

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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

**Date: Monday, 6 September 2004**

**Time: 9.00 a.m.**

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

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Streetpride Performance Response Times (Pages 1 - 4)  
- to note the report
4. Estate Management Procedures (Pages 5 - 9)  
- to agree a full review and implementation of estate management procedures by December, 2004
5. A Framework for the Delivery of Services in Animal Health and Welfare (Pages 10 - 14)  
- to consider the offer of a presentation from the State Veterinary Service of DEFRA
6. Annual Report on Ethnic Monitoring 2003/04 (Pages 15 - 37)  
- to note the progress made
7. Employment Opportunity - People with a Learning Disability and the Gardens of Older People in Council Housing (Pages 38 - 39)  
- to note the progress of the Scheme
8. Local Lettings Policies (Pages 40 - 93)  
- to approve and implement the reviewed Local Lettings Policies
9. Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring April to July, 2004/05 (Pages 94 - 101)  
- to approve the proposed amendments to the HRA budget
10. Housing and Environmental Services General Fund Budget Monitoring April to July, 2004/05 (Pages 102 - 107)  
- to receive the report

11. Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-07 (Pages 108 - 138)  
- to adopt the Strategy
12. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Summary of Procedures (Pages 139 - 157)  
- to take note of the policy document
13. Void Property Monitoring (Pages 158 - 163)  
- to note the action taken and progress made

#### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:-

14. Wath Housing Regeneration Phase 6 - Negotiated Tender (Pages 164 - 169)  
(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – amount of expenditure to be incurred by the Authority)
15. Waste Collection DSO and Housing Services Organisation Budget Monitoring April to July, 2004/05 (Pages 170 - 177)  
(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred by the Authority)
16. Housing and Environmental Services Complaints Panel held on 9th August, 2004 (Pages 178 - 179)  
  
(Exempt under Paragraphs 4, 5 and 7 of the Act – services provided by the Council/application for financial assistance and financial affairs of a third person)
17. Demonstrating Competitiveness in Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Services of Housing Services DSO (Pages 180 - 204)  
(Exempt under Paragraphs 1 and 8 of the Act – employees of the Council/provision of work or supply of goods/services)
18. Petition - Anti-Social Behaviour, Catcliffe  
(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Authority)

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member - Delegated Powers Meeting</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Streetpride Performance Response Times</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The results for the second quarter of 2004 are presented in tabular form in Appendix 1. They show a continuing improvement in response times compared to the previous quarter.

**6. Recommendations**

**(a) That the report be noted**

**(b) That Streetpride continue to monitor performance response times and report to the Cabinet Member quarterly.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

The Streetpride Service has a set of targets covering 'response times' for 26 key services. Our actual performance achieved in respect of each of these targets is recorded and monitored monthly.

The results for the last quarter (see Appendix 1) show that 80% of these key services are now consistently being delivered within the target response times 100% of the time. In general, performance has improved significantly compared to the previous quarter.

In June 2004, those services which did *not* meet the specified targets 100% of the time were as follows:

Streetlight out	(82%)
Removal of fly tipping	(87%)
Removal of burnt out car	(75%)
Request for a Warden visit	(98%)
Report of a stray dog	(79%)

Action is continuing to further improve performance in all of these 5 areas.

## 8. Finance

All costs incurred in meeting these response times are contained within existing budgets.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

Streetpride is now a high profile Council Service. There is a risk that if the demand for services rises, there may be some reduction in performance response times compared to current levels.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Improving Streetpride's response times in respect of all 26 services makes a significant contribution to the delivery of the Council's Sustainability and Safer Rotherham agendas - particularly in respect of the removal of abandoned cars, fly tipping and graffiti, as well as the repair of street lighting faults and highway defects.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix 1 - Streetpride response times (produced jointly with Economic and Development Services)

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APPENDIX 1 - STREETPRIDE RESPONSE TIMES

STREETPRIDE RESPONSE TIMES		STREETPRIDE RESPONSE TIMES						Comments	
Resp	Request for Action	Target Response 2004/05	Number of requests	% meeting target response time	Number of requests	% meeting target response time	Number of requests		% meeting target response time
			Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04				
Steve Wibberley	1(a) Make safe dangerous overhanging trees/vegetation on highway land.	If necessary, the danger will be signed and guarded within 4 hrs.	0	100%	0	100%	2	100%	Target fully met
	1(b)	Cutting back will be carried out within 5 days.	2	100%	1	100%	3	100%	Target fully met
Steve Wibberley	2(a) Make safe dangerous overhanging trees/vegetation on private land.	If necessary, the danger will be signed and guarded within 4 hrs.	0	100%	2	100%	0	100%	Target fully met
	2(b)	After 14 days a 14 Day notice will be served on the owner and then cutting back will take place.	1	100%	14	100%	15	100%	Target fully met
Graham Weaver	3	Estimate/license for vehicular dropped crossing.	25	100%	30	97%	30	100%	Target fully met in April and June
Bob Stevenson	4	Street light out.	282	73%	187	69%	170	82%	Performance has improved significantly in June
Mick Powell	5(a)	All lights out - 4 hrs	6	100%	2	100%	5	100%	Target fully met
	5(b)	Faulty traffic lights.	7	100%	7	100%	11	100%	Target fully met
Steve Wibberley	6	Dangerous defect in carriageway.	13	100%	23	96%	16	100%	Target fully met in April and June
Steve Wibberley	7	Dangerous defect on footpath.	17	94%	21	100%	18	100%	Target fully met in May and June
Nigel Deffley	8	Removal of fly tipping	255	83%	218	78%	262	87%	The service is operating successfully and response times improved in June despite the increased demand
Janet Walklate	9	Removal of dog mess	17	100%	19	100%	24	100%	Target fully met

## APPENDIX 1 - STREETPRIDE RESPONSE TIMES

Resp	Request for Action	Target Response 2004/05	Apr-04		May-04		Jun-04		
Steve Finley	10(a)	Burnt out - within 24 hrs	5	100%	7	100%	3	75%	Target met in April and May
	10(b)	Removal of abandoned car.	5	100%	11	100%	8	100%	Target fully met
	10(c)	Runner - 15 working days	8	100%	5	100%	5	100%	Target fully met
Steve Wibberley	11	4 hrs to make safe and inform the public and private sewers, gas, water or BT apparatus.	12	100%	18	94%	17	100%	Target fully met in April & June
Janet Walklate	12	Clear up spillage on carriageway.	26	100%	15	100%	50	100%	Target fully met
Janet Walklate	13	Empty overflowing litter bin/dog bin	3	100%	2	100%	3	100%	Target fully met
Graham Kaye	14(a)	4 hrs to sign and guard with,	42	100%	8	100%	2	100%	Target fully met
	14(b)	blockage relieved within 1 working day.	42	100%	8	100%	2	100%	Target fully met
Adrian Gabriel	15	Same or next working day.	80	100%	74	100%	95	100%	Target fully met
Adrian Gabriel	16	10 working days.	515	100%	572	100%	552	100%	Target fully met
Nigel Deffley	17	Within 24 hrs subject to agreement of property owner.	13	100%	15	100%	17	100%	Target fully met
Mark Ford	18	5 working days.	143	100%	240	100%	130	98%	During June, 30 litter and 10 dog fouling fixed penalty fines were issued. The total number of fixed penalty notices for the year from 1st April 2003 is 77 and 25 respectively.
Mark Ford	19	95% within 3 hours	21	100%	40	100%	28	100%	The collection of drug litter from public places is a cross council initiative and overall for the year all 89 notifications have been removed to safety within the 3 hour target. The Neighbourhood Warden team dominate the number of needle clean ups (53 for the year).
Mark Ford	20	Actioned within 24 hrs.	101	87%	83	92%	70	79%	Response to stray dogs etc. has previously been, at times, restricted due to the Council having only 1 Dog Warden. Performance has been enhanced by cover and support being provided by the Environmental Wardens.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Estate Management Procedures</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

Review of estate management policy and procedures for housing management. All Wards are affected.

**6. Recommendations**

**That Cabinet agree to a full review and implementation of estate management procedures by December 2004**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

Estate management procedures need reviewing to take into account changes in Government Policy, Housing Legislation and reflects changes in Community and Corporate strategies. The procedures were last reviewed to reflect the Client-Contractor requirement under Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) and the issue now is to review the procedures.

The solution to this is to have a working set of procedures with delegated powers for Managers to decide on a comprehensive range of estate management issues (see Appendix 1). These include breach of tenancies for example overgrown gardens and waste to properties. The proposed changes will incorporate the new staff procedures for dealing with anti social behaviour.

## **8. Finance**

Cost of reviewing the procedures are contained under staffing and procurement costs within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The procedures will stop any uncertainties on current estate management interpretation. Staff and stakeholder ownership of the procedures will be developed to cut out any risk or uncertainties at the implementation stage by planning full training sessions.

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

Review of the procedures will support regeneration and help sustain a good neighbourhood environment and improve the quality, upkeep of our housing stock.

Proposed improvements will have no adverse effect on any equality issues and will help to address and improve estate management standards across all our Neighbourhoods.

Changes will help to support crime and disorder by reducing the levels of environmental crimes for example dealing more effectively with fly tipping, abandoned cars as well as complementing strong enforcement action on individual tenancies.

The working procedure will link to one of the key priorities of the Community Strategy "Creating safe and inclusive communities for all, and ensuring that individuals and communities enjoy a better quality of life "and the Council's priorities of a "place to live", "safe place ", "a place for everyone" "a place for enjoyment" as outlined in the examples of improving the environment of our neighbourhoods as part of the review process listed under point 7.

Changes will have a positive contribution toward a good initial assessment under the indicative ALMO in September 2004 and a full inspection due in November 2005. In line with our key target of achieving 3 star rating for housing management by November 2005. This will ultimately help to improve the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) score for the Council from its current weak rating.



Action plan for the procedures will include completed procedures by 6 September and a full training programme delivered to the appropriate staff by the end of December 2004.

Part of the procedure in particular for dealing with fly tipping and the average relet time to remove fly tips (days) is included in the Best Value Performance Plan 2003 - 2004

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

Consultation will take place and is currently in progress with a number of stakeholders these include tenants representatives through the Estate Management Policy Panel, Housing, Environmental Staff, Streetpride, Legal Services, Leaseholder Forum and Ward Members.

Background papers

Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003  
DEFRA Fly tipping Strategy  
ENCAMS – report on “Broken Windows” Estate Environment  
Compulsory Competitive Tendering Procedure Guides  
Baseline Assessment Staff Survey  
Good Practice Guidelines–Local Authority examples

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Estate Management Procedures**

#### **Contents at a glance**

##### **Introduction**

- Section 1 Streetpride**
- Section 2 Caretaking – Action sheets and gritting**
- Section 3 Fly Tipping procedure**
- Section 4 Dealing with abandoned vehicles**
- Section 5 Dealing with abandoned properties**
- Section 6 Belongings disclaimer form – when to use**
- Section 7 Succession**
- Section 8 Clearing a property on the death of a tenant**
- Section 9 Unauthorised occupiers**
- Section 10 Land sales**
- Section 11 Sale of miscellaneous property**
- Section 12 Open plan – request to erect fencing**
- Section 13 Tenant alterations**
- Section 14 Request from tenant to see tenancy file**
- Section 15 Mutual Exchanges**
- Section 16 Absence from a property (for over 4 weeks)**
- Section 17 Violence to staff**
- Section 18 Access to Council dwellings**
- Section 19 Running a business from a Council tenancy**
- Section 20 Boundary Disputes**

**Section 21 Trees, shrubs and hedges**

**Section 22 Insurance Claims**

**Section 23 Gardens – breach of tenancy conditions**

**Section 24 Request for permission to:**

**Section 25 Pest Control – disinfestations**

**Section 26 Right to repair**

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member For Housing and Environmental Services
2.	Date:	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2004
3.	Title:	A framework for the delivery of services in Animal Health and Welfare
4.	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.
8. **Inspections:** No external or proposed inspection
9. **Performance Generally:** Within DEFRA performance indicators
10. **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.

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Annual Report on Ethnic Monitoring 2003/2004</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

The report analyses the ethnic monitoring undertaken by Housing Services during 2003/04. The report identifies areas for improvement in monitoring to ensure consistent reporting and to produce information that can be used as a tool to improve the service provided to customers.

The amount of multi-agency working has increased, particularly with regard to racial harassment and community safety. We also have more understanding of BME housing aspirations following networking with Rotherham Racial Equality Council and research undertaken with Sadeh Loc Housing Association.

More accurate data collection is required so that ethnic monitoring information is detailed and up-to-date. Staff training with regard to equality and diversity issues is also required to embed a customer-focused culture throughout the organisation.

## **6. Recommendations**

**That Members receive the report and note the progress made.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

This is the first ethnic monitoring annual report. The report is the basis for future reporting of ethnic monitoring on a quarterly basis. The format will be refined and revised as our ability to produce more accurate information improves.

Ethnic monitoring is a positive means of listening to our customers and learning from their experiences.

Learning from Customers is now embedded as a key element to help service improvement. There are clear benefits from ethnic monitoring at all stages of service provision.

## **8. Finance**

There is an administration cost to producing the reports. Understanding of equality and diversity issues will be raised through a programme of training and development. The accuracy of ethnic monitoring information held will be improved by undertaking a 'tenant census' during 2004/05.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Ethnic monitoring has contributed to culture change within the Programme Area. Improved ethnic monitoring and reporting will accelerate the development of a customer-focused culture.

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

The quality of the information being collated allows us to identify trends and initiate positive action to remedy any inequalities. We are improving customer care all the time and the report identifies further improvements that will help us to move from a reactionary to a proactive service. We are already seeing the benefits of these improvements which will improve the sustainability of the service.

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

Ethnic monitoring has not been presented as an annual report previously.

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## Housing Services

### Annual Report on Ethnic Monitoring: 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this annual report is to analyse the ethnic monitoring undertaken by Housing Services during 2003/04. The report identifies areas for improvement in monitoring to ensure consistent reporting and to produce information that can be used as a tool to improve the service provided to customers.
2. During the year, the Programme Area has gone through a period of unprecedented change. This has led to organisational culture change throughout the Service, resulting in improved performance, continuous improvement and greater customer focus.
3. Staff have been encouraged to develop their customer care skills and to increase their cultural awareness. This has been done through the promotion of People and Service 1<sup>st</sup>, training on Equalities and Diversity and the Introduction to Islam and the Muslim Culture Course. Equalities and Diversity training is compulsory for all new starters who attend a 10-week induction programme. Language Line training has also been provided.
4. Key improvement areas are:
  - 4.1 The amount of multi-agency working has increased, particularly with regard to racial harassment and community safety.
  - 4.2 Reception displays have been developed and the standards and contents of the displays are regularly tested.
  - 4.3 More information translated into community languages is now available.
  - 4.4 Staff training has been provided to improve the Service provided to customers from BME communities.
  - 4.5 More understanding of BME housing aspirations following networking with Rotherham Racial Equality Council (REC) and research undertaken with Sadeh Lok Housing Association.
5. Key areas of weakness and concern are:
  - 5.1 Data collection and cleansing is required so that the ethnic monitoring information we hold is accurate and up-to-date.
  - 5.2 More staff training with regard to equality and diversity issues is required.
  - 5.3 Using ethnic monitoring information from customer satisfaction surveys where the response rate is low means that information collated may not be representative.

6. Despite the cultural change taking place, in some areas our response to equality and diversity issues has simply not been good enough. The findings of the Audit Commission's Repairs and Maintenance Re-inspection Report published in May 2004 will be used to drive key improvements. The areas of weakness have identified the need to increase involvement of customers, elected members and management in our service and to develop regular monitoring, reporting and analysis.
7. The profile of equalities and diversity issues will be raised further through the introduction of regular management reporting and reporting to Elected Members, making it part of the Programme Area's performance management framework.
8. The appointment of an Equalities and Diversity Officer for the Programme Area will increase the level of support it offers to staff to deal with equality and diversity and to ensure consistency in approach across the Programme Area.
9. Further work will take place to raise awareness of equality and diversity with customers and staff. Equality and diversity training is already planned for 2004/05 with all Programme Area staff. A BME Conference is planned for May 2004 and will form part of the consultation process for the BME Housing Strategy.
10. The commissioning of a report by the REC to investigate the barriers facing the major BME groups in Rotherham, Sadeh Lok's investigation into the housing aspirations of the BME community in the Holmes area and other work such as the Housing Needs Survey are helping us to gain a greater understanding of BME needs in Rotherham. These will inform the BME Housing Strategy which will be produced in 2004/05.
11. Monitoring will enable us to pin point the community's priorities. By further developing the monitoring of what is important to the community, we will be able to develop the Service to meet these priorities.
12. The ALMO Excellence Plan and the Repairs and Maintenance Service Improvement Plan include actions to address areas of weakness and concern. The emerging BME Housing Strategy will provide a strategic framework. Implementation of the Plans will have a positive impact on the Programme Area's performance in 2004/05 by improving service delivery, customer care and customer feedback, and by further developing monitoring and reporting procedures.

## **ETHNIC MONITORING**

### **Overall**

13. The Council has a duty under law to make sure that we carry out our responsibilities 'in ways which avoid discrimination' and to promote good community relations and equal opportunities.
14. Ethnic monitoring allows us to establish who is using our services and how they are being treated. We can also identify any gaps in service provision for particular groups and target resources to deliver services that meet their needs.
15. More importantly, ethnic monitoring allows us to identify any patterns in service outcomes that could identify any section of the community which is receiving a poorer service. If we find areas where certain groups are over or under-represented, we need to find out why this is happening, establish whether it is a problem and if it is, take positive steps to combat discrimination.
16. Discrimination is not always deliberate. Certain groups may be discriminated against by accident if we do not provide the sort of service a particular group needs.
17. Ethnic monitoring information is currently collated for the following:
  - 17.1 Staff employed in the Programme Area
  - 17.2 Racial harassment
  - 17.3 Tenants
  - 17.4 Homelessness decisions
  - 17.5 Offers of tenancies accepted and refused
  - 17.6 Tenancies terminated
  - 17.7 Tenants referred to Court for rent arrears
  - 17.8 Tenants accepted to pay rent by direct debit
  - 17.9 Tenants accepted on to the Home Contents Insurance Scheme
  - 17.10 Grant applications for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance
  - 17.11 Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs
  - 17.12 Complaints
18. In 2001 the Housing Register application form was amended and the IT system upgraded to include ethnic monitoring records. Ethnicity details are input onto the OHMS database from the Housing Register application form and can be reported on using the various modules within the OHMS system at different points of service provision. The OHMS database and monitoring is being developed in partnership with Anite and RBT.
19. Housing Register applications and tenancy details prior to 2001 do not contain ethnicity details. This has an impact on the ethnic monitoring data that is available.

20. Various customer satisfaction surveys are used and include ethnic monitoring. The surveys are useful to identify the number of service users and can help to determine future service requirements. However, the effectiveness of this information is highly dependent upon the rate of return.
21. It is essential that we develop and gain greater understanding of our customers. It is important to recognise that our BME communities are changing due to Asylum Seekers and refugees. A tenant census, undertaken during 2004/05, would enable us to update the information that we currently hold and fill in gaps in our knowledge about our tenants.
22. The REC and our central Equalities Unit have also identified that the way that census questions are asked means that the Yemeni community cannot be identified.

### Employment

23. The 2001 census data indicates that 3.1% of Rotherham's population is BME, with 2.8% of the BME community being economically active.
24. The following table shows the ethnic origin of Housing and Environmental Services Programme Area's staff:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White	212	21.63
British	745	76.02
White Irish	2	0.20
White Other	4	0.41
Indian	4	0.41
Pakistani	6	0.61
Kashmiri	1	0.10
Asian Other	1	0.10
Black Caribbean	1	0.10
Any Other	2	0.20
Mixed White and Asian	2	0.20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>980</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>961</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>98.06</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>1.94</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

25. 99% of the staff employed within the Programme Area have completed ethnic monitoring records with only 8 staff out of 988 not completing records. These records indicate that 1.94% of the programme area's staff are BME. This is below the census figure of economically active BME people in the Borough (2.8%).
26. The BME Housing Action Plan includes actions to promote the Programme Area to prospective candidates including the introduction of a Positive Action Training Programme and developing wider participation in the Apprentice Programme for minority groups.

### Racial Harassment

27. All racist incidents are reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and then referred to MAARI (Rotherham Multi-Agency Approach to Racial Incidents) where follow up action is agreed by the partners. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit monitors the action taken and reports corporately.
28. MAARI is a confidential central reporting agency, which is responsible for identifying and monitoring racial tension and trends within Rotherham. The Group provides practical advice and support to all partners in combating racial harassment. The MAARI approach complies with the recommendations of the Macpherson Report. Racial incident reporting forms and procedures have been revised to comply with the Report's recommendations.
29. Housing offices are one of a number of first contact points agreed by MAARI for anyone wishing to report an incident of racial harassment. The Service encourages reporting by displaying multi-lingual posters, leaflets and, where racial incidents occur, seeking support for victims and taking action against perpetrators.
30. The following table details the incidents of racial harassment that were reported to area housing offices during 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004:

Type of incident	Area Housing Office										Total	Percentage of grand total
	Area 1 Maltby	Area 2 Dinnington	Area 3 Wath	Area 4 Swinton	Area 5 Rawmarsh	Area 6 & 7 Going Local	Area 8 E Herringthorpe	Area 9 Town Centre	Area 10 Aston			
Assault											0	0.00
Criminal damage						1					1	6.25
Intimidation					2			1			3	18.75
Arson											0	0.00
Verbal abuse							1	11			12	75.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>16</b>	

31. Housing Services reported a total of 16 racist incidents during the year compared to 18 in the previous year. The incidents ranged from verbal abuse to threats of violence.
32. Of the 16 incidents received, the victims were white British (4), Indian (1), Iraqi Kurdish (3), Asian (2), Gujrati (1), black African (1) and Pakistani (2). The ethnic group of 2 further victims was unknown. Five of the victims lived in Council properties.
33. Of the 16 incidents received, the perpetrators were Asian (3) and white British (4). The ethnic group of the remaining 9 perpetrators was unknown. Of the 7 known perpetrators, 5 lived in Council properties.
34. Of the 9 incidents where the perpetrator was not identified, 1 involved criminal damage, 7 involved verbal abuse and 1 involved intimidation.
35. 11 of the incidents occurred at home, 2 in the street, 2 in a shop and 1 in a petrol station.
36. A total of 283 incidents were reported to MAARI by the Police and other partners with a total of 298 in the previous year.
37. There does not appear to be any significant trends developing within estates but it is important to continually review and develop systems and procedures. The racial incident procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the BVPI 164 Action Plan.
38. The majority of the incidents were resolved through advice from Housing Services and cautions from the Police. All cases are brought to the attention of the Police, if the victim gives their consent. The majority of cases were resolved without taking legal action. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit became involved in 3 cases.
39. In all instances affecting Council tenants, a joint visit was made with the Police. Tenants are warned that possession proceedings could be taken and that this could result in them losing their home. The Police also advised them of the possibility of criminal action, if their behaviour could be proven or if further incidents occurred.
40. Joint visits were found to be the most effective way of dealing with the incidents where the perpetrator was known. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were issued on 2 occasions.
41. Actions taken in response to racial incidents include:
  - 41.1 Criminal damage - racist graffiti removed within the hour by a Caretaker.



- 41.2 Intimidation - multi-agency working with the Police and Education Service resulted in the granting an ASBO on a racist youth and publicity of the action taken was reported in the Rotherham Advertiser.
- 41.3 Reports of racial abuse to a shopkeeper - a uniform presence from the Police and Neighbourhood Warden Service and the use of cameras to identify the perpetrator.
- 41.4 Verbal abuse - mediation has been used on two occasions and has been successful in making the parties aware of cultural differences. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have been issued on 2 children and the consequences of further incidents fully explained in warning letters sent to parents. MAARI were also informed so that cultural awareness sessions could be held at the local school. 2 victims did not want any further action to be taken for fear of repercussions but still wished it to be recorded with MAARI.
42. The low level of reporting incidents may reflect a lack of awareness or confidence in the Service by BME communities. In 2004/05 BME communities will be consulted and the existing quality assurance process, which is currently monitored through MAARI, will be reviewed.
43. The MAARI Task Group have recruited trained 15 volunteers to work with the victims of racial incidents.
44. To improve the service provided to BME customers the Service plans to provide victims with a Service Level Guarantee advising them of the minimum standards of help they would receive. This has been translated into the ethnic minority community languages of Arabic, Chinese and Urdu.
45. The role of the Ant-Social Behaviour Unit is changing to work across tenure dealing with the more serious cases of anti-social behaviour in the Borough
46. The BME Housing Conference planned for May 2004 will include workshops on tackling Racial Harassment.
47. Further investigation is required to establish if there are any barriers to accessing the Service. Key to improving this will be implementing a strategy to engage the BME community in the community and improve the accessibility of the service.
48. BV74 and BV75 measure tenants' satisfaction with the overall housing service provided and with the opportunities for participation in management and decision making in the housing service. The results are broken down by BME and non-BME tenants. It is specified that the survey must be postal. Contacts within the BME community have advised that, due to the way that the survey is conducted, there is likely to be a lower return rate for cultural reasons than if the survey was

completed face-to-face. During 2004/05 it is planned to do an annual survey and to supplement this with face-to-face interviews.

49. The interviews will be completed with the known BME community using the records on our database. Updated records from the tenant census will enable us to provide more accurate figures and a more accurate picture of barriers and dissatisfaction with the service. This will be incorporated into an annual review of the BME strategy and the services that we provide.

## Tenants

50. The following table shows the ethnic origin of Housing Services' tenants at 13 April 2004:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
<b>White</b>	<b>23,052</b>	<b>98.54</b>
Irish	2	0.01
White Irish	7	0.03
<b>White Other</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.07</b>
Indian	1	0.00
Pakistani	111	0.47
Bangladeshi	1	0.00
Kashmiri	4	0.02
Asian British	7	0.03
Asian Other	26	0.11
Black British	3	0.01
Black Caribbean	6	0.03
Black African	32	0.14
Black Other	5	0.02
Chinese	3	0.01
Yemeni	14	0.06
Any Other	97	0.41
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1	0.00
Mixed White and Asian	5	0.02
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23,393</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>23,068</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>98.61</b>	
<b>Total BME*</b>	<b>325</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>1.39</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

51. These figures indicate that only 1.39% of the Council's housing stock is let to BME tenants. This is below the census figure of the 3.1% of BME people in the Borough. However, Housing Register applications and tenancy details input onto the OHMS database prior to 2001 do not contain ethnicity details. This has in

impact on the ethnic monitoring data that is available as the number of BME tenants is likely to be under represented.

52. The BME Community Housing Action Plan will include actions to improve BME groups' accessibility to Council housing including producing more information about the size and location of Council housing, introducing choice-based lettings, introducing an independent housing advice centre and introducing a multi-cultural moving in pack.
53. The BME housing strategy will include actions for 2004/05 to introduce positive action training and to improve recruitment and selection by marketing the Service.
54. The Housing and Environmental Services Performance plan will include a clear strategy to increase customer involvement from BME communities and other hard to reach groups in service design, delivery and monitoring.

### **Homelessness**

55. The overleaf table shows the ethnic origin of people who presented themselves as homeless between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 and the decision made regarding their case.
56. The figures indicate that BME groups are accessing the homelessness service. 12.34% of the people who presented themselves as homeless were from a BME group. This is higher than the census figure of the 3.1% of BME people in the Borough.
57. The figures in the table overleaf show that the number of BME groups found homeless non-priority is considerably higher than that of non-BME groups. However, closer investigation shows that the sample sizes may be distorting the results. The numbers of households from non-BME groups, who presented themselves as homeless, is considerably higher than those presenting as homeless from BME groups. All households whose ethnic origin was White totalled 223 from that figure 28.76% were found to be non-priority homeless. The households whose ethnic origin was Black Caribbean totalled 4. From this figure 50% were found to be homeless non-priority. There were 12 White households found to be non-priority homeless, the percentage was 28.76% compared with 2 found to be non-priority homeless from Black Caribbean origin, where the percentage was 50%.
58. During the year information leaflets have been translated into Urdu, Arabic and Chinese. A Frequently Asked Questions list has also been produced to explain the services that customers can expect to receive.

**Ethnic origin of people who presented themselves as homeless between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 and the decision made regarding their case**

Ethnic Origin	Presenting as Homeless						Decision Made					
	Accepted Homeless	Intentionally Homeless	Homeless, non-priority	Not Homeless	Ineligible	% of Presenting as Homeless	Accepted Homeless	Intentionally Homeless	Homeless, non-priority	Not Homeless	Ineligible	% of Presenting as Homeless
White	233	114	10	67	42	48.93	114	10	67	42	48.93	4.29
White British	887	467	25	231	164	52.65	467	25	231	164	52.65	2.82
White Irish	3	2		1		66.67	2		1		66.67	0.00
White Other	10	6		4		60.00	6		4		60.00	0.00
Asian British	11	5		4	2	45.45	5		4	2	45.45	0.00
Indian	1	1				100.00	1				100.00	0.00
Pakistani	35	20	1	9	5	57.14	20	1	9	5	57.14	2.86
Bangladeshi	1	1				100.00	1				100.00	0.00
Kashmiri	2	1		1		50.00	1		1		50.00	0.00
Black British	1	1				100.00	1				100.00	0.00
Black Caribbean	4	2		2		50.00	2		2		50.00	0.00
Black African	34	25		5	1	73.53	25		5	1	73.53	0.00
Chinese	1					0.00					0.00	0.00
Yemeni	9	6	1	1	1	66.67	6	1	1	1	66.67	11.11
White/Asian	4	2		1	1	50.00	2		1	1	50.00	0.00
Other	53			39	10	0.00			39	10	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1289</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>226</b>		<b>653</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>226</b>		
<b>Total non BME</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>206</b>		<b>587</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>206</b>		
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>87.66</b>	<b>89.89</b>	<b>94.59</b>	<b>82.74</b>	<b>91.15</b>		<b>89.89</b>	<b>94.59</b>	<b>82.74</b>	<b>91.15</b>		
<b>Total BME*</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>% BME</b>	<b>12.34</b>	<b>10.11</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>17.26</b>	<b>8.85</b>		<b>10.11</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>17.26</b>	<b>8.85</b>		

BME = All groups excluding White, White British and White Other

% of Presenting as Homeless	% of Presenting as Intentionally Homeless	% of Presenting as Non-priority	% of Presenting as Not Homeless	% of Presenting as Ineligible
18.03	28.76	18.03	18.03	0.00
18.49	26.04	18.49	18.49	0.00
0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18.18	36.36	18.18	18.18	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
14.29	25.71	14.29	14.29	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2.94	14.71	2.94	2.94	8.82
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
11.11	11.11	11.11	11.11	0.00
25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00
18.87	73.58	18.87	18.87	7.55

## Allocations

59. The table overleaf shows the ethnic origin of applicants who are on the housing register with live and deferred applications, the number of offers made and the outcome of those offers between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004. This information is also available broken down by area housing offices.
60. The figures do not include people who have not completed ethnic monitoring records. The total number of applicants on the Housing Register, including live applications and deferred applications is 13,062 rather than the 11,599 who have completed ethnic monitoring records. Ethnic monitoring records are unavailable for 1,463 applicants.
61. An information leaflet is being developed to explain to customers why ethnic monitoring information is collated and what it is to be used for.
62. The percentage of offers refused by BME applicants (33.3%) is higher than the percentage of offers refused by non BME applicants (24.7%). The reasons for this could include properties being in the wrong area or of the wrong size for the BME community. More detailed investigation is required to establish the reasons for properties being refused and to investigate and remedy any barriers.
63. The IT system is currently unable to cross reference information. For example, it can provide numbers of applicants who refused properties but cannot link to the reasons. Early in 2004/05 we will be working with Anite to improve reporting facilities that enable cross-referencing.
64. During the year a summary of the Allocation Policy was translated and distributed to BME communities and centres.
65. The BME Housing Strategy will include actions to improve the quality of information available and to increase the number of BME households accessing the Council's Housing Service. Actions will include distributing a waiting time summary within BME communities and centres, producing a frequently asked questions guide on the letting process and introducing a first stop shop advice centre in the town centre.
66. Initiatives to market difficult to let voids have involved staff making offers to people who may not have expressed an interest in particular properties or areas. In some cases only the successful offer was input onto the computer system whereas others were all input. Applicants may therefore have been made offers that were unsuitable for their needs. The current IT system is unable to cross-check data with refusal reasons and this makes it difficult to assess the impact of this practice on the reported data. During 2004/05 improvements to the Anite system will enable more detailed analysis to be undertaken. The introduction of an Empty Property Procedure Guide will also be introduced during 2004/05 to standardise practices across all area offices.

Offers of Accommodation Statistics and decision by BME group, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, All Areas

Ethnic Origin	Live applications on the waiting list	Deferred applications on the waiting list	Total on waiting list	Total Offers Made	Offers Refused	Offers Accepted	% of offers refused	% of offers accepted	% of group on waiting list	% applications made an offer
White British	1368	5526	6894	1491	396	1095	26.56	73.44	59.44	12.85
White Irish	3	10	13	5	1	4	20.00	80.00	0.11	0.04
White Other	1328	2632	3960	1050	232	818	22.10	77.90	34.14	9.05
Indian	0	1	1	1	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.01	0.01
Pakistani	36	244	280	42	21	21	50.00	50.00	2.41	0.36
Bangladeshi	0	2	2	1	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.02	0.01
Kashmiri	0	4	4	1	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.03	0.01
Asian British	1	24	25	10	6	4	60.00	40.00	0.22	0.09
Asian Other	14	60	74	9	1	8	11.11	88.89	0.64	0.08
Caribbean	1	7	8	2	0	2	0.00	100.00	0.07	0.02
African	6	54	60	17	2	15	11.76	88.24	0.52	0.15
Black British	0	2	2	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00
Black Other	1	6	7	2	1	1	50.00	50.00	0.06	0.02
Chinese	0	5	5	1	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.04	0.01
Yemeni	2	19	21	5	1	4	20.00	80.00	0.18	0.04
Any Other	20	205	225	53	15	38	28.30	71.70	1.94	0.46
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1	2	3	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
Mixed White and Black African	0	7	7	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.00
Mixed White and Asian	0	8	8	4	3	1	75.00	25.00	0.07	0.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>2781</b>	<b>8818</b>	<b>11599</b>	<b>2694</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>25.20</b>	<b>74.80</b>		
<b>Total non BME</b>	<b>2696</b>	<b>8158</b>	<b>10854</b>	<b>2541</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>1913</b>				
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>96.94</b>	<b>92.52</b>	<b>93.58</b>	<b>94.32</b>	<b>24.71</b>	<b>75.29</b>				
<b>Total BME*</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>102</b>				
<b>% BME</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>7.48</b>	<b>6.42</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>33.33</b>	<b>66.67</b>				

## Terminations

67. The following table shows the ethnic origin of tenants who terminated tenancies between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004:

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ethnic Origin as % of grand total</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>98.92</b>
Pakistani	9	0.44
Asian Other	1	0.05
African	3	0.15
Yemeni	1	0.05
Any Other	8	0.39
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2039</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>2017</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>98.92</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>22</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>1.08</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

68. Of the 2,039 tenancies that terminated only 22 were from BME backgrounds. During the year 102 BME tenants accepted tenancies. The number of BME tenants has therefore increased by 80 during the year. The largest increases were in the groups Any Other (+30), Pakistani (+12) and Black African (+12). The number of non-BME tenants reduced by 104 during the year.
69. Detailed investigation is currently being undertaken into the reasons for terminating tenancies. Local Performance Indicator, HES5, monitors the percentage of new tenancies that last more than 12 months. This targets avoidable terminations such as terminations due to anti-social behaviour, rent arrears etc. The termination procedure has also been amended to improve monitoring. The impact of the indication should be that we can target vulnerable tenants and the issues that are causing problems for them.
70. Various initiatives have been undertaken during the year to increase the sustainability of tenancies. These include actions to improve community safety such as:
- 70.1 Expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service.
  - 70.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has seconded a police officer and appointed a Youth Liaison Officer. Both appointments have helped to improve multi-agency working.
  - 70.3 Introductory tenancies have also been introduced to protect tenants and the community from the problems of anti-social behaviour.
  - 70.4 Multi-agency Safer Estates Forums have been introduced across the Borough to address low level anti-social behaviour.

- 70.5 A Safer Homes Scheme to improve security in tenancies where there has been a burglary or harassment has been introduced.
- 70.6 A mediation service was also introduced in July 2003 to deal with low level anti-social behaviour.
71. During 2004/05 the introduction of neighbourhood management and the restructuring of the department will lead to greater sustainability as it will bring more intense patch management and identify potential problems earlier. There will be more estate-based staff who are able to target resources to meet customers' needs.
72. During the year, training on the use of Language Line was provided and staff were issued with the appropriate guides. The Houseproud Guarantee was also introduced for all new tenancies.
73. Equalities and Diversity training is compulsory for all new starters who attend a 10-week induction programme. Staff training has also been provided on tackling racial incidents and a programme of equality and diversity training was commenced in 2003/04. This includes the Introduction to Islam and the Muslim Culture Course where staff visit a Mosque. The training programme will continue in 2004/05.
74. Future initiatives include the introduction of choice based lettings, furnished tenancies, starter packs, and a preferred supplier for energy which will provide new tenants with a start up pack and will assist tenants to connect to services. An Asylum Seeker/Refugee Group will also be developed to consult and act as a forum to improve services.
75. A BME Housing Conference is planned for May 2004. The purpose of the day is to engage the BME community in developing a BME Housing Strategy. The event will include workshops on tackling racial harassment and provide invaluable information to market and improve the Service.

### **Rent Arrears**

76. The Rent Service uses customer satisfaction surveys that include ethnic monitoring forms following customer contacts relating to the Tenant Home Contents Insurance Scheme, requests to pay rent by Direct Debit and referrals to court for rent arrears. The overall response rate is nearly 40%. This is a good return rate for a form that is not compulsory to complete. However, the return rate of the survey means that 60% of tenants accessing these services are not represented in our findings.
77. Information is collated by central and area based staff, all of whom complete monthly submissions that filter into quarterly returns.



78. The Service has reviewed the way it measures BME groups and adopted a fresh approach to monitoring. From April 2004 every tenant accessing the Tenant Home Contents Insurance Scheme, requesting to pay rent by direct debit and being referred to Court for rent arrears will be monitored using data already held within our IT systems about their ethnicity. This change will enable us to collate more accurate data.
79. The following table shows the ethnic origin of people who returned customer satisfaction surveys following referral to Court for rent arrears between 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White	271	96.79
Pakistani	3	1.07
Asian Other	4	1.43
Black British	1	0.36
Black Caribbean	1	0.36
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>280</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>271</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>96.79</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>3.21</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

80. The percentage of BME tenants who were referred for court action appears to be higher than the percentage of Council stock occupied by BME tenants (1.39%) However, this is based on what believe to be an under represented figure for the number of BME tenants. The improved methods of ethnic monitoring will enable the Service to monitor this more closely and to take appropriate action. The Service will be able to better target resources including contacting Community Leaders and translating information relating to rent recovery action into BME community languages.

### Direct Debit

81. The following table shows the ethnic origin of people who returned customer satisfaction surveys following being accepted to pay rent by direct debit between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White	454	162.14
Pakistani	3	1.07
Asian Other	7	2.50
Black African	1	0.36
Any Other	3	1.07
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>468</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>454</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>97.01</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>2.99</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

82. The tenants who are included in the 'Any Other' group are Kurdish (2) and Algerian (1).
83. The percentage of BME tenants who were accepted to pay their rent by direct debit (3%) appears to be higher than the percentage of Council stock occupied by BME tenants (1.39%).
84. The direct debit scheme will be marketed to further increase direct debit uptake by BME groups. During 2004/05 we plan to publish and distribute posters in 3 community languages. These will be displayed in community halls and public areas.

### Tenant Contents Insurance Scheme

85. The following table shows the ethnic origin of people who returned customer satisfaction surveys following being accepted onto the Home Contents Insurance Scheme:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White	261	93.21
White Irish	1	0.36
Asian Other	1	0.36
Yemeni	2	0.71
Any Other	2	0.71
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>267</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>261</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>97.75</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>2.25</b>	

86. The tenants who are included in the 'Any Other' group are Kurdish (1) and Turkish (1).

87. The percentage of BME tenants who were accepted onto the Home Contents Insurance Scheme (2.25%) appears to be higher than the percentage of Council stock occupied by BME tenants (1.39%).
88. To further increase uptake of insurance by tenants from BME groups we plan to publish posters in at least 3 community languages. These will be displayed in community halls and public areas

### Grant applications

89. The following table shows the ethnic origin of grant applicants for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White British	176	98.32
Pakistani	2	1.12
Mixed Other	1	0.56
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>179</b>	
<b>Total Non BME</b>	<b>176</b>	
<b>% non BME</b>	<b>98.32</b>	
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>% BME</b>	<b>1.68</b>	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

90. The data collected is not comprehensive as ethnic monitoring forms were not obtained for a further 455 cases.
91. Monitoring ethnicity of grant applicants for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance has revealed the need to market the service to raise awareness among BME communities. It has also highlighted where to target the service.
92. During the year the IT system (FLARE) has been developed and processes have been amended to record the ethnicity of customers.
93. A workshop will be held at the BME Housing Consultation event planned for May to consult the BME community about the barriers to accessing adaptations and housing grants. The outcomes of the event will be fed into BME Housing Strategy.
94. To improve the service provided to BME customers the Service during 2004/5 there are plans to translate leaflets into community languages, develop the use of audio tapes for BME customers that cannot read their own language and review where leaflets are displayed including various voluntary sector groups, advice centres.

95. The service will complete 6-monthly analysis of the number of enquiries for grant assistance by ethnicity. It will also develop a customer satisfaction survey and translate this into community languages.

#### Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs

96. The following table shows the ethnic origin of returned customer satisfaction surveys from tenants who used the responsive repairs service between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004:

Ethnic Origin	Responses Received	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total	Number of tenants who said they were satisfied	% satisfaction rate
White British	1916	98.97	1765	92.12
White Irish	5	0.26	4	80
Pakistani	10	0.52	8	80
Asian British	1	0.05	0	0
Black Caribbean	1	0.05	0	0
Black African	2	0.10	2	100
Yemeni	1	0.05	0	0
Grand Total	1936		1779	91.89
Total Non BME	1916		1765	
% non BME	98.97		99.21	92.12
Total BME	20		14	
% BME	1.03		0.79	70.00

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

97. The percentage of BME tenants who returned their satisfaction survey (1.03%) is slightly lower than the percentage of Council tenants who are from BME groups (1.39%). However, it must be noted that this figure may be under reported due to the issues around data collection prior to 2001. Further investigation is therefore required to find out why the return rate for BME tenants is lower and to establish what could be done to improve the return rate eg, translation of the questionnaire or undertaking a face-to-face survey.
98. The satisfaction rate for tenants of BME groups who have used the day-to-day repairs service is 70%. This is considerably lower than the satisfaction rate for tenants who are not from BME groups (92.12%). Further investigation is required to find out why the satisfaction level for BME tenants is so much lower and to establish what could be done to improve satisfaction with the Service for these groups.
99. To improve the information received about customer satisfaction a ReACT system is to be introduced for 2004/05. Where customers return satisfaction surveys stating that they are dissatisfied with the service they received, they will be contacted to find out exactly what the problem was. The information received will be used to remedy the problem and to improve the Service for other customers.

100. Information obtained from satisfaction surveys is fed into the Learning From Customers Group. This Group, which includes customers and officers, analyses the information and contributes to service improvements.

### Complaints

101. The following table shows the ethnic origin of customers who made a stage one complaint between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004:

Ethnic Origin	Total	Ethnic Origin as % of grand total
White British	24	88.89
White Other	1	3.70
Pakistani	2	7.41
Grand Total	27	
Total Non BME	25	
% non BME	92.59	
Total BME	2	
% BME	7.41	

\*BME = all groups excluding White British, White English and White Other

102. A total of 266 stage one complaints were received during the year. Ethnic monitoring forms were completed by just 27 customers. This is only 10.15% of the complaints.
103. Further investigation is required to establish why the return rate is so low. For example, customers may feel more confident about completing ethnic monitoring information if it was collated at a later stage in the complaint process.
104. An information leaflet is being developed to explain to customers why ethnic monitoring information is collated and what it is used for.

### LESSONS LEARNED

105. Keeping ethnic monitoring records is a positive step. This report and the ethnic monitoring information collated will be used a benchmark for further ethnic monitoring. It will allow trends to be identified and investigated.
106. The ethnic monitoring that has been completed in 2003/04 has highlighted the need to develop our reporting methods.
107. Data collection and cleansing is required so that the information we hold is accurate and up-to-date. The capability our IT system to meet the Service' requirements in this regard needs to be investigated.

108. More information needs to be translated into community languages and other methods of informing and consulting BME groups need to be developed.

109. Further investigation into possible barriers to individual services areas is required.

## **DEVELOPMENTS**

110. A BME Housing Conference is planned for May 2004 to engage the BME community in developing a BME Housing Strategy. The BME strategy will also be informed by the Housing Needs Survey and Sadeh Lok's Barriers Report. However, this work will not give full picture and it is essential that we gain a full understanding of our existing customers. Undertaking a tenant census during 2004/05 will be key to this.

111. The appointment of an Equalities and Diversity Officer for the Programme Area will increase the level of support it offers to staff to deal with equality and diversity and to ensure consistency in approach across the Programme Area. Approval to appoint the officer was given during the year. However there was difficulty in recruiting a suitable applicant. The successful applicant will be in post with effect from July 2004.

112. The Service has a number of action plans that aim to achieve step change improvements in the provision and delivery of services to BME communities. The Service will work with partners to achieve this vision. Actions include undertaking equality impact assessments throughout the Programme Area, introducing a BME Compact, provision of training for staff and tenant representatives.

113. During 2003/04 the Programme Area has developed its reception displays. It tests the standards and contents of the displays using the Customer Inspection Service and a programme of reality checks. Testing methods include using a checklist of information that should be displayed. Champions have been identified and tasked to ensure that displays are up to date and that they comply with the checklist.

114. The introduction of choice-based lettings provides an opportunity to engage with BME communities and to improve BME groups' accessibility to Council housing. Improved information will be available about the size and location of Council housing including the establishment of an independent housing advice centre. A waiting time summary and frequently asked questions guide will be produced and a multi-cultural moving in pack will also be developed.

115. A Service Level Guarantee, translated into the community languages, has been provided to victims of racial harassment.

116. Improvements to the IT system to enable reporting to cross check will allow us to identify potentially vulnerable tenants. This will improve the monitoring that can be undertaken via OHMS for example, including issues such as the percentage of

BME tenants that receive emergency and non-emergency repairs and repairs completed within target times.

**KEY ISSUES**

117. Equality and diversity issues impact on the Council's priorities. They link directly with the community strategy, corporate plan and strategic partnerships.
118. The Service aims to provide responsive, flexible services that recognise individual circumstances and enable people to thrive and contribute to the sustainability of communities.
119. There is an urgent need to address the key weaknesses raised by Audit Commission.
120. A full Best Value Review of equality and diversity is planned for 2004/05.
121. During 2004/05 the Council will be reviewing the Race Equality Scheme.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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1	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Social Services Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
2	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (Housing) 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (Social Services)</b>
3	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Employment Opportunity – People with a Learning Disability and the Gardens of Older People in Council Housing Wards Affected - All</b>
4	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Social Services Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5 Summary**

This report is to bring Members up-to-date on developments since the original report and proposal in February 2004.

**6 Recommendations**

**That Members note the progress of the scheme.**



**7 Proposals and Details**

People with a learning disability are now receiving work experience and training by tending the gardens of older and some disabled people who live in Council properties. People are finding this experience educational, enjoyable and socially inclusive.

The problems experienced with recruiting the tutors has led to a late start for the project and Housing Services have used outside contractors to keep abreast of the demand for the service. Additionally, some of the gardens have proved very difficult to clear and progress has been slowed. However, the scheme is now established with a full complement of equipment, transport and volunteer workers. A record of each worker's progress is kept and the hope is that a few people will be able to move on to similar employment.

**8 Finance**

Financial support for the scheme is provided by Housing Services' current budget for this gardening service and a grant from Adult Community Learning to provide the tutors, or supervisors, of the two teams. The late start and therefore the need to continue to use some outside contractors has reduced the amount available from the established Housing Services' budget. The full impact of this is to be determined. Any savings from the late start will be used to off-set this reduction in income but an overspend is possible and will have to be met from other Learning Disability Service budgets.

**9 Risks and Uncertainties**

The amount of pay each volunteer receives is £20 per day. This is the amount of therapeutic earnings people are allowed before benefits are affected.

**10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The scheme fits with the Council's aims of working in partnership; opening up learning opportunities for all and raising educational achievements and skill levels; and supporting vulnerable people and improving life chances for all. It is also positive action to enable an under-represented group gain access to employment opportunities, as outlined in the Equalities and Diversity cross-cutting theme one of the Council's Political Priorities.

**11 Background Papers and Consultation**

None.

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Local Lettings Policies</b> <b>All Wards Affected</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The report outlines the proposals for the revised Local Lettings Policies previously agreed by Cabinet in September 2003, after consultation with tenants, local Ward Members and partner agencies.

**6. Recommendations**

**THAT REVIEWED LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES BE APPROVED AND IMPLEMENTED**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The local lettings policies provide Housing Managers with the flexibility to make the best use of properties no longer required by their original target clientele, whilst continuing to address issues relating to allocating in accordance with housing need through transparency and consistency in approach.

Low demand for properties had impacted on the wider sustainability of neighbourhoods and the widening use of the local lettings policies from September 2003 has gone some way to halt the 'spiral of decline'. Another key factor in achieving sustainability is addressing anti-social behaviour, therefore a fair and consistent approach needs to be adopted to combat the issue.

Local Lettings Policies are seen as one of a series of initiatives that are required to generate and sustain interest in Council properties. It is intended that the policies will complement the introduction of Choice Based Lettings in April 2005.

Since the introduction of the Council's Equalities standard it was deemed necessary to subject the local lettings policies to an Equalities Impact Assessment and conduct some consultation targeted specifically at the BME communities.

A review of the policies has highlighted the lack of provision for single persons and separated parents who require accommodation to allow their children to stay with them from time to time. In addition, some areas have no provision for the elderly, therefore in specified areas provision is being sought for these groups by utilising family housing where there is little or no demand - Appended documents will detail these proposals as it not required across the board.

## **8. Finance**

There is an administration cost related to the production of the policies and further cost related to the hire of a venue and refreshments for consultation purposes. However, there are financial gains due to the increase in rental income, reduction in the cost of securing properties and reduction in the cost of vandalism.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

De-designation of properties needs to be supported by monitoring of new tenancies. Anti-social behaviour is a key factor in sustainability. The implementation of the Introductory Tenancies and Demoted Tenancies schemes will help to minimise existing problems and prevent new ones.

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

The rigorous performance management culture within Housing and Environmental Services demands that void turnaround times are reduced to 20 days by March 2005, 15 days by 2005/06 and 12 days by 2006/07, therefore regular review of the local lettings policies are necessary to maintain effectiveness.

Since the implementation of the local lettings policies, turnaround times have reduced from 24 days to the current Borough average of 20.13 days @ 13th August 2004.

The objectives of the proposal for Local Lettings Policies fit within the Council's overall priority 'A place to live' by 'Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods' by delivering a clear achievable housing strategy, which enables the restructuring of housing markets to meet current and future need as well as 'Improving our performance as a landlord' and 'Improving Void turnaround times and optimising income'.

Sustainability can be achieved by ensuring that properties are vacant for the least amount of time, therefore, minimising the impact on the quality of life of those in the community. A new performance indicator has been introduced to measure levels of sustainability on our estates (HES5).

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

The local lettings policies have been developed in consultation with local Ward Members, tenant representatives, partner organisations and other stakeholders including a representation of the BME communities in Rotherham.

Discussion and feedback has also been sought from Legal Services and the newly appointed Equalities Officer for Housing and Environmental Services.

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## Maltby Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Maltby management area includes the neighbourhoods of **Maltby, Flanderwell, Sunnyside, Bramley, Wickersley, Ravenfield, Whiston, Thurcroft** and **Birks Holt**, totaling 2100 properties under management.
- 1.2 Currently the Maltby area is performing below the target average turnaround period for void properties at 17.89 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to maintain void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Maltby management area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 Little or no demand for certain aged persons' accommodation on most estates within the management area. By contrast there has been a general increase in demand for two bedroom bungalows.
  - 1.3.2 High demand for single persons' accommodation in the area, particularly from the young, but a low availability of designated single persons' accommodation.
  - 1.3.3 No waiting list demand for properties in some locations, which are perceived as being less desirable places to live. These locations have tended to see a comparatively high rate of tenancy terminations and refusals from housing applicants.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.

- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.
- 1.5.1 In January 2003 Maltby Neighbourhood Office had 12 empty aged person properties classed as low demand. These properties were empty for an average of 50 days, with one property empty for 119 days. In June 2004, Maltby Neighbourhood Office had no empty low demand aged person properties because of the local lettings policy and is letting this type of property in an average of 21 days.
- 1.5.2 In January 2003 there was low demand from eligible aged person applicants requesting ground floor accommodation in the **Maltby, Flanderwell, Sunnyside, Bramley, Wickersley, Ravenfield, Whiston and Thurcroft** areas (39 applicants in total). The average void time being 72 days. In June 2004 there are 65 eligible aged person applicants requesting this type of accommodation. The average void period being reduced to on average 15 days.
- 1.5.3 Estate regeneration of the **Birks Holt** Estate during 2003/4 has resulted in a nil waiting list as at January 2003 being replaced by a short waiting list of eligible applicants requesting this type of property in June 2004. The void period per property in January 2003 was 150 days; this has reduced to on average 20 days.
- 1.6 During the past 12 months 10 ground floor properties have been de-designated with an average void time of 15 days.
- 1.7 Current termination trends for trends for all properties within the Maltby Management area are no higher than other areas of the borough. However of the 245 terminations received between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 a total of 100 were from bungalows and aged person's flats. What has been identified above is that there is little or no demand for such properties from eligible applicants.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria there is little or no waiting list for one and two bedroom ground floor flats and bungalows, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The current Allocations Policy excludes single persons from being allocated the tenancies of houses, unless there is no waiting list. The allocation of houses is done on a quota basis. Single persons are not included in these quotas, although

childless couples are, as they are considered to be a family unit. As such, houses are being let predominantly to families with children. There is, however, some demand from single persons who have access to their children, following the breakdown of their marriage/relationship and this demand needs to be addressed. The concentration of large numbers of families with children within the district has led to management problems, due to limited recreational facilities for the young and a resultant increase in reported neighbourhood problems.

- 2.3 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

### **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.

- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
  - Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
    - Prevent tenancy abandonment
    - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
    - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
    - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
    - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs
- 3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.
- 3.2 Aged persons ground floor flats and bungalows across the management area, where necessary, will be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants, under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.2.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.3 The allocation of family houses at **Birks Holt**, will be extended to include the following: -
- priority will be given to applicants with a local family connection;
  - priority will be given to applicants with children;
  - applications from separated parents who require accommodation to allow their children to stay with them from time to time;
  - lone single persons.



- 3.4 Two bedroom houses at **Dunnsdale** and **Charnall Avenue** will be allocated to applicants over the age of 50 years. This measure makes provision for aged persons that want to remain within the area but have no other re-housing option due to the lack of aged persons accommodation in the locality. However, they will need to be assessed as not requiring ground floor or adapted properties.
- 3.5 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties.
- 3.5.1 Section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.
- 3.5.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

## **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.
- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

## **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14, HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## Dinnington Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Dinnington management area includes **Laughton Common, Laughton-en-le-Morthern, Dinnington, Firbeck, Gildingwells, Woodsetts, North Anston, South Anston, Thorpe Salvin, Harthill, Diveton Park, Wales** and **Todwick**, being a total of 1729 properties under management.
- 1.2 Currently the Dinnington area is below the target average turnaround period for void properties at 15.57 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Dinnington management area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 Estate regeneration has removed the necessity to let unpopular and defective housing in **Laughton Common** and **Kiveton Park White City**. The remaining areas have medium to strong waiting lists for houses and flats.
  - 1.3.2 Little or no demand for sheltered and non-sheltered aged persons' ground floor flats and one bedroomed bungalows in certain areas of **Dinnington, Laughton-en-le-Morthern, North Anston** (Parker Morris), **Harthill** and **Kiveton Park**. By contrast, there has been a general increase in demand in many other management areas for aged persons' bungalows.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.
- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient

interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.

- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
  - Prevent tenancy abandonment
  - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
  - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
  - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
  - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

- 3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.
- 3.2 Aged persons designated ground floor flats and bungalows will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.3 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.

4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.

4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

## **5. Publicity**

5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.

5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

## **6. Monitoring**

6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.

6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14, HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.

7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need

## Wath Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Wath management area includes **Wath, West Melton, Brampton, Harley and Wentworth** being a total of 2,103 properties under management.
- 1.2 Currently the Wath area is slightly above the target average turnaround period for void properties at 23.56 days at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Wath management area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 Little or no demand for sheltered and non-sheltered aged persons' ground floor flats and one bedroomed bungalows in areas of **Wath, West Melton and Brampton**.
  - 1.3.2 High demand for single persons' accommodation in the area, particularly from the young, but a low availability of designated single persons' accommodation.
  - 1.3.3 No waiting list demand for properties in some locations, which are perceived as being less desirable places to live. These locations have tended to see a comparatively high rate of tenancy terminations and refusals from housing applicants.
  - 1.3.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.
- 1.4 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient

interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-esignation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The current Allocations Policy excludes single persons from being allocated the tenancies of houses, unless there is no waiting list.  
The allocation of houses is done on a quota basis. Single persons are not included in these quotas, although childless couples are, as they are considered to be a family unit. As such, houses are being let predominantly to families with children. There is, however, some demand from single persons who have access to their children, following the breakdown of their marriage/relationship and this demand needs to be addressed. The concentration of large numbers of families with children within the district has lead to management problems, due to limited recreational facilities for the young and a resultant increase in reported neighbourhood problems.
- 2.3 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to



achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.

- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
  - Prevent tenancy abandonment
  - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than move on.
  - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
  - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
  - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.

3.2 The original Local Lettings Policy, formulated and approved in January 2003, has resulted in properties within the named areas being allocated and has therefore reduced the number of long term void properties. There are no long-term void properties in the Wath area.

3.3 With the exception of **Almond Place** it is not intended to remove any of the areas from the original Local Lettings Policy. **Almond Place** and the flats on **Poplar Drive, Cherrytree Place** and the bungalows on **Oak Avenue** and **Cherrytree Place** are the subject of a Housing Cabinet Report for a decision on their future as part of the Sheltered Housing Review currently being undertaken. For this reason allocation is currently suspended to these properties.

- 3.4 Aged persons designated bungalows on **Barnsley Road, West Melton** will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.5 Aged persons bungalows on the **Ann Rhodes Warden Scheme** (one bedroomed properties) on **Bierlow Close** and **Spring Drive** will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.6 Aged persons bungalows on **Saville Road** are currently being remodelled from one bedroomed bungalows into two bedroomed bungalows under the Wath Regeneration Programme. As there are very few applicants on the waiting list for properties in this area, 6 in total, it is anticipated that once the existing tenants on the estate have been rehoused to allow their properties to be remodelled and the waiting list is exhausted allocation to future vacant properties will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.7 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.8 Due to the lack of single person accommodation being available within the Wath Management area it is intended to allocate two bedroomed houses on **Keble Martin Way** to single people. Allocation will be made within a quota of one single person allocation to two family applications. Where there are no family applications for these properties allocation will be made to single persons.
- 3.9 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties.
- 3.9.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered.

Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.

- 3.9.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.
- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

#### **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy which is implemented.

- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14 and HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## **Swinton Neighbourhood Office**

### **Local Lettings Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Swinton management area includes the neighbourhoods of **Swinton** including the **Fitzwilliam estate** and the **Meadowview** area of Kilnhurst.
- 1.2 Currently the Swinton area is above the target average turnaround period for void properties at 25.79 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Swinton management area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 The **Fitzwilliam Estate** has had substantial environmental and property improvements within the last 6 – 9 years, however, there is still a perception amongst local people of an area with problems. The Fitzwilliam Estate scores highly in the deprivation indicators in view of the number of families qualifying for state benefits. There are still pockets of anti-social behaviour relating to drug nuisance which are being tackled by the Estate Management Team and Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
  - 1.3.2 Low demand for 1 bedroom aged persons' bungalows and flats throughout the management area.
  - 1.3.3 Low demand for bedsits and one bedroom flats in the **Albany Road** area of **Meadowview**.
  - 1.3.4 There is increasing demand for single persons' accommodation in **Swinton**, particularly from the young, but there is a low availability of single persons' flats.
  - 1.3.5 In view of low demand and subsequent neighbourhood problems, work is ongoing to look at regeneration of the bedsits, maisonettes and one bedroom flats on **Albany Road**. Whilst this is being undertaken, properties of this type are not currently being let.

- 1.3.6 Statistics show a healthy waiting list for houses in the area but little to no demand for the properties above. As a result, converting these properties to family housing is being considered.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.
- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.

- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
  - Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
  - Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
  - Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
  - Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
  - Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
    - Prevent tenancy abandonment
    - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
    - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
    - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
- 3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.
- 3.2 De-designate **all one bedroom bungalows** within the management area to applicants over 50 years of age.
- 3.2.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be

regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.

- 3.3 De-designate flats at **Brameld Road** and the following 2 bedroom cottage style flats at **Fosters Close, St. Johns Road, Storey Street, Birdwell Road, Holywell Road** to applicants over 50 years of age.
  - 3.3.1 However, requests for such accommodation from aged persons would be given priority. Additionally, the age mix of the scheme will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that persons over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.4 All other cottage style two bedroom flats within the area should be de-designated as single persons accommodation for both ground floor and upper floor flats. These are non-sheltered and many have been individually de-designated over a number of years. In view of possible lifestyle clashes, selection of applicants would take into account the age of the other tenant of the block. This would include the following, **Hatherley Road, Piccadilly Road and Valley Road**.
- 3.5 Following the estate improvements, a policy was adopted allowing tenants of the **Fitzwilliam Estate**, to retain their original date on the rehousing list if they had accepted a property on the estate to alleviate their housing circumstances. Again this practice is in keeping with creating sustainable communities and should be retained.
- 3.6 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in key areas of the district. These areas include **Meadowview** and the **Fitzwilliam estate**.
  - 3.6.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.
  - 3.6.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.



#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas is and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels has been and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.
- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

#### **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring

customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

**7. Evaluation**

7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.

7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## Rawmarsh Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Rawmarsh management area includes the neighbourhoods of **Manor Farm, Monkwood, Rawmarsh (central), Ryecroft, Parkgate, Sandhill** and **Kilnhurst** village totaling 2450 properties
- 1.2 Currently the Rawmarsh area is slightly above the target average turnaround period for void properties at 23.4 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Rawmarsh management area has experienced problems relating to:
  - 1.3.1 Little or no demand for sheltered and non-sheltered aged persons' ground floor flats and one bedroomed bungalows in the management area.
  - 1.3.2 Falling demand for houses in some parts of the management area, such as **Oates Avenue, Ingshead Avenue, St. Marys Road** and **Ash Grove** are predominantly due to youth nuisance, accumulation of litter, dumped rubbish and drug activity.
  - 1.3.3 **Rockingham House** is a block of 15 flats', that was refurbished two years ago. It is currently designated as aged persons and disabled persons accommodation but vacancies have been difficult to fill.
  - 1.3.4 Major problems are being experienced in the **Ryan Place** where there is single persons accommodation surrounded by mixed tenure properties. **Parkgate** is well known for its high level of drug activity and the associated problem of burglary. Some of these properties are neglected and intensive housing management, including the involvement of the neighbourhood warden scheme is taking place.
  - 1.3.5 **Manor Farm** is an estate with a wide variety of properties with a good community spirit and an active tenants and residents group. Over recent years there have been a number of new tenants who have created problems on the estate, i.e.

youth nuisance and drug misuse.

- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.
- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted

where necessary.

- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
  - Prevent tenancy abandonment
  - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
  - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
  - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
  - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.

3.2 One bedroom bungalows at **Manor Farm, Sandhill, Kilnhurst** village and **Parkgate**, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by offering to applicants with a minimum age of forty.

3.2.1 However, requests for such accommodation from aged persons would be given priority. Additionally, the age mix of the scheme will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that persons over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any

way because of de-designation.

- 3.3 Flats at **Rockingham House** will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
- 3.3.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.4 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in key areas of the district. These areas include **Oates Avenue, Ingshead Avenue, St. Marys Road, Ash Grove, Ryan Place, Rawmarsh House, Goosebutt House** and **Manor Farm**.
- 3.4.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.
- 3.4.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas is and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.

4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels has been and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.

4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

## **5. Publicity**

5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.

5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

## **6. Monitoring**

6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.

6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.

7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## Going Local Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Going Local management area includes **Greasbrough, Munsbrough, Wingfield, Rockingham, Kimberworth Park, Kimberworth, Richmond Park, Meadowbank, Blackburn** and **Thorpe Hesley** with a total of approximately 4,500 properties under management.
- 1.2 Currently the Going Local area is above the target average turnaround period for void properties at 23.91 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Going Local management area has experienced problems relating to:
  - 1.3.1 No demand for sheltered bedsits and ground floor flats at **Munsdale** and **Dawson Croft**. In addition there is little or no waiting list for sheltered and non-sheltered ground floor flats at **Munsbrough, Rockingham, Wingfield, Kimberworth Park** and **Richmond Park**.
  - 1.3.2 Little demand for certain areas due to the perception that these are less desirable places to live. These areas are **Whitegate Walk, Rockingham, Munsbrough estate** and **St. Johns Green, Kimberworth Park**. Monitoring has shown that the high rate of refusals and turnover in tenancies is often due to estate management and anti-social behaviour problems coupled with the rehousing of vulnerable applicants without adequate support packages.
- 1.4 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

#### 2. Drawbacks of the current system

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one



bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.

- 2.2 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

### **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy

terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:

- Prevent tenancy abandonment
- Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than move on.
- Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
- Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
- Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

- 3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.
- 3.2 Aged persons designated ground floor flats and bungalows will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years (but will exclude those currently subject to the sheltered housing review). This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on.
  - 3.2.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.3 The allocation of family houses at **Thornton Street** and **Thornton Terrace, Meadowbank**, will be extended to include a quota bracket for separated parents who require accommodation to allow their children to stay with them from time to time.
- 3.4 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in key areas of the district. These areas include **Munsbrough, Whitegate Walk** and **St. Johns Green**.
  - 3.4.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the

authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.

- 3.4.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.
- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

## **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14, HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## East Herringthorpe Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The East Herringthorpe management area includes **East Herringthorpe, Dalton, Thrybergh and Hooton Roberts**, being a total of 2,110 properties under management.
- 1.2 Currently the East Herringthorpe area is slightly below the target average turnaround period for void properties at 18.58 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to reduce void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the East Herringthorpe management area has experienced problems relating to:
  - 1.3.1 Little or no demand for sheltered and non-sheltered aged persons' ground floor flats and one bedroomed bungalows at East Herringthorpe, Dalton, and Thrybergh. By contrast, there has been a general increase in demand in many other management areas for aged persons' bungalows.
  - 1.3.2 Falling demand for houses in some parts of the management area, such as **Bradstone Road, Mallory Road and Beckwith Road**, East Herringthorpe.
  - 1.3.3 High demand for single persons' accommodation in the area, particularly from the young, but a low availability of designated single persons' accommodation.
  - 1.3.4 No waiting list demand for properties in some locations, which are perceived as being less desirable places to live. These locations have tended to see a comparatively high rate of tenancy terminations and refusals from housing applicants.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure

that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.

- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system.**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no waiting list for one bedroomed bungalows, and ground floor flats, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst de-designation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The current Allocations Policy excludes single persons from being allocated the tenancies of houses, unless there is no waiting list. The allocation of houses is done on a quota basis. Single persons are not included in these quotas, although childless couples are, as they are considered to be a family unit. As such, houses are being let predominantly to families with children. There is, however, some demand from single persons who have access to their children, following the breakdown of their marriage/relationship and this demand needs to be addressed. The concentration of large numbers of families with children within the district has led to management problems, due to limited recreational facilities for the young and a resultant increase in reported neighbourhood problems.
- 2.3 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.

- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are minimised.
- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
  - Prevent tenancy abandonment
  - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
  - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
  - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
  - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.

3.2 Aged persons designated ground floor flats and bungalows will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to a wider range of applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under

60's, then under 50's and so on.

- 3.2.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.3 In respect of aged persons properties, any existing tenant who wishes to transfer to another similar demand aged persons property within the area, thereby releasing a property which can be de-designated for rapid and appropriate letting to a younger person, will be considered with a degree of priority. This is to allow for the better management of the stock, grouping remaining aged persons dwellings and de-designated dwellings to minimise management problems, due to potential lifestyle conflict.
- 3.4 The allocation of family houses at **East Herringthorpe (Beckwith Road, Mallory Road and Bradstone Road**, will be extended to include a quota bracket for separated parents who require accommodation to allow their children to stay with them from time to time.
- 3.5 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in key areas of the district. These areas include **Lady Oak Road, Chesterhill Avenue, Bradstone Road, Mallory Road and Beckwith Road**.
- 3.5.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.
- 3.5.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.



#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas is and will be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels has been and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.
- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

#### **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14, HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

**7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the

## **Town Centre Neighbourhood Office**

### **Local Lettings Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Town Centre management area includes **East Dene, Herringthorpe, Eastwood, Springwell Gardens (part), St Anns, Wharncliffe, Wellgate, Broom Valley, Beeverleigh, Masbrough, Henley, Holmes and Thornhill.**
- 1.2 Currently the Town Centre area is above the target average turnaround period for void properties, at 25.28 days, as at 30th July 2004 . From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to achieve void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock. The local lettings policy forms part of a robust action plan to address overall void performance issues in the Town Centre district.
- 1.3 For some time, the Town Centre area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 Low demand for sheltered and non-sheltered aged persons' flats and one bedroom bungalows in some locations, specifically **Wharncliffe, Masbrough, Herringthorpe, East Dene, Eastwood, Henley and Broom Valley.** By contrast, there has been a general increase in demand in other areas for aged persons' bungalows.
  - 1.3.2 Falling demand for houses in some parts of the management area, such as **Eastwood.**
  - 1.3.3 There is increasing demand for single persons' accommodation in town centre locations, particularly from the young, but there is a low availability of single persons' flats.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible; to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the

underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.

- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicants, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.
- 1.6 With regard to areas experiencing social and management problems, effective letting strategies need to be in place to contribute towards stabilising these areas and sustaining the local neighbourhoods.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria, there is no current waiting list for some vacant properties which are, in the main, one bedroom bungalows, one and two bedroom ground floor flats and upstairs flats, designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years.
- 2.2 The current Allocations Policy excludes single persons from being allocated the tenancies of houses, unless there is no waiting list. In the case of Eastwood generally, there is still a waiting list for houses from applicants with children. The allocation of houses is done on a quota basis. Single persons are not included in these quotas, although childless couples are, as they are considered to be a family unit. As such, houses are being let predominantly to families with children. There is, however, some demand from single persons who have access to their children, following the breakdown of their marriage/relationship and this demand needs to be addressed.
- 2.3 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to the emergence of management problems, whilst eligible applicants are being sought for vacancies.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties,
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties,
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential management and social problems are avoided,

- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives being developed where necessary,
  - Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
  - Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
  - Ensure that lettings decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless and tackling low demand in the public sector.
  - Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which suggest that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
    - Prevent tenancy abandonment
    - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on
    - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
    - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
- 3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.
- 3.2 Aged person designated ground floor and upper floor flats at **Wharnccliffe Hill** will, where necessary, be de-designated for letting to applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to applicants aged under 60 years of age, then under 50 years of age and so on.
- 3.3 Ground floor and upper floor flats at **Mile Oak Road, Guest Road and Guest Place, Broom Valley**, will, where necessary, be de-designated for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 40 years will not be offered these properties, to minimise any potential for estate management problems. This approach will be subject to monitoring and further consultation, should variation become necessary.

- 3.4 Aged persons designated ground floor and upper floor flats at **Masbrough**, will, where necessary, be de-designated for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 30 years will not be offered these properties, to minimise any potential for estate management problems. This approach will be subject to monitoring and further consultation, should variation become necessary.
- 3.5 Aged person designated ground floor flats, upper floor flats and one bedroom bungalows at **Henley**, will be de-designated, where necessary, for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Properties will not be allocated to applicants under the age of 30 years, subject to further monitoring and consultation.
- 3.6 Aged persons designated ground floor flats at **The Lanes, East Dene**, will, where necessary, be de-designated for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 30 years will not be offered these properties, subject to further monitoring and consultation.
- 3.7 Aged persons designated ground floor flats at **Herringthorpe Valley Road, East Dene**, will be de-designated, where necessary, for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 30 years will not be offered these properties, subject to monitoring and further consultation.
- 3.8 Aged persons designated first floor flats at **Longfellow Drive, Herringthorpe**, will be de-designated, where necessary, for applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 30 years will not be offered these properties, subject to monitoring and further consultation.
- 3.9 Aged persons designated one bedroom bungalows at **Eastwood** will be de-designated, where necessary, for housing applicants under the age of 60 years. This will be done sensitively by progressively offering to under 60's, then under 50's and so on. Applicants under the age of 40 years will not be offered these properties, subject to monitoring and further consultation.
- 3.10 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely effect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.

- 3.11 The allocation of family houses at **Eastwood**, will be extended to include an allocation quota for single persons who have access arrangements to their children.
- 3.12 In respect of points 3.2 to 3.9 any existing tenant who wishes to transfer to another similar demand aged persons property within the area, thereby releasing a property which can be de-designated for rapid and appropriate letting to a younger person, will be considered with a degree of priority. This is to allow for the better management of the stock, grouping remaining aged persons dwellings and de-designated dwellings to minimise management problems, due to potential lifestyle conflict.
- 3.13 In respect of points 3.2 to 3.9, in attempting to identify suitable applicants from the target applicant group, registered social landlords will be notified of vacancies. This may generate interest from their waiting list applicants or existing tenants who would be interested in taking council accommodation. Where interest is expressed, priority will be given to applicants who are within the aged persons target group, as this will reduce the need for the de-designation of properties. In addition, in identifying younger applicants for dedesignated properties, applicants with a health problem who would benefit from ground floor accommodation will be considered with a degree of priority ahead of general needs applicants. However, such lettings will be done sensitively to ensure that tenancies are appropriate and sustainable.
- 3.14 In order to ensure that properties at **Beeversleigh** are allocated appropriately, to meet both housing need and to ensure that the building and it's community is sustainable, the following local letting conditions will be applied: -
- The minimum age for applicants will be 40 years.
  - Applicants with children under the age of 16 years, will be counseled on alternative housing options.
- 3.15 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a **proven** history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in key areas of the district. These areas include **Warwick Street, York Road, Eldon Road, St. Anns, Eastwood, Wharnccliffe Hill and Broom Valley**.
- 3.15.1 New section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of

unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.

3.15.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.

4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.

4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.

4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local lettings policies, the policy has been communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All lettings staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.

5.2 Local lettings policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include other housing providers, who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

#### **6. Monitoring**

6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy which is implemented.



- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local lettings policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14 and HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

## Aston Neighbourhood Office

### Local Lettings Policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Aston management area includes the neighbourhoods of **Aston, Aughton, Brinsworth, Canklow, Catcliffe, Orgreave, Swallownest, Treeton and Ulley.**
- 1.2 Currently the Aston area is performing well below the target average turnaround period for void properties at 8.63 days as at 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. From April 2004 a 20-day average turnaround time, reducing to a 15-day turnaround time by 2005/06, must be achieved. This latter target is based upon the department's commitment to achieve an agreed performance target of 12 days by 2006/07. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, such as Local Letting Policies, are explored to maintain void turnaround targets and assist in the effective management of the stock.
- 1.3 For some time, the Aston management area has experienced problems relating to: -
  - 1.3.1 Little or no demand for certain aged persons' accommodation on most estates within the management area.
  - 1.3.2 Houses in **Canklow** have recently been improved to meet the Decent Homes standards. This has generated some renewed interest in the estate but further initiatives are required to increase demand.
  - 1.3.3 High demand for single persons' accommodation in the area, particularly from the young, but a low availability of designated single persons' accommodation.
  - 1.3.4 No waiting list demand for properties in some locations, which are perceived as being less desirable places to live. These locations have tended to see a comparatively high rate of tenancy terminations and refusals from housing applicants.
- 1.4 In the past, in order to address some of these issues, aged persons flats have been de-designated, on an ad-hoc basis, for letting to younger persons, following discussions with ward members, who have generally supported de-designation, where sensible and appropriate lettings can be achieved quickly. The allocation of such properties has then been carried out as sensitively as possible, to ensure that there are no resultant management problems created by, for example, a clash of lifestyles. Whilst this has allowed vacant properties to be let, the

underlying problem of low demand for aged persons' accommodation has remained constant.

- 1.5 The Housing Needs Unit has carried out marketing of such properties, but these initiatives, whilst attracting some applicant interest, have not attracted sufficient interest from aged person applicants, to reverse the trend and establish a waiting list.

## **2. Drawbacks of the current system**

- 2.1 Due to the current Allocation Policy criteria there is little or no waiting list for one and two bedroom ground floor flats and bungalows, as they are designated specifically as accommodation for applicants over the age of 60 years. Whilst dedesignation has been undertaken to let these properties to younger applicants, this has been done on a property by property basis, following consultation with ward members.
- 2.2 The current Allocations Policy excludes single persons from being allocated the tenancies of houses, unless there is no waiting list. The allocation of houses is done on a quota basis. Single persons are not included in these quotas, although childless couples are, as they are considered to be a family unit. As such, houses are being let predominantly to families with children. There is, however, some demand from single persons who have access to their children, following the breakdown of their marriage/relationship and this demand needs to be addressed. The concentration of large numbers of families with children within the district has led to management problems, due to limited recreational facilities for the young and a resultant increase in reported neighbourhood problems.
- 2.3 The reduction in demand for properties from eligible groups is leading to management problems, whilst efforts are being made to identify suitable applicants for vacant properties.

## **3. Local lettings policy proposals**

The following Allocations Policy local letting variations are designed to address the above issues and also achieve the following objectives: -

- Tackle low demand and stimulate demand for unpopular properties.
- Ensure that property types meet waiting list demands and explore the alternative use of properties to meet housing needs and widen choice.
- Ensure that properties are let rapidly but appropriately and that potential

management and social problems are minimised.

- Ensure that new tenancies and communities are sustainable, with support packages and management initiatives developed and actively promoted where necessary.
- Allow greater flexibility for allocations staff in the letting of properties to achieve a reduced void period and achieve performance targets.
- Ensure that Council services are adaptable and meet the changing needs and demands of our customers and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that letting decisions support key corporate themes, such as support for vulnerable people and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities. Also, that they support strategic housing objectives, such as improving access to social housing, meeting the needs of the homeless, tackling low demand in the public sector and creating revitalised, inclusive and safe communities.
- Maintain a strong element of housing provision according to need, but also recognise social and community need, in order to contribute to sustaining local neighbourhoods and tenancies.
- Ensure that the policy reflects and provides measures to improve the sustainability of tenancies. Recent statistical data regarding tenancy terminations has demonstrated trends, which indicate that there is still a need to carry out continued work to:
  - Prevent tenancy abandonment
  - Encourage secure tenants to maintain their tenancy rather than moving on.
  - Provide tenancy support to prevent indebtedness and the need for serious enforcement action
  - Provide suitable housing options for an ageing population
  - Allocate properties taking into account future needs of applicants rather than just immediate needs

3.1 The following recommendations have taken account of these issues and have also been developed in accordance with the local lettings policy guidance issued by the Head of Housing Services, knowledge of open access properties and local area management problems.

3.2 Non-sheltered ground floor flats at **Aston, Aughton, Catcliffe, Orgreave, Swallownest, Treeton** and **Brinsworth** be de-designated as general purpose single persons accommodation with two waiting lists – general single persons in date turn order and a priority list. General applicants incorporating urgent and

transfer categories. Priority being defined as homeless, medical priority, cabinet decisions and compulsory purchase orders.

- 3.2.1 However, requests for such accommodation from aged persons would be given priority. Additionally, the age mix of the scheme will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that persons over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.3 Sheltered ground floor flats at **Aston, Aughton, Catcliffe, Orgreave, Swallownest, Treeton** and **Brinsworth** be de-designated as general person single persons accommodation within age bands of ten years, i.e. from sixty to fifty, forty, thirty etc. Allocations will be made equally to a general single person's waiting list and a priority list, as in paragraph 3.2. It will also include applications not currently eligible due to relationship breakdown, i.e. matrimonial and cohabiting partners, where there is evidence they are living separately.
- 3.3.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely affect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.4 Non-sheltered and sheltered bungalows in **Aston, Aughton, Catcliffe, Orgreave, Swallownest** and **Treeton** be de-designated as general persons accommodation for single persons and couples over the age of forty with no dependants. Allocations will be made equally to applications from a general waiting list and priority groups as in paragraph 3.2. Applications will also be considered from single persons not currently eligible due to relationship breakdown, i.e. matrimonial and cohabiting partners, where there is evidence they are living separately.
- 3.4.1 However, aged person applicants will still take priority over the single person waiting list and this policy will exclude any allocations that adversely affect properties eligible for concessionary TV license, until this policy issue is resolved. Additionally, the age mix of any scheme affected by de-designation will be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that people over the age of sixty are not disadvantaged in any way because of de-designation.
- 3.5 The allocation of family houses at **Canklow**, will be extended to include the following: -
- applications from separated parents who require accommodation to allow their children to stay with them from time to time will be eligible for two and three bedroom properties;
  - Lone single persons will be eligible for two bedroom properties;
  - Aged persons will be considered for two and three bedroom properties where

they are assessed as not needing ground floor of adapted properties.

- 3.6 In order to stabilise existing communities and contribute to a revival of those communities, applicants with a proven history of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, will not be allocated properties in **Canklow, Aston, Aughton and Swallownest.**
- 3.6.1 Section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 allows a local housing authority to treat individual applicants as ineligible if they meet three tests. First, the applicant or a member of the household must have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour. Secondly, the authority must be satisfied that the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority. Thirdly, the authority must be satisfied that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour, at the time that his or her application for housing is considered. Ensuring that exclusions are not made merely because of a past record of unacceptable behaviour without taking into account whether the applicant has made improvements.
- 3.6.2 Decisions to exclude an applicant would need to be made by the Housing Assessment Panel in order to adopt a fair and consistent approach throughout the authority.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation regarding this document has and will continue to be conducted on an annual basis with local ward members, relevant partner agencies, tenants and residents groups and the area housing panels.
- 4.2 Consultation with residents representatives in the identified areas has and will continue to be essential in order to gain support for the suggested local lettings policy and to deflect possible criticism.
- 4.3 Consultation with Area Housing Panels is and will continue to be required, together with TARA representatives in the affected areas and other stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has and will continue to be analysed and incorporated into the finalised Local Lettings Policy.

#### **5. Publicity**

- 5.1 To ensure that there is a general awareness of local letting policies, the policy will be communicated to all other neighbourhood housing offices, the Housing Needs Unit, Housing Strategy Unit, Housing Regeneration

Unit, and other appropriate Programme Areas. All letting staff are aware of all local lettings strategies in place throughout the Borough.

- 5.2 Local letting policies will be promoted, to ensure that potential applicants who have not previously approached the Authority, believing that they were not eligible, will come forward and express an interest. This should include RSL's who may have applicants or existing tenants who may be interested in moving to council properties.

## **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Regular monitoring will be essential in identifying further necessary changes to any local letting policy, which is implemented.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to conduct a regular review of the effectiveness of the local letting policy, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary modifications, subject to further consultation, where necessary. An annual review of the policy will be conducted with all stakeholders, with feedback to be included in a final evaluation of the policy. An important part of the local letting policy, will be its impact on performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators HES5, HES14, HES68 and HES69, in addition to local performance indicators measuring customer satisfaction with the service, such as the Houseproud Guarantee.

## **7. Evaluation**

- 7.1 An evaluation report will be required that will confirm whether the Local Lettings Policy will continue, be amended or terminated. The decision should be a local one, ratified in line with established consultation practices and in line with RMBC Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 It will also be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the local lettings policy, in terms of its impact on termination and refusal trends. This will indicate whether the measures are being effective, but will also identify the need to modify the policy to meet changing trends.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring April to July 2004/05</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The report informs Members of the projected out-turn budget position after the first third of the financial year and in particular identifies the impact on budgets of the high level of Right to Buy sales and consequent recalculations of housing subsidy in both the current and last financial years.

**6. Recommendations****MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO**

- **ACCEPT THE REPORT AND**
- **APPROVE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE HRA BUDGET**



## 7. Proposals and Details

As part of the ongoing budget monitoring process income projections are reviewed and reassessed during the financial year, taking into account factors such as; rent billed, void losses and the impact of "Right to Buy" sales. In 2003/04 some 1,507 properties were sold under the scheme with a further 137 being closed pending demolition, combined with the level of sales and closures in both 2002/03 and the current financial year this has resulted in the authority crossing the threshold of a 10% change in stock numbers requiring the recalculation of Housing subsidy for both the current financial year and, retrospectively, 2003/04. For information, 488 sales and 51 closures have occurred by the end of July in the current financial year, which is well above the rate for the same period in 2003/04.

The results of these subsidy recalculations have been significant adjustments to subsidy for both years. In 2003/04 there has been an estimated net increase in subsidy of some £0.9m, which will be confirmed when the final claim is submitted to the ODPM at the end of September. This gain is however, composed of a reduction of £0.8m in Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), which is used to fund capital expenditure and an increase of £1.7m in revenue resources as a result of the reduction in negative subsidy. In respect of subsidy, the Council has benefited from a recent change in the rules concerning recalculation of the subsidy and a special determination from the ODPM. The increase in subsidy has the opening of the final accounts for 2003/04 to reflect the increase in balances which now stand at £3.7m.

In the current year, following recalculation based on estimated sales in the year, the level of negative subsidy payable to the ODPM falls from £7.3m to £5.8m. Against this windfall however, rent income is £1.2m less than originally estimated. This is for several reasons: firstly the high level of sales in 2003/04 has resulted in the opening housing stock being less than was estimated in the original budget with a consequent shortfall in rent income of £0.2m. Secondly, the high number of sales in January, February and March 2004, which tend to be of higher value properties reduced the average weekly rent payable on a Council property by 4p, equivalent to a rent loss of £45,000 during the year. Finally, RTB sales in 2004/05 are expected to be above the budgeted level again reducing rent income by £0.9m. Against this however, some £0.5m additional miscellaneous income has been identified including increased de minimus capital receipts.

The net effect of this windfall and reduction in rent income has been to provide resources of some £2m which can be reinvested in the housing service in line with key priorities, for example in supporting the move to ALMO status and improving strategic management. In addition the contingency identified when the budget was set of £0.5m has been retained. Appendix A has list of these services and A1 includes a virement request. It is proposed that the budget position will be monitored against the adjusted budget.

It should be noted that as well as increasing revenue resources the recalculation of subsidy has resulted in a reduction in MRA both for 2003/04 and 2004/05, of some £0.8m and £1.2m respectively. The change has had no effect on the funding of the HIP in 2003/04, however it has resulted in reduction in balances of unspent MRA carried forward into 2004/05 and on the level of MRA available for

this year. Against this loss of MRA, higher than budgeted sales will mean higher than projected capital receipts. This increase in income notwithstanding, in order to balance the HRA, a revenue contribution to the funding of capital projects (RCCO) of £0.9m will be necessary which is included in appendix A.

Following the adjustments outlined in appendix A, most spending on the HRA is expected to be in line with budgets, the exception is the Area Assembly budget which was transferred to the Housing and Environmental Services Programme Area with effect from April. This has a budget shortfall of £0.2m and is therefore projected to overspend by this amount, although it is expected that this will be addressed by the restructuring of the Programme Area, which is currently progressing.

## **8. Finance**

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

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The projected year end position is based on spending and income for the first four months of the financial year and the situation could change as the year progresses. The level of RTB sales are being closely monitored and daily averages of stock levels are being calculated. To the end of July some 488 properties had been sold and 51 closed pending demolition, on which basis it has been estimated that the 10% stock change threshold for subsidy recalculation will be breached for this year. To address this and other pressures, a contingency provision of £0.5m was built into this year's budget and has been retained in the revised proposals and can be used to address either reduced income or increased costs.

Work is also progressing on the implementation of the Programme Area restructure to create the Neighbourhood services and this will also have an impact on HRA expenditure.

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

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

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

HRA budget Report to Cabinet -February 2004 and Council, February 2004.

This report has been discussed with by the Programme Area Management Team and the Head of Corporate Finance.

This report is one in a series of regular monitoring reports. It is the first report in respect of 2004/05, as, 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. 3241*

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

1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposing Programme/Service Area(s):

Date of Meeting:

Agenda Item No:

Report Title: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget Monitoring April to July 2004

### Brief Summary of Proposal

Following the projected sale and closure for demolition of more than 10% of the HRA housing stock in 2004/05, the Council has triggered the recalculation of Housing subsidy with the result that, rent income, negative subsidy (i.e. the notional surplus on the HRA which must be transferred to the ODPM ) and the Major Repairs Allowance have been reduced, giving rise to additional resources which can be re-invested in the HRA in line with service priorities for the coming financial year. In particular, resources have been allocated to support the move to ALMO and the restructure of the service.

### Policy Implications

The allocation of the additional resources has been focused on supporting the mover to ALMO status and the restructure of the service.

### Implications for Other Programme/Service Areas

None

### Staffing Implications

The additional resources are being used to fund posts supporting the move to ALMO and the restructure.

### Financial Implications

Are there any financial implications arising from this proposal?      YES  
If YES the reverse side of this form MUST be completed.

### Executive Director's Comments

If the report relates to an inter-departmental virement, comments of both Executive Directors are required.

<b>Head of Service's Comments</b>

\Repform2000

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSAL

### A. REVENUE BUDGET

COST/SAVING						
	Gross Expenditure		Gross Income		Net Expenditure	
	Increase £	Decrease £	Increase £	Decrease £	Increase £	Decrease £
Current Financial Year	1904	2591	0	687	0	0
Next Financial Year						
Subsequent Financial Year						
Is this a permanent change to the Base Budget? YES/NO						

Please tick as appropriate	SOURCE OF FUNDING – VIREMENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	Virement in excess of £50,000 within the Programme/Service Area to be approved by Cabinet (Fin. Reg. 9 (11))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Virement affecting Other Programme/Service Areas agreed by the affected Programme/Service Head, to be approved by Cabinet (Fin. Reg. 9 (11), 9 (12) )

If you have ticked one of the above Boxes, please supply the following Information: (If insufficient space available, please attach additional sheet(s) as necessary)	Code	Amount £
Increased Expenditure	J01040 J01054 J01055 JDSO J01045	1,390,000 55,000 400,000 34,000 25,000
Reduced Income	J83001	1,171,000
Reduced Expenditure	J82001	2,591,000
Increased Income	J80001	484,000

N.B. When approval is given, a standard Virement form must be forwarded to the Head of Corporate Finance

Please tick as appropriate	SOURCE OF FUNDING – OTHER
----------------------------	---------------------------

	Supplementary Estimate requested
	Use of Reserves / Funds – approval of Cabinet to be sought
	Other Sources (please specify)

**B. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Gross Capital Cost	
Income	
Net Capital Cost	
This proposal is/is not already included in the Council's approved Capital Programme for the year ...../.....	

**HEAD OF CORPORATE FINANCES' COMMENTS**

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**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services General Fund Budget Monitoring April to July 2004/05</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The report informs members of the projected out-turn budget position in respect of the General Fund services within the Programme Area (i.e. Waste Strategy, Environmental Health and Housing General Fund) after the first third of the financial year, April to July 2004. Details of the budget position are included in the attached appendices.

**6. Recommendations**

**MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO ACCEPT THE REPORT.**



## 7. Proposals and Details

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 approved in February this year. The position in respect of each service is set out below:

**Waste Strategy:** A carry forward request for 2003/04 of £165,000 has been approved and will be added to the approved budget for the year of £8.9m. The carry forward will be used for the purchase of bins for green waste collection, thus reducing the use of non-funded Local PSA Capital financing credit approvals, which have to be repaid. Using this method of financing the purchase of bins is estimated to save some £0.022m in capital financing costs per year. The pilot green waste scheme will be assessed in coming months for its effect on residual waste streams and hence collection and disposal costs.

Current projections indicate that the budget will not be overspent, however to achieve this, costs associated with the development of the long term waste strategy and improved signage both at recycling centres and in streets will need to be contained within existing allocations.

In addition to the above pressures from within the budget, the impact of the introduction of the hazardous waste regulations with effect from July 2004 will also need to be closely monitored, although at the present time these are thought to be minor.

**Environmental Health:** Current projections indicate that for most sections spending and income are in line with the net budget of £2.0m approved in February, and the position will be closely monitored during the remainder of the current financial year.

Several potential budget pressures have been identified and will be closely monitored in coming months. Firstly, with respect to Cemeteries and the Crematorium, the grounds maintenance contracts will require renegotiation during this year and costs may increase. Consultant support may also be needed to assist in the development of partnership proposals for this service.

As part of the corporate budget process, additional resources of £0.225m were allocated to provide a budget for the impact of a range of new legislation, (including liquor licenses and Houses in Multiple Occupation). Until however details of the new licensing law and accompanying government guidelines are agreed it is not possible to assess the full cost implications of the developments in both present and future financial years.

**Housing General Fund:** A budget of £0.856m was approved for the current financial year and it is currently projected that spending will be in line with this; however budgets will be closely monitored during the rest of the financial year.

## 8. Finance

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

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

Although it is currently projected that expenditure and income for this year will be consistent with the budgets set in February, this projection is based on expenditure and for the first four months of the current financial year and the situation may change as time progresses. Several pressures have been identified above and although it is currently projected that spending will be contained within existing allocations, budgets will need to be closely monitored during the remainder of the financial year.

### **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 to 25 February and Council 10 March 2004.

This report is one in a series of regular monitoring reports. It is the first report in respect of 2004/05, as, 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. 3241*

ROTHAMHAM 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%	
Housing Regeneration	Employees	107,117	107,117	0	0.00%	
Agency Grants & Enforcements Housing Strategy Management		244,195	230,000	-14,195	-5.81%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
District Heating		86,159	86,159	0	0.00%	
		101,403	101,403	0	0.00%	
		663,630	663,630	0	0.00%	

<b>ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>						
<b>Programme Area:</b> <b>Service Unit:</b>			<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>			
<b>Budget Projections 2004/05</b>			<b>Housing &amp; Environmental Services</b>			
<b>Projected End of Year Position Based on the Period:</b>			<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>			
<b>Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings</b>			<b>1st April 2004 to End of July 2004 (Period 4)</b>			
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%	Processes relating to supporting People grant are being reviewed. Recharges for the services from Social Services should correspond with rent income received
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	N/A	
Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme		940,800	940,800	0	0.00%	Processes relating to supporting People grant are being reviewed.
Rothercare		12,472,496	12,472,496	0	0.00%	Spending will be closely monitored
Housing Repairs		2,723,285	2,660,000	-63,285	-2.32%	Salaries lower than budgeted due to the level of vacancies
District Offices		131,501	131,501	0	0.00%	
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						
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>						
Programme Area: <b>Housing &amp; Environmental Services</b> Service Unit: <b>Housing Revenue Account</b>						
<b>Main Areas of Potential Over / Under Spendings</b> <b>1st April 2004 to End of July 2004 (Period 4)</b>						
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%	budget includes extra provision for project managers and premises Increase in interest changed
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%	
Other Income		- 581,000	- 581,000	0	0.00%	
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

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> September, 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-07</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

A Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with customers and stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that people from BME communities have access to suitable and appropriate housing.

**6. Recommendations**

- **THAT THE BME HOUSING STRATEGY IS ADOPTED**
  - **THAT COPIES OF THE STRATEGY ARE CIRCULATED TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP, ALL PROGRAMME AREAS, ALL MANAGERS WITHIN HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES**
  - **THAT THE STRATEGY IS PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S INTRANET AND INTERNET SITE**
-

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The Council must by law carry out its functions in a way that eliminates unlawful discrimination and which promotes equality of opportunity and good race relations.

The process of compiling the strategy provided a foundation for consultation with stakeholders, interested parties and community groups from BME communities in Rotherham .

The aim of the BME Housing Strategy is to explain and set out what the authority and our partner organisations are seeking to achieve in terms of race equality in housing.

The Council's introduction of a specific BME Housing Strategy will help us to do the following:

- provide a framework for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage
- provide clarity to the authority, its partners and service users on what they are seeking to achieve in the field of race equality
- demonstrate to BME communities the authority's commitment to race equality
- set out a number of measurable objectives and performance targets that can be monitored in order to determine how far progress has been made

The BME Housing Strategy also includes an action plan. This sets out targets against performance for the Local Authority and some of our key partners.

This is Rotherham's first BME Housing Strategy and will evolve and be further developed over time in response to the changing needs of BME communities.

## **8. Finance**

The cost involved in the production and distribution of the BME Housing Strategy and associated publicity will be met from existing resources.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The process of developing, promoting and implementing the strategy must be flexible and adaptable in order to respond to the changing needs of black and minority ethnic communities.

This version of the BME Housing Strategy has been produced as a separate document. However, it does not exist in isolation and must link into a number of other plans and strategies including the broader Housing Strategy.

A failure to make these links will put this strategy at risk of missing its basic aim of providing equality in housing. In addition, there is a risk that the strategy may fail to deliver improvements to our services that the BME community desires.

We plan to mitigate this risk by continually reviewing the strategy, in consultation with stakeholders and through a process of regular reporting to Cabinet on progress against the Action Plan.

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

The introduction of the BME Housing Strategy is expected to contribute towards:

Regeneration

- Providing sustainable neighbourhoods
- Providing an excellent environment

### Equalities

It will:

- provide a framework for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage
- provide clarity to the authority, it's partners and service users on what is being tackled in the field of race equality
- demonstrate the Council's commitment to race equality

The process of compiling the strategy has been assisted by consultation carried out with representatives of BME communities.

### Sustainability

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from black and minority ethnic communities within a framework of empowerment and Best Value
- To provide services that are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture
- To recognise the diversity of local communities and to foster good relations between the communities
- To take positive action to address existing disadvantage and encourage a more inclusive society.

### Health Implications

There are a number of housing related issues that affect BME communities to a greater extent than the remainder of the population.

There is an accepted link with housing and health and by addressing the housing issues it is expected there will be a positive effect on some of the health and social inequalities which affects these communities.

### Safer Rotherham

The BME Housing Strategy addresses key community safety issues including tackling racial harassment and crime reduction.

### Human Rights Issues

The BME Housing Strategy is about tackling inequalities and promoting equal opportunity. It does this through the main aims of the strategy:

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from black and minority ethnic communities within a framework of empowerment and Best Value
- To provide services that are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture



- To recognise the diversity of local communities and to foster good relations between the communities
- To take positive action to address existing disadvantage and encourage a more inclusive society

### The Council's Priorities

The BME Housing Strategy is a tool to assist the Council in meeting the legal obligations to eliminate disadvantage, promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

It will, therefore, contribute to the cross cutting issues of sustainable development, equalities and diversity, regeneration and crime and disorder as described above.

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

- (i) Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-2007
- (ii) Community Consultation Event  
Silverwood Miners Welfare Institute – 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2004
- (iii) Community Consultation Event  
Unity Centre, St. Leonard's Road, Rotherham  
20<sup>th</sup> July, 2004

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# Rotherham BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan

Prepared by:  
Jackie Heeney and Andrew Petrie  
Sadeh Parhai Ltd.  
2004

Draft



## 1 Foreword

Rotherham Housing Services has made a strategic commitment to identify the housing needs and requirements of Black & Minority Ethnic households and to develop a strategic approach to tackling these needs.

Our clear intention is to develop a strategy that addresses local Black & Minority Ethnic needs whilst contributing to regional and national priorities. This document has been influenced by the Government's agenda for building and maintaining sustainable communities, by housing market conditions at a regional and sub-regional level and by local housing issues

We recognise that Rotherham is a diverse community and that we have a particular responsibility to ensure our services are equally accessible to all. We need to support Black & Minority Ethnic individuals and groups who may be isolated and therefore more prone to social exclusion and more vulnerable to racist abuse and attacks. We have a responsibility to challenge the 'everyday racism' that Black & Minority Ethnic households and communities often have to put up with.

Rotherham is a multicultural town with a diverse Black & Minority Ethnic population, characterised by communities from different cultures, religions and with different languages. This Strategy sets out the priority housing needs of Rotherham's Black & Minority Ethnic communities and how housing providers in the Town can address these needs. It represents the outcome of extensive consultation and discussion around practical ways in which these needs can be met and demonstrates a strong commitment towards achieving this.

On behalf of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council we would like to thank all the partners who have contributed to the development of this document and look forward to seeing the effective delivery of the outcomes.



Sue Ellis  
Cabinet Member  
Housing & Environmental Services



Tom Cray  
Executive Director  
Housing & Environmental Services

## 1.2 Vision

Our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy and Action Plan seeks to contribute towards the achievement of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) mission, which is as follows:

Rotherham Borough Council exists to provide community leadership – representing, serving and involving people and organisations throughout the Borough – so that the quality of life for everyone is improved.

The Council will seek to ensure that everyone benefits from high quality services that respond to the needs and priorities of all those who live, learn and work in Rotherham.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan also seeks to contribute towards the aim of the Council's Vision to make Rotherham a prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work.

In addition, our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan seeks to:

- Ensure housing services are accessible to all
- Ensure provision is based on both identified needs and informed choice
- Realise the potential of everyone in Rotherham to take up opportunities and influence the future of the area in which they live and work
- Promote Rotherham as a place where people from all backgrounds want to live, responding to the future needs and aspirations of existing communities and attracting new people into the area
- Celebrate diversity, taking account of and responding to particular needs of all groups and individuals whilst promoting cohesive communities

## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 Why we need a Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy**

The foreword clearly indicates our commitment to meeting the local needs of people from our Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

We have a legal obligation to provide services in such a way that they contribute towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good race relations. Legislative requirements are detailed in section 6 of the Strategy. The development of our local strategies, sensitive to differences in the needs and preferences of local communities, will achieve these aims.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan is essential to ensure we meet these requirements.

Our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan sets out how RMBC will realise its vision ensuring that all communities will wish to live in the Rotherham area and have access to suitable and appropriate housing. The first part of the Strategy outlines the objectives that RMBC is working towards. These are, in broad terms, what the Strategy is seeking to achieve. An Action Plan is then presented providing a range of actions that work towards achieving the objectives outlined above. Many of these actions will have corresponding Indicators that can be used to measure progress against the action and, taken together, against the Strategy as a whole.

It should be noted that this Strategy is concerned primarily with equality in relation to colour, race, and nationality, ethnic or national origins. Unless stated otherwise, where we refer to 'groups' or 'communities' we are referring to all those that are covered by the above categories. However, the principles underlying the Strategy and the good practice suggested can be applied to any group who may be disadvantaged or have differing needs.

### 3 Background Information

#### 3.1 Context

Both nationally and locally Black and Minority Ethnic communities face discrimination in accessing services. Nationally, over two-thirds of the BME population live in the 88 most deprived wards (Census 2001). This deprivation is linked to factors such as low income and lack of access to employment and training opportunities, amongst others. Housing is one of many factors, therefore, that is important in improving the situation and life chances of disadvantaged communities.

#### 3.2 Rotherham's context

This draft Strategy has been developed in response to the recommendations of the REC's 'Barriers to Accessing Housing Services Report', findings of surveys carried out locally', (e.g. the Housing Needs Survey and the Holmes Housing Market Renewal Survey) and feedback received from the consultation process described in paragraph 3.3.

The 2001 Census<sup>i</sup> puts the population of Rotherham at just over 248 000. In terms of ethnicity, the large majority of the population class themselves as 'White'. The table below shows the proportion of the population by ethnicity for both Rotherham and the UK – using the five broad ethnic group headings.

Table 1 – Rotherham and England Population by Ethnic Group (%)

	<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>England</b>
White	96.89	90.92
Mixed	0.49	1.31
Asian/Asian British	2.23	4.57
Black/Black British	0.16	2.30
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	0.23	0.89

Clearly Rotherham has a relatively small non-White population compared to England. The largest ethnic group is Pakistani at 4704 people (1.9% of the population).

With regard to religion in Rotherham, the most common religion is Christianity (79.4%) with Islam the second most common (2.2%).

The Black and Minority Ethnic population in Rotherham has a younger age profile than the White population with a higher proportion of young people generally. However, there are differences between groups, for example the Black British population has the lowest proportion of population under 24 years old.

In relation to housing, the Asian/ Asian British population in Rotherham has a higher level of owner occupation than all other ethnic groups (73%). The White and Chinese/Other communities have similar levels (68% and 66% respectively), as do the Black/Black British and Mixed population (55% and 53%).

The proportion of the Asian/Asian British population living in council accommodation is significantly lower than the level for the population as a whole - 9% compared to 21.5%.

With regard to types of housing, a larger proportion of the Asian community live in a house or bungalow with larger proportions of the Black and Chinese/other communities living in a flat, maisonette or apartment.

There are a number of housing related issues that affect minority ethnic communities to a greater extent than the White population. Table 2 shows the levels of overcrowding and having no central heating for different communities.

Table 2 – Extent of No Central Heating and Overcrowding (%)

	White	Mixed	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Chinese/Other
No Central Heating	3.1	4.7	11.2	3.5	4.2
Overcrowding	5.0	10.9	23.1	14.1	20.7
No Central Heating and Overcrowding	0.2	1.9	4.5	0.7	2.3

Clearly these issues affect Black and Minority Ethnic communities to a greater extent than the White population. The proportion of 'non-white' ethnic groups living in accommodation classed as overcrowded is significantly higher than the district average. This is particularly true of the Asian community where 23% are living in overcrowded accommodation.

Settlement patterns of BME communities in Rotherham show the largest concentration of BME communities to be in the Central, Park, Broom, Boston and, to a lesser extent, Herringthorpe.

### 3.3 The Consultation Process

An initial draft of our Strategy and Action Plan was developed in April 2004. This draft was widely circulated for comments and in advance of the first of two consultation events, held on 24th May 2004 at the Silverwood Miners Welfare Centre in Rotherham.

The purpose of the first event was to involve stakeholders in developing the Strategy and was attended by over 70 delegates from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Interpreters were also in attendance and the event was introduced by Zafar Saleem the Council's Equalities and Diversity Manager. Following an opening address by Councillor Sue Ellis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services, 'the purpose of the day' speech was delivered by Tom Cray, Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services.

The day was split into two sessions. In the first session, delegates formed groups identifying potential barriers and improvements to previously identified key areas of the service. In the second session, delegates formed groups to consider the key areas of the draft Strategy in detail.

The draft Strategy and Action Plan was revised to take account of feedback from the event.

The second consultation event was held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2004 at the Unity Centre, Rotherham. This event was again well attended with delegates from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and was held in a workshop format to review the key areas of the revised draft Strategy and Action Plan. The draft was again revised to take account of feedback from the event.

Following the events, the draft Strategy and Action Plan was again widely circulated and revised in the light of further comments and amendments.

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<sup>1</sup> Census and other data in this section taken from *Rotherham's Ethnic Minority Communities: An Analysis of Data from the 2001 Census, 2003*



## 4 Objectives of the Strategy

In this section we have identified initially some of the key issues that are required to take the work forward. We then go on to present four key objectives for the Strategy.

### 4.1 Key Priorities and Actions

**Achieve Vision** – The key priority for this Strategy is to work towards the vision set out at the start of this document. All of the subsequent objectives and actions are intended to contribute to this Vision.

**Appointment of an Equality & Diversity Officer** – The appointment of an Equality & Diversity Officer is needed to take forward many of the actions outlined in this Strategy and Plan and to ensure the implementation of others. The Officer will have responsibility for producing or amending policies, monitoring their implementation and producing quarterly data and annual reports on performance against the Strategy. The Officer will also have responsibility for providing support to services other than Housing, in delivering their agreed actions, emphasising the value of the Strategy and Action Plan in capturing and recording all progress in relation to equality and diversity.

**Reporting on Equality Performance** – The responsibility of the Performance & Quality Team, this report would measure progress against the Strategy and Action Plan. Monitoring data, as well as local contextual data, would be presented. Monitoring data would be analysed and presented to ensure services were reaching all sections of the community. Progress against each action would be updated, and the Action Plan reviewed where appropriate. It is recommended that monitoring takes place quarterly and a report published annually. Performance measured would include both legislative and locally identified requirements.

**Community Engagement Strategy** – The issues of equality and community engagement are often closely linked. The production of a Community Engagement Strategy would clarify the position of RMBC Housing Services with regard to how it engages with, consults with, and, informs communities and individuals. Many of the actions outlined in this plan depend on timely and appropriate communication and engagement with communities. There are actions around community engagement in this document, and although these do not form a comprehensive approach, these actions and objectives should inform any Community Engagement Strategy that is produced. This strategy should be integrated within RMBC's Communication and Consultation Strategy and Community Empowerment Strategy.

### 4.2 Strategic Objectives:

- **Leadership** - Rotherham MBC Housing Services is committed to prioritising and, wishes to benefit from, the development of a framework to ensure the inclusion of Black & Minority Ethnic communities and the reduction of inequalities across all it's functions and activities and thereby contribute to the Corporate Vision of Rotherham as a 'prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work'.

- **Policies and Procedures** - All policies and procedures will seek to eliminate inequality and unlawful discrimination, recognise and capitalise on the rich resources BME communities offer and, promote community cohesion, good community relations and equal opportunities.
- **Service Delivery** - To ensure services are provided that support and meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.
- **Community Engagement** - To ensure that local residents from all communities are able to influence and shape the delivery of Housing Services in Rotherham and that all decisions are open and transparent and accountable to all Rotherham communities

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## 5 Relationship to Structures, Strategies and Plans

The BME Housing Strategy is an example of how Housing Services is striving to achieve the Council's corporate objectives. The Strategy is based on existing sound and reliable data and enhances the Council's Corporate Housing Strategy.

The Strategy has important links to and complements wider key strategies including those listed below:

- Rotherham MBC Corporate Housing Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Race Equality Scheme
- Rotherham MBC Community Empowerment Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Community Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Draft Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Rotherham MBC Corporate Equality Plan
- Rotherham MBC Compact BME Code of Good Practice
- Rotherham REC Barriers to Accessing Housing Services
- Transform South Yorkshire Prospectus
- Rotherham MBC Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area Development Frameworks
- Rotherham MBC Housing & Environmental Services Performance Plan
- Rotherham MBC Community Cohesion Draft Strategy
- Rotherham MBC Consultation and Communication Strategy

The BME Housing Strategy has been informed by these strategies as well as other research undertaken in the area, for example the Housing Needs Survey and the Housing Market Renewal Research into the Housing Needs and Aspirations of BME Communities in Holmes, carried out by Sadeh Lok Housing Group with RBA Research. More detail is provided in paragraph 7 and Appendix 1 is a list of document references.

## 6 Legislative Requirements

The **Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)** places a duty on public authorities to tackle unlawful discrimination and promote good race relations between people of different races. Local authorities and other public bodies have duties under this Act and would seek to carry these out through the work they undertake.

The duties set out in the Act and Code relate as much to policy, planning and the delivery of services as employment issues. Under the general duty to promote race equality public bodies must consider the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

There is a specific duty for public bodies to publish a Race Equality Scheme which

- states the functions and policies that have been assessed as being relevant to the general duty to promote race equality; and
- sets out arrangements for meeting the duty by:
  - (i) monitoring policies for any adverse impact on race equality;
  - (ii) assessing and consulting on, the likely impact of proposed policies;
  - (iii) publishing the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring;
  - (iv) making sure that the public have access to information and services;
  - (v) and training staff on the general duty

Under the specific duty on employment, public bodies must monitor existing staff, and applicants for jobs, promotion and training by their racial group. They also need to monitor and analyse, by racial group: grievances; disciplinary action; performance appraisals (when they lead to benefits or penalties); training and staff leaving the organisation. They are required to publish the results of these ethnic monitoring results every year and also to review their Race Equality Scheme every three years.

Rotherham MBC has produced a Race Equality Scheme which goes into detail on how this duty is to be met by the authority as a whole.

## 7 Key Concerns and Issues

There are a number of issues faced by BME communities in Rotherham that this Strategy will seek to address. These include:

- Ensuring BME communities have access to information, support and guidance on all aspects of housing service provision. This must be in appropriate languages and formats and available in different locations.
- Ensuring all staff have an awareness and understanding of issues facing BME communities and their needs and aspirations.
- Ensuring there is a clear policy on racial harassment and support for victims.
- Develop partnership working with community and voluntary sectors as well as other statutory bodies, to ensure the housing needs and aspirations of BME communities are met.
- Ensure that staff working within Housing Services reflect the communities of Rotherham.

Some of the key concerns and issues identified in Rotherham REC's report 'Barriers To Accessing Housing Services', which the Strategy seeks to fully or partially address, include the following:

- Lack of language skills
- Loneliness and isolation
- Discrimination and racial harassment
- Low incomes
- Lack of knowledge of available services
- Diet.
- Few opportunities to acquire property
- Access to public sector housing
- Severe overcrowding
- Negative images
- Meeting religious, cultural and social needs

The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder research undertaken in the Holmes area identified further issues relevant to the Strategy. Some of the key ones include:

- Although over a third of BME households felt that racism and discrimination needs to be tackled, (28% of White residents also gave this answer) other issues were more important priorities such as crime.
- There is a higher level of owner occupation, particularly amongst the Asian community, with 50% owner occupied and a further 15% saying their property is owned by a family member. With regard to aspirations in this community, 86% would choose owner occupation.
- BME residents were more likely to highlight problems with the repair and maintenance of their homes.
- Asian residents were particularly likely to say they need more bedrooms and were more likely to consider themselves overcrowded.
- Of the BME households that said they were likely to move away from the area, over half gave a housing related reason for doing so. Reasons given included wanting a bigger house.

These issues, and others that impact on BME communities, are explored further and addressed through the implementation of this Strategy and its Action Plan which is presented at Appendix 2.

## APPENDIX 1

## DOCUMENT REFERENCES

The following documents have been referred to and used to inform the development of our BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan:

- Rotherham MBC Race Equality Scheme, RMBC (2002)
- Rotherham's Ethnic Minority Communities: An Analysis of Data from the 2001 Census, RMBC (2003)
- Rotherham's Corporate Housing Strategy 2003-2006: Defining the Future, RMBC
- Rotherham Housing Services Race Equality Improvement Plan
- Manchester City Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2003
- Middlesbrough Borough Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2004-2006
- Sunderland Housing Group's Racial Equality Strategy 2002-2006
- Chesterfield Race Equality Scheme 2002-2005, Chesterfield Borough Council
- The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Corporate Equalities and Diversity Policy Framework, (2003)
- Blackaby, B. & Chahal, K. (2000) Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategies: A Good Practice Guide, Chartered Institute of Housing
- ABCD (Wolverhampton New Deal for Communities) Equalities Strategy and Action Plan (2004), unpublished.
- Rotherham REC's Barriers to Accessing Housing Services report
- South Yorkshire Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Research into the Housing Needs and Aspirations of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Holmes, Rotherham

## APPENDIX 2

## BLACK &amp; MINORITY ETHNIC HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2004/05 - 2010/11

## Leadership

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prioritise the development of an effective framework to ensure the inclusion of Black &amp; Minority Ethnic communities &amp; the reduction of inequalities across all Housing Services functions and activities and thereby contribute to the Corporate Vision of Rotherham as a 'prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of BME communities &amp; reduction of inequalities to contribute to the vision of Rotherham as a 'prosperous, inclusive and attractive Borough, where people choose to live, learn and work'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a BME Housing Strategy that recognises and understands the benefits and needs of all the diverse communities and individuals in Rotherham</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft BME Housing Strategy developed May 2004.</li> <li>Draft Strategy consultation events held</li> <li>Strategy agreed by Cabinet</li> <li>Equality targets agreed &amp; set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 2004</li> <li>September 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete <span style="color: green;">■</span></li> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All partners and stakeholders understand, support and are committed to implementing the BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree Cabinet Member to lead on and champion equality issues as part of portfolio</li> <li>Recruit Housing Equality Officer to lead on BME issues</li> <li>Equalities Strategy to be integrated in Members' Code of Conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Equalities Unit</li> <li>Housing Services</li> <li>Corporate Equalities Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BME Housing Strategy adopted and implemented August 2004</li> <li>Cabinet Member identified to champion equality issues</li> <li>One Housing Equality Officer recruited</li> <li>Code of Conduct addresses equality issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 2004</li> <li>June 2004</li> <li>October 2004</li> </ul>



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress towards the achievement of the BME Housing Strategy is measured, recorded and available to all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review progress and impact of BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan.</li> <li>Review baseline and existing information to ensure it includes data broken down by ethnicity, faith, gender and disability where possible</li> <li>Publish Annual Report on progress towards implementation of Strategy.</li> <li>BME Housing Strategy to be reviewed annually. Targets established once data has been collected</li> <li>Diversity and equality training programmes developed and provided for all staff</li> <li>Provide opportunities for staff to attend community events during working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Service Managers</li> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Housing Services</li> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Training Unit</li> <li>Service Managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress against strategy measured &amp; recorded and published in Annual Report.</li> <li>Baseline review completed and new information integrated into Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>Produce annual report on performance indicators and progress</li> <li>Strategy and Action Plan reviewed Annually</li> <li>Training Programme Delivered and Evaluated</li> <li>100% of staff receive training</li> <li>Increased levels of awareness and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> <li>Autumn 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> </ul>

## Policies and Procedures

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All policies and procedures will seek to eliminate inequality and unlawful discrimination and promote community cohesion, good community relations and equal opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotherham MBC Housing Services ensures that recruitment, training and development processes comply with the RMBC Race Equality Scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Recruitment Processes are compliant with Race Relations Amendment Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment processes reviewed and updated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record and monitor ethnic origin of employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% accurate data on ethnicity of the workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure general understanding of equality issues for all staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of staff received agreed training</li> <li>Training integrated into induction for new staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure policies and procedures support recruitment, retention and progression of all staff</li> <li>Explore opportunities for staff mentoring schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update recruitment strategies to take account of diversity issues</li> <li>Develop a strategy balancing needs of existing staff with open recruitment and equal opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff work towards eliminating racial discrimination from all employment and training practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce Code of Conduct for all staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative requirements addressed by all policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct impact assessments on all policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of policies &amp; procedures having impact assessments</li> </ul>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All actions fully compliant with legislative employment duties</li> <li>Racial harassment and racist incidents are dealt with effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up Equality Group to scrutinise issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Service Managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of legal requirements complied with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy around racial harassment where victim or perpetrator are in local authority housing. Extend this support to tenants of all tenures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy developed and agreed</li> <li>Monitor level of service usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that conditions of tenancy include the provision for taking action specifically for racial harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific tenancy condition included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff aware of definition of a racist incident and policy around racial harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of staff trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback to victims of outcome of complaint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victims receive feedback on outcome within three months of reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all actions are dealt with quickly and taken against the perpetrator not the victim</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time limits agreed for actions</li> <li>100% of actions taken are against perpetrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> </ul>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all tenants are aware of policies around racial harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on Racial Harassment policy included and highlighted in information for tenants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce levels of racial harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASB Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents of racial harassment to show a decrease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that suppliers and contractors are committed to the BME Housing Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultants and contractors to demonstrate commitment to promoting equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop database of consultants and contractors having equality policies in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure consistency of service to tenants/ service users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake consultation with tenants/ service users having contact with consultants and contractors to ensure consistent levels of satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of procurement opportunities for BME owned businesses and increase ethnic diversity of consultants and contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an approved list of BME consultants and contractors</li> <li>Hold an open event/ information day to raise awareness of RMBC procurement opportunities for BME owned businesses</li> <li>5% of consultants and contractors to be BME owned businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of Strategy and policies amongst consultants and contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procedures on use of external consultants and contractors</li> <li>Include terms, conditions and penalties for non compliance with equality strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

**Service Delivery**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure services are provided that meet the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there is a clear understanding of the needs of BME communities in relation to Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a mapping exercise to identify the location of existing BME communities. Collate existing information and datasets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping exercise completed, clear information on location of communities available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure needs and necessary support for the Rotherham Asylum Project Team and NASS contract holders are considered throughout the Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with local organisations supporting asylum seekers on Strategy throughout development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy supports and complements the work of Rotherham Asylum Project Team and NASS contract holders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotherham MBC ensures housing provision meets the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there is information on needs and aspirations of BME communities concerning housing requirements, particularly for older people and extended families</li> <li>Work to widen choice of properties available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform South Yorkshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BME housing needs inform BME and Corporate Housing Strategy</li> <li>Revised Strategy based on information collected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform South Yorkshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BME housing needs inform BME and Corporate Housing Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify appropriate types of accommodation for victims of domestic violence and explore opportunities for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate types of accommodation identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise opportunities for other housing provision e.g. RSL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform South Yorkshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified needs &amp; aspirations satisfied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure waiting times are consistently low across all communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waiting times analysed by ethnicity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and produce information in community languages and suitable formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information requirements assessed</li> <li>Information leaflets produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of use and take up of information in community languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value for money issues identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Front-line' staff are able to provide information and advice that ensures informed decisions are made. Individuals should not be disadvantaged by a lack of knowledge or understanding of an area or of choices available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased satisfaction levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to enable people to continue living in owner occupation/ private rented and RSL accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainability</li> <li>Sustains positive community cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore issues around providing support to locate people in areas not usually accessed</li> <li>Ensure advice and information accessible to all</li> <li>Explore opportunities for using interpreters more effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Needs</li> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Corporate Equalities Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards positive community cohesion</li> <li>Advice in community languages available to those who need it</li> <li>Recruitment of multi-lingual workers across RMBC</li> <li>Development of Community Interpreters Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the needs of seekers and homeless individuals and families from BME communities are understood and addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore possibility of outreach advice services in community settings – Housing Officers to hold surgeries in community centres to advise and deal with housing enquiries and concerns</li> <li>Provide homeless advice to all communities</li> <li>Offer increase choice to BME homeless applicants</li> <li>Ensure there is suitable homeless accommodation for different communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> <li>Homeless Service</li> <li>Homeless Service</li> <li>Homeless Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of outreach service</li> <li>Service has high take-up amongst target communities</li> <li>Advice available in community languages</li> <li>Monitor provision of advice by ethnicity</li> <li>Number of lettings to homeless BME individuals</li> <li>Waiting times for accommodation to be consistent across all communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> <li>On target</li> </ul>



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	STATUS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All service users are equally satisfied with, and have confidence in, service provision as a whole and individual services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recording and monitoring of ethnic origin of all service users, applicants for housing, complainants and other instances where individuals come into contact with Rotherham MBC Housing Services</li> <li>Analysis of monitoring and evaluation data to ensure all users are equally satisfied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 % of forms reviewed and amended where appropriate to include ethnicity information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance &amp; Quality Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction levels analysed and consistent across all communities. Results published in Annual Equality Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

### Community Engagement and Consultation

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	TIMESCALE	STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that local residents from all communities are able to influence and shape the delivery of Housing Services in Rotherham and that all decisions are open and transparent and accountable to all Rotherham communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local residents from all communities are able to influence and shape the delivery of Housing Services in Rotherham</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a Community Engagement Strategy, to pay particular attention to BME communities and other 'hard to reach' communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Development Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Engagement Strategy Produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute towards the funding and organisation of a community event which celebrates diversity and promotes harmony linking with the work of the Corporate Community Cohesion Steering Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> <li>Service Managers</li> <li>Corporate Community Cohesion Steering Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual events organised and attended by a mix of racial groups, those with disabilities and men and women.</li> <li>Events promote positive messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autumn 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the existing VAR &amp; REMA database of community organisations, groups and networks – broken down by area of activity and ethnicity</li> <li>Monitor those involved in consultation by ethnicity, age and gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database produced by March 2005</li> <li>Annual update of database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure work is informed by and informs the work of Area Assembly Panels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data on communities consulted presented in Annual Report</li> <li>Area Assembly Panels receive regular information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All decisions are open and transparent and accountable to all Rotherham</li> </ul>					

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD INDIVIDUAL/ BODY	OUTCOME MEASURES	TIMESCALE	STATUS
	communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include and consider views of all residents, analysed by ethnicity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance &amp; Quality Team</li> <li>• Tenant Involvement Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review survey and other data</li> <li>• Develop database of community and voluntary organisations serving the needs of different groups and individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all Tenants and Residents Associations, Area Assemblies and community groups adhere to the BME Housing Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief all community and voluntary groups on strategy</li> <li>• Examine all constitutions for equality</li> <li>• Reconsider links with any individuals or groups demonstrating discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On target <span style="color: yellow;">■</span></li> </ul>

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**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2004</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Summary of Procedures</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing</b>

**5. Summary**

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 (section 12 introduces a new provision in the Housing Act 1996 (Section 218A). This new provision requires public landlords (local housing authorities, housing action trusts, registered social landlords to prepare a policy in relation to anti social behaviour and a summary for dealing with occurrences of anti social behaviour by 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

**6. Recommendations**

**That Chairman and members take note of the Policy document and summary of procedures for tackling anti-social behaviour in line with Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003**

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## **7. Proposals and Details**

The policy has been produced in line with the Government Guidelines. Tackling anti-social behaviour plays a key part in Sustainable Communities which improves the quality of life for residents. The policy is based on a mixture of prevention, enforcement and support and represents a challenge to build on this and ensures that benefits introduced through multi agency working are passed on to our tenants and residents.

## **8. Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour can contribute to a spiral of decline in neighbourhoods which will invariably have higher management costs. Failure to carry out set out procedures will leave the Council open to Judicial Review

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

Officers of the Council will play an integral part in ensuring that all the tools set out in the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 are utilised. Officers will ensure that work is carried out in line with the policy.

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

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

ODPM Anti Social Behaviour: Policy and Procedure Code of Guidelines August 2004.

Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group - Dealing with anti social behaviour – Model policies and procedures for social landlords.

**Contact Name** : *Helen Nixon Anti-Social Behaviour Manager ext 4362  
helen.nixon@rotherham.gov.uk*

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**Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**  
Draft Policy August 2004

**1.0. INTRODUCTION**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 placed a duty on Social Landlords to publish their policies and procedures for dealing with anti social behaviour by 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

It is recognised that anti social behaviour damages individuals and communities, and that tackling anti social behaviour is one of the key activities in regenerating and sustaining our communities. The anti-social behaviour policy shows that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to maintaining safe and sustainable neighbourhoods and recognises the need to work closely with partner agencies, tenants and residents businesses throughout the Borough to achieve this.

**2.0. WHAT IS ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Section 153 of the Housing Act 1996 defines anti-social behaviour as conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person; and directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of the Council; or consists of or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by the Council for an unlawful purpose. The people to whom the conduct may cause nuisance or annoyance include anyone who has a right to live in property owned or managed by the Council, those living in any other property in the neighbourhood (for example owner occupiers or tenants of other landlords), and anyone else lawfully in such property or in the locality (e.g. people working or using local facilities).

The housing management function of the Council covers any activity that the landlord would undertake in the day to day and strategic management of the Councils housing stock this includes rent collection maintenance and repairs, and investigating neighbour disputes. The matters which indirectly affect the housing management function could include refuse collection, abandoned vehicles and the provision of social care and housing support.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership has created an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy which recognises the twin issues of tolerance and different community perceptions of what constitutes anti-social behaviour. Therefore, anti-social behaviour has been broken down in to three broad types of problems:

**Neighbour Problems** – these are disputes which can happen between two neighbours and cover complaints about noise, verbal abuse, boundary disputes, harassment and intimidation, nuisance children, car repairs, damage to property, barking dogs.

**Neighbourhood Problems** – these problems affect more people living in a neighbourhood such as graffiti, dog fouling, fly tipping, nuisance youths congregating, off road motor cycling and abandoned vehicles.

**Crime Problems** – such problems include burglary of dwellings, criminal damage, drug dealing, and car crime, arson, racial and hate crime, public order offences and violence against people or property.

**This is not an exhaustive list.**

### **3.0 THE LEGAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

The Council has to operate within the framework created by legislation and its own strategies and policies (e.g. Housing Strategy, Strategy to Reduce Crime and Disorder, Anti Social Behaviour Strategy, Community Strategy and Homeless Strategy, The Youth Offending Strategy, BME Strategy, Housing and Environmental Community Cohesion Strategy and the Council's Race Equality Scheme). This policy document plays an integral part in assisting the authority in the objectives set out in the above strategies.

#### **HOUSING ACT 1985 (AS AMENDED BY HOUSING ACT 1996)**

The Housing Act introduced statutory grounds for possession for example.

- a) Behaviour which is a breach of an express clause of the tenancy agreement;
- b) Behaviour by a Council tenant, or a person living with the tenant or a person visiting the tenant which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to:
  - a person living in the locality of the tenant's property
  - a person visiting a property in the locality of the tenant's property or
  - anyone else in the locality of the tenant's property.
- c) Where a Council tenant or a person living with the tenant or a person visiting the tenant has been convicted of:
  - using or allowing the tenant's property to be used for immoral or illegal purposes; or
  - an arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of the tenant's property.
- d) Where a person living in a Council property has had to leave the property because he/she has been subjected to domestic violence.
- e) Where the condition of the tenant's property has deteriorated due to acts of waste, neglect or default by the tenant or anyone else living with or visiting the tenant.

The 1996 Act also created introductory tenancies along with Local Authority Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions which have been amended by the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. All new secure tenancies granted by the Council from October 2003 are introductory tenancies.



### **THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

This Act introduced Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's). The Police or a local authority can seek an ASBO against anyone aged 10 or over who has acted in an anti social manner and where people need to be protected from further anti social acts

This Act also requires local authorities and the police to work with the Health and Probation Services to reduce crime and disorder. The Safer Rotherham Partnership was set up in response and a strategy to reduce crime and disorder developed on a three year basis. The current strategy runs from 2002 to 2005. The new strategy from 2005 to 2008 will be developed following an audit of crime and disorder and full consultation.

### **THE POLICE REFORM ACT 2002**

This Act makes it possible for Interim Anti Social Behaviour Orders to be granted, where there is an urgent need to protect the community from further acts of anti-social behaviour, pending a full Anti Social Behaviour Order being obtained.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000**

This enables the Local Authority to promote economic, social and environmental well being in its area.

### **CHILDREN ACT 1989**

This Act places a duty on authorities to co-operate with each other in the protection of children. In particular information on one authority's actions must be shared with others if it would help them to carry out their functions.

### **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995**

It is unlawful for a Council to discriminate against a disabled tenant by seeking possession of their home. If there is evidence that a disabled tenant is acting in an anti-social manner and the actions are a direct consequence of the tenant's disability, the Council can only seek possession of their home where it is "justified" to do so under The Act.

### **RACE RELATIONS ACT 1976 / RACE RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000**

This places a statutory duty on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good race relations. Race equality issues must be considered in all of its policies.

### **HOMELESS ACT 2002**

This imposes a duty on the Council to assist people at risk of violence. In addition it states that the Council does not have to give preference to housing people guilty of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant. Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that would have entitled the Council to be granted a possession order had the tenant been a council tenant. In addition it enables the Local Authority to treat an applicant as ineligible for housing if they or a member of their household has been guilty of unreasonable behaviour.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998**

The Act gives statutory effect to the European Convention on Human Rights. Key Rights include:

- Freedom of expression
- Right to life
- Prohibition of torture
- Prohibition of discrimination
- Right to freedom of thought and religion
- Right to respect for private and family life

The Council has to ensure it is doing all in its powers to enable quiet enjoyment by people of their homes and to ensure that it is not breaching the human rights of anyone it may take action against for anti social behaviour. Any action taken by the Council which interferes with a person's human rights must be reasonable and proportionate.

### **THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990**

This legislation imposes a legal obligation on local authorities to take such steps as are reasonably practical to investigate a complaint of statutory nuisance, which includes noise. A statutory nuisance can exist where noise emitted from premises is either prejudicial to health or a nuisance. In such circumstances the Council can serve an abatement notice on the person responsible for the noise, requiring him/her to stop the nuisance recurring. If such a person does not comply with the Notice they can be prosecuted and fined. In serious case the Council could also seize equipment used to create the noise, for example a stereo system.

### **THE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003**

This Act has brought in a number of new duties and powers for local authorities in their landlord capacity. These are as follows:

- Publish and keep under review policies and procedures for dealing with anti social behaviour.
- Sections 152 and 153 of the Housing Act 1996 which deal with injunctions have been amended to widen the scope of injunctions that the Council can

apply for to deal with anti-social behaviour. It is now possible to protect wider categories of people who are the subject of anti-social behaviour. In certain circumstances the Court can add a power of arrest to the injunction and prohibit people from entering specific premises or areas.

- Demotion Orders have been introduced which enable the council to apply to Court for an order demoting a tenant from a secure tenancy to a less secure one for a year. If the tenant continues committing anti-social behaviour within that year it should be easier for the Council to seek possession of the tenant's home.
- The Court must give particular consideration to the impact of anti-social behaviour on victims, witnesses and the wider community when deciding whether it is reasonable to evict a tenant from their home.
- If the Council applies for possession of a tenant's home and believes that other people are committing related anti-social behaviour, it may also apply within the same Court proceedings for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order to be made against those other people.

#### **4.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS**

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council recognises that in order to provide customers with a high degree of customer care it has to be effective in tackling anti-social behaviour. This will be done by utilising all remedies available and taking appropriate effective action to assist those who are affected by or who are victims of anti-social behaviour.
- Anti-social behaviour varies in severity and the Council will assess the seriousness of a problem in order to determine the most appropriate way of dealing with it and to make the best use of limited resources. What some people perceive to be anti-social behaviour, other people may not e.g. young people playing ball games which could be sorted out by both sides talking to each. At the very extreme the behaviour may include violence which would need protection for the complainant and legal action being taken against the perpetrator.
- All aspects of anti social behaviour complaints will be treated seriously, investigated promptly and fairly. Careful consideration will be given to those who are vulnerable.
- Complainants will usually be interviewed within 5 working days of receipt of their complaint. The confidentiality of a complaint and the anonymity of complainants and witnesses will be maintained by the Council, wherever possible. The Council will usually wish to discuss a complaint with a perpetrator. However this will be discussed with a complainant before a perpetrator is approached by the Council. Information will be made available in an accessible format and use of interpreters will be made where necessary.

- All incidents will be logged and monitored and if further investigations are required further witnesses will be sought and work may be carried out with partner agencies such as South Yorkshire Police, Environmental Health, Social Services, Neighbourhood Wardens, The Anti Social Behaviour Unit, and The Health Authority to resolve the issue. All liaisons will be documented.
- Complainants will be regularly updated in relation to how a case is progressing. Assistance will be given to complainants in compiling evidence and making statements.
- The Council will attempt to resolve a complaint without the need for formal legal action wherever possible. Where possible the Council will seek to promote non-confrontational approaches to the resolution of complaints. However, the Council will not hesitate in taking appropriate legal action, where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.
- We will not promise our customers that legal action will be taken until a case has been fully investigated. The Council will assist witnesses in attending Court and supporting them through the Court process and work with and liaise with witness support.
- Serious cases will be forwarded to the Council's Specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in order for witnesses to be given support and assistance. The Unit has the ability to provide the following services for witnesses in and emergency:
  - a 24 hour help line for witnesses
  - dispersed alarms where necessary.
  - Re-housing (in very serious cases)
  - Taking emergency legal action e.g.; injunctions, interim anti social behaviour orders.
- Multi agency working may be carried out with partners of the Safer Rotherham Partnership, Registered Social Landlords and Private Landlords signed up to the Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
- Witnesses and complainants will be notified in writing when a case is closed.
- Neighbourhood Services will work in line with The Racial Harassment Procedures, The Homeless Strategy and the Housing Business Plan and the Community Plan.
- Neighbourhood Services will monitor its progress and will endeavour to improve by asking customers about the service provided and benchmarking with other local authorities and housing associations to show continual improvement in the service.

## **5.0 TACKLING ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council offers a range of services to tackle anti social behaviour along with its partners mentioned above, but the Council aims to prevent anti social behaviour from occurring in the first instance or to resolve it without the need for legal action. For those who continue anti social behaviour, the Council will take enforcement action.

### **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:**

#### ***Mediation***

The Council will forward low level nuisance and anti social behaviour cases to Rotherham Mediation Services. This will only be done when both parties agree for their case to be forwarded. This is also part of the tackling anti social behaviour procedures. It is a service which is impartial and negotiates a mutual understanding between parties which they can sign up to.

#### ***Acceptable Behaviour Contracts***

The Council will use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts against perpetrators where it is appropriate to do so. They are seen as an initial warning for those perpetrators who's continued anti social activities could lead to obtaining an anti social behaviour order.

#### ***Neighbourhood Wardens.***

Neighbourhood Wardens currently work in Rawmarsh, Parkgate, Kilnhurst, Dalton, Thrybergh and the Valley Area of East Herringthorpe. It is their role to not only reduce the fear of crime, but to reduce the incidents of low level anti social behaviour within the areas.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

#### ***Neighbourhood Champions (formerly Housing Officers)***

Deal with all aspects of tenancy management and nuisance complaints involving the ALMO tenants and leaseholders. They work closely with the Police, Neighbourhood Wardens, The Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Environmental Health and Education Welfare and Social Services.

### ***Safer Estates Forum***

Agencies signed to the Councils' information sharing protocol meet in 7 areas to discuss individuals on estates who are causing nuisance and anti social behaviour within the area. All meetings are minuted and ways forward to tackle the individual's problems are discussed and remedies to stop the behaviour identified.

### ***Anti Social Behaviour Unit***

The specialist unit deals with the more serious cases of anti social behaviour where work by other agencies has failed.. The Unit which includes, a manager, four anti social behaviour officers, two anti social behaviour support officers and two seconded Police Officers, takes enforcement action against perpetrators and works to protect witnesses most at risk. The Unit also takes preventative action and works closely with partner agencies making referrals where appropriate to agencies such as Social Services and the Youth Service. The Unit also has a youth liaison officer who works with young people who have signed Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

Enforcement actions taken by officers are:

- Injunctions
- Demoted Tenancies
- Possession proceedings
- Anti-social Behaviour Orders

### ***Confidentiality and Data Protection***

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows the Council to share personal data or information to be disclosed to the Police, Probation Service, Social Services, Youth Offending Services, Environmental Health, and Education where it is necessary for the purpose of obtaining an Anti Social Behaviour Order. This information is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Council and South Yorkshire Police have protocols to share information and consideration is given to what information is necessary and formal requests are made in writing with an audit trail kept of the request and reply.

### ***Rehabilitation of Perpetrators***

Where enforcement action has been taken to deal with anti-social behaviour consideration will be given to any necessary rehabilitation work for the perpetrator. The Council will work with other agencies to ensure that appropriate rehabilitation services are offered to those who have perpetrated anti social behaviour. This could include:

- Referrals to Drug Action Team,
- Rotherham Community Alcohol Service
- Mental Health Team

- Youth Services
- Youth Offending Services
- Social Services
- Youth Liaison Officer

### ***Trained Staff***

All front line staff are trained in tackling anti social behaviour, dealing with racial incidents, evidence gathering and the use of pocket books. Further training is identified in their personal development review. Risk assessments are also carried out for the care and protection of staff.

### ***Tenancy Conditions***

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council makes it clear to new and existing tenants its policy on anti social behaviour. The Tenancy Agreement contains conditions aimed to ensure tenants do not act in an anti social manner or allow other people resident or visiting to act anti socially. The Council has a right to take action to enforce the condition set out if the tenant does not comply with them. All new tenants are advised of the conditions when they sign to accept the tenancy.

### ***Rotherham Council Tenancy Conditions state that:-***

- Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of every person living in or visiting their home (including children). Tenants are also responsible for them on surrounding land, in communal areas and in the neighbourhood around their home.
- Tenants, other residents or visitors to their home must not behave in a way that causes or is likely to cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any other person in the locality of their home.
- The tenant, other residents of their home or their visitors must not harass any other person in the locality of their home (harassment includes racist behaviour or language that offends).
- The tenant, other residents or visitors must not cause damage to Council property or write graffiti on Council property.
- The tenant other residents of their home or visitors must not interfere with any security and safety equipment in communal blocks. For example by jamming security doors or fire doors open or letting strangers in without identification.
- The tenant, other residents or visitors of their home must not be violent or threaten violence against any person, residing with them or living in a Council house. Tenants must not harass, use mental, emotional, physical or sexual abuse to make anyone who lives there leave the home. If a person leaves the

home because of domestic violence the Council may take action to end the tenancy.

- The tenant, other residents or visitors to their home must not use abusive or threatening language or act in a violent, aggressive or abusive manner towards the Council's members, officers or agents.
- Pets belonging to the tenant, other residents or visitors of the home must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other people, or damage to property.

## **6.0 INVESTIGATING RACIAL INCIDENTS**

**The Council has adopted the Stephen Lawrence report definition of a "A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person"**

All Action will be taken in line with the Council's Tackling Racial Incidents Procedure and will work with MAARI (Multi Agency Approach to Racial Incidents) to rectify issues. Work will also be done to ensure that victims are given support and protection, a plan of action will be agreed between the victim and the officer investigating the case. This may include, dispersed alarms, improvements in security to the complainants home, repairs to any damage, removal of graffiti, temporary rehousing and referral to support groups.

It is the Council's aim to prevent racial incidents from re-occurring, act quickly and give support to the victim and deal with the perpetrator in the most appropriate way and to encourage reporting of incidents.

## **7.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic Violence is where one person acts in a violent way to another member of the household. This will have the effect of the victim having to leave or live in fear, and quite often causes nuisance to neighbours. The Council is committed to working in line with the Domestic Violence policy and working with other agencies to offer support to the victim. The Council has a duty under the Homeless Act 2002 to treat people claiming homelessness due to the threat of violence as a priority need.

## **8.0 PUBLICITY**

Any action taken will be publicised where it is deemed reasonable and necessary to do so. The general public need to know what a perpetrator is prevented from doing and to reassure the community that action is being taken to stop anti social behaviour.



## **9.0 SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP**

Neighbourhood Services is committed to working with partners and forms an integral part of the Rotherham Safer Partnership. One of the aims of the Partnership is to tackle all forms of anti social behaviour across the borough and encourage multi agency working between partners including Young People's Service, The Rotherham Crime Reduction Programme, Social Services, Youth Offending Services, Probation, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Yorkshire Police, the Probation Service, Education Services and Victim Support.

## **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

It is important that appropriate action and resources is given to tackling anti social behaviour to ensure that good service is given to our customers. Failure to deal with the issue could lead to customers being at risk, feeling threatened and not being able to enjoy the quiet enjoyment of their home.

The Council recognises that for many people it is difficult for them to come forward and complain about the behaviour they are experiencing. It is therefore important that we offer support to complainants and act quickly for those who are too frightened to give evidence.

## **11.0 REVIEW DATE**

This policy will be reviewed in April 2005 with further reviews on an annual basis.

## **12.0 VISION**

It is our vision to provide everyone in Rotherham with a high quality service in tackling anti social behaviour. It is important that people feel safe and enjoy their home, which will make Rotherham the best place to live, learn and work.

## **Draft Summary of Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures**

### **Introduction**

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 placed a duty on all Social Landlords to publish their policies and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour by 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to maintaining safe and sustainable neighbourhoods and recognises the need to work closely with partner agencies, tenants and residents and businesses to achieve this.

The Council is committed to ensuring that its customers are treated fairly and will take prompt and effective action by:

- Supporting Complainants and Victims
- Deterring alleged perpetrators
- Attempting to resolve complaints without the need for formal legal action
- Passing serious cases of anti-social behaviour to the specialist Anti Social Behaviour Unit

### **What is Anti-Social Behaviour?**

For the purpose of this summary of procedures anti social behaviour uses the definition under Section 153 of the Housing Act 1996 which is: 'Conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person: and directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of the Council; or consists or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by the Council for an unlawful purpose.'

The people to whom the conduct may cause nuisance or annoyance includes anyone who has the right to live in property owned or managed by the Council, those living in any other property in the neighbourhood (for example owner occupiers or tenants of other landlords), and anyone else lawfully in such property or in the locality (e.g. people working or using local facilities).

### **Examples of Anti-Social Behaviour**

Below is a list of such behaviour which can contribute to anti-social behaviour

- Noise nuisance – This can be in the form of parties, noise from children, shouting, noise from televisions, radios and hi-fi equipment
- The use of threatening behaviour and violence
- Harassment – this can be broken down into elements such as race and ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, mental health and disability
- Verbal abuse – foul and abusive language
- Damage to property – in private or council accommodation such as graffiti, damage to walls and fencing and damage to communal areas.
- Drugs – which can include such behaviour as noise, verbal abuse, theft, damage and supply, use or misuse of illegal drugs?

- Boundary disputes – such as the size, type or height of a wall or hedge

The above is not an exhaustive list.

## **Procedures**

All cases reported in respect of anti-social behaviour will be dealt with promptly and sensitively and the Council will take a victim centred approach.

### **Making a Complaint**

- The member of staff receiving complaints of anti-social behaviour will complete an anti-social record sheet with the details of the complainant including name address and contact details.
- Staff will record details of alleged perpetrator(s) including his/her name and address where it is known.
- Members of staff will record details of the complaint on the record sheet including any dates or times of relevant incidents.
- Arrangements will be made to interview the complainant within 5 working days. For racial harassment or more serious anti-social behaviour the interview will take place within 1 working day or when convenient to the complainant.

### **Interview / Visit Complainant**

Interviews will normally be carried out by a Neighbourhood Champion (Housing Officer) who will:

- Interview the complainant to obtain detailed information about incidents and will discuss and agree the form of action that will be taken.
- Arrange support for the complainant if required
- Start a case file in respect of the complaint
- If appropriate arrange mediation to discuss the matter where there is no threat of violence.
- If appropriate issue the complainant with diary sheets to complete
- If the matter is resolved without further investigation, the Neighbourhood Champion will take appropriate action and advise the complainant by letter.

**If the complainant does not agree for the Council to contact the alleged perpetrator, the reasons will be clearly recorded in the case file and the consequences will be explained to the complainant.**

### **Interview / Visit of Perpetrator**

In most cases the alleged perpetrator will be contacted by letter to invite them to attend an interview or arrange a visit in order to listen to their view of the situation. The interview will be carried out by a Neighbourhood Champion who will advise the alleged perpetrator:

- That complaints have been received
- Details of the complaints
- Consequences of such behaviour
- Conditions of the tenancy agreement

Details of the interview will be recorded and held in the case file. Complainants and perpetrators will be advised in writing of the outcome of the visit.

If necessary further action will be taken and where appropriate Legal action may be instigated but this will be as a last resort.

### **File Preparation**

Neighbourhood Champions will record all information in the case file including diary sheets, information from other agencies; they will also keep contemporaneous notes in respect of the case. Photographic evidence will also be held in the case file of personal damage or damage to property.

### **Investigations Strategy**

Neighbourhood Champions will break down a case and focus attention on the steps that can be taken to modify or stop the behaviour of the perpetrator. If the Neighbourhood Champion is unable to remedy the behaviour a Threshold Test will be applied to the case and the matter will be referred to the Council's specialist Anti Social Behaviour Unit.

### **The Anti Social Behaviour Unit**

The Anti Social Behaviour Unit will only deal with serious cases of anti social behaviour that are referred to them via agencies. The Unit consists of a manager, seconded police officers, anti social behaviour officers, a youth liaison officer and two anti social behaviour support officers.

#### ***The unit offers:-***

- support and advice to witnesses and complainants.
- A 24 hour help line service to those most at risk.
- Witness protection phones and dispersed alarms.
- Staff trained to carry out a wide variety of surveillance under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

### **Visits to Complainants / Perpetrators.**

Further witnesses may be sought and in line with initial reporting of incidents all matters will be dealt with in confidence.

The Anti Social Behaviour Unit will contact the complainants by telephone or letter and arrange to visit and discuss the complaint and agree an action plan.

Perpetrators will be visited; warnings and formal actions may be given verbally and backed up in writing.

The Unit will not promise to instigate legal proceedings; however appropriate measures will be taken to stop anti social behaviour for the protection of complainants. Complainants and witnesses will be contacted by letter when a case is closed. Files will be returned to the local area housing office and information will be kept on the house file.

### **Legal / Non-legal Remedies**

Several options are available in dealing with anti social behaviour.

#### ***Non legal interventions***

- Joint visits by Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and South Yorkshire Police Officers to discuss the behaviour.
- Letters to inform the perpetrators that the behaviour that they are displaying is unacceptable and that action may be taken against them.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts which are voluntary agreements to address behaviour

#### ***Legal Interventions***

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • Notice Seeking Possession (NSP)    | Applicable only to secure tenants.   |
| • Notice of Pending Possession (NPP) | Applicable only to secure tenants within the local authority within their 1 <sup>st</sup> year of tenancy. |
| • Demotion Order                     | Relegation of a secure tenancy to a non secure status.   |
| • Notice to Quit (NTQ)               | Applicable to non-secure and assured short hold tenancies.   |
| • Abatement order.                   | Instigated and served by the Environmental Health Officer.   |
| • Anti-Social Behaviour Order(ASBO)  | Applicable to persons aged 10 years and over.  |
| • Tenancy agreement                  | Rights and responsibility of the tenants and landlord.   |
| • Injunction                         | Prohibitive remedy addressing anti social Behaviour  |
| • Undertaking                        | Agreement to refrain from anti social behaviour without an admission of guilt.                             |

### **Environmental Health**

Noise pollution should primarily be referred to the Environmental Health Service. This is not an exhaustive list, but would include parties, playing loud music, noise from televisions and hi-fi. Issues relating to problems of a filthy and verminous nature should also be referred to the same Office.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If service users are not satisfied with the service provided in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour complaints can be made via the Corporate Customer Complaints Procedure. Information on how to make a complaint can be found in Council Reception areas.

**Contact Telephone Numbers**

Maltby Office  
01709 812637

Dinnington Office  
01909 564171

Wath Office  
01709 873678

Swinton Office  
01709 570384

Rawmarsh Housing Office  
01709 522456

Kimberworth / Munsbrough Office  
01709 336917

Town Centre Office  
01709 522456

Aston Office  
01709 382121

Environmental Health  
01709 823114

South Yorkshire Police  
01142 202020

**Corporate Customer Complaints**

Housing & Environmental  
Performance and Quality Unit  
Eastwood Depot  
Chesterton Road  
Rotherham

**DRAFT****ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September, 2004</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Void property monitoring for 5 July 2004 to 27 August 2004</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Housing and Environmental Services</b>

**5. Summary**

Performance on relet times and rent loss on void properties needs to improve this year for the Service to meet its performance targets, and the needs and aspirations of tenants in Rotherham.

**6. Recommendations**

**That the Cabinet Member notes the action taken and current progress**

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**7. Proposals and Details**

The targets set for HES68 and BVPI 69 are 20 days and 1.25% respectively. The report shows that the number of voids has significantly reduced with performance on rent loss being 1.21%, and the overall time to let dwellings from 1 April 2004 to 27 August 2004 is 19.60 days.

**8. Finance**

No additional resources required. Improved performance will increase rental income.

**9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to re-let tenancies in a timely manner will affect the sustainability of communities and increase rent loss, which in turn reduces the ability of the Service to deliver quality housing management services.

**10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Improved performance on re-letting voids contributes to the Community Plan and neighbourhood renewal agenda by helping to provide sustainable neighbourhoods of quality, choice and aspiration. The actions taken to improve performance include the introduction of guaranteed standard "Houseproud", Local lettings standards, Furnished tenancies, which alongside future Choice based lettings will enhance sustainability because people will choose the area and type of property they live in.

**11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Audit Commission guidance

**Contact Name** : David Abbott, Housing Manager, Tel Ext. 2294

## Appendix 1 – Status of Voids by Area Office as at 27/08/04

District	BVPI 68	League Position	Properties Terminated in Period	Properties Let in Period	Properties Available to Let 27/08/04	Open Access Properties Signed up in Period
Maltby	16.46 days	3 <sup>rd</sup>	34	31	0	0
Dinnington	14.93 days	2 <sup>nd</sup>	17	12	7	0
Wath	23.04 days	8th	39	29	3	9
Swinton	22.12 days	6th	25	18	1	9
Rawmarsh	21.21 days	5th	46	42	1	0
Going Local Pilot	22.52 days	7th	53	47	10	0
East Herringthorpe	17.27 days	4 <sup>th</sup>	33	32	4	0
Town Centre	24.00 days	9th	35	44	9	0
Aston	8.94 days	1st	37	38	0	0

*NB The termination figure includes properties in the Canklow Regeneration Scheme*

**Void Performance Monitoring for the Period 05.07.04– 27.08.04**

**1. The Number and Type of Voids**

- 1.1 The number of voids on 27 August 2004 decreased by thirty from the start of the period to 251 or 1.08% of the stock. The majority of voids, (195 or 77.69%) are those currently excluded from HES 68; these include properties such as those awaiting renovation and disposal.
- 1.2 The number of voids that meet the criteria to be included within the HES 68 decreased during the period to 56. This equates to 0.24% of the stock.

**2. Performance Against BVPI 68**

- 2.1 The definition for HES 68 is, the average re-let times for dwellings let in the financial year. The time is calculated from the day the authority becomes aware that a property is to become void up to the day a tenant is signed up for a property and receives the keys.
- 2.2 **The overall performance against this indicator is 19.60 days** during the period, an improvement of 4.25 days from the last period. Four Neighbourhood Housing Offices are operating within the target of 20 days and the others are on track to meet the target. The steps taken to improve performance during the period are highlighted in section 5.
- 2.3 The performance on allocating open access properties has continued with 18 open access properties being let in the period. The overall performance if all open access properties were removed from the indicator would be 20.01 days. This indicates that open access properties are no longer having a significant impact on the indicator.
- 2.4 **The current level of performance, based on the first quarter of 2004/5 comparative ALMO data would place the authority in the top quartile of All England ALMO's and move it into second place behind Carrick District Council on 17 days. However, it must be assumed that other authorities have also improved over the last two months.**
- 2.5 A new Local Performance Indicator was introduced for 2003/04 - HES14. This indicator measures the average time taken to let a void from when one tenancy terminated until the next one starts as defined by dates entered onto the open house management system. This indicator excludes all those properties that are excluded from HES.68. Performance based on this indicator is 15.88 days during the period.

**3. Terminations, Lettings and Properties Available to Let**

- 3.1 **Terminations & Lettings** There were 319 terminations in the period of which 288 met the criteria to be included in HES 68 and 293 lettings. The cumulative figures for this year are 762 terminations and 801 lettings. In addition there have been 33 new tenancies created by mutual exchanges since April 2004.

### **3.2 Property Available to Let**

The number of available to let properties at the start of the period is 35.

### **4. Performance against HES 69**

**4.1** Definition for HES 69 is the percentage of rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant.

**4.2** The amount of rent income lost on voids up to 27 August 2004 has improved from 1.33% at the last report to **1.21%**. This level of performance, based on the 2001/02 comparative data, would continue to place the authority in the upper quartile for Metropolitan Authorities. This indicator has been discontinued as a National Indicator and is difficult to collect more up to date data to give a meaningful comparison.

### **5. Actions Taken to Improve Performance in the Period**

#### **HES.68**

- Performance monitoring continued to be tightened with individual managers being personally invited to explain performance in addition to the clinics.
- The Furnished Tenancy scheme, and Starter Packs had an increased take up (37 and 36 respectively) during the period and are on track to achieve the year end target. The Furnished Tenancy scheme will create more sustainable tenancies by providing furnished accommodation to those who may not otherwise be able to furnish a home. Similarly the Starter Packs are helping to provide basic amenities to those who would not be able to afford the cost of a new tenancy.
- The local lettings strategies were reviewed following consultation with our partners. The strategies will be presented to the cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2004.
- A trial commenced on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2004 at East Herringthorpe of a new monitoring system called COREDIGITAL. This system will help improve sustainability by identifying patterns of refusals to a greater accuracy and prompting more detailed analysis of the customers income and eligibility .
- A choice based lettings team was set up to drive the implementation of Choice based lettings in 2004/5. This team is raising awareness of the scheme with staff and customers. Progress includes putting in place the processes and Information Technology to support Choice Based lettings.
- A BME Housing Strategy has resulted from the BME consultation day held on the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2004. The day and subsequent consultation provided feedback on how to make the voids and allocations service more accessible to all.
- The Open Access website and displays have been updated to improve accessibility. The Open Access List was also issued to 150 customers and the Tenants and Residents Associations.

## HES.69

The cabinet decisions on the disposal of the Tarran Properties at Maltby and sheltered housing complex at Almond Place, Wath has helped reduce the number of voids and rent loss included in the indicator.

A review of the processes for assessing miscellaneous voids has helped reduce a backlog of voids awaiting sale.

### 6. District Performance and Issues

- 6.1 The teams have been given a target of letting one more property than is terminated each week. The table in Appendix 1 identifies the performance of the district offices during the period.
- 6.2 Due to the Local letting strategies, the impact of letting long term voids is no longer a significant issue.
- 6.3 The issue of delays caused by asbestos in certain gas boilers has greatly reduced with the progress of the annual gas maintenance programme and revised pre-termination procedures. The remaining areas to be completed includes part of the Wath area and Going Local. These will be completed in October.
- 6.4 The improvements to the Electrical testing and gas check procedures have reduced delays, although there is still improvements that can be made on the time taken for some electrical checks. This is being reviewed and will be reported in the next report..
- 6.5 There have been procurement of kitchens and security doors continues to improve and is longer a significant issue .
- 6.6 The return of regeneration properties at Wath has had a positive impact on performance.

### 7. Sustainability

The 'sustainability of tenancies' indicator (HES5) measures the percentage of terminating tenancies in the year that have lasted longer than 12 months. This is on the basis that tenancies which last longer than this can be considered 'successful' and that it is less likely that subsequent terminations will be due to failure to maintain tenancies on the tenants part, or provide appropriate management support on that of Housing Services. Performance during the 12 months up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August,2004 was 96.26% which is a continuous improvement. This figure does not include tenancies terminating within 12 months due to transfers, mutual exchanges and deaths. If these were included the figure would be 93.89%

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