

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

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

Date: Thursday, 24 February
2005

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

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

FOR INFORMATION

5. Draft Corporate Plan - Progress Report (Pages 1 - 54)
- presentation by Colin Bulger, Chief Executive's Office

FOR MONITORING

6. Air Pollution in Rotherham (Pages 55 - 66)
- report by Mark Parry, Manager, Neighbourhood Development
7. Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme (Pages 67 - 70)
- report by Robert Pearce, Principal Policy and Planning Officer, Neighbourhoods
8. Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services (Pages 71 - 81)
Minutes of meetings held on 10th 17th and 24th January, 2005.

MINUTES - FOR INFORMATION

9. Recycling Group (Pages 82 - 85)

Minutes of meeting held on 4th January, 2005

10. Minutes of Scrutiny Panel held on 13th and 27th January, 2005 (Pages 86 - 97)
11. Minutes of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 14th and 28th January, 2005 (Pages 98 - 105)
12. Minutes of the Asylum Seekers Working Party held on 2nd February, 2005 (Pages 106 - 108)
13. Exclusion of the press and public
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
14. The Formation of the Arms Length Housing Management Organisation (ALMO) (Pages 109 - 301)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 9 of the Act (accommodation provided by the Council/negotiation of terms).
15. Housing Revenue Account
- presentation by Anne Ellis, Finance and Accountancy Manager
(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 of the Act – expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority)

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Thursday, 10 March 2005**

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor Atkin

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Hall

Councillors:-Burke, Clarke, Hodgkiss, Jackson, McNeely, Nightingale, Rushforth, P. A. Russell, Vines
and The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	24th February 2005
3.	Title:	Draft Corporate Plan – Progress Report
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executives Department

5. Summary

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

6. Recommendations

- 1. That Members consider the draft Corporate Plan and how it could be improved**
- 2. Endorse the format and direction the Corporate Plan is taking and proposals for the consultation process**
- 3. Endorse the minor changes in wording to the vision as proposed.**

7. Progress and future work requirements

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

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

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

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

Service Planning

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

Consultation

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

Member input

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

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

Senior Managers

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

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

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

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

Staff

A] Wavehill Consultants have been engaged to support the consultation process. They will be available to Programme Areas in supplying advice on how to conduct consultation with staff. CX dept. will manage this aspect, and be discussing it with all Programme Areas

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

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

Public

A] Wavehill Consultants have been engaged to support the consultation process for both the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy—which will be undertaken together. They will provide advice to the council on how to conduct the consultation and what methodologies will be the most appropriate. Members are asked to note that we are not proposing to consult on the detailed content of the plans, nor the specific wording in the vision statement but rather the overall vision and direction and to ask what particular needs local people have and what they want to see improving in the future. Public consultation will include a workshop held with the Network of Partnerships and Voice, area based events involving Area Assemblies and Parish Councils, focus groups and so on.

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

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

Partners

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

Amendments to the Vision Statement

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

8. Finance

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

9. Risks and Uncertainties

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

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

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

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

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

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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

Contact Name:

Lee Adams Assistant Chief Executive Ex 2775 Email: lee.adams@rotherham.gov.uk

**Colin Bulger Head of Policy and Partnerships
Ex 2735 Email: colin.bulger@rotherham.gov.uk**

Appendix 1

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN

2005 – 2010

First Draft, 20 January 2005

Foreword from Leader and Chief Executive – to be inserted

Introduction

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

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

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

This plan demonstrates how the Council will continue to support:

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

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

A new Corporate Plan

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

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

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

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

The Council as an organisation is changing too.

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

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

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

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

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

The Current Position

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

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

- A growing economy – between 1996 and 2003, there was a 3.4% increase in VAT registered businesses in the borough (compared to just 0.9% for the Yorkshire & Humber region).
- Dealing with crime and the fear of crime – domestic burglary rates fell by 24% in 2003/4 to be the lowest in South Yorkshire and residents stating they 'were very concerned about being a victim of crime' fell from 51% in 2003 to 27% in 2004.

- Better employment prospects – latest figures in 2004 showed that Rotherham's employment rate of 75.8% was above the national average (in 2000, our rate was 7.3% below).
- A good natural and built environment – in 2004 residents' satisfaction with our parks and open spaces increased to 70% in 2004 (from 62% in 2001).

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

Our Vision

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

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

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

OUR PRIORITY THEMES	
Rotherham <u>Learning</u>	Rotherham people will be self-confident and have a sense of purpose. They will aspire and develop to achieve their full potential in their chosen careers, work, leisure and contributions to local life. Learning and development opportunities will be available and accessible to all, Rotherham people will be recognised as being informed, skilled and creative, innovative and constructively challenging.
Rotherham <u>Achieving</u>	Rotherham will be a prosperous place, with a vibrant mixed and diverse economy, and flourishing local businesses. Inequalities between parts of the borough and social groups will be minimised. There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups. There will be a wide choice of sustainable transport. Villages and rural areas will be revitalised and provide wonderful quality of life amongst Rotherham's beautiful countryside.
Rotherham <u>Alive</u>	Rotherham will be a place where people feel good, are active, live life to the full, and have fun. Rotherham will celebrate its history -building on the past, and creating and welcoming the new. People will be able to express themselves and be involved in many high quality cultural, political, artistic, physical and creative activities. The media, arts and literature will flourish. People will enjoy good health and live healthy lives. As a society we will invest in the next generation.
Rotherham <u>Safe</u>	A place where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with

	good quality homes for all, and accessible local facilities and services. There will be attractive buildings and public space; peaceful and thriving communities free from crime, drugs and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Environments and people will be protected and nurtured, children will be safe from harm and neglect, a preventive approach will be taken to minimise crime, accidents and hazards; and to further strengthen resilience and thus safeguard all Rotherham citizens.
Rotherham Proud	Rotherham people and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Equalities and diversity will be highly valued. We will be renowned for our welcome, our friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Rotherham will be a caring place, the most vulnerable will be supported. Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making.

OUR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES	
Sustainable Development	Ensuring all development is sustainable, does not harm the environment or people both now and for the future.
Fairness	All individuals in Rotherham will have equality of opportunity and choice. We will treat each other with fairness and respect, and our diverse needs and qualities will be understood and valued. Rotherham will actively challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination and ensure that all the priorities encompass an equalities approach.

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

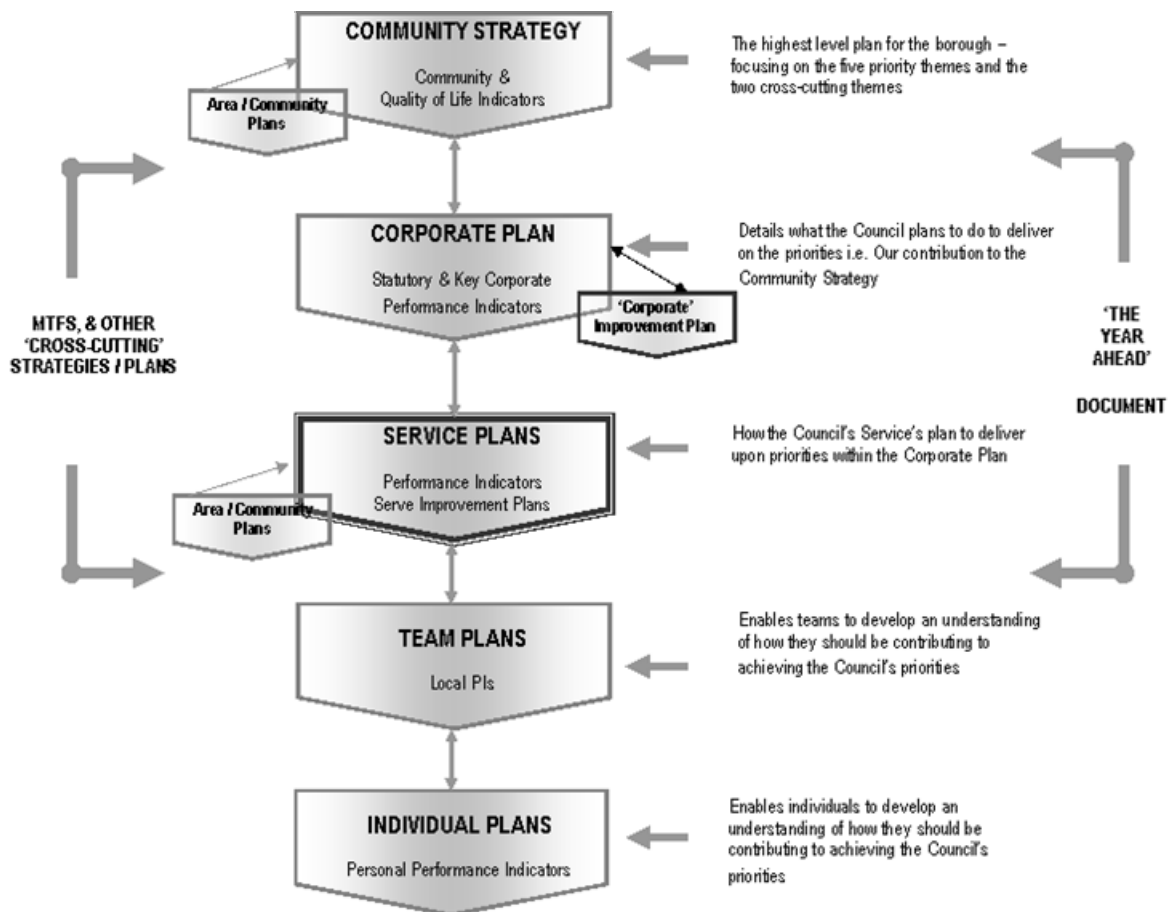
The vision and this Corporate Plan is drawn from an understanding of the borough's current position, and where we want to be, but key to its formulation has been the views of residents and communities. Under each of the themes in the Plan details of "what you told us" through consultation are summarised,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

What you told us – about the Borough and the Council
- to be inserted following consultation

Our Planning Framework

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

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



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

The Future Challenges

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

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

Nationally there continues to be a focus on neighbourhood renewal with multi-billion pound flagship initiatives such as the Communities Plan offering major opportunities to improve the quality of life for people, tackling poverty, inequalities, deprivation, crime and anti-social behaviour and to improve the quality of public spaces and buildings. *RMBC itself has is developing a specific focus on Neighbourhoods and their development, and through the establishment of an Arms Length Management Organisation will be seeking to make extensive investment in its housing stock, and its future management. A masterplan for the regeneration of Rotherham town centre, investment in educational and cultural facilities using the Private Finance Initiative and the establishment of a network of Council 'First Stop Shops' are all features of the renewal agenda which is reflected in this Plan.*

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

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

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

What we aim to Achieve

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

ROTHERHAM LEARNING

Context and challenges

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

- Education is a key national priority and one of the shared priorities between national and local government. Research consistently identifies success in education and training as a route out of poverty, increasing people's self-confidence, and ensuring people have the necessary skills to take advantage of new employment opportunities.
- The Government has introduced a series of reforms in education and training. These pave the way for a transformation of the educational system for children, adult learners, parents and employers including more choice and personalisation, greater freedom for schools and possibly major changes in the qualifications system. The five major outcomes for children, published in the Children Bill together underpin all of the factors necessary to support positive learning outcomes for every child.
- Skill levels in Rotherham's workforce at an all time high but despite improvements lag behind the national and European norms. Improving the skills and qualifications of the Borough's existing and potential workforce is key to improving prosperity and quality of life. Good quality crèche and early years provision at the heart of local communities will place a renewed value on education and engage children and their parents at the earliest stage.
- Educational attainment is improving in Rotherham but still lags behind the national average. In 2003/04 44.4% of year 11 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE A* to C passes compared to 52.9% nationally. The achievement of some of the most vulnerable groups remains a concern which is being addressed.
- There will be significant job growth in those occupations requiring higher skill levels, with a growing proportion demanding first degrees from applicants. For those who possess these skills the picture is generally very good, with high and growing incomes, and sustained employment. The unskilled face great difficulties as the amount of unskilled jobs continues to fall, and will be concentrated in lower paid and less secure jobs and occupations. Skills shortage is a growing concern for all employers in the Borough, including the Council by far the largest employer in Rotherham. These shortages are particularly acute in some higher skills occupations such as ICT and social work.
- Differences between adult educational attainment locally and nationally are largest amongst those with the higher qualifications. The most recent figures show the percentage of the working age population qualified to at least NVQ level 2 at 58.4% compared to 65.3% nationally, however the percentage qualified to at least NVQ level 4 is only 17.3% compared to 25% nationally.

- Rotherham has a higher rate of economically active adults with no qualifications than the England average - 31.7% compared to 26%. There are also significant variations at the local level with rates from 24% to over 42% in Rotherham's wards.
- Adult Education enrolments are increasing but at less than 1% of all 15-59 year olds Rotherham's rate in 2002 was amongst the lowest in the Region.
- There has been a major focus on improving early years provision. Local surveys show that local people are generally satisfied with the provision of early education for 3 to 4 year olds in Rotherham with 77% (with children aged 0 – 14) satisfied with the provision in their local area.
- The Council in partnership with a special purpose company, Transform Schools, to deliver its major schools PFI project. The overall goals are to improve the learning environment, levels of educational attainment and increase community use. This project includes the construction of ten new schools and substantial upgrade and refurbishment of a further five. It covers a mix of secondary and primary schools and includes energy management, repairs and maintenance, cleaning and catering.
- The contribution offered by informal learning opportunities by participating in culture and leisure, and from out of school learning (e.g. homework clubs, youth service activities) will need to be used to its fullest potential to improve both academic and social education in the borough.

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

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

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

External views

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

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

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Learning

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

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

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

Context and challenges

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

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

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

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

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

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

External views

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

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

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

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Achieving

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

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

ROTHERHAM ALIVE

Context and challenges

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

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

External views

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

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

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Alive

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

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

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

Context and challenges

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

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

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

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

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

External views

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

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

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

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Safe

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

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

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

Context and challenges

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

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

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

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

External views

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

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

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

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

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Proud

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

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area to xx% by 2010• Establish new area assembly models within the framework of the Local Strategic Partnership which clearly links to the council's democratic decision making process by 2006 |
|--|--|

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Context and challenges

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

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

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

External views

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

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

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

Our Plans to ensure Sustainable Development in Rotherham

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

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

FAIRNESS

Context and challenges

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

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

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

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

What you told us

- to be inserted following consultation

The Current Position

Our Performance

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

External views

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

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

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

In addition the Council needs to:

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

Our Plans to make Rotherham Fair

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

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

RMBC - An Excellent Council

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

We will be....

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

Key Challenges Ahead

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

Ambitions

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

Priorities

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

Capacity

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

Performance Management

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

Current Performance

Ambitions

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

Priorities

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

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

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

Capacity

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

Performance Management

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

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

External View

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

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

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

	- All Council staff to receive equality and diversity training by 2008.
	-

Financing the Plan

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

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

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

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

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

How we know we are on track

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

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

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

RMBC – Your Council

RMBC has 63 Members representing the 21 wards in the Borough. The Council's Cabinet, which comprises the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and 'Portfolio Holders' take key decisions on Council matters. A number of Scrutiny Committees, on which non-Cabinet members sit, hold the decisions of the Cabinet and the Council to account. All meetings of Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees are open to the public. In addition RMBC is devolving responsibility for many local decisions to its 7 Area Assemblies, and community involvement at these meetings is

actively encouraged. Supporting the Members are the officers of the Council, within each of its 'Programme Areas'. These programme areas are headed by the Council's corporate management team.

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

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

Feedback form

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panels
2.	Date:	24th February 2005
3.	Title:	Air Pollution in Rotherham
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

This report is a response to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panels report of September 2003. It details the changes in national legislation and the work undertaken by the Air Quality Unit since that report.

6. Recommendations

The Unit's work to September 2003 was examined by the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panels report. This report updates the work undertaken by the Unit and responds to the recommendations.

7. Proposals and Details

The work of the Air Quality Unit is largely governed by national legislation and guidance. The nature of the work means that the staff need to work closely with other Councils in South Yorkshire, sharing and promoting best practice and working on joint initiatives. The report outlines some of this work, especially that since the Scrutiny Panel Report. The appendix contains the Unit's response to and actions on the recommendations made.

8. Finance

Contained within existing budgets

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Air quality monitoring is a highly technical area, requiring considerable skills. The results produced by such monitoring need careful interpretation, in order that valid conclusions can be drawn. The Unit then needs to use these conclusions whilst following legal and technical guidance issued by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in producing reports detailing the work carried out and the proposed course of action. These reports are submitted to Government and are analysed by consultants working on behalf of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and where appropriate Authorities are challenged on their work.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

At present the Unit has met all targets for submission of reports to Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel Report "Air Quality in Rotherham" September 2003

The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, January 2000.

Contact Name : Mark Parry, Manager, Neighbourhood Enforcement, Ext 3121, mark.parry@rotherham.gov.uk

Appendix

**AIR POLLUTION IN
ROTHERHAM**

**Scrutiny Review-Response from
Neighbourhood Services**

Background

Air Quality Developments post September 2003

In early 2003 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs produced a new timetable for the statutory review and assessments of air quality to be carried out by local authorities. This comprised a programme of new “Updating and Screening Assessments”, “Detailed Assessments” and “Annual Air Quality Progress Reports” as well as the continuing of the “Further Assessments” which are required to be provided within 12 months of the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area and associated Action Plans.

The Council first looked at the M1 corridor as a potential area of poor air quality, based on Government guidance as to which areas should be given priority. More recent guidance from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has concentrated much more on heavily trafficked “A” roads especially at junctions. As a result of this, air quality in other areas of the Borough has been the focus of work since the Scrutiny report.

The Council’s “Updating Screening and Assessment” was completed in April 2003 meeting the Government’s deadline. The Council’s Detailed Assessments for the A630 (St Annes), A6021 (Wellgate) and A629 (Wortley Road) were also completed on time for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter; these were subsequently approved by Government experts. As a result, Air Quality Management Areas were declared in November 2004 for town centre routes: Wellgate (nitrogen dioxide); St Ann’s (nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter), and Wortley Road (nitrogen dioxide).

The Unit’s application for Supplementary credit approval was granted by Government, and new “real time” monitoring devices have been purchased and installed. These devices are at St Anns for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, and at Bradgate on the A629 for nitrogen dioxide.

The Unit has also enlarged the existing nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube survey in partnership with the other South Yorkshire Councils and the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive. In Rotherham, these were centred around the A629 between the town centre to Junction 35 of the M1, encompassing the new air quality management area, and also around the Waverley area where there is considerable development proposed in an area adjacent to the existing M1 Air Quality Management Area.

Preliminary work was carried out for the pollutant lead as the Aldwarke Corus works is now the largest single lead-emitter in the country. In December 2004 the “Detailed Assessment” for lead was completed and submitted to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It concluded that if leaded steel production remains at current level, exposure of the nearest residents should not exceed the objective for lead in 2008. Neighbourhood Services continues to monitor lead at two locations- Roundwood and Rotherham Golf Clubs. Data from the monitoring is used to validate air quality modelling work.

Using supplementary credit approval, the South Yorkshire Councils have created the "Care4air campaign", which is a partnership between them and South Yorkshire Travelwise. The aim is for Care4Air to highlight what is happening in the region on air quality issues. In particular, Care4Air aims to provide individuals, organisations, schools and businesses with information that will enable them to do their bit for air quality. Celebrity Bill Oddie launched the web site and gained coverage on regional TV and other media in May 2004. Paul Hudson, BBC Look North, also presented Care4air awards to local winners in October 2004. Care4Air has an award winning website at www.care4air.org.

The new format Local Transport Plan (LTP2) is currently being drafted. A change in Government guidance has meant that air quality is one of four main themes. The new plan will seek to achieve the attainment of the National Air Quality Objectives and a programmed reduction in pollutant levels across the region to maximise any health benefits. The existing Action Plans relating to AQMAs which have been declared as a result of the local road network will be included as part of the LTP.

1.1 Air Quality in Rotherham Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Response from Neighbourhood Services

Recommendations refer to the Air Quality in Rotherham Scrutiny Review, Report of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panels, September 2003.

1.1.1 Recommendation 15.2 Communication with the Highways Agency and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Communication with the Highways Agency has continued on air quality nationally and between the Agency and South Yorkshire Councils. The Agency have been closely involved in the M1 Corridor Air Quality Partnership, but were not directly concerned with air quality issues. However, in the last year or so the Highways Agency Brief has been changed by Government and now includes specific commitments to take air quality into account when proposing road schemes. A presentation was made recently by the Highways Agency on proposals for the M1 and M18.

The Highways Agency have drafted their Route Management Strategy, which contains policy objectives of preserving the built and natural environment. The Route Objective for the M1 corridor includes specific undertaking to seek to improve air quality, and recognises that part of the route is in an Air Quality Management Area.

The Highways Agency are key stakeholders in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and are actively involved in development of the new version of the LTP, known as LTP2.

It is understood that the recommendation of the Panel that the Leader write to the Highways Agency and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has not yet been implemented.

1.1.2 Recommendation 15.3 Motorway Speed Restrictions

It is accepted that emissions from vehicles increase at high speeds and one potential method of improving air quality in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) is to impose speed restrictions. Most of the M1 motorway that runs between Sheffield and Rotherham has been designated as an AQMA and our partners, Sheffield City Council, recently commissioned a study from a national consultancy, where the effects were modelled of a reduction in the speed limit on pollutant emissions and air quality. The baseline traffic flow data from the emissions database uses a reference speed for the M1 of 75 miles per hour. The scheme assessed assumed that the average speed on the affected section of the motorway drops from 75 mph to 60 mph.

It was assumed that the scheme would operate over approximately a 12 km stretch of the M1 from Junction 32 to 36 in both directions. Although not all of falls within the AQMA, it would be necessary for there to be a “lead-in” section on both sides of the motorway to minimise the effects of sudden changes on speed. The scheme would be enforced by fixed and/or mobile road safety cameras located along the relevant stretch of the M1.

The only effect modelled has been the reduction of traffic speeds as described above.

Costs of implementing the scheme

The major costs of implementing the scheme are concerned with the costs of enforcing a reduced speed limit. It would be necessary to use speed enforcement cameras on the motorway in order to ensure that traffic kept to the reduced speed limit, otherwise it is highly likely that large numbers of drivers would simply ignore the new speed limit. A number of different types of speed enforcement camera are available for use ranging from Truvelo cameras which take still photographs of speeding vehicles to SPECS digital cameras which tend to be used on high speed roads. Speed camera enforcement on trunk roads and motorways is carried out using SPECS cameras that utilise ANPR technology to capture the registration details of offending vehicles.

Table 1 Estimated costs associated with M1 speed restriction scheme

	Scheme enforced using Truvelo cameras	Scheme enforced using SPECS digital cameras
Enforcement costs	£0.7 million to £1.6 million	approximately £4.8 million

The estimates above are based on enforcing 24 kilometres of motorway (12 km in each direction). The estimate for Truvelo cameras is based on siting camera housing and sensor units at 1 kilometre intervals. Camera housings can be equipped with real cameras or with dummy cameras that simply flash when speeding vehicles pass. Camera housing and sensor units cost £20,000 to £25,000 per unit,

cameras cost £45,000 per unit, and dummy cameras cost £3,000 per unit. The costs of enforcing the scheme with SPECS cameras is based on a scheme in place on the A616 Stocksbridge bypass; the SPECS system in place there costs £800,000 to cover a 2 km stretch of road in both direction.

Estimated impact of a hypothetical scheme on emissions and air quality

The analysis above has been used to assess the benefits of a hypothetical scheme in Rotherham and Sheffield.

The measure of reducing speed on the M1 has been assessed. It is also compared with other potential measures to indicate the potential effectiveness compared with the main national-level road transport policies, i.e. the Euro standards and fuel quality standards. There are a number of ways that the individual schemes and measures can be evaluated and ranked. These include:

- The emissions reductions achieved of the two pollutants (PM₁₀ and NO_x);
- The progress towards the air quality objectives;
- The reductions in population weighted exposure;
- The health and economic benefits (expressed as monetary benefits from the combination of the improvements in the two pollutants).

It is stressed that the different ways of ranking schemes reflect different considerations of effectiveness. There are two main ways to assess the schemes in relation to air quality improvements. The first is to focus on the progress towards legally binding air quality limit values or objectives. This seeks to ensure environmental protection and environmental justice by protecting human health, i.e. by ensuring air quality concentrations do not exceed levels known to impact on health. The second is to focus on delivering greatest health benefit, i.e. to focus on economic efficiency by delivering most health benefit for least cost. This leads to a consideration of cost-benefit analysis.

The following set of table presents an estimation of the impact of measures in terms of their emissions improvements for the consistent case study in Rotherham. The impact has been calculated based on work done by AEA Technology for our partner Sheffield City Council.

Table 2. Ranking of some Hypothetical Measures in terms of Annual Emissions Performance. Case Study for NO_x (tonnes per year)

Rank	Scheme	NO _x (t/year)	Estimated % change Nox emissions
1	LEZ (Euro 3 replacement vehicles)	-530	-3.5
2	LEZ (Euro 2+RPC)	-200	-1.3
3	M1 speed restriction	-120	-0.8
4	Congestion Charge	-4	-0.03
5	Quality Bus Initiative (based on South Bradford scheme)	-2.5	-0.02
Baseline Emissions		15000	

LEZ = Low emission zone

The estimated set up cost per annual tonne of NO_x emission improvement of the M1 speed restriction measure is £40,000.

1.1.3 Recommendation 15.4 Babbie study

Noted.

1.1.4 Recommendation 15.5 Tree Planting

Further tree planting on land adjacent to the M1 is constrained by the lack of availability of suitable land. However, any tree planting within the borough will have a positive impact, particularly on the levels of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. South Yorkshire Forest Partnership are currently active creating new woodlands in the South Yorkshire Forest area. They are currently running a 'Branch out for Business' campaign where organisations can, for example, calculate their business mileage and plant the appropriate number of trees to compensate for the carbon dioxide emissions resulting from this mileage. One local authority example is that of Doncaster Council's Pollution Control Section, who have committed to a local tree planting scheme.

Rotherham Council has also been active, during 2003-4 the Neighbourhoods Service has provided land for the creation of a South Yorkshire Forest Community Woodland of 9 Hectares at Warren Vale closed landfill site. Other proposals for community woodland projects are also being worked on.

Rotherham Council is also part of the "Care4Air" publicity initiative which rewards good environmental practice. The Care4Air initiative supports the planting of trees through the "Gift that Grows" scheme which encourages donations which are used to plant trees.

1.1.5 Recommendation 15.7 Brampton Bierlow

Officers regularly visit the area and actively address any smoking chimneys.

A press release was issued on the subject of the use of unsuitable fuels in May 2004. (attached),

An interview was given on Radio Sheffield

A leaflet was produced and circulated in partnership with health authority,

Area Assembly and Parish Council meetings were attended to explain first hand the problems of unsuitable fuel use.

Air quality in Brampton Bierlow has improved significantly since the declaration of the Air Quality Management Area. During 2004, no exceedences of either the 15 minute or 24 hour health-based objectives have been monitored. Neighbourhood Services intend to continue to monitor the levels of sulphur dioxide in Brampton, with a view to possibly revoking the AQMA Order in 2006.

1.1.6 Recommendation 15.9 Vehicle Emissions Testing

Vehicle emission testing was a “one off” project, with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs inviting bids for the year 2002/3. Funding of £300,000 was applied for by the South Yorkshire Councils and was granted, and in the year the majority of the funding was used for publicity and free testing of vehicles, with a more modest amount used for compulsory stopping and testing at roadside. Similar scale funding was applied for in the following year to continue the project. However, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs decided to discontinue the scheme, and it was not possible for the project to continue.

Local Transport Plan (2) 2006-2011 is currently in the process of being developed. One of the four themes is air quality. One measure being considered for inclusion in LTP2 is reviving the South Yorkshire Vehicle Emissions Testing (SYVET) programme. If included in LTP2, funding for SYVET will be part of the South Yorkshire partners bid.

1.1.7 Recommendation 15.10 – Orgreave / Waverley

The 80 acre site at Waverley has recently completed progress through the planning system, and the permission included for comprehensive funding of public transport. It also included a requirement for green travel plans for all commuters.

In addition to recommendations made regarding public transport for any large development, Neighbourhood Services are suggesting the implementation of Low Emission Zones (LEZs) for major schemes such as Waverley/Orgreave.

1.1.8 Recommendation 15.11 – Support for Supertram

Noted.

1.1.9 Recommendation 15.12 New vehicles

Neighbourhood Services' fleet includes several LPG fuel vehicles. The new vehicle acquisition contract awarded on xx/xx/xx allows the flexibility to acquire more "green" vehicles where service demands allow. Andy Bramall 4311

1.1.10 Recommendation 15.13 Tinsley marshalling

Noted. This proposal was supported by Economic and Development Services, however the project appears to have been abandoned by the applicant.

1.1.11 Recommendation 15.14 Air Quality and Planning Guidance

Neighbourhood Services have drafted guidance on air quality and planning. New national Planning Policy Statement PPS23, which addresses sustainable development, was published in November 2004. Rotherham's guidance will be updated taking account of PPS23. In addition, the aim is to produce advice for developers in leaflet form.

1.1.12 Recommendation 15.15 J33/34 Community Forum

Noted.

1.1.13 Recommendation 15.16 Conversion to gas heating

The 'Achieving Decent Homes' initiative has resulted in conversion of many Council properties from solid fuel to gas heating. For example, 90 conversions were carried out in the Brampton Bierlow area, which has been a major contributor to the improvements in air quality in the AQMA.

1.1.14 Recommendation 15.17 Public Health

This area of work is covered by the Health Protection Agency. It is recognised that the vast majority of diseases are more common in poorer people. Response from Dr Kevin Perrett (Health Protection Agency for Rotherham and Barnsley) has been sought.

'I have had a preliminary conversation with John Radford (Director of Public Health) about this important request from the AQ Scrutiny Panel. John and I are agreed this is an important question which should be addressed and recommend using a Health Impact Assessment approach. John has agreed that Rotherham Primary Care Trust could lead on this, with Health Protection Agency input, but that this would be a considerable undertaking and require significant resources, in the order perhaps of £50K. I agree that Sheffield South East Primary Care Trust might well have an interest in this idea as well, as might Barnsley, who have similar concerns. I've copied this email to the relevant DPHs therefore. Our answer is therefore, yes, we would very much like to undertake such an analysis, although clearly there does need to be considerable further discussion as to how this would be done and how it would be funded.'

Care4Air Press Release

Reducing Air Pollution in Brampton Bierlow May 2004

Rotherham Council and the South Yorkshire air quality partnership, Care4Air, are kick starting an awareness campaign aimed at dealing with the illegal use of certain solid fuels in Brampton Bierlow, an area that is currently suffering from poor air quality.

One source of the problem is thought to be the use of some poor quality solid fuels for domestic heating, in particular one fuel known as Petrocoke. Petrocoke is an industrial fuel which burns at a higher temperature than ordinary fuels, and can cause damage to domestic grates. It also contains more sulphur than ordinary fuels, which makes the air quality poor. It is not approved for use in areas like Brampton Bierlow.

In order to make sure residents are aware of the problem, leaflets have been posted to every home in the area. Julie Kent from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council said: " The leaflet encourages people to use the correct fuels for use in their domestic appliances such as fires and tells residents where to buy these fuels. It's a good idea to get a receipt from your coal merchant so you know exactly what fuel's being delivered. If you think you're being given the wrong fuel call Environmental Health on 01709 823172 It's vital that people living in Brampton Bierlow can improve their own environment and ultimately their futures by making sure they burn the proper solid fuels."

Rotherham Council is also contributing to the improvement of the local air quality through the conversion of some Council owned homes to gas fired central heating. This form of heating causes less pollution and produces a cleaner environment.

Mark Daly from the Care4Air campaign wants residents to be aware of the benefits of having cleaner air: "Reducing air pollution helps the environment and peoples health. If residents use the correct solid fuels they can help us meet government targets for air pollution. This would be great for the environment and make life easier for people with asthma or bronchitis."

Wentworth Primary Care Trust are offering support for residents who are already suffering health problems, such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis. They're giving advice on how to cope with these illnesses, without having to go to hospital."

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Environment Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	24 th February, 2005
3.	Title:	Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

To give consideration to the progress of the Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme and steps to be taken to promote participation in the Scheme.

6. Recommendations

THAT MEMBERS NOTE THE PROGRESS OF THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME INTRODUCED IN TWO AREAS COVERING BRINSWORTH AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT PATHFINDER, EASTWOOD AND SPRINGWELL GARDENS.

NOTE THE ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO BEING TAKEN TO PROMOTE TAKE-UP OF THE SCHEME

7. Proposals and Details

The principle aim of the Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme is to encourage landlords throughout the district to maintain their properties in a safe and decent condition, in good repair with a good standard of management.

The Accreditation Scheme is being led by the Neighbourhoods Programme Area.

The scheme is about giving recognition to good quality privately rented housing that meets the standards set down in the scheme.

The standards are based primarily upon existing legislation but also include some additional requirements aimed at protecting the health and safety of tenants i.e. timely and regular gas and electrical safety checks.

It provides a means through which to acknowledge and actively promote good standards and management practice by landlords in the private rented sector. There are benefits arising from the operation of a successful Accreditation Scheme to Landlords, Tenants, the Local Authority and the Community.

The scheme was introduced initially in two pilot areas covering Brinsworth and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder area in Eastwood and Springwell Gardens.

To date we have only received applications from three landlords for Accreditation under the pilot scheme.

Inspections have been carried out on eight properties that were covered by the applications and all of them met the required standards.

It is intended at this stage that the operation of the Accreditation Scheme is extended for a further period of six months. This extension will provide an opportunity to promote more intensively the benefits of the scheme.

In particular we will:-

- continue our work with Rotherham and District Residential Landlord Association with the objective of encouraging participation of landlords with properties in the Pilot Areas;
- arrange a presentation to the Landlords Association by the Community Services Section about proposals for a Property Shop and choice based lettings in February 2005;
- a presentation to promote the benefits of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme is to be given to the Voluntary Sector Housing Services in March 2005;
- work with RoBond, the Rotherham Bond Guarantee Scheme, to identify landlords in the Pilot Areas that may be interested in participating in the Accreditation Scheme;
- work with the regeneration team to identify private rented sector properties in the pilot areas;

- promote the benefits of the Accreditation Scheme to lettings agents operating in the locality with properties in the Pilot Areas;
- seek out landlords in the pilot areas and work with them to encourage them to seek accredited status and to raise the quality of the accommodation they provide;
- continue to seek out Best Practice advice and information which will benefit the successful operation of the scheme through our membership of the National Accreditation Network and through contact with other local authorities with schemes in place.

It will enable us to widen our experience of working with landlords and others to encourage them to apply for Accreditation before it is extended to other areas.

8. Finance

The Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme is being run as a voluntary scheme and consequently no charge is being made to those applying for accreditation status.

The operation of the scheme in the pilot areas is being achieved through the use of existing staff resources.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Lack of interest from landlords who are not concerned with raising or maintaining good standards in their accommodation.

Housing may be particularly poor and, therefore, landlords are unwilling or unable to raise standards to achieve accreditation status.

High demand from tenants looking for accommodation in the private rented sector may reduce the possible benefit of creating a “market edge” that accreditation will give.

The recent rise in the value of properties across the District has prompted a number of landlords to sell their properties with a net reduction in the private rented sector.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Through the introduction of an Accreditation Scheme, the Council would have a tool with which to improve the quality of private rented houses throughout Rotherham. This is consistent with the Housing Strategy which aims to increase access to, and choice of, accommodation across all housing sectors and improve the character and diversity of neighbourhoods through housing market renewal.

It would also contribute to raising home energy efficiency standards that will support Rotherham’s Affordable Warmth Strategy.

It supports the Community Strategy Scheme priority to create safe and inclusive communities.

The insistence on timely and regular gas and electricity safety checks is a key health and safety issue.

Accredited landlords will be confident that their property is of an acceptable standard and that that they are providing good quality housing for their tenants.

Prospective tenants will be confident that a property that has been awarded accredited status will provide decent, safe and secure accommodation.

The Accreditation Scheme will, in time, make a positive contribution to improving the quality of housing and management in the private rented sector.

The improved standard of repair of houses is expected to contribute towards meeting our target under BVPI 62 - Unfit Houses Made Fit.

In addition where landlords are encouraged to bring empty property back into use it will support the achievement of our BVPI 64 target.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The development of the Accreditation Scheme was assisted through reference to guidance published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

In addition we made use of good practice examples from schemes already being operated in other local authority areas.

The development and introduction of the scheme has been carried out with extensive consultation with the Rotherham and District Residential Landlords Association.

Housing Quality and Choice. The Housing Green Paper – O.D.P.M.

Developing a Voluntary Accreditation Scheme for Private Landlords – A Good Practice Guide – O.D.P.M.

Rotherham M.B.C. – Housing Strategy 2004-2007.

Contact Name :

Rob Pearce, Principal Policy and Planning Officer

Telephone: (01709) 823437

E-mail: rob.pearce@rotherham.gov.uk

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
10th January, 2005

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

**THE CHAIR AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM TO
ENABLE RESIDENTS TO BE FULLY INFORMED OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

141. TARRAN PROPERTIES, MALTBY

The Chair reported receipt of a petition, containing, 43 signatures, from residents of Braithwell Road/Newland Avenue/Chadwick Drive, Maltby, asking that a decision on the future of the tarran properties at Maltby be deferred for 1 month.

The petitioners had contacted Kevin Barron, M.P., who was looking into the possibility of a reinstatement scheme for the properties and was to consult with the Minister for Housing.

The deferment would also allow proper consideration to be given to the report by the independent consultants which had been received recently.

Resolved:- (1) That the petition be received and the request for a 1 month deferment be approved to enable further investigations/consultation to take place.

(2) That a copy of the independent consultants' report be supplied to the TARA Group, Mrs. Laird and Mrs. Clements for them to circulate to the appropriate persons.

142. PETITION - WESTPIT HILL, BRAMPTON

Further to Minute No. 80 of 25th October, 2004, the Housing Manager submitted a report in response to a petition from Westpit Hill tenants requesting free use of the Hurley Croft communal facility.

The issue had been ongoing for many years and in May, 2001, a decision was made to allow the tenants the opportunity to pay the weekly charge (£3.90) and join the Hurley Croft Sheltered Scheme. Only 1 resident took up the opportunity. Staff from the Wath Office had visited the tenants of both Hurley Croft and Westpit Hill in order to ascertain the situation.

All 32 residents at Hurley Croft had been visited of whom 26 stated they would not object to the Westpit Hill tenants using the communal facility provided that they paid the weekly charge. 5 residents could not be contacted and 1 would not state why she objected.

At Westpit Hill, 24 of the 28 residents stated they had no desire to use the Centre although some would reconsider if there was no charge. 3

residents expressed an interest in using the Centre and paying the weekly charge. 1 already paid the charge and used the Centre.

It was quite clear from the history, that a decision to allow the residents of Westpit Hill free use of the communal facility would be very unpopular. The Hurley Croft residents were adamant that Westpit Hill residents should pay for the use of the Centre.

The majority of residents from both areas felt that the Centre should be free of charge and open to all residents. This was not practical as the mandatory charge on the rent paid for the running of the communal facilities in sheltered housing. Without that income it was unlikely the buildings would be sustainable and consideration had to be given to the fact that they were situated in sheltered housing complexes.

It was unclear why the 2 schemes were not originally designated as 1 sheltered scheme. It was proposed to amalgamate the schemes, therefore, all new tenancies on Westpit Hill would be let as 'sheltered' with a mandatory charge on the rent for the communal facility. The existing tenants of Westpit Hill could be given the option of joining the Hurley Croft scheme now and having the communal facility charge added to the rent account. However, this would be on the understanding that if the charge was added it would not be removed at a later date.

Resolved:- (1) That the Westpit Hill OAP Bungalow Scheme and the Hurley Croft Sheltered Housing Scheme be amalgamated so that all new allocations had a mandatory charge on the rent account to cover the use of the communal facility.

(2) That the existing tenants of Westpit Hill be given the option of using the Hurley Croft communal facility if they agreed to pay the communal facility charge.

143. DECORATION ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Housing Manager submitted a report proposing a revised Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure to address concerns identified by the Audit Commission and contribute to the delivery of a three star Repair and Maintenance Service.

The Audit Commission had identified the need to revise the Policy to ensure that allowances were allocated equitably and performance and satisfaction were systematically evaluated. The current Policy and guidance for issuing decoration allowances was limited. The Lettings Policy stated that £25.00 could be offered for each habitable room but it gave no guidance in what circumstances an allowance may be offered. The figure had also been used as a guide by officers using an allowance where decorations had been disturbed by improvement programmes. There had been no identification of the duty that the Local Authority had under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to replace like with like and/or

compensate for decorations damaged during repair work.

The current system of payment to the customer also lacked choice. All payments were made using Focus vouchers. This arrangement was negotiated with a 10% discount for the Authority by RBT procurement. Complaints had been received from customers about the accessibility of stores.

The main features of the revised procedures were that it:-

- Ensured an equitable service by defining a decoration standard for voids and provided guidance in what circumstances an allowance could be paid;
- Expanded the allowance to non-habitable rooms such as hall and stairways;
- Recognised that some rooms were more expensive to decorate than others and set a sliding scale of allowance to match;
- Explained the obligations that arose from the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985;
- Improved accessibility of the scheme by expanding the choice of payment methods to include cheques and a credit on the rent account;
- Included a decoration allowance leaflet to improve the customer's awareness of the service;
- Introduced a decoration allowance contract with the customer which clarified the responsibility of the customer and improved the audit of the service;
- Allowed for the future improvement of the service by introducing service standards and a customer satisfaction survey to identify customers' needs and aspirations.

The revised Policy and Procedure would be monitored on a 6 monthly basis to audit the equitable distribution of allowances and satisfaction with the Service.

The Decoration Allowance budget for empty properties and compensation for damage caused by repair work in 2004/05 was £50,000. The total value of allowances paid in the first 6 months was £23,460 with all but £645 being allocated to customers taking new tenancies. If the same rate of expenditure was to continue to the end of the year, the budget would be 94% spent. On average decoration allowances were allocated to 36% of all new tenants, the average amount being £66.32 to decorate approximately 3 habitable rooms.

A Decoration Allowance budget of £75,000 was provisionally allocated in the draft Annual Maintenance Plan for 2005/06. This was based on the maximum amount per room for voids remaining at £25.00 and allocation rate remaining at 36%. Benchmarking revealed £25.00 per room was the equal lowest with 1 other authority, other social landlord's standard rates being significantly higher. It was proposed that the Policy be evaluated in March, 2005, to enable an assessment to be made as to whether or not a sustainable rise in the allowance could be made for the start of the new financial year.

Discussion ensued on the post inspections to be carried out in accordance with the Audit Commission and the work incurred. It was suggested that a 10% random selection of cases would give the quality control and check required.

Resolved:- (1) That the introduction of the revised Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure be approved and the timetable for evaluating the Service be noted.

(2) That a report on the issue of evaluation be submitted 3 months after the commencement of the ALMO.

(3) That the report be referred to the Environment Scrutiny Panel for comment.

144. PORTFOLIO OF CLOSED LANDFILL SITES

The Waste Strategy Manager reported on the latest situation with regard to the high winds experienced over the weekend and the effect it had had on the waste collection service. Operatives had worked Saturday and Sunday to ensure household waste bins had been collected and contingency arrangements made for the disposal of the contents.

Further to Minute No. 187 of 19th January, 2004, the Head of Neighbourhoods submitted a report outlining the present status of the Authority's 6 closed landfill sites and the options available for their development.

In its capacity as the Waste Disposal Authority, the Authority had responsibility for ensuring former landfill site, now closed to operations, were maintained in a safe and appropriate manner. This entailed making the appropriate arrangements for ensuring gas levels within the sites were closely monitored to ensure they were within safe limits and action taken to contain or disperse leachate produced within them. All of the Authority's closed sites had the appropriate gas and leachate management systems installed to meet those obligations. The Council was also required to return the sites to pre-determined standards contained within the original planning consent for each site.

The cost of routine monitoring and the servicing of flares etc. were contained within the current revenue budget. Capital projects, such as the installation of automatic gas monitoring equipment, had in the past been financed by Supplementary Credit Approvals which had been subject to a bidding process to DEFRA on an annual basis. Any scheme was then assessed by the Environment Agency on behalf of DEFRA. These Approvals had now been renamed Contaminated Land: Application for Capital Projects.

Funding from the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership and the Forestry Commission was now financing the tree planting scheme at Warren Vale and currently considering the potential for a scheme at Kiveton Park. The only cost to the Authority was the aftercare in years 2 to 5 after the initial planting.

Appendix 1 submitted stated the status of each of the closed landfill sites.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

145. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

146. HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES - PAYMENT OF RECYCLING PREMIUM

The Waste Strategy Manager submitted a report outlining a request received for a variation to the current contract on the payment of the recycling premium. At present, the contract allowed for the recycling premium to be paid on an annual basis. The Council's partner had formally requested that the premium be paid on a quarterly basis and, if payment was made within 30 days, they would offer a 2.5% discount to the Council.

The contract was a joint contract with Barnsley and Doncaster Councils. Discussion had taken place with representatives of Legal Services on the proposal who were agreeable to a variation in the contract in conjunction with the partner authorities.

Resolve:- (1) That the variation of the contract to allow for the payment of the recycling premium on a quarterly basis be approved.

(2) That the receipt of a discounted rate of 2.5% on subsequent recycling premium invoices, subject to payment terms being met, be approved.

(Exempt under Paragraph 9 of the Act – negotiation of terms for the

supply of services)

147. HOUSING RENTS AND BUDGETS 2005/06

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report setting out the proposed housing rents and budgets for 2005/06 based on the Government's Housing Subsidy Settlement for the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

It was proposed that average housing rents be increased by 6.4% which equated to £46.48 per week for 48 weeks. This was the 3rd year that the Council had applied the rent convergence rules that would allow it to move to using formula rents for properties by 2012. The changes were being achieved incrementally with caps or limits on the increase in rent for a property in any 1 year to protect tenants. Applying the formula meant that the average rent for a Council property next year would be consistent with the "Limit Rent".

It was proposed that a decision on increases in all fees and charges for additional services e.g. Wardens and Rothercare be deferred pending a meeting of the Supporting People Board in light of the uncertainty surrounding the Supporting People Grant.

It was noted that the Environment Scrutiny Panel was to consider the report at its meeting on 13th January, 2004.

Resolved:- That, subject to the concurrence of the Environment Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet be asked to recommend to Council:-

(1) That the Council rents be set at the levels determined by the application of the formula rents i.e. an average of £36.48 per week for 48 weeks, an average increase of 6.4%.

(2) That any decisions on increases in all fees and charges for additional services be deferred until after the January meeting of the Supporting People Board.

(3) That a prudent approach be adopted to the 2005/06 budget which assumed no cash increase in resources.

(4) That savings from within the additional items, funded by the subsidy windfall in the 2004/05 budget, be identified.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Local Authority/expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority)

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
17th January, 2005

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

148. VOID PROPERTY MONITORING

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Housing Operations Manager which gave an update on void property re-let performance and associated issues for the period 29th November to 31st December, 2004.

Performance was improving with the number of voids as at 31st December, 2004, increasing by 3 from the start of the period to 220. The majority of voids, 164, were voids currently excluded from HES68 and included properties such as those awaiting renovation and disposal. The number of voids that met the criteria to be included within HES68 had increased during the said period to 56.

Overall performance against the Indicator had improved by 0.43 days from the last period to 16.53 days.

Performance on HES14 (average time to let a void from when one tenancy terminated until the next one started as defined by date entered onto the open house management system) which excluded all those properties that were excluded from HES68, was 12.92 days.

The amount of rent income lost on voids up to 31st December, 2004, had improved from 1.08% to 1.07%. This performance continued to place the Authority in the upper quartile for Metropolitan Authorities.

Sustainability of tenancies (HES5) measured the percentage of terminating tenancies in the year that had lasted longer than 12 months. Performance during the 12 months up to 30th September, 2004, was 96.7%. The figure did not include tenancies terminating within 12 months due to transfers, mutual exchanges and deaths. If they were included the figure would be 93.52%.

Members noted and welcomed the increase in performance and wished to see this publicised more.

Discussion ensued on the impact of Council Tax payments on void properties and how this would be overcome for properties awaiting demolition.

Resolved:- That the report be received and current progress noted.

149. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (contains information relating to the negotiation of terms).

150. OPTIONS FOR THE DISTRICT HEATING MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Further to Minute No. 105 of 15th November, 2004, consideration was given to a report presented by the Principal Maintenance Co-ordinator setting out options for the future of the district heating management contract as a consequence of natural contract termination and the change from solid fuel to gas.

There were currently 15 separate contracts for the management of solid fuel fired boilers (serving 1,194 properties) of which fourteen would terminate on 30th June, 2005 and one on 28th February, 2009. Following legal advice and by mutual agreement with the contractor, the notice period to terminate a contract was now 4 months.

Details of the 2 options were set out in the report, together with the financial implications and risks.

Discussion ensued on the contract negotiations, the possibility of pulling the 14 contracts together as one, evaluation of the Swinton Fitzwilliam heating pilot, tender process, negotiation of the 2009 contract, contractual obligations of Economic and Development Services, problems experienced during the changeover process from solid fuel to gas and performance monitoring.

Resolved:- (1) That Option 2 be agreed in principle and that agreement be given to the renegotiation of the existing contracts extending the time period to 1st January, 2007 thus allowing the changeover contract from solid fuel to gas to be completed, current prices to be reduced and preparations made to go out to competitive tender on the 'gas fired' district heating services.

(2) That following negotiations a further report be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services detailing the terms of the negotiated contract, savings for the Council, how problems would be overcome and involvement with Economic and Development Services.

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
31st January, 2005

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillors Hall (Environment Scrutiny Panel) and N. Hamilton (Policy Advisor).

151. DISPOSAL OF NO. 168 SCHOLES LANE, SCHOLES

The Head of Housing Services presented a report proposing the disposal of No. 168 Scholes Lane, Scholes.

The property was a pre-1914 2 bedroom end terrace stone cottage and was the sole remaining Council rented property in Scholes village. It was 1 of 36 transferred into the ownership of Rotherham Council in 1980 from Wentworth Estates. The property had been managed as a Council tenancy ever since.

It had been adapted throughout to meet the needs of the last occupant approximately 15 years ago. The adaptations included an extension to provide a bedroom and a bathroom and a ground floor WC.

The property had been surveyed on 14th January, 2005, to assess both the cost of bringing the property back to the existing habitable standard and to current Decent Homes standards. The estimated works for the former was approximately £15,000 (including £1,500 contingency) with the bulk of estimate being for the replacement of kitchen units, bathroom suite, damp remedial work and a new roof. To bring the property up to current Decent Home standards an estimated further £8,000 would be required to include new secure by design windows and doors, electrical rewiring and heating. Aspirational standards envisaged under the revised Decent Homes would likely increase the amount further.

The property was valued on the open market value at £100,000 in its present condition and £125,000 if brought up to current Decent Homes standard. However, it was noted properties recently disposed of at auction had achieved considerable higher capital receipts than anticipated.

Resolved:- That No. 168 Scholes Lane, Scholes, be disposed of at auction.

152. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

153. DALTON COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER - OUTCOME

The Senior Housing Officer presented a report on the findings of the Secretary of State in relation to the Doncaster Road, Dalton (Compulsory Purchase Order).

It was proposed that prior to any future action being considered relating to the use of Compulsory Purchase powers, the following points be fully considered and used as guidance (they had been defined using fuller comments laid down by the Planning Inspector in his report to the Secretary of State):-

- Scheme justification and impacts
- Benefits to the authority if CPO was approved
- Objector's description of the proposed public amenity area as being cosmetic was accepted
- Retention of the property did not affect the bus lane works or environmental improvements
- Visual impact and appearance
- Human Rights Act

Resolved:- (1) That the findings in the report made by the Secretary of State be noted.

(2) That the content and recommendations of the report be adopted for guidance prior to entering into the course of action for any future proposals.

(3) That a report be submitted in 6 weeks' time setting out options and associated costs for the future of the remaining properties.

(4) That Neighbourhoods and Economic and Development Services submit a joint best practice procedure on the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Human Rights Act by April, 2005.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Act – business affairs of a third party/negotiation of terms)

154. PROGRESS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS RESTRUCTURE

The Human Resources Manager submitted an update report on the status of the restructure of the Neighbourhoods Programme Area.

Appendix 1 set out the final structures which had been subject to consultation with staff and trade unions on a continual basis. In the main the changes had been implemented to strengthen the front line services.

Recruitment to the new posts commenced on a phased basis in September, 2004, and to date over 300 interviews had taken place. A

total of 153 full-time equivalents had been successful in obtaining a new post (73% represented a promotion). In terms of job matches, there had been 98 posts remaining the same principally within the Neighbourhood Services departments.

The next phase of recruitment had now commenced with a total of 177 posts to be filled. Recruitment had begun week commencing 24th January, 2005 and expected to be completed by the end of February.

Resolved:- (1) That continued support for the full implementation of the new structure be approved.

(2) That once the recruitment had been completed, a breakdown of local arrangements be supplied to local Members together with contact numbers.

(Exempt under Paragraph 1 of the Act – employees of the Authority)

**RECYCLING GROUP
TUESDAY, 4TH JANUARY, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Wyatt (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Austen, Ellis and Littleboy.

Tony Clabby, Chief Executive, Creation Recycling, was in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Senior.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th September, 2004, were agreed as a true record.

2. WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Waste Strategy Manager submitted a report on the consultation process which had been undertaken on the initial option appraisal relating to the Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

A mailing to all premises on the Council's address database seeking their views on reducing waste, recycling waste and ranking the treatment options available had resulted in 12,000 responses with 1,700 indicating a wish to be further involved with the process. A further letter and information pack had been sent to the 1,700 seeking their views on the Best Practical Environmental Option criteria. The completed form could be returned through the post or by attending 1 of the 3 drop in sessions held throughout the Borough. A stakeholder consultation day was also held with attendees including Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, industry representatives, neighbouring local authorities, the Local Strategic Partnership, the Environment Agency, Planning and Neighbourhood Services.

A Health Impact Assessment seminar and workshop, in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust, was held on 1st December, 2004.

The final document was to be submitted to the Cabinet Member of Housing and Environmental Services in February, 2005.

The consultation exercise had been an outstanding success. It was encouraging that so many members of the public were aware of the issue and had responded. The Youth Cabinet had been asked to consider including the Waste Strategy in their work programme for the year.

The Chairman reported that in another forum consideration was being given to E-consultation which would have the benefits of being quicker and also target a particular audience i.e. young people/schools.

Agreed:- (1) That the consultation initiatives being undertaken to inform the development of the Municipal Waste Management Strategy be noted.

(2) That the issue of e-consultation be referred to the Citizenship Education Review Group.

3. SCHOOLS WASTE ACTION CLUB/CRED BID

The Waste Strategy Manager submitted a report on the above.

A bid to the CRED Fund had been declined in September, 2004. Following their feedback, the Unit had worked with Waste Watch to revise the Schools Waste Action Club completely with the new project focussing entirely on waste that was produced at home not in schools. The new 'Taking Home Action on Waste' (THAW) bid (approximately £220,000) had been submitted to CRED for funding from April, 2005, for 2½ years. The project content had been developed to meet National Curriculum aims and subject matter with lesson plans and resources support for teachers. A decision was expected during February, 2005.

An Expression of Interest had also been submitted to the DEFRA Community Fund by Waste Watch as a contingency in case the bid to CRED was unsuccessful. The Waste Management Unit had submitted an outline business plan for consideration in the Council's Medium Financial Term Financial Plan for funding sustainable education in the longer term.

The Chairman reported receipt of the final report for Rotherham Schools Waste Action Club which included the background to and delivery of the project and full details of schools involved with and activities delivered.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Rotherham Schools Waste Action Club be referred to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel for information.

4. HOME COMPOSTING

The Waste Strategy Manager submitted an update report on the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Home Composting Scheme.

Phase 1 of the Home Composting partnership between WRAP and the Council had ended on 31st December, 2004. The original 22 Councils had been selected to continue into phase 2, together with an additional 20 new partners. At present, Rotherham would remain in the group with Lincoln and North Lincolnshire and was likely to be joined by Sheffield as a new partner. The second phase commenced on 1st January, 2005.

Approximately 7,000 compost bins had been sold and distributed in the Rotherham Area. WRAP were particularly pleased with the Rotherham

scheme mainly as a result of the consistent sale of bins throughout the latter part of the year and had been used as a model on phase 2 for advertising and publicity. Each partner had to provide WRAP with a list of planned advertising.

Discussion ensued on advertising with suggestions including banners on lampposts and advertisements in community newsletters

WRAP had been requested to provide feedback on the pilot areas and the test areas of the Borough but it had not been forthcoming as yet.

Tony Clabby reported that targeted work in the Eastwood area had started to pay off and an increase in recycling seen. Various efforts had been made to raise participation including the sponsoring of an Eid party where a number of female muslims had attended. It had lead to a massive increase the following week.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Waste Strategy Manager contact WRAP and stress the importance of a feedback report.

(3) That any analysis from Creation Recycling be submitted to the Group for information.

5. BLUE BOX RECYCLING SCHEME

The Waste Strategy Manager submitted an update report regarding participation rates on the Blue Box recycling scheme.

The scheme now covered the majority of the Borough, offering an alternate week service to over 101,000 premises. Participation rates on the first 50,000 premises on the scheme were manually logged by the crews with premises on the second phase having being issued with tagged/chipped boxes. However, there were ongoing problems with the reliability of the scanners, therefore, the information was having to be logged manually to ensure continuity of credible data.

Despite similar levels of publicity prior to the launch, the second phase of the scheme had had a much lower take up. During September/October a targeted communications campaign had been developed specifically for non-participating households with the leaflets delivered on 8th and 15th November. The initial data appeared to indicate that this had had minimal impact as yet. A more hard hitting approach was outlining the potential consequences for both Rotherham residents and the environment as a result of continued non-participation was now being considered. New technical posts created as part of the Programme Area restructure would allow resources to be directed into the community. This would involve 'door knocking' and working at ground level to raise awareness of the Blue Box scheme and removing barriers to use.

Tony Clabby reported that they had tried 'door knocking' but had found it had not had significant impact. Creation Recycling were currently putting their operatives through a NVQ in Customer Care which was funded as part of the Workforce Development.

It was suggested that if new schools were being targeted for the SWAC Scheme, this should be in areas of low participation. It was considered this may lead to pupils in schools becoming 'Waste Champions'?

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 1st March, 2005, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 13th January, 2005

Present:- Councillor Atkin (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright); Councillors Burke, Clarke, Hodgkiss, Jackson, P. A. Russell, Vines, The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright), Mr. D. Alderson, Mr. D. Willoughby and Mr. J. Carr (National Society for Clean Air).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hall, McNeely, Nightingale and Rushforth.

91. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no members of the press and public present.

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

93. PROGRESS REPORT - FURNISHED HOMES

In accordance with Minute No. 135 of April, 2004, the Community Services Manager submitted a progress report outlining the critical success factors, funding, customer satisfaction and operational aspects.

The Scheme had been introduced in May, 2004, with a target to establish a one-stop furnishing service and to introduce 100 units by 31st March, 2005. During the 7 months of operation there had been 99 furnished homes introduced of which only 2 had been terminated.

A Furnished Service Standards leaflet had been developed which provided information about the types of packages available, service standards to be expected and also the expectations from both the customer and the furnishing service prospective. Mechanisms had also been adopted to enable individual items of furniture to be returned which would prompt a reduction in the charge.

To ensure value for money, 5 furniture suppliers had been tested. A formal agreement would be written, incorporating delivery timescales and costs. The suppliers also worked with other authorities allowing innovation and good practice to be transferred and embedded into the Scheme.

Initially all new furnished homes had been decorated throughout although this had been changed in July, 2004, with decoration vouchers to the value of £200-£300 issued. This was due to the decoration contractor not being able to keep up with demand, decoration costs outweighing predicted spend and customers preferring to take ownership and decorate their home themselves. The decoration costs were between £1,200 to

£1,600 per property, more than estimated. The new approach had enabled each of the furnished charges to be reduced by at least £9.00 i.e. ranging from £14.17 for a 1 bedroomed part furnished to £37.16 for a 3 bedroomed fully furnished property.

Resolved:- (1) That the adoption of the Furnished Home Scheme with provision of 100 additional units during 2005/06 be supported.

(2) That the Scheme be monitored for value for money and customer satisfaction with a further report to be submitted after a further 12 months in operation.

94. DECORATION ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

(The Chairman authorised consideration of this item)

The Executive Director Neighbourhoods submitted a report explaining that the Audit Commission had identified the need to revise the Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure to ensure that allowances were allocated equitably and performance and satisfaction were systematically evaluated. The proposal was to introduce revised policies and procedures to address these concerns and review the outcome periodically.

The Decoration Allowance Policy was vital to the commitment to deliver a quality service, and complements the "Houseproud" Empty Property Guarantee. The policy contributes to the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods by providing a home and service that customers feel they have a stake in.

The current policy and guidance for issuing decoration allowances was limited and the main features of the revised procedures were that it:

- Ensures an equitable service by defining a decoration standard for voids, and provides guidance in what circumstances an allowance can be paid.
- Expand the allowance to non-habitable rooms such as hall and stairways.
- Recognise that some rooms are more expensive to decorate than others, and set a sliding scale of allowance to match this.
- Explains the obligations that arise from the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Improves the accessibility of the scheme by expanding the choice of payment methods to include cheques and a credit on the rent account.
- Includes a decoration allowance leaflet to improve the customer's

awareness of the service.

- Introduces a decoration allowance contract with the customer which clarifies the responsibility of the customer improves the audit of the service.
- Allows for future improvement of the service by introducing service standards and customer satisfaction survey, identify customers needs and aspirations.

It was noted that the revised Policy and Procedure would be monitored on a six monthly basis to audit the equitable distribution of allowances and satisfaction with the service. The outcome of the evaluation and satisfaction surveys would be presented to the Learning from Customers Group to inform improvement to the service.

The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the proposed revisions to the Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure and timetable and requested a progress report on the outcome.

Resolved:- That the introduction of the revised Decoration Allowance Policy and Procedure and timetable for evaluating the service be supported.

(2) That a progress report be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel.

95. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

Further to Minute No. 146 of May, 2004, the Anti-Social Behaviour Manager submitted a progress report against the 15 point action plan produced in relation to housing related anti-social behaviour.

The Scrutiny Panel went through the action plan page by page and the Anti-Social Behaviour Manager commented on the issues raised by Members.

The following comments were made:-

(a) a need for better communications between Neighbourhood Wardens and the Police.

A response to this was that a progress report would be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel updating Members on proposals from the Council and the South Yorkshire Police to look at establishing Joint Partnership Teams. From 1st April, 2005, the police were moving towards local policing teams and that they were in the process of reorganising their service geographically to ensure that they have resources available to line up with the local authority and other partners agencies.

(b) Telephone calls not getting through to the Police and yet crime is still being committed.

(c) Concerns regarding the allocation of finance because Rotherham's recorded low crime figures seems to attract lesser funding.

(d) Concerns regarding the possible loss of funding from the SRB Fund.

(e) The Scrutiny Panel would like the crime figures for Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster to compare with Rotherham, preferably on a Ward by Ward basis.

(f) There was a need to examine a number of real case histories to see how effectively those cases had been dealt with and the results arising.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and proposals for sustainable actions to tackle anti-social behaviour in Rotherham be noted.

(2) That future reports on housing related anti-social behaviour, tenancy and estate management be made within reports of the ALMO Excellence Place.

(3) That arrangements be made for an ASBO Review to take place, as soon as possible, to examine real case histories.

96. BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC HOUSING STRATEGY 2004/07

The Head of Neighbourhood Development submitted a report on the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy which had been developed in partnership with customers and stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that people from BME communities had access to suitable and appropriate housing.

The aim of the Strategy was to explain and set out what the Authority and its partner organisations were seeking to achieve in terms of race equality in housing. It would:-

- Provide a framework for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage
- Provide clarity to the Authority, its partners and service users on what it was 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 could be monitored in order to determine how far progress had been made
- Set up a BME Housing Strategy and Monitoring Group, involving stakeholders and BME tenants, to scrutinise the Housing Strategy and provide a forum for consultation.

The Strategy also included an action plan which set out targets against performance for the Authority and some key partners.

Scrutiny Panel Members asked a range of questions and answers were provided.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services asked Members of the Scrutiny Panel to submit any comments/observations on the Strategy to the Scrutiny Adviser who would collate these for further consideration.

Resolved:- (1) That the BME Housing Strategy be noted.

(2) That copies of the Strategy be circulated to all Members of the Council, members of the Strategic Housing Partnership, all Programme Areas, all Managers within Neighbourhoods and other stakeholders and interested parties.

97. ALMO INDICATIVE INSPECTION

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report containing the recommendations for service improvement from the Indicative ALMO Inspection.

The recommendations had had been included in the ALMO Excellence Plan to drive forward and monitor the service improvement of Housing Management and Repairs Services into an ALMO structure with the objective to delivering an excellent customer service through Neighbourhood Management. The objectives had been divided into 5 key points:-

- An ALMO be established and in place by 31st March, 2005
- Tenants were at the hard of the decision process and played a principal role in shaping future service delivery
- Delivering a continuously improving, high performing, customer focused service
- The ALMO had a long term strategy for the delivery of neighbourhood management beyond the delivery of decent homes
- Ensure the services demonstrate value for money to customers through the application of competition and procurement.

Resolved:- That the recommendations from the Indicative ALMO Inspection and the ALMO Excellence Plan be noted and that this Scrutiny Panel welcomes further updates.

98. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES HELD ON 6TH, 13TH AND 20TH DECEMBER, 2004

The Panel noted the decisions made under delegated powers by the

Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services held on 6th, 13th and 20th December, 2004.

The Chairman referred particularly to Minute No. 121 (Waste Strategy Consultation) and reported that all Members of the Council had been invited to a presentation on the Waste Management Strategy arranged by the Scrutiny Panel on 27th January, 2005.

99. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December, 2004, were noted.

100. MINUTES OF ASYLUM SEEKERS WORKING PARTY HELD ON 1ST DECEMBER, 2004

The Panel noted the minutes of the Asylum Seekers Working Party held on 1st December, 2004, attended by Councillors Sharman (in the Chair), Councillors Boyes and Ellis.

101. MINUTES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the meeting of the Members' Sustainable Development Group, attended by Councillors Wyatt (in the Chair), Atkin, Hall and Sharman, held on 10th December, 2004, were noted.

102. MINUTES OF PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 26TH NOVEMBER AND 17TH DECEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 26th November and 17th December, 2004, were noted.

103. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

104. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Manager and Registrar of the Cemeteries and Crematorium Service submitted a medium term plan, together with a draft Project Timetable, which aimed to position Rotherham as a provider of high quality effective bereavement services.

It was noted that this was a feasibility study and further updates would be submitted to Members.

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the Service Improvement Plan for Cemetery and Crematorium Services be noted.

(2) That the Service Improvement Plan be used as a key document for consultation during Soft Market Testing, seeking potential partners to assist in the delivery of Bereavement Services in Rotherham.

(3) That the Project Timetable for exploring partnership arrangements in the delivery of Bereavement Services in Rotherham be noted.

(4) That a further report be submitted to the Scrutiny Panel upon completion of the soft market testing exercise.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act – expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority and contractual issues)

105. HOUSING RENTS AND BUDGETS 2005/2006

The Finance and Accountancy Manager, gave a power point presentation and submitted a report setting out the proposed housing rents and budgets for 2005/2006 based on the Government's Housing Subsidy Settlement for the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

It was proposed that average housing rents be increased by 6.4% which equated to £46.48 per week for 48 weeks. This was the 3rd year that the Council had applied the rent convergence rules that would allow it to move to using formula rents for properties by 2012. The changes were being achieved incrementally with caps or limits on the increase in rent for a property in any 1 year to protect tenants. Applying the formula meant that the average rent for a Council property next year would be consistent with the "Limit Rent".

It was proposed that a decision on increases in all fees and charges for additional services e.g. Wardens and Rothercare be deferred pending a meeting of the Supporting People Board in light of the uncertainty surrounding the Supporting People Grant.

It was noted that, following consideration of the report by this Scrutiny Panel, the report would be submitted to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 26th January, 2005.

The Environment Scrutiny Panel noted and supported the decisions made by the Cabinet Member, Housing and Environmental Services Delegated Powers meeting held on 10th January, 2005 as follows:-

(1) That the Council rents be set at the levels determined by the application of the formula rents i.e. an average of £36.48 per week for 48 weeks, an average increase of 6.4%.

(2) That any decisions on increases in all fees and charges for additional services be deferred until after the January meeting of the Supporting People Board.

(3) That a prudent approach be adopted to the 2005/06 budget which assumed no cash increase in resources.

(4) That savings from within the additional items, funded by the subsidy windfall in the 2004/05 budget, be identified.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Local Authority/expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority)

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 27th January, 2005

Present:- Councillor Atkin (in the Chair); Councillors Burke, Clarke, Hall, Jackson, McNeely, Nightingale, Rushforth, P. A. Russell and Vines together with Mr. J. Carr (National Society for Clean Air)

Councillor Ellis attended at the invitation of the Chairman.

Councillors Cutts, Pickering, G. A. Russell, Swift and Turner were in attendance for Minute No. 110).

Apologies were received from Councillors Hodgkiss, The Mayor (Councillor F. Wright), Mr. D. Alderson and Mr. D. Willoughby.

106. HOLOCAUST DAY

Members held a minute's silence in respect in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

107. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

The member of the public did not wish to ask any questions.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

109. MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Adrian Gabriel, Waste Strategy Manager, gave a presentation to the Scrutiny Panel on Rotherham's future Waste Management Service covering:-

- The traditional services
- Customer focused, easy to use Waste Services
- The challenge to reduce waste
- Medium and Long Term Strategy
- Reduce landfill
- Landfill allowances
- Waste Strategy Options
- Progress

Discussion ensued on the presentation with the following points raised:-

- A "soft" approach was being piloted in the north of the Borough to encourage increased participation in recycling by the posting of leaflets to those not participating. The restructuring would enable 2 officers to "door knock" to further aid the effort.

- Some parish halls facilitated business functions where funds were raised. Businesses and charities were not allowed to dispose of waste at household waste recycling centres. Investigation could take place into the possibility of siting a bring site nearby that they could use.

John Lucas, Enviros Consulting Ltd., gave a presentation on the new technologies available for waste management including:-

- The role of new technologies
- Key issues
- Drivers for change
- What was biodegradable municipal waste
- Government response
- Mechanical Biological Treatment
- Biological – Aerobic and Anaerobic Digestion
- Mechanical Heat Treatment
- Advanced Thermal Treatment
- Refuse Derived Fuel
- Indicative costs
- Key Issues

Discussion ensued on the presentation with the following points highlighted:-

- There were problems in collecting plastic due to the large vehicles required to collect low tonnages. It did not contribute significantly to the Authority's recycling performance so the focus had been on glass and paper. If household waste collection moved to an alternate week basis, the bulk of residual waste would have to be reduced and may be that kerbside collection was introduced. Vehicle manufacturers were now looking at some form of shredder/roller to partially collapse bottles.
- It was difficult to recycle plastics because of their contents.
- The emissions from an incinerator had to be monitored, measured and controlled. They were regulated to a very high level by the Environment Agency and had to comply with national legislative standards.
- The green waste from cemeteries was composted and utilised in the cemeteries.

It was noted that a report containing recommendations for the way forward would be submitted to the 14th February Cabinet Member of Housing and Environmental Services' meeting and the Environment Scrutiny Panel 24th followed by the Cabinet and the Council for adoption.

Resolved:- (1) That Adrian Gabriel and John Lucas be thanked for their informative presentations.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the 24th February meeting of this

Scrutiny Panel

110. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government act 1972 (accommodation provided by the Local Authority /expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority)

111. BUDGET 2005/06

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Finance and Accountancy Manager and Head of Neighbourhood Services gave a presentation on the Neighbourhoods Programme Area Budget 2005/06 highlighting:-

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Budget process
- What was proposed to be delivered for the budget
- General Fund budget (current proposals A, B, C and D list)
- Housing Revenue Account budget (fees and charges)
 - Additional Fees and Charges
 - Proposed to increase fees and charges in line with rents by 6.5% - the exceptions are:-
 - Rothercare and Wardens Charges (which are linked to Supporting People Grant) 2% - the increase in grant levels;
 - Communal Facilities – 2% increase in charges from £3.90 to £3.98
 - Rothercare and Wardens
 - Communal Facilities – 2% increase in charges from £3.90 to £3.98
 - Fees and Charges
 - Garages – No increase
 - Garage plots – proposed increase from £25 to £50
 - Furnished Accommodation – proposed increase of 3%

Consideration was given to the A, B, C and D lists which had been prioritised by the Corporate Management Team. However, it was noted that a number of items on B and C were legislative and therefore mandatory. Discussion ensued with the following points raised:-

- All the Performance Indicators were on track or had exceeded their target.
- It was important to align the Programme Area's spend with the Corporate Plan.
- Environmental/Neighbourhood Wardens should be mainstreamed

and therefore moved to the A list.

Resolved:- (1) That the Scrutiny Panel's views and concerns in respect of the following be forwarded for consideration during the final stages of the 2005/06 budget:-

- That Environmental/Neighbourhood Wardens be moved from the B to the A list.

- That further work be carried out to identify activities that could be reduced, stopped altogether or delivered through other means to enable higher priority activities to be carried out if they could not be supported corporately.

(2) That the ALMO Excellence Plan be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel before 1st April, 2005.

(3) That budget meetings for Scrutiny Panels be included in the preparation of the 2005/06 diary.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
14th January, 2005

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkin, Doyle, Hussain and R. S. Russell.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

84. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION - PROGRESS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services outlined the latest position regarding the review of the Constitution following the Cabinet/Corporate Management Team away day in December, 2004. A report had now been drafted which had been circulated to Members. The proposal was that a new set of documents would be adopted by the Council at its annual meeting in May, 2005.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services indicated that the document was only a working document and that the away day had been the start of the process.

Some concern was expressed that the away day had appeared to have a particular focus on scrutiny, The subsequent outcomes report from the away day included much of what was already happening in practice within scrutiny.

There was a general feeling of the need to retain the facility to be able to go straight to the Council. It was also felt that scrutiny needed to be involved in discussions about scrutiny and the leadership role of scrutiny.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the request for a joint meeting between this Committee and Cabinet be affirmed.

85. BUDGET PHASE 2

The Head of Corporate Finance reported on the latest position with regard to the budget indicating :-

- The final settlement had still not been received
- Since the last meeting of this Committee on 17th December, 2004 the budgetary issues had been circulated to all Members

- Corporate Management Team and a joint meeting of Cabinet and Corporate Management Team had discussed the latest position this Tuesday
- Funding gap
- Last year's scrutiny items were back on the agenda
- Some issues had now firmed up e.g. employer's superannuation contributions
- Future discussions at Corporate Management Team and Cabinet

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised –

- Scrutiny and other recommendations not accepted
- Treatment of additional monies received
- Need to link investment to performance
- Unavoidable pressures
- Corporate finance attendance at future scrutiny panel budget meetings
- Need to monitor any suggestions for the utilisation of the Commutation Adjustment Reserve and keep scrutiny panels aware
- Need for options for closing the gap to go to all scrutiny panels

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That Corporate Finance be not required to attend the next round of scrutiny panel budget meetings where budget items will be led by the relevant Programme Area Executive Director.

86. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST JANUARY TO 30TH APRIL, 2005

The Committee referred to the above and felt that the document was not user friendly.

Cath Saltis indicated that a monthly flag up of issues for scrutiny panel chairs and vice-chairs was being investigated.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

87. SCRUTINY REVIEW

Cath Saltis outlined briefly arrangements for the scoping of the review and terms of reference in respect of the above.

88. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th December, 2004 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

89. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor Sangster reported

(i) Health Services Working Group

- there had been a meeting of the Children's Obesity Group
- there had been an excellent report on public health
- there was a joint meeting next week on protocols

(ii) Regeneration

- consideration of the budget had been deferred
- six monthly progress reports had been requested on the Local Transport Plan
- Councillors Jack, R. S. Russell and S. Wright had been nominated to serve on the Benefit Take Up review group

(b) Councillor Hall reported

- the flytipping report had been considered by Cabinet this week
- the review of Caretakers/Wardens/Rangers had commenced

(c) Councillor Whelbourn reported consideration of Fair Trade in Rotherham

(d) Councillor G. A. Russell reported consideration of the progress report regarding Children's Services Post Inspection Plan

90. CALL-IN

There were no formal call in requests.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
Friday, 28th January, 2005

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sangster.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

92. GREEN SPACES BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Further to Minute No. 176 of the meeting of this Committee held on 25th April, 2003, the Committee considered a report by the Green Spaces Manager regarding the above action plan which had been prepared based on the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Green Spaces completed in 2003. The action plan was submitted.

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, gave a powerpoint presentation which covered the following :-

- why review
- about the review
- main objectives
- what we found – people's views
- Principal conclusions and associated improvement actions :
 - Adequacy of supply
 - Quality of maintenance and management
 - Safety in green spaces
 - levels of use
 - Quality of customer service
- where next

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

- facilities
- access blocking
- scheme standards for children's play areas
- toilet provision
- availability
- consultation process

- consultation with parish councils
- review group elected membership
- benchmarking with other authorities
- organisation structure positioning of green spaces
- review considerations to accommodate horses
- consultancy work re audit
- quality of contracting for consultancy services

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and Phil Gill be thanked for his presentation.

(2) That, as far as this Committee is concerned, the Green Spaces Best Value Improvement Plan be endorsed.

(3) That the Chief Executive be requested to commission a report on contracting for consultancy services for consideration at the March meeting.

93. ANALYSIS OF THE INDICES OF DEPRIVATION 2004

Further to Minute No. B114 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22nd December, 2004, Andrew Towleron, Principal Policy Officer, presented the submitted report relating to the above.

It was noted that a report was presented to the Corporate Management Team in July, 2004 on the Indices of Deprivation 2004 (ID 2004) which replaced the previous Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 (IMD 2000) and its implications for Rotherham. There were two main findings. Firstly, when comparing the ID 2004 with the IMD 2000, Rotherham's overall ranking had moved significantly from 48th most deprived local authority in England to 63rd. Secondly, it was uncertain at that time if the move was due mainly to changes in methodology or a real change in the relative level of deprivation and that further analysis should be undertaken. The initial findings of that analysis were now available.

It was noted that the ID 2004 was important because it was used extensively to help direct and target funding from Government departments and other bodies between local authority areas.

The ID 2004 was published in June last year by an independent team at Oxford University on behalf of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and followed detailed consultation, negotiations and lobbying.

Whilst retaining many of the features of the previous IMD 2000, the new index differed in a number of ways and these were summarised.

Detailed work and analysis had been undertaken to establish the extent to which these changes had contributed to Rotherham's big move in ranking. The work was outlined in the appendices to the submitted report.

The main conclusions were :

- (a) Making comparisons between the ID 2004 and IMD 2000 was not straightforward and therefore any findings needed to be treated with a degree of caution
- (b) The evidence suggested that the main factor behind Rotherham's relative movement up the ID 2004 had been the strong progress in the social and economic regeneration of the Borough.
- (c) That changes in the statistical methodology had also been a (lesser) factor in the change in Rotherham's relative ranking.

It was difficult to assess the precise effect the changes had had on the overall ranking for Rotherham, however the evidence suggested that :

- The relative and strong lowering in the levels of deprivation in Rotherham linked to economic growth had been the main factor in Rotherham's movement downwards (i.e. becoming less deprived) but
- Not to the extent the new indices suggested, as statistical methodological changes had certainly been a contributory (but lesser) factor

Further work and analysis was under way. Following discussions with the partner agencies and other local authorities linked to the development of the report, the Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities (SIGOMA) had indicated that it was minded to bring together a specialist group to help develop a common evidence base and understanding and that Rotherham may be used as a case study for the work. Rotherham MBC had been invited to an exploratory meeting to progress the work.

A question and answer session ensued and the need for an appropriate press release was highlighted.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That it be welcomed that the main factor behind Rotherham's relative movement up the ID 2004 had been the strong progress in the social and economic regeneration of the Borough.

(3) That it also be noted that the technical changes had been a factor in the movement.

(4) That the IMD and its applications should continue to be a priority for campaigning and lobbying activity by the Council and its partners in order to ensure that the methodological issues raised in the report were acknowledged and Rotherham's most deprived communities received their full and proper share of key regeneration resources.

(5) That Rotherham MBC should work with SIGOMA and other partners to identify the full implications of the ID 2004 for Rotherham MBC and other similar local authority areas.

(6) That further reports be submitted as further information and analysis becomes available.

(7) That an appropriate press release should be issued highlighting Rotherham's improvement.

94. FEEDBACK FROM THE JOINT MEETING WITH CABINET

The Chairman referred briefly to issues discussed at the Committee's joint meeting with Cabinet and undertook to distribute a note of the meeting to Members of the Committee.

95. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th January, 2005 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

96. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

- (a) Councillor G. A. Russell reported consideration of Gershon savings at their budget meeting today.
- (b) Councillor Hall reported consideration of Gershon savings and the ongoing review of Caretakers/Wardens/Rangers
- (c) Councillor Stonebridge reported that the LSP Review Group was meeting next week.

97. CALL-IN

There were no formal call in requests.

**THE ASYLUM SEEKERS WORKING PARTY
02 FEBRUARY 2005**

Present:- Councillor Terry Sharman (in the Chair); Councillors Ellis and Boyes.

Apologies: Angela Smith, Community Services Manager, Neighbourhoods

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1ST DECEMBER, 2004

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December, 2004, be approved as a true record.

2. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN

Dave Creaghan, Team Manager (Health), Children and Families Services, and Sue Smith, Social Worker Asylum Team, Children and Families Services, gave a presentation on their role with specific regard to unaccompanied asylum seeker children coming into Rotherham.

Their role was no different from any Social Worker working with children and families through the Children's Act 1989 although the new Children's Act coming into force in the near future may have implications. There were two specific areas of that Act that they used to support children. Firstly Section 17 which stated "it shall be the general duty of every Local Authority to:-

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who were in need
- So far as it is consistent with that duty to promote the upbringing of such children with their families

by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs". The services provided may include giving assistance in kind or, in exceptional circumstances, in cash.

Secondly, Section 20 which stated "every Local Authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appeared to them to require accommodation as a result of:-

- There being no person who has parental responsibility
- Being lost or abandoned
- A person who has been caring being prevented (whether or not permanently or for whatever reasons) from providing suitable accommodation or care."

Attempts to find foster placements were generally tried to accommodate

the younger children and residential units or, in exceptional circumstances, supported bed and breakfast provision for the older ones. There were currently 3 asylum seeker children accommodated in foster care and 5 living in the community.

Dave and Sue were thanked for their attendance and interesting presentation.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

3. ASYLUM SEEKER OUTREACH WORKER POST

The Working Party considered a report submitted by Margaret Holland, Manager, Social Inclusion and Project Development, on the work of the above post.

Alnaar Calyton, Asylum Seeker Outreach Officer, Library and Information Service, had been in post since March, 2004, She had worked with asylum seekers, refugees and members of resident ethnic minority communities to create groups with common cultural interests and language. To date the Bahrat Group, Iranian Community in Rotherham, East African Cohesion Group and the Arabic Integration Group had been formed and all met on a regular basis facilitated by Alnaar.

Partnerships had also been built with a number of agencies to provide a variety of training including family learning events, citizenship, ESOL and basic skills including ICT. A series of events had also been held/were planned.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

4. WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT TO FAILED ASYLUM SEEKER FAMILIES

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Team Leader, submitted a report outlining the current legislation, yet to be implemented in Rotherham, which aimed to withdraw support to those failed asylum seeker families who refused to co-operate with removal arrangements.

The Asylum and Immigration Act (Treatment of Claimants etc.) 2004 had received Royal Assent. It was a wide ranging Act which was being implemented on a phased basis. Section 9 of the Act withdrew support to failed asylum seeker families who refused to co-operate with attempts to remove them. The Home Office was currently piloting the introduction of Section 9 in some areas of the country.

Discussion ensued on the Act with various issues of concern raised. It was felt that these should be directed to the Consortium for clarification.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That a protocol be developed between Social Services and Neighbourhoods to support failed asylum seeker families.

(3) That the appropriate Cabinet Members ensure that support for failed asylum seeker families are suitable presented.

5. POST-2005 CONTRACT

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Team Leader, reported that discussions were still ongoing with regard to the Post-2005 contract although it was highly likely that the Home Office would proposed a reduced number of bed spaces in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

Agreed:- That a further updated be given at the next meeting of this Working Party.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Wednesday, 30th March, 2005, commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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