of 2 void blocks of 3 storey flats at Wath upon Dearne.

Construction of all the single person flat accommodation within the Wath Scheme dated from approximately 1960 with only minimal alterations/additions/maintenance works carried out since that time. It did not now meet the reasonable expectations of national or local government standards or the needs and aspirations of residents, tenants and other service users who reside on the White Bear Estate.

11 blocks of the original 14 blocks of single person flats had been demolished and 1 refurbished, leaving the remaining 2 blocks of 12 individual flats per block. The retained and refurbished block proved expensive to refurbish and appeared to show signs of degradation from

abuse, misuse and general vandalism 1 year since completion.

Housing Management advised that there remained a high demand for this type of single person accommodation but the number of applicants willing to accept this type and standard of accommodation was nil.

The cost of refurbishment of a single 3 storey block of flats was in excess of £200,000 excluding fees. To demolish the 2 blocks of flats would cost approximately £100,000 which included the demolition, removal of potential asbestos and the clearing of the sites but excluded fees.

Ward Members and stakeholders had been consulted throughout the concept and implementation stages of the Regeneration Scheme. The condition of the void blocks of flats was of significant concern to all parties involved in the regeneration of the estate. A consultation exercise had determined a majority opinion that the blocks of flats attracted vandalism and general abuse which created unpleasant living conditions.

Resolved:- (1) That, subject to discussion with Property Services to ensure that the building was not required, the 2 void blocks of 3 storey flats at Wath upon Dearne be demolished and the cleared land incorporated into the existing land development brief to be marketed in January, 2005.

(2) That investigations take place into the possibility of Housing Market Renewal funding being available to fund the demolition costs.

83. PROPOSALS TO PILOT THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR POWERED HEATING IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES

The Head of Housing Services submitted a proposal to pilot the installation of solar powered heating in Council properties which would dovetail with other renewable energy schemes such as wind farms in line with other Central Government energy strategy.

Rotherham was committed to identifying new and sustainable sources of energy. In support of this, it was proposed to install solar heating to 10 properties i.e. 2 voids at Kiveton Park and 8 tenanted properties at Woodsetts. The void installations would commence late September/early October, 2004.

The voids were chosen due to this being a new venture and on inconvenience to tenants. The tenanted properties had been chosen for their suitability i.e. facing south, pitch of the roof and an easily adaptable heating system. Woodsetts was chosen as a small, self-contained estate and easier to evaluate results. Installation should take 2 days.

Solar panels, know as collectors, would be fitted to the building's roof which use the sun's heat to warm glycol which passes through the panel. The glycol was then fed to a hot water tank and helped provide heat and

hot water for the building. The panels worked throughout daylight hours even if the sky was overcast and no direct sunshine. The hot water bills for residents should be reduced by up to 50%.

The tenanted properties would be visited to discuss the details of the scheme with residents to obtain their views and permission before starting work. This project was being undertaken with the help of a company called Genersys plc. who manufactured, marketed and installed solar thermal panels that provided hot water for domestic, industrial and other applications. The manufacturing unit at Barbot Hall would not undertake manufacture of small units should a large district heating site be considered, would be able to do so. Both the Gas Servicing Section and the PVC u Manufacturing Section at Barbot Hall would achieve Clearskies solar installer accreditation when the scheme was completed. They would then be able to carry out the work for other authorities and organisations. Once accreditation and demand was established, there was potential for the formation of a Solar Installation Scheme within the Neighbourhood Management Section which could then become commercially viable through the South Yorkshire energy Efficiency Advice Centre, Save N Warm discount scheme. The panels were designed to have a life expectancy of at least 35 years and required no maintenance.

Monitoring equipment could be installed in the properties and in properties without solar panels to enable comparisons to be made.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposal to pilot the installation of solar powered heating in Council properties be approved.

(2) That a progress report be submitted in 6 months.

84. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

85. VOID PROPERTY SECURITY

In accordance with Minute No. 99 of 15th September, 2003, the Head of Housing Services submitted a report seeking authority to extend the current security contract for void properties.

Pioneer Security Systems were successfully awarded the contract from 1st October, 2002, to 30th September, 2003, with the option of a further 2 years to 30th September, 2005, including fixed annual increased based on national indices.

Feedback from service users showed that the company were providing an

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11/10/04**

efficient and high quality service.

Resolved:- That the extension of the current vacant property security contract awarded to Pioneer Security Systems for a further year to 30th September, 2005, as laid down in the original contract documents, be approved.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act – supply of goods/services and negotiation of terms)

86. EXTRA CARE HOUSING FUND

The Head of Housing Services submitted proposals for the development of a second Extra Care Housing development in Rotherham.

Local authorities had been invited by the Department of Health to submit bids for the second round of the Extra Care Housing Fund. All bids must be submitted by 25th October, 2004. The report considered the land contribution that the Council would need to make in order to make the ECH bid viable.

It was noted that the report was to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Social Services on 15th October, 2004.

Resolved:- That in principle approval be given to:-

(1) the submission of an Extra Care Housing Bid, based on the sheltered housing site stated in the report, and the adjacent garage site, be approved.

(2) the sheltered housing site and the adjacent garage site be transferred by way of long lease or freehold, subject to appropriate restrictive covenants, to a Registered Social Landlord as part of the Authority's capital contribution to the Extra Care Housing Fund be approved.

(3) the Programme Area consult with residents of the current sheltered scheme and with tenants of the garage site and report back to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services in November, 2004.

(4) a further report on the final bid be presented to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services in November, 2004.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Council/supply of goods or services)

87. DAMP PROOFING AND TIMBER TREATMENTS CONTRACT

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report proposing to extend the damp proofing and timber treatments contract.

The current contract, which commenced on 1st October, 2003, was approved for 1 year with an extension of a further 2 years on satisfactory completion of year 1.

Resolved:- That the extension of the damp proofing and timber treatments contract for a further 2 years (30th September, 2006), be approved.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act – expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority/terms negotiated for the supply of goods or services)

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
23rd September, 2004

Present:- Councillor Atkin (in the Chair); Councillors Burke, Clarke, Hall, Hodgkiss, Jackson, McNeely, Nightingale, Rushforth, P. A. Russell, Vines and The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright). together with Mr. D. Alderson (Housing Tenant Panel) and Mr. D. Willoughby (Housing Tenant Panel)

Apologies were received from Mr. J. Lewis and Mr. J. Carr.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no members of the public or press present.

45. JOINT TRADING STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the above Working Group held on 30th July, 2004, were circulated for information.

It was noted that there was a vacancy on the Group to be filled by Rotherham.

Resolved:- That Councillor Hodgkiss be nominated as the Scrutiny Panel's second representative on the Joint Trading Standards Committee Working Group.

46. RESTRUCTURING OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PROGRAMME AREA

The Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services presented a report on the new structural arrangements for the Programme Area.

The proposed arrangements represented a radical reconfiguration recognising the significant progress made to improve quality of services and to address the challenges facing the Council in the medium term. The main changes were:-

- You would see someone in charge in every neighbourhood
- More members of staff out on the streets problem solving and also preventing problems escalating
- Better co-ordination of activity and join forces with partners and other agencies to improve service to the public
- Target the Programme Area's strengths and activity to ensure that they were used more actively where needed

- Crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour issues and the pulling together of those involved in tackling the work within the neighbourhood.

There were also two other issues that the restructuring would address. Firstly, the ALMO. The new structures would enable a smooth transition for service users from Council delivery to ALMO delivery. Secondly, there had been suggestions as to how Area Assemblies and Community Planning could be improved. The strengthening of the local community leadership role of Ward Members would be addressed by the mainstreaming of some of their activity through the structures.

The main features of the proposals were highlighted in particular the key challenges facing each Service Area.

A number of suggestions had been made on the new name for the Programme Area. "Neighbourhoods" was the preferred option. The name would reflect the Council's efforts to deliver neighbourhood management and neighbourhood objectives across the Borough. It was about places and people, neighbourhood and communities.

Discussion ensued on the restructuring proposals. The following comments were made:-

- There would be savings in the region of £105,000 due, in part, to the "flatter" structure and less managers. 270 posts had been deleted due to the method of delivery being changed with 220 new posts being created.
- The Neighbourhood Management structures had been designed to reflect the number of stock as at 1st April, 2005 when it became the responsibility of the ALMO.
- The Executive Director was to consult with the Police Authority on their interaction with and contribution to the Neighbourhood Management Strategy. A report was to be submitted to the Cabinet and Scrutiny setting out the way forward for the Council on neighbourhood management. The Police were keen to work alongside the Council and Neighbourhood Wardens to tackle anti-social behaviour and exchange information to allow them to concentrate on the harder policing issues. Discussions were taking place with regard to the Police devolving a number of Community Police Officers to work much more closer with Neighbourhood Managers in Area Assemblies. A joint training programme was being devised.
- As part of the new arrangements the relationship with RBT would be examined as well as the ALMO would have the right to revisit any contract the Council had and any service provided by the Council. At the last inspection of the Repairs and Maintenance

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Services, RBT was found to be one of the strengths of the Service but consideration needed to be given as to how it could be improved for the future. RBT's performance was monitored on a monthly basis and was currently delivering to high satisfaction levels.

- A report was to be submitted to the Scrutiny Panel on the development of Area Assemblies linked to the whole Neighbourhood Management Service. It would explain how the Programme Area would consult with Members to ascertain their experience and views on Area Assemblies.
- There would be the issue of the name of the ALMO Board which would only focus on housing.
- Members should be supplied with the mobile telephone numbers of members of staff if there were to be less front line staff.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the proposals, including the renaming of the Programme Area, be supported.

(2) That the Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services submit a report on the development of Area Assemblies.

(3) That the Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services submit a report on the involvement of the Police in the Neighbourhood Management Strategy.

47. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES

The Anti-Social Behaviour Manager presented a report on the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (Section 12 introduced a new provision in the Housing Act 1996 (Section 218A)) which required public landlords to prepare a policy in relation to anti-social behaviour and a summary for dealing with occurrences of anti-social behaviour by 30th December, 2004.

The current anti-social behaviour procedures had been updated and a massive training exercise undertaken for the staff working at ground level as well as Community Constables and Environmental Services.

The proposed policy would also be considered by the ALMO Board.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues highlighted:-

- Members of the public suffering from anti-social behaviour should report it to their Local Housing Office, Environmental Services, the Police or any of the youth agencies. Safer Estates meetings were held throughout the Area Assemblies where officers at ground level discussed complaints that had been received and consider the best

way to help people. If the complaint became particularly serious (there were threshold tests), they were referred to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.

- Anti-Social Behaviour Officers worked outside of normal office hours.
- Tenants on Introductory Tenancies were regularly visited. The Anti-Social Behaviour Manager was hoping to visit as many Tenant and Residents Group as possible to assure them of what action could be taken and not to be afraid to report any incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- There was a 24 hour telephone help line for witnesses together with alarms in their property and dictaphones.
- If someone was evicted for anti-social behaviour it would be backed up with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. There was support from the Courts in Rotherham should they be breached. If there was any intimidation of a witness the perpetrator would be warned by one of the 2 Police Officers in the Unit and possibly arrested.
- A bid had been submitted for another Police Officer to join the Unit.
- There was a clause in a Right to Buy contract allowing the Council to tackle anti-social behaviour after purchase.
- Once an Anti-Social Behaviour Order had come to an end there was nothing to stop the Unit applying to Court for another Order with different prohibitions.
- Unless the Authority had a statutory obligation to rehouse someone under the Homeless Act they would not be rehoused if they had been the subject of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. The Service would be working with Registered Social Landlords and private landlords with regard to a reciprocal agreement.
- The Neighbourhood Wardens had provided much support to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. It was the intention to roll out learning points from the Wardens and pass onto the Neighbourhood Champions. There were 3 years of external funding remaining for the Wardens at which point it would become mainstreamed.
- A meeting had been held with several Registered Social Landlords. They did not have a specialised unit themselves and were very keen to tap into the Service. The Unit currently had 3 cases from RSL's. A further meeting was to be held together with the Youth Offending Service.

5D

Resolved:- That the draft policy be noted.

48. 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2004/05

The Performance and Development Officer submitted the 1st quarter performance report of 2004/05.

82% of Indicators were achieving their quarterly control target with action in place to ensure all the year end targets were achieved. Despite targets being stretched, this was an improvement from the previous quarter where 76% of Indicators had met the outturn target. Currently 83% of those performance indicators that related directly to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment were on track to meet the year end targets.

When compared to the All England figures, Housing Services had 2 Indicators that had moved up a quartile place with 6 remaining static compared to the same period last year. Environmental Health had 2 that had moved up a quartile place, 4 having remained the same and 1 dropping a place, although in line with projected national trend. The Programme Area currently had 6 Indicators in the top quartile compared to 3 Indicators at the same stage last year.

An action plan had been developed utilising customer feedback to deliver improvements in both the short, medium and longer term which had already seen a rise in the level of satisfaction from 75.5% in March, 2004 to 80% in July, 2004.

The Programme Area's performance management network had been externally validated by House Mark which had praised the strides forward made.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and progress made be noted.

(2) That the Scrutiny Panel's congratulations be conveyed to staff on the excellent performance.

49. ALMO EXCELLENCE PLAN

The Service Improvement Manager presented a report on the progress of the ALMO Excellence Plan which would drive forward and monitor the transformation of housing management and repairs services into an ALMO structure with the objective of delivery of excellent customer services through Neighbourhood Management.

The plan would help shape the ALMO structure, re-organise service and deliver excellent customer service through Neighbourhood Management. It included recommendations from the Repairs and Maintenance Inspection in February, 2004, areas of weakness identified in the Best Value Review of Housing Management and gaps which were identified by the 'Preparing for an Indicative ALMO Inspection' focus group.

The monitoring process was very robust and had a Key Task Manager being responsible for the accountability of each task. Each of the tasks was then project managed.

The plan was on target and there were no major issues.

Dennis Alderson reported that the Housing Futures Group had met the previous day to receive the final nominations from those interested in becoming tenant members of the ALMO Board. 9 nominations had been accepted and agreed that they would all be interviewed on 13th October for 5 positions. Once the decision on the 5 had been made, all stakeholders would be balloted.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services stated that the Council's representatives would come from Area Panels and 1 each from the sub-boards to the main Board plus the Cabinet Member for Community Planning and Social Inclusion and herself. The nominations for the remaining 5 independent places would go out to advertisement with the tenant representatives and Council representatives coming together to make the decision.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

50. LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES

The Head of Housing Services presented a report outlining the proposals for the revised Local Lettings Policies previously agreed in September, 2003, following consultation with tenants, local Ward Members and partner agencies (Minute No. 94 refers).

It was noted that the policies had been amended at the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services meeting held on 6th September as follows:-

“2.2 Removal of the word “quota”

3.2 “...under the age of 60 years (but will exclude those currently subject to the sheltered housing review).....”

That strategic consideration be given to the schemes being suggested for de-designation as to the options for future uses including other supported housing.”

It was made clear in the criteria that Members and stakeholders be consulted on the policies, widely publicised and made available to applicants. The policies were intended to be flexible to meet situations in any locality.

With regard to the reducing of age limits in aged persons ground floor flats

and bungalows, Managers were under instruction that any policy changing must dovetail with the existing community and that they be consulted about the proposals. De-designation only went as far as 30 years of age. If there were groups younger than that age, the Service would look to partners such as Social Services and the Police to help make sure any tenancies let to younger groups were managed and co-ordinated. It was recognised that lifestyle clashes were recognised and managed, but it was also acknowledged that one could not exclude specific groups from living in popular areas of the Borough.

The policies would be reviewed on an annual basis but they could be changed within that period if Members or residents felt it appropriate.

Resolved:- That the reviewed Local Lettings Polices be supported.

51. ESTATE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

The Head of Housing Services presented a report indicating that a review was to commence of estate management policy and procedures for housing management. The review was to be completed by December, 2004.

The Panel would receive a report in due course.

Resolved:- That the review be noted.

52. ROLE OF THE WARDENS AND CARETAKERS - SCRUTINY REVIEW

Resolved:- That a Review Scrutiny Panel be set up, comprising of Councillors Atkin, Hall, Hodgkiss and Vines and Mr, D. Willoughby, to look at the role of the various Wardens and Caretakers.

53. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES HELD ON 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

The Panel noted the decisions made under delegated powers by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services held on 6th September, 2004.

It was noted that a presentation was to be made to the Panel at its next meeting by the State Veterinary Service of DEFRA on the Framework for the Delivery of Services in Animal Health and Welfare (Minute No. 57 refers).

54. MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 26TH AUGUST, 2004

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th August, 2004, were noted.

It was noted that a report from the Corporate Management Team was to be submitted to the next meeting of this Panel. This would be their

response to the recommendations contained within the Fly Tipping Review. The report would include comments on the recommendation regarding the Bulky Item Service (Minute No. 39 refers).

55. MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 23RD JULY, 20TH AUGUST AND 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 23rd July and 20th August, 2004, were noted.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Clarke, Doyle, Hall, Hussain, G. A. Russell, R. S. Russell, St.John, Sangster and Whelbourn.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkin.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Interests were declared in item 34 below 'Middle Lane Traffic Calming Scheme' as follows:

Councillor Hall declared a personal interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillor Hussain declared a prejudicial interest and participated in the meeting as a sponsor of the call in request not as a member of the Committee.

34. MIDDLE LANE TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

The Committee considered Minute No. 40 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Economic and Development Services held on 9th August, 2004 relating to the above.

Councillor Dodson, supported by Councillors Hussain, Kirk, McNeely and Wootton elaborated on the reasons they were objecting to the proposed Middle Lane traffic calming scheme.

These included :-

- Badsley Moor Lane and Middle Lane junction was very busy
- previous decisions to prevent a right turn from Clifton Lane onto Doncaster Road had increased the volume of traffic on Middle Lane and created dangerous 'rat runs' including Walker Lane. Re-opening the junction fully would be key to the traffic problems on Middle Lane
- the traffic problems on Middle Lane related to the volume of traffic and not speed
- pelican crossings were imperative and should not be replaced by zebra crossings
- the pelican crossing at the Badsley Moor Lane and Middle Lane junction was well used by schoolchildren
- poor visibility of crossing facility when travelling up Middle Lane would

be a danger to children and the wheelchair bound if the crossing was not light operated

- the proposed mini roundabouts would not work, they were on a bus route and could be problematic for HGVs.

The sponsors of the call in clarified that they wanted :

- the re-opening fully of the Clifton Lane and Doncaster Road junction
- a light control system installed at the Middle Lane and Badsley Moor Lane junction
- the crossing outside the Park Hotel to remain as a pelican crossing

Councillor Hussain referred to a petition raising the same issues and it was important to look at the wider picture and listen to residents living in the area on a daily basis. If the Clifton Lane junction issue was taken on board some of the proposed calming measures would be unnecessary.

The Committee questioned the sponsors of the call in and clarified issues relating to the consultation through the area assembly and crossing facilities.

Councillor G. Smith, Cabinet Member for Economic and Development Services responded that the issue for debate was Middle Lane. Procedures were in place to consider representations for the surrounding area and he was not debating recommendations for Clifton Lane, Walker Lane etc.,

Councillor Smith, together with John Bufton, Schemes and Partnerships Manager responded to some of the issues raised and clarified the proposed scheme.

Points made related to :-

- pedestrians did come first
- rationale for the scheme
- consultation on the scheme and amendments made as a result
- little difference in height of a belisha beacon and pelican light from a driver visibility point of view

The Cabinet Member and Schemes and Partnership Manager answered questions from the Committee relating to :-

- pelican crossing criteria
- usage of pelican crossing on Middle Lane near to junction with Badsley Moor Lane

- amendments made to the scheme as a result of consultation
- rationale behind proposals for zebra crossings rather than pelican crossings
- proposed zebra crossing outside Clifton School
- guidelines for the provision of crossing facilities and implications of not following guidelines
- accident statistics, increased traffic flows and increase car usage
- increased traffic flow on Middle Lane as a result of preventing right turn from Clifton Lane onto Doncaster Road
- rationale behind, and national guidelines for, the use of mini roundabouts
- ability for HGV's to negotiate proposed mini roundabouts
- the problem on Middle Lane relating to volume of traffic not speed

Councillor Dodson summed up on behalf of the sponsors of the call in as follows :-

- stressing the need for pelican crossings as opposed to zebra crossings for driver visibility, and the safety of children and people with a disability
- the need for lights at the Middle Lane and Badsley Moor Lane junction which was now busier than ever
- disagreement with the proposed use of mini-roundabouts
- correspondence received from the Headteacher of Clifton School indicating a desire that the proposed crossing facility outside the school would have lights

The Committee considered the information and it was suggested that the proposals be reviewed looking at the area as a whole taking account of information and statistics currently being processed in respect of the surrounding area. The possibility of non contentious items being proceeded with was discussed. Views varied on the indication from the Cabinet Member that a temporary zebra crossing could be installed at little cost outside Clifton School pending consideration and application for a pelican crossing.

Resolved:- That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Development Services be requested to (a) reconsider the decision for the proposed Middle Lane Traffic Calming Scheme to facilitate looking at the area as a

whole and taking into account statistics for the surrounding area which were currently in the process of being collected and (b) undertake such review in close liaison with the Ward Councillors.

35. ROTHERHAM REACHOUT 9 : RESULTS OF THE NINTH SURVEY

The Committee considered a report presented by Dawn Roberts, Policy and Research Manager, relating to the findings from the ninth Rotherham Reachout Survey and outlining a number of important policy implications for the Council.

The ninth survey, conducted in March, 2004, focused on :-

- Leisure and Recreation
- Rights of Way
- Health Eating and Lifestyle
- Recycling
- Community Strategy and Crime

The key findings were outlined in the submitted executive summary.

Dawn highlighted a number of wider policy implications for the Council and particularly referred to the significant drop in the percentage 'very concerned' about being a victim of crime (down from 51% to 27% since 2002).

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- decreased levels in the fear of crime
- need to publicise more action regarding Rights of Way issues
- need to consider the provision of fresh fruit as part of the Meals on Wheels Service
- recycling issues relating to provision of blue bags and transportation of blue boxes
- need to target younger people regarding recycling issues
- need for a definition of what constitutes anti-social behaviour

Resolved:- (1) That the findings of the ninth survey of Rotherham Reachout and the policy implications identified in the report be noted.

(2) That Chairs and Vice-Chairs take up any issues of interest from the survey with their respective scrutiny panels.

36. WORKFORCE EQUALITIES DATA

The Committee considered a report presented by Simon Cooper, Human Resources Manager-Partnership, regarding equal opportunities statistics relating to the Council's workforce and employment processes and outlining progress in relation to the Best Value Performance Indicator

action plans to improve Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), Gender and Disability representation in the workforce.

The main points arising from the statistics presented were :-

- A headline increase in the representation of disabled and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees
- Disabled workers in the workforce (2.2%) was substantially lower than the proportion of disabled people in the wider community (18.8% according to the 2001 census)
- Proportion of BME workers in the workforce (2%) was lower than the proportion of working age people from BME communities in the Borough (2.8%) according to the 2001 census)
- A variable distribution between programme areas
- Representation of BME and women in the top 5% of earners was low compared to the rest of the workforce
- Analysis of employment type showed a greater preponderance of BME workers on temporary contracts
- The age profile showed an ageing workforce with a particularly low number of under thirties

Simon highlighted ongoing activity which included :-

- developing a cultural and religious observance policy
- positive action training schemes
- gender issues e.g. work life balance

Simon stressed the need to continue monitoring with regard to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process, service delivery and employment.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- information regarding physical and learning disabilities
- positive training
- graduate schemes
- salary level implications
- need to be more proactive attracting people in
- need to compare how local authority performs against other public sector organisations
- service delivery

Resolved:- (1) That the data presented in the report and actions taken to date to support diversity in the workforce be noted.

(2) That future reports include comparative data from other public sector organisations.

37. PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

The Committee considered a report presented by Emma Kirkwood, Internal Communications Officer, updated Members on the Pennies From Heaven scheme in which employees donated their spare pence from their pay to support local charities.

The payroll giving service was available to all employees and Members of Rotherham MBC and, following consultation with employees, the local charities designated for support were :-

- The Bluebell Woods Children's Hospital
- Rotherham Women's Refuge
- Rotherham Special Needs Playscheme

Take up had been low and a second phase of publicity was planned. This would include further articles in Unite, utilising Programme Area newsletters, updating the Intranet site and developing the Corporate Induction to include the scheme. The publicity would utilise case studies from the charities.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- further publicity
- external publicity campaign
- need for application forms
- low cost reminders to elected Members
- possibility of payslip advertising and website publicity

Resolved:- That the information be noted and the scheme continue to be promoted to existing and new employees of the Authority as appropriate.

38. THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE LOCAL COUNCILLOR

The Committee considered a report, introduced by Sioned-Mair Richards, Scrutiny Adviser, which had been received by the Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 7th September, 2004 updating Members on the progress of the submitted recommendations arising from the scrutiny review of the above.

7F PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 24/09/04

Whilst the majority of the recommendations were progressing appropriately, Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel Members had expressed concern that little action had taken place on briefing sessions for Members representing the Council on outside bodies and referred the question of developing a protocol to facilitate such to this Committee.

Whilst it was acknowledged that individual Councillors could request briefings, the Committee felt that a "Briefing protocol" was required.

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, referred to the review and the best value review of support for the Democratic Process and that this would form part of an improved support service for elected Members.

A brief general discussion ensued relating to the Review Group recommendations and reference was made to the following :-

- Area Assemblies : Area based induction
: Defined roles in the Assemblies
- Access to Cabinet Members

Resolved:- (1) That work be done on the development of a protocol for Members to be able to request officer briefings when attending outside bodies.

(2) That the Chairman of this Committee take up the issue of Cabinet Member "Surgeries" and when they would start.

(3) That the progress being made be noted.

39. WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, and the Chairman updated the Committee on the progress of the final report of the Scrutiny Review Group to look into the way this Local Authority worked with its Parish Councils and the probable effects of some of those Councils seeking Quality Parish Council status.

The recommendations had been considered by Corporate Management Team, Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel and had been well received at Cabinet on 22nd September, 2004.

An officer team, led by the Executive Director, Housing and Environmental Services, was considering the proposals and support for the proposals as part of the Neighbourhood Development initiatives.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

40. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September, 2004 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

41. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor Hussain referred to a meeting re the Anti-Social Behaviour report and that the issues would be promoted by John Gomersall at the Safer Rotherham Partnership. A report would be submitted, in due course, to the Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel.

(b) Councillor R. S. Russell indicated he was sorting out dates to visit Bradford Council to look at their scrutiny arrangements.

(c) Councillors Hussain and R. S. Russell reported on a worthwhile visit to Warwick to the Leadership Academy.

Resolved:- That a report be submitted to the Members Training and Development Panel with a view to supporting attendance of Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee members at the Leadership Academy.

42. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no further formal call in requests.

**THE ASYLUM SEEKERS WORKING PARTY
29 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Present:- Councillor Sue Ellis (in the Chair) and Councillor Boyes.

Apologies: Councillors Kirk, Robinson and Sharman.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE, 2004 AND MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM

Arising from Minute No. 2(3) (Contingency Fund) it was noted that a spending plan had not been drawn up as yet. Discussion ensued on possible issues that could be included.

Arising from Minute No. 2(4) (representation) it was noted that Sarah Fitzhugh would be the representative from the Finance and Accountancy Section of Housing and Environmental Services.

There were systems in place for weekly budget reports on the Asylum Programme.

Arising from Minute No. 4 (Post 2005 NASS Contract) it was noted that the Council, at its meeting on 25th August, 2004, had reaffirmed its commitment in principle to providing accommodation for dispersed asylum seekers following expiry of the current accommodation contract in October, 2005.

Arising from Minute No. 5 (Refugee Week 2004) it was noted that a volunteer from Doncaster now worked in Rotherham as a result of the recent television programme. Andrew Crowley was to order a copy of the DVD to use as part of a training package. It was also suggested that it be used in the health arena for the training of Health Visitors.

Agreed:- (1) That the minutes of the Working Party held on 30th June, 2004, be approved as a true record.

(2) That Andrew Crowley draw up a Contingency Fund for submission to this Working Group.

(3) That a letter supporting the 2005 contract level 2 partially delegated model be sent to the Home and Office and, for information purposes, to the 3 local MPs. as a matter of urgency.

2. ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION - WORK WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS

Gaetano Dermartino presented a report on the community learning work carried out with asylum seekers and refugees.

The aim of the various community learning programmes was to help newly arrived, as well as those already established, refugees and asylum seekers with the ability to read, write and speak English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function in society. The Community Learning Service had contracted with various providers to provide a range of programmes including citizenship courses, ESCO courses, practical orientation of Rotherham programmes and ICT and were held at a number of locations with funding provided from the Learning Skills Council, Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, Social Regeneration Budget and Home Office fund.

There had been substantial and positive work carried out and much stronger links with the Welcome Centre. The Acting Strategic Leader, Inclusion, reported that a Community Services Manager was to be appointed shortly whose brief would include the Welcome Centre.

Agreed:- (1) That the Community Services Manager be invited to the March/May meeting of this Working Party to discuss proposals for the future of the Welcome Centre.

(2) That the Library Development Worker be invited to the next meeting of this Working Party to inform Members of the work taking place in this field.

3. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

The Executive Director of Social Services reported that an appointment had been made to the above post, Sue Smith, who would start full time on 4th October, 2004.

The Support Worker had also been recruited but was currently subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks. Once those checks had been completed she would take up the position immediately.

The role of Social Worker also had a developmental role in educating families and making them aware of the services available to them e.g. mother and baby group, Gate medical centre. Sue would also be part of the induction.

It was noted that the Asylum Programme had agreed funding for two years for the two posts not until the end of the contract in 2004.

Agreed:- That Sue Smith, Social Worker, Support for Children and Families and Unaccompanied Minors, be invited to the February meeting of this Working Group to give an update on the current position.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Agreed:- (1) That arrangements be made for new Members to visit the

Asylum Team.

(2) That a training package be devised by the Diversity Team for Members and officers.

(3) That the Executive Director of Social Services discuss with the Chief Executive Andrew Crowley attending the Corporate Management Team on an annual basis to update on the Asylum Programme.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Wednesday, 1st December, 2004, commencing at 9.30 a.m.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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