

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Thursday, 19 January 2006

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. Apologies for Absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and the press.

FOR INFORMATION

6. Charter Mark Action Plan (Pages 1 - 19)
- report by Jasmine Speight, Service Quality Champion
7. Complaints Breakdown (Pages 20 - 38)
- report by Jasmine Speight, Service Quality Champion
8. Furnished Homes - Progress Report (Pages 39 - 42)
- report to be presented by Lesley Gaunt, Furnished Homes Team Leader
9. Funding Initiative Providing Additional Thermal Comfort (Pages 43 - 52)
- report by Dave Cherry, Housing Solutions Officer
10. Audit Commission ALMO Inspection
- verbal report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods
11. Decent Homes Programme - Progress Report (Pages 53 - 62)
- report by Jim McAusland, Interim Chief Executive, 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

FOR DISCUSSION/CONSULTATION

12. ODPM Consultation (Pages 63 - 90)
- report by Head of Neighbourhood Services
13. Forward Plan of Key Decisions (Pages 91 - 93)
- 1st January – 30th April, 2006

FOR MONITORING

14. Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods (Pages 94 - 101)
- minutes of meetings held on 5th and 19th December, 2005

MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

15. Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel (Pages 102 - 106)
- minutes of meeting held on 15th December, 2005
16. Members Sustainable Development Action Group (Pages 107 - 110)
- minutes of meeting held on 9th December, 2005
17. Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee (Pages 111 - 123)
- minutes of meetings held on 9th and 21st December, 2005
18. Exclusion of the Press and Public
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following 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.
19. Housing Rents and Budget 2006/07 (Pages 124 - 130)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Local Authority/expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Local Authority)
20. Gas Appliances in OAP Bungalows (Pages 131 - 132)
(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – accommodation provided by the Council)
21. Anti-Social Behaviour Client Review - Review Group (Pages 133 - 177)
(Exempt under Paragraph 11 of the Act – labour relations)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	19 January 2006
3.	Title:	Charter Mark Assessment Report 2010 Rotherham Limited & Retained Housing Services All Wards Affected
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

Charter Mark Assessment Report from East Midlands Quality Centre on 2010 Rotherham Limited and Retained Housing Services recommending that these organisations be recognised as meeting the Charter Mark Standard.

6. Recommendations

THAT SCRUTINY PANEL IS ASKED TO NOTE THE ASSESSMENT REPORT AND COMPLIANCE AGAINST ELEMENTS MET.

7. Proposals and Details

The assessment report provides feedback on the compliance against all the six elements of Charter Mark criteria and recommendations of areas for continuous improvement.

The headline results within the body of the main report include:

- Precise, measurable and challenging standards are set for main services
- Key Performance Targets are set against the top quartile of performance from national benchmarking information
- “Your use of Performance Clinics to review both good and poor experiences can be recognised as good practice and is directly leading to service improvements”
- Dips in performance are identified and remedial action taken where necessary – “one impressive example of this was that you identified a shortfall of appointments slots and introduced evening and weekend working to meet your customer needs”
- Customers, staff and partners are consulted on a regular basis through a variety of means
- “The involvement of Tenant Customer Service Inspectors is good practice and it is noted that cross inspection arrangements have been set up with neighbouring services”
- Staff work to customer care standards and are seen to be helpful and courteous
- Partnership arrangements are clearly for the benefit of customers and they are made aware of joint access arrangements.
- There is a commitment to value for money
- Policies are in place for staff to respond promptly and politely to customers, for example the answering of telephone calls within seven rings
- Customer care is seen to be important for the future success of services and a significant investment has been made in staff training
- Work on improving housing stock is ongoing in relation to the Decent Homes standard. “A real success story is the re-let time of void properties reducing from 120 days to 16 days over the last three years”
- Levels of customer satisfaction are compared year on year and show significant improvement in many area of service provision
- Measurement of performance and monthly statistics against targets key to the success of services
- The nature of services dictates identification of the larger community served, there is a commitment to improve communities with funds that are available through Almo status

The report concludes that services are forward looking and extremely customer orientated. We have received recognition from the assessor for our efforts in completing the Charter Mark application and this has resulted in only two partial compliances identified. “It is a credit to both services that such a level of compliance has been identified”

Recommendations for continuous improvements will be subject to improvement plans. Partial compliance issues raised will be subject to an action plan with identified timescales

8. Finance

East Midlands Quality Centre charges:

Pre assessment	½ day	£275.00 plus vat
Main assessment	2 days	£1100.00 plus vat
Evidence review	¼ day	£137.50 plus vat
Feedback report	½ day	£275.00 plus vat
Total	3.25 days	£1787.50

A health check review will take place 12 months following certification to ensure standards are maintained and areas of Continuous Improvement are met. The envisaged cost would be as around £550 per day plus vat with a duration of around 4.5 days for the review.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Risk to Neighbourhoods Directorate reputation of failing the annual re-assessment. This will be managed by implementing service improvement recommendations which will be lead by Strategic Services and a 2010 Rotherham Limited project officer representative.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Charter Mark accreditation will positively contribute to the Almo Inspection in November 2005, identifying good practice around quality and customer excellence. Recommendations for continuous improvement provide direction for improving services to customers, partners and staff over the next 12 months.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The report has been discussed with Programme Area Management Team and the contents shared with the Chief Executives Office for inclusion into the Corporate Complaints Report to Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee.

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COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

**CHARTER MARK
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

ON

**2010 Rotherham Ltd
&
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Retained Housing Services**

**Recommending that these organisations be recognised as meeting
the Charter Mark Standard**

Assessors	Peter Benzies Peter Oldridge
Assessor's Registration Centre	EMQC
Organisational Contacts	Dave Roddis John Mansergh Jasmine Speight
Date of Pre-Assessment visit	15 July 2005
Dates of on-site visit	15/16 August 2005 28 October 2005

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

This was a joint assessment of the Retained Housing Services of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) Neighbourhoods Directorate and 2010 Rotherham Ltd, the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).

The 2020 vision for Rotherham presents a significant challenge for the Borough where customers will be at the heart of everything that is done. The Community Strategy sets out the steps that will be taken over the next five years and the priorities that will drive partnership working within the Borough. The resources and activities of RMBC's Neighbourhoods Directorate and 2010 Rotherham Ltd have been shaped around priorities and objectives of the residents of Rotherham.

Customers have said they wish to see emphasis on 'neighbourhoods' and not just homes, and more co-ordination of services at a local level. As a result during 2004 the Directorate restructured to take the lead on the 'neighbourhoods' agenda. The vision of the Service is to deliver Neighbourhood Management so that:

- People can see that someone is in charge and can get things done in every neighbourhood.
- Neighbourhood plans, investment and services are designed to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live.
- Services are delivered in a way that contributes to the sustainability of communities.

In May 2005, the Neighbourhood Management service became an ALMO, 2010 Rotherham Ltd. This new company is central to the delivery of the Council's objectives and as such is included in this application. 2010 Rotherham Ltd has the same vision, values, customer care practices and service standards as the Retained Housing Function and the rest of RMBC.

Services are provided through 10 customer Reception Points. Some of which are shared facilities with other Services such as Social Services and Education. All services can be accessed via free ICT and Internet access and support from within local Libraries. In addition there are 10 depots where building maintenance operations are based.

The Retained Services included the following teams: Homelessness and Advice Team, Furnished Team, Home Energy Services Manager, Asylum Seekers Team, Assessment Services Team and Agency Services Team.

The Retained Housing Services has a staff of 140 and a budget of £2 million. 2010 Rotherham Ltd has a staff of 580 and a budget of £7.5 million.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

The assessment process was a full assessment against all the elements of the Charter Mark Criteria. A half-day pre-assessment meeting was held on 15 July 2005. This proved to be a valuable opportunity to work through the key evidence and to plan the assessment process.

It was agreed that the assessment would include the Retained Housing Services of the Neighbourhoods Directorate and 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Until recently these had been part of the same service. Subject to a satisfactory assessment and Certification by EMQC each would be separately certificated and then monitored on a separate basis. The rest of Neighbourhoods Directorate would probably be assessed early in 2006.

The documentary evidence in support of the application was listed under each element of the standard and was contained in seven ring binders. This detailed and comprehensive information was extremely well presented and went a long way in demonstrating compliance against the Charter Mark Standard. In addition the applicant had undertaken a self-assessment where they clearly analysed their own rating against the Standard. Much of this evidence was reviewed in conjunction with the applicant at the pre-assessment visit.

The visit programme provided the opportunity to see services in action and to test the strength of services on the ground with customers and partners. The Neighbourhood Offices at Swinton, Wath, Dinnington and Maltby as well as the main office at Norfolk House in the town centre were included. There was ample opportunity to meet with customers, staff and partners (both internal and external).

Following completion of the assessment the Assessor was able to provide feedback to the applicant on the Service's compliance against all the elements of the Charter Mark Criteria and on his recommendation to the EMQC Certification Panel. Sadly the original assessor Peter Benzies passed away before he was able to complete his feedback report and a further visit was made by a second assessor, Peter Oldridge who confirmed the original conclusions and decision.

Appendix A

Compliance against the Charter Mark Standard.

Criterion 1

Set Standards and perform well

Sub Criterion 1.1

Precise, measurable and challenging standards are set for your main services. These include the percentage of rent collected, arrears, tenants evicted, emergency and non-urgent repairs. In addition Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set in respect of urgent repairs completed in time, repairs and appointments made and kept, average time to complete non-urgent repairs average re-let time from termination to start and rent loss through voids.

The Homelessness Service works on a standard of not using bed and breakfast accommodation and this is achieved.

Measurable standards are set for customer service. These include response to all telephone calls within 7 rings, response to letters within 10 working days, response to antisocial behaviour reports within 5 working days, response to Rotherham Connect enquiries within prescribed time limits and letting all properties to the 'HouseProud' Standard. These are set out in the Council's, People and Service 1st initiative and the Services Customer Care Standards Charter.

Sub Criterion 1.2

You review and raise your standards each year. In February 2005 you used input and learning from the Customers Forum to further build on your standards. Your KPI targets are set against the top quartile of performance from national benchmarking information.

Performance against standards is monitored through customer satisfaction surveys, estate walkabouts, reality checks and using your Tenant Customer Service Inspectors. The involvement of Tennant Customer Service Inspectors is good practice and it is noted that cross inspection arrangements have been set up with neighbouring Services.

At the end of 2004 –2005 83% of your KPIs were achieved, which was a significant improvement on the two previous years. Your performance this year shows continued improvement. Your intention is to be recognised as a 2 star Service by the end of 2005.

Comparisons within the Audit Commission data, the achievement of Housemark and feedback from the national and Yorkshire and Humberside Benchmarking Club show that you are performing well in comparison with others.

Sub Criterion 1.3

You consult customers, partners and staff to set and review your standards in a variety of ways including surveys, customer forums, staff meetings and customer exit polls.

You provide customer information on your standards and performance in poster form, leaflets and newsletters such as Open House News.

Customers, partners and key players met during the visit confirmed to our assessor that your standards are meaningful and relevant to them.

You identify dips in performance through monthly control profiling against targets and take remedial action when necessary. The Service is proactive in actively involving and informing customers. One impressive example of this was that you identified a shortfall of appointment slots and introduced evening and weekend working to meet your customer needs.

Your use of Performance Clinics to review both good and poor experiences can be recognised as good practice and is directly leading to service improvements.

You are fully compliant in this Criterion

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- Reviewing your new Charter after 12 months to ensure that it is still meeting the needs of your customers. For instance it is understood that you may include a timescale to see personal callers within so many minutes of their appointment or arrival time.
- Continuing with your efforts to benchmark your services with the best in the public and private sector to ensure you continue to develop your thinking and bring forward further innovation.
- Extending your consultation further to include people on the waiting list.
- How to make further progress in meeting your KPIs.
- How to improve access to website information on your standards and performance against them.

Criterion 2 **Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff**

Sub Criterion 2.1

Customers, staff and partners of the Services are consulted on a regular basis through a variety of means. You undertake numerous surveys, hold surgeries/roadshows, attend and support tenant and resident forum meetings and actively seek views on your Services. The consultation around the decision to apply for ALMO status was comprehensive and rigorous. It is clear that customers are central to service developments and that you see consultation to be essential for the development of services.

Staff feel confident that there is opportunity to express views and ideas and that their contribution is valued. This is supported by evidence relating to the service and delivery planning including changes to working hours. The Council has a Staff suggestion scheme and this has been replicated by 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

The results of consultation are analysed and reviewed to improve services. Customer are informed in newsletters, at meetings and via your websites how consultation has impacted on the Services and of changes made.

Sub Criterion 2.2

Both Services have excellent information in poster and leaflet form. Website information is constantly being reviewed and there is a direct link between both Services websites. Prior to the formation of 2010 Rotherham Ltd the Council had an informative well produced 'Welcome Home' handbook. A new version of similar quality is now being printed for the new arrangements. Your services are publicised at events such as the Rotherham Show and in the local media. To assist in publicising services you have produced a video tape on the ALMO arrangements.

Sub Criterion 2.3

Information is presented in plain English and you seek customer and staff views on how it could be further improved. Staff work to guidance on using plain language in written communications.

It is good practice that you obtain tenants signatures if they have been able to understand the contents of the Tenants Handbook.

Sub Criterion 2.4

You work with others to provide a coordinated and effective service to your customers. Examples of this can be found in all the Services included in this application, from your work with private landlords to Safer Estates Meetings that include the Police. You have forged links with other neighbouring Local Authority Housing Services and Housing Associations. Probably the most obvious way that compliance to this sub criterion can be demonstrated is with the close working arrangements and Service Level Agreements between the Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

There is evidence of regular sharing of information with other Services such as the National Health Service, Social Services and Environmental Health.

Your partnership arrangements are clearly for the benefit of customers and they are made aware of joint access arrangements. The Welcome Home Handbook and its successor provide valuable information on joint or interlaced services such as Neighbourhood Wardens.

Partial Compliance

Element 2.2.2 During the course of the assessment it was not fully demonstrated how customers could easily access the cost of running the Council's Retained Services and also 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- The introduction of an annual consultation report for customers, given the significant importance of consultation within your Services.
- The further analysis of the cost effectiveness of your joint working following the bedding in of the ALMO arrangements.
- Evaluating the views of customers on the soon to be introduced 2010 Rotherham Ltd, Customer Handbook.

Criterion 3

Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice

Sub Criterion 3.1

Customers can access your facilities by telephone, websites/email, and correspondence or of course especially in relation to housing, by visiting one of your neighbourhood offices. There are twenty four hour telephone contact arrangements in place for the Homelessness Service and other emergencies.

You use technology to provide information about, and access to services in a number of ways. There is free email contact from libraries and both Services have websites. Of particular note are Rotherham Connect and the access to your housing repairs services through digital television.

Sub Criterion 3.2

Your staff are identifiable through the wearing of name badges and identity cards and in respect of 2010 Rotherham Ltd a new corporate uniform has been introduced. You have policies for staff to respond promptly and politely to customers for example the answering of the telephone within seven rings and the reply to all letters within ten working days.

Customer care is seen to be important for the future success of your services and a significant investment has been made in staff training. Services are provided in a flexible manner with late opening times, morning, evening and weekend appointments. Where appropriate, customers can be seen in their own homes at a time convenient to them. 2010 Rotherham Ltd provide services from ten neighbourhood offices strategically located for ease of customer access throughout the Borough.

You survey your customers and staff in order to improve choice within the services provided. The ALMO consultation was seen to be extremely successful by both customers and staff.

2010 Rotherham Ltd Housing Services rents are seen to be reasonable and affordable when compared to the private sector. Customers particularly appreciate their rent free weeks within the payment year.

Sub Criterion 3.3

The Council has a proactive approach to consulting and including customers with special needs. Attention is given to ensuring race equality and the need to open up services to all. Services are provided for the vulnerable and elderly through sheltered housing schemes and properties adapted to meet individual needs.

Information is made available in large print and on audio tape, DVD and video tape. A translation/interpretation service is used and information printed in other languages is available.

You make changes to your services policies and practices to ensure you meet the needs of disadvantaged people. Your Homelessness and Office Accommodation Strategies are examples of this.

The Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd have customer care, equal opportunities and disabilities policies in place.

You are fully compliant in this Criterion.

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- If the standard of replying to letters within 10 working days is challenging given that you were 99% successful in meeting this timescale.
- Including in your customer standards specific statements and timescales relating to personal callers.
- If your newsletters and printed information cover all aspects of the two Services.
- Ensuring that all of your neighbourhood offices are fully DDA compliant.

Criterion 4
Continuously develop and improve

Sub Criterion 4.1

Both Services have in place planning processes that identify future developments and costs. Indeed the formation of 2010 Rotherham Ltd is a direct result of strategic planning. Your Delivery, Performance and Service Improvement Plans demonstrate compliance with this sub criterion. The Decent Homes Programme is linked to Central Government funding. Associated with this is a successful 2 star assessment by the Audit Commission.

Sub Criterion 4.2

Your services have improved in terms of performance and facilities. Work on improving your housing stock is ongoing in relation to the Decent Homes Standard. Of note is how many aspects of your performance have improved, a real success story is the re-let time of void properties reducing from 120 days to 16 days over the last three years. The Councils CPA Rating demonstrates an upward trend.

Levels of customer satisfaction are compared year on year and show significant improvement in many areas of service provision. It is worthy of note that in relation to the housing repair service customer satisfaction levels have improved and now run at 94%.

There is an excellent record of customer and staff involvement in planning improvements. Examples of this are the learning from customer forum and your numerous surveys.

The use of technology is well demonstrated with internet access for repairs and information. The service is working to the e-govt strategy. Of note during the assessment was that wardens have held hand computers to report repairs and that customers can access your services via digital television.

Sub Criterion 4.3

The Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd have well publicised complaints procedures. The latter's procedure is formed from the Council's procedure and has tighter timescales for stage two complaints.

Staff are provided with guidance and training on the complaints process and they are empowered to locally resolve customer concerns. Staff, customers and partners are actively encouraged to comment on your service via the internet, through customer surveys and customer forums.

Both services record and analyse formal/informal complaints and suggestions received. These are held on a corporate data base and reviewed on a regular basis.

You publish details of the number of complaints received in Open House News and in poster form.

People who have made complaints are followed up and you seek their views on how the complaints process could be further improved. Currently the Council's Complaints Procedure is under review with the involvement of staff and customers.

Partial Compliance

Element 4.3.5 You do not fully demonstrate how you publish details of the number and type of compliments and suggestions/comments received.

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- Providing further information on your websites on the analysis of complaints, compliments and suggestions received along with improvements made as a result.
- The length of time taken to review the Council's complaints procedure.
- If you have mechanisms in place to fully record informal complaints, compliments and suggestions made.

Criterion 5
Use your resources effectively and imaginatively

Sub Criterion 5.1

You meet your budgets and have processes in place to provide and review financial information for both Services. Monthly financial statements are produced and monitored by the relevant management teams for the two organisations.

Key to the success of the Services is the measurement of performance and monthly statistics are produced against targets.

There are several initiatives in place to ensure good use of resources. The review of customer demand and working practices has led to greater efficiency. In terms of procurement, Rotherham Brought Together (RBT) has generated savings for the Services.

Benchmarking arrangements are in place and you actively compare your services with neighbouring Local Authorities and Housing Services. Also of note is your involvement with Housemark.

Your Services are independently assessed and at present you are awaiting a visit from the Audit Commission.

Sub Criterion 5.2

You ensure that your staff are aware of the need for efficiency and value for money for the customer. Financial matters form part of your regular meetings with staff.

Your planning process ensures that you seek value for money.

You are fully compliant in this Criterion.

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- The possible benefits of joint provision of services and purchasing arrangements with other ALMO Housing Services.

Criterion 6

Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve.

Sub Criterion 6.1

The nature of your Services dictates that you identify the larger community you serve as that covered by the geographical area of Rotherham MBC. The Council's commitment to improving opportunities and quality of life for the residents of Rotherham is clearly identified in the Community Strategy. Within this neighbourhood management is designed to ensure equality of service within sustainable communities.

Thought has been given to how your operations and service developments impact on others. Bringing homes up to the Decent Homes Standard will involve an analysis of the impact on the wider community. There is a commitment to improve communities generally with funds that are available through ALMO status.

The views of staff and customers are considered of, note is the way you involve residents as well as tenants in your community initiatives.

Sub Criterion 6.2

The Council is corporately committed to serve and support the community as a whole. You provide use of facilities for Tenant and Resident Groups and give support to their activities. You have invested heavily with Community Development Officers and Neighbourhood Champions to develop the communities that you serve.

Members of staff are encouraged to become involved with local charities and community activities. Support is given to staff who have a voluntary role in serving the community

The Services offer work experience opportunities for local children.

The promotion of your Services is seen to be important local shows and events.

You monitor your activities against your Community Plans for the impact they have on the community.

You are fully compliant with this Criterion

Areas for continuous improvement

You may wish to consider:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of your arrangements for addressing elements 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 now that some time has elapsed since the formation of 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Services are forward looking and extremely customer orientated. Much effort has been given to completing the Charter Mark application and this has resulted in only two partial compliances being identified. It is a credit to both Services and the Council that such a level of compliance has been achieved.

Both Services work to precise and measurable standards and have actively involved customers in their development.

There is an excellent commitment to consultation with, staff customers and others.

Your printed information is of high quality and you are further developing website information. The Welcome Home handbook and the 2010 Rotherham Ltd Customer Handbook are most helpful and informative.

Services are provided in a flexible and responsive manner with numerous improvements in performance over recent years.

Your staff work to customer care standards and are seen to be helpful and courteous.

The level of satisfaction with your Services has improved year on year.

There is a commitment to value for money and staff are involved with planned savings and other financial issues.

The development and enrichment of the wider community is seen to be core to your planning process.

There are two areas where all elements of the Charter Mark Criteria are not fully met. The partial compliance issues raised in this report should be subject to an action plan with defined timescales.

I recommend that 2010 Rotherham Ltd and Rotherham MBC, Retained Housing Services be separately certified as meeting the Charter Mark Standard.

Peter Oldridge
Charter Mark Assessor

30/10/05

Appendix A**Compliance against the Charter Mark Standard**

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
1	1.1	1.1.1		X		
		1.1.2		X		
	1.2	1.2.1		X		
		1.2.2		X		
		1.2.3		X		
		1.2.4		X		
		1.2.5		X		
	1.3	1.3.1		X		
		1.3.2		X		
		1.3.3		X		
		1.3.4		X		
		1.3.5	X	X		

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
2	2.1	2.1.1		X		
		2.1.2		X		
		2.1.3		X		
		2.1.4		X		
		2.1.5		X		
		2.1.6		X		
	2.2	2.2.1		X		
		2.2.2			X	
	2.3	2.3.1		X		
		2.3.2		X		
	2.4	2.4.1		X		
		2.4.2		X		
		2.4.3		X		
		2.4.4		X		
		2.4.5		X		

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
3	3.1	3.1.1		X		
		3.1.2		X		
	3.2	3.2.1		X		
		3.2.2		X		
		3.2.3		X		
		3.2.4		X		
	3.3	3.3.1		X		
		3.3.2		X		
		3.3.3		X		
		3.3.4		X		

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
4	4.1	4.1.1		X		
	4.2	4.2.1		X		
		4.2.2		X		
		4.2.3		X		
		4.2.4		X		
		4.2.5		X		
	4.3	4.3.1		X		
		4.3.2		X		
		4.3.3		X		
		4.3.4		X		
		4.3.5			X	
		4.3.6		X		
		4.3.7		X		

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
5	5.1	5.1.1		X		
		5.1.2		X		
		5.1.3		X		
		5.1.4		X		
		5.1.5		X		
	5.2	5.2.1		X		
		5.2.2		X		

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Element	Best Practice	Full Compliance	Partial Compliance	Major Non-Conformance
6	6.1	6.1.1		X		
		6.1.2		X		
		6.1.3		X		
	6.2	6.2.1		X		
		6.2.2		X		
		6.2.3		X		
		6.2.4		X		

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	19 January 2006
3.	Title:	Complaints Breakdown All Wards Affected
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

The report details a further breakdown of complaints following analysis within the Neighbourhoods Programme Area Annual Customer Care Report 2004/05.

6. Recommendations

THAT SCUTINY PANEL ARE ASKED TO NOTE THE BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

Proposals and Details

The report provides a further breakdown of complaints, including; actions or conduct of staff, quality of service, absence of service, Neighbourhood Management - Going Local and Neighbourhood Enforcement.

- 7.1 31(15%) of the total 209 complaints received were relating to 'actions or conduct of staff' including 14 received by the Neighbourhood Management Service (neighbourhood issues, repairs, allocations and customer care), 5 received by Health & Commercial Standards and 4 received by Community Services. Complaint description examples include:
- the attitude of reception staff
 - the way that staff dealt with neighbour nuisance
 - information and advice provided regarding housing applications
- 7.2 77 (37%) of the total complaints received were relating to 'quality of service' including 33 received by the Neighbourhood Management Service, 16 received by Asset Management Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport) and 14 received by Asset Management Construction (Decent Homes, Programme Works). Complaint description examples include:
- allocation policy unclear for non-cohabiting couples
 - dust left to customers home following gas servicing
 - quality of the 'follow up work' under the Decent Homes Scheme
- 7.3 40 (19%) of the total complaints received were relating to 'absence of service' including 20 received by the Neighbourhood Management Service, 10 received by Asset Management Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works) and 4 received by Waste Strategy. Complaint description examples include:
- lack of action from staff relating to ongoing neighbourhood problems concerning youths playing football
 - time waiting for repairs under Programme Works
 - missed bin and blue bag collection
- 7.4 86 (42%) of the total complaints received were relating to Neighbourhood Management issues including; neighbourhood issues, repairs, housing allocation issues and customer care. 24 complaints were received by the Going Local pilot area, 16 received by the Town Centre and 13 received by Wath. Complaint description examples include:
- time waiting to be re-housed (service and advice received by Going Local staff)
 - repairs incomplete following four months wait (Going Local)
 - lack of action taken against neighbour relating to dispute over shared driveway (Going Local)

- advice and assistance provided by staff (Town Centre)
- absence of service from office following neighbour problems over boundary issues (Wath)

7.5 20 (10%) of the total complaints received were relating to Neighbourhood Enforcement – Environmental Services (Enforcement, Standards, Licensing) including 3 relating to the cost of services, 2 regarding the quality of service and 2 regarding lack of information. Complaint description examples include:

- fixed penalty charge for littering
- memorial safety testing programme
- lack of action in relation to air pollution from land fill site

7.6 Improvements have been implemented as a result of learning from complaints, examples include:

7.6.1 **Customer complained that...**

The allocation policy was unclear and discriminated against non-cohabiting couples

We have...

Changed the allocation policy with the introduction of Key Choices to ensure that non-cohabiting couples are treated on an equal basis to co-habiting couples

7.6.2 **Customer complained that...**

Dust was left in their home following Gas Servicing

We have...

Issued all Gas operatives with dust sheets and Hoovers as van stock

7.6.3 **Customer complained that...**

There was a lack of information and advice around the agency and grants system

We have...

Implemented a Service Standard booklet for the Adaptations Service and carried out a Best Value Review

7.6.4 **Customer complained that...**

They were unhappy with the quality of the 'follow up work' required under the Decent Homes Scheme

We have...

Worked with our contractors 'Wates' to resolve these issues and have given a bouquet of flowers to the customer as an apology

8. Finance

There is an administration cost to producing the Annual Customer Care report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

We have built up a reputation for putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and enhanced the learning from complaints culture. The immediate risk is complacency. To avoid this we will be implementing a number of actions which should improve customer services for the year ahead:

- a customer satisfaction system in place for all service areas;
- a new 2010 Complaints Procedure and monitoring protocol with the Council;
- an evaluation of office usage, customer preferences;
- an evaluation of the out-of-hours repairs by appointment service;
- an impact and needs requirement assessment of the Complaints Policy to ensure compliance with the Local Government Equality Standard.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

We have been asked to share our Customer Care practices and service standards across the Council as part of the People and Service 1st review programmed in for January 2006. Results from the annual customer care report and 'learning from complaints' are evidence that the programme area is able to implement change and deliver good customer performance results.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The report has been discussed with Programme Area Management Team.

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Customer Care Report – Extra Information

Subject Area – Actions or conduct of staff

Service Area	Actions or conduct of staff	ALL COMPLAINTS
Community Services (Housing Needs)	4	6
Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works)	2	34
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)	0	7
Policy and Planning	0	0
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	14	86
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	2	20
Waste Strategy (Recycling)	0	7
Health & Commercial Standards	5	6
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)	2	28
Regeneration	2	9
Legal	0	0
Rent	0	5
Anti Social Behaviour	0	0
TOTAL	31	209

Service Area	Complaint Descriptions (Examples)
Community Services (Housing Needs)	Unhappy with the conduct of a member of staff while visiting a property
	The Council has not dealt appropriately with the customers application to be re-housed
	Customers concerns with the actions of a homelessness officer
	The actions of Officer – accused of shouting at the child of the customer

Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works)		Attitude of a Technical Officer
		Actions of a technical officer
		The service received from Wates construction
		Problems with works during adaptations
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)		
Policy and Planning		
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)		Meeting with customer cancelled without informing the customer. Customer not happy as an apology was not given when they called to enquire after the Officer.
		The way that Officers had dealt with the customers reports of neighbour nuisance
		Response of Officers in dealing with the customers reports of nuisance and repair issues.
		The way Officer conducted themselves during a deceased tenancy termination.
		The quality of advice provided by Officers in respect of the customer re-housing prospects.
		The attitude of the member of staff at the Norfolk House Housing reception
		Attitude of reception staff in a Neighbourhood Office
		Officer refused to visit customer
		Information and advice provided regarding the customers homeless application
		The way that the Officer has conducted themselves when dealing with tenancy issues of a customer
		The driving incident involving a repairs and maintenance operative
		The advice provided by the Officer when dealing with a boundary dispute
Waste Strategy (Recycling)		
Health & Commercial Standards		The way in which an Officer dealt with the customers complaints about another Officer.
		Customer was unhappy with actions of a trading standards Officer
		The actions of trading standard officer

			The actions of trading standard officer
			The allegation made by the licensing officer
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)			
Regeneration			Lack of action by an Officer in respect of a request for repair under a regeneration scheme
			The actions of a contractor employed under a regeneration scheme
Legal			
Rent			
Anti Social Behaviour			
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)			The removal of ornaments from the memorial garden
			Attitude of staff when dealing with the customer's enquiry
Upheld	5		16%
Not upheld	17		55%
Part upheld	7		23%
N/A	2		6%
TOTAL	31		

Subject Area – Absence of Service

	Absence of service	ALL COMPLAINTS
Community Services (Housing Needs)	1	6
Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works)	10	34
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)	1	7
Policy and Planning	0	0
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	20	86
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	1	20
Waste Strategy (Recycling)	4	7
Health & Commercial Standards	0	6
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)	3	28
Regeneration	0	9
Legal	0	0
Rent	0	5
Anti Social Behaviour	0	0
TOTAL	40	209

Service Area	Complaint Descriptions (Examples)
Community Services (Housing Needs)	
Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes,	The responsive repairs service

Programme Works)	
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	Problems with the customers combi-boiler and heating problems
	Problems with the customer Heating system
	Repair of high security doors
	Failure to visit by the Technical Officers
	Delay in repair to a customers radiator
	Problems with the customer heating system
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)	A delay in processing a request for a grant to replace the customers windows
Policy and Planning	
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	Customers boundary issues
	Request for re-housing
	Request for fencing
	Customer suffered an accident due to repairs not being carried out
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	The Decent Homes scheme
	Neighbour nuisance problems
	The service received from the Neighbourhood Office
	Problems with a overflow and the customers shed
	The condition of Hollowgate Road Flats
	No response to previous complaints
Waste Strategy (Recycling)	recycling issues
	the Council's waste recycling centres
	Early closure of Recycling centre
Health & Commercial Standards	
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)	Problems with the repair service
Regeneration	

Legal		
Rent		
Anti Social Behaviour		
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)		The smell from the land fill on Wath Road
Upheld	11	30%
Not upheld	15	40%
Part upheld	9	25%
N/A	2	5%
TOTAL	37	

Service Area	Quality of service provision	ALL COMPLAINTS
Community Services (Housing Needs)	1	6
Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works)	14	34
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)	2	7
Policy and Planning	0	0
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	33	86
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	2	20
Waste Strategy (Recycling)	0	7
Health & Commercial Standards	1	6
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)	16	28
Regeneration	4	9
Legal	0	0
Rent	4	5
Anti Social Behaviour	0	0
TOTAL	77	209

Service Area	Complaint Descriptions (Examples)
Community Services (Housing Needs)	Housing application

	The offer of accommodation
	The Council has not offered him a suitable property.
Asset Management – Development (Decent Homes, Programme Works)	The cost of Economy 7 heaters
	The customers heating system
	The customers district central heating system
	The conduct of the gas contractors
	The Council's Decent Homes Scheme
	The standard of the kitchen improvements
	The customers front window
	Unhappy with the decision to the Technical Officer
	Unhappy with work carried out during Decent Homes
	The customers heating system
	The standard of the kitchen fitted under the Decent Homes Scheme
	Problems with Decent Homes and Wates contractors
	Problems with Decent Homes and Wates contractors
	The customers heating system
Agency and Grants (Home Adaptation)	Would like a grant for downstairs extension to provide toilet.
Policy and Planning	Unhappy with standard of home when moved in 2002 and standard of repairs since.
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	Housing waiting lists
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	Re-housing query
	The standard of repairs carried out to the customer property
	Re housing issues
	Concerns regarding neighbour nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour
	Mess left after repairs
	Customers housing application date
	Customers reports of neighbour nuisance
	The delay in repair of your roof
	Anti-social Behaviour

	The customers housing issues
	Re-hosing request
	The Installation of your windows
	The service received from The Neighbourhood Office
	Problems encountered when moving to a new property
	Problems with the customers W.C.
	Garden rubbish removal issues
	Application date query
	Repairs issues and damage to property and goods
	The housing advice received
	The security gates at St Johns Green flats
	The faulty front door
	The repair of your boiler
	The anti social behaviour problems at Holm Flatt Street
	The replacement of windows
	The security lighting
	Customers housing application
	Customers housing application
	Customers housing application
	The repair of the blocked drain
	The replacement of a bath
	The repair of the kitchen
	The damp problem
Waste Strategy (Recycling)	
Health & Commercial Standards	
Asset Management – Construction (Gas, Electrical, Short Term, Transport)	The district heating
	The re-wiring of the property
	The problems with the boiler
Regeneration	The brick cleaning work carried out to the property
	The roof after Regeneration work by Bramalls
Legal	
Rent	
Anti Social Behaviour	
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	The memorial safety programme in Haugh Road cemetery

Upheld	18	23%
Not upheld	36	47%
Part upheld	21	27%
N/A	2	3%
TOTAL	77	

Service Area – Neighbourhood Management

Service Area	Actions or conduct of staff	Quality of service provision	Cost of service	Delay in Providing service	Absence of service	Lack of information and/or publicity	Others	TOTAL	Percentage of total complaints
Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Issues, Repairs, Allocation)	14	33	0	5	20	1	14	86	42

Service Area	Grounds, Garden and Garages	Neighbourhood Issues			Responsive Repairs			Housing Allocation Issues			Customer Care			New Property Issues	
		Anti-social	Noise	Neighbour	Delay	Quality	Lack of	Waiting List	Re-house	Rent Issues	Attitude	No Response	Service/Advice		
Matby	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	8
Dinnington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Wath	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	1	13
Swinton	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Rawmarsh	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Going Local	0	0	2	0	5	1	5	9	0	0	0	0	2	0	24
East															28
Herringtonthorpe	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	7
Town Centre	0	1	0	0	1	5	2	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	16
Aston	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
Total	3	3	2	9	7	8	9	22	4	0	2	3	12	2	86
															100

Percentage of complaints	3	3	2	11	8	9	11	26	5	0	2	3	15	2	100
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	Problems with re-housing
	The repairs carried out to the customer property
	Re-housing advice received
	Re-housing advice received
	Re-housing query
	The security gates at St Johns Green flats
	Re-housing query
	Re-housing query
	Problems with a shared drive
	Delay in repairs to the customers property
	Delay in repairs to the customers property
	The Decent Homes scheme
	Housing application query
	Housing application query
	The damp problem in the property
Rotherham South (Town Centre)	Repairs to customers stairs
	Re housing issues
	Delay in repair to overflow
	Housing application date query
	Service received from the Neighbourhood Housing Office
	Service received from the Neighbourhood Housing Office
	Anti-social Behaviour
	The condition of Hollowgate Road Flats
	Lack of response to complaints
	Delay in repair to bathroom
	Application date query
Wentworth Valley (Maltby)	Unhappy with standard of home when moved in 2002 and standard of repairs since.
	Service received from the Neighbourhood Housing Office
	The future of the Tarran Housing Estate
	The future of the Tarran Housing Estate
	The condition of the property at termination
	Repairs to the customer's property.
	Repair to the faulty front door
	the attitude of the Housing Officer
	Customers boundary issues
Rother Valley South (Dinnington)	The length of time waiting to be re-housed

Rother Valley West (Aston)	The termination of deceased fathers house		
	Customers reports of neighbour nuisance		
	Customers reports of neighbour nuisance		
Upheld		11	13%
Not upheld		48	55%
Part upheld		21	25%
N/A		6	7%
TOTAL		86	

Service Area – Neighbourhood Enforcement

Service Area	Actions or conduct of staff	Quality of service provision	Cost of service	Delay in providing service	Absence of service	Lack of information and/or publicity	Others	TOTAL
Environmental Services (Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	2	2	3	0	1	2	10	20

Environmental Services	Complaint Descriptions (Examples)
(Neighbourhood enforcement/standards, licensing)	Environmental issues in Bramley
	The smell and noise from neighbouring take away
	The state of Moorgate Cemetery
	The Memorial Safety Testing programme
	The noise from an extractor fan
	Ornaments removed from memorial garden
	The charges at the Crematorium
	The service received from the Rotherham Crematorium
	The Memorial gardens
	Fixed penalty for dropping litter
	Unhappy with fixed penalty for litter dropping
	Fine for dropping litter
	Noise during service at Crematorium
	Dog fouling fixed penalty
	The Attitude of staff concerning security of building
	The smell from the land fill on Wath Road
	The memorial safety testing programme
	The memorial safety testing programme

Upheld	0	0%
Not upheld	12	60%
Part upheld	7	35%
N/A	1	5%
TOTAL	20	

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	19th January 2006
3.	Title:	Progress Report - Furnished Homes
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

In January 2005 a "Furnished Home Scheme Progress Report " was presented to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods. The recommendations were to continue to monitor, evaluate and review the furnished scheme every six months. This report will outline the critical success factors, funding including income and expenditure, customer satisfaction and operational aspects.

6. Recommendations

- **THAT THE FURNISHED HOME SCHEME BE MONITORED TO ENSURE THAT THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME HAS ROBUST SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND THAT THE SCHEME IS TRANSPARENT AND FAIR.**
- **A PROGRESS REPORT TO BE PROVIDED AFTER A FURTHER SIX MONTHS IN OPERATION**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 The feasibility report informed us that furnished accommodation schemes have been established in other authorities for approximately five years. The Homelessness Strategy identified that one of the main reasons tenancies fail is due to the lack of support, in particular for young single people who find it difficult to set up a tenancy, due to lack of furniture. Evidence shows that there is less chance of a tenancy failing if furniture, carpets and decoration are in place

7.2 The furnished scheme was introduced in May 2004 with a target to establish a one stop furnishing service and to introduce one hundred units by 31st March 2005. A total of 106 furnished homes were introduced.

A further target has been set to introduce a further 100 units during the financial year 2005/2006 and as at 12th August 2005 42 new units have been introduced.

7.3 The scheme is a long-term investment so it essential that the customer understands how the scheme works. A Furnished Service Standards leaflet has been developed and approved by the Learning from Tenants Forum Group. This provides information about the types of packages available, service standards to be expected and it also sets out the expectations from both the customer and the furnishing service prospective. Mechanisms have also been adopted to enabled individual items of furniture to be returned, this would prompt a reduction in the charge.

7.4 During financial year 2004–2005 when the scheme was piloted, five furniture suppliers were used to compare for value for money, quality and service delivery. To meet with financial regulations for financial year 2005–2006 the Furnished Homes Scheme has gone out to tender for a furniture supplier. Currently 6 companies have completed a Pre Tender Questionnaire and are to be invited to Tender.

7.5 Initially all new furnished homes were decorated throughout, this approach was changed in July 2004 with an alternative of issuing between £200-£300 of decoration vouchers. The reasons for the change were that the decoration contractor could not keep up with demand, decoration costs were outweighing predicted spend and customers preferred to take ownership and decorate their home themselves. We found that new tenants were decorating over a newly emulsion walls. The decoration costs were between £1200 to £1600 per property and this was more than had been estimated. The new approach has enabled each of the furnished charges to be reduced by at least £9. The charges are now more affordable ranging from £14.60 for a one-bed part furnished to £38.27 to a three bed fully furnished property.

7.6 We aim to deliver a quality customer focused furnished service. A furnished focus group meeting was arranged to collect factual information, such as customer satisfaction levels, lessons to be learnt, choice and aspirations, value for money and service delivery. Unfortunately, none of the invited attended the meeting. The reasons given were they had forgotten, or that is was due to the bad weather conditions on that day. In view of the lack of engagement a postal customer satisfaction survey was subsequently undertaken. However, only seven surveys were returned, all of which thought the furnished scheme was excellent value for money and rated the overhaul service as good. A customer commented "Whoever

thought of this scheme deserves a medal". A further satisfaction survey was undertaken during March 2005 of the 106 issued 42 were returned. 13 rated the scheme as excellent and 22 as very good. Customer comments regarding the colour and texture of carpets have been used to improve customer choice and satisfaction. Customers reported that the beige basket weaver carpet being used at the start of the scheme proved difficult to Hoover and showed the dirt easily. As a result a meeting was arranged with the carpet supplier. Customers now have a colour choice of terracotta, blue or brown /beige fleck and improved carpet quality which is harder wearing and is easy to care for texture. Feedback from customers has been very positive.

7.7 Management focus - Operational cost saving has been made with the implementation of security marking "Micro dots", working with second hand dealers and undertaking regular Inventory Checks. The furniture is robust and meets the Fire Safety Standards. Admin processes have been developed such as stock control, income and expenditure and mapping of furnished stock, monitoring client group by family make up and ethnicity. Of the 106 furnished homes established during financial year 2004-2005 the family types were 49 singles, 45 families and 12 elderly, with 100 being of White Origin, 5 Pakistani and 1 Other. Of the 42 completed furnished homes this financial year family types so far are 19 single, 12 family and 11 elderly, with 39 being of white origin, 2 Pakistani and 1 Afro Caribbean. 5 applicants had been awarded Medical Priority and 8 have a disability. Since the scheme was established 5 furnished tenancies have been terminated. 2 due to a death, 2 evictions 1 for rent arrears and 1 for anti social behaviour and one family leaving the area to receive support. None of the furnished accommodation proved difficult to relet in fact one part furnished property was upgraded to fully furnished at the request of the new tenant.

7.8 Marketing - Various marketing initiatives have included; a virtual DVD Rom - used at Rotherham Show, newspaper articles in the local press and "Openhouse", weekly staff briefings, launch of the Furnished Show Home, poster displays, letters to new tenants, roadshows and awareness raising presentations have been made to the Voluntary Sector and Neighbourhood Offices. Training sessions have been provided for the Neighbourhood Champions and Neighbourhood Support Officers and staff awareness raising sessions are currently being undertaken at the Neighbourhood Officers Friday morning training sessions to promote the scheme.

8. Finance

Funding was established through a prime pump funding grant of £40,000 and unsupported credit approval of £200,000. A five-year business plan projected expenditure for the first year to set up 100 units of £232,960, and operational costs of £47,213. Expenditure is on target, with open book accounting principles. The cost is offset from a predicated income of £120,000 generated by the furnished charge. Income from the furnished charge generated on the Housing Rental Account for financial year 2004-2005 amounted to £79,569.48. For the current financial year as at 12th August £69,641.82 income has been generated.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Risks that the furniture could be stolen or damaged have been minimised with the introduction of management procedures, incorporating Inventory Checks and Security Marking of furniture. The 3 monthly inventory checks have been undertaken

on all existing furnished homes. The inventory checks have shown that overall customers are caring for and looking after the furniture provided and have pride in their home. It is made clear to all tenants that they will be charged for the replacement of any items of furniture damaged through neglect or misuse. To date this has not been necessary.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Furnished Homes contribute to the sustainability agenda, which is a driving principle of the Council. The scheme improves the performance framework in relation to rent loss through dwelling becoming vacant and the reduction in usage of bed and breakfast for homeless applicants. The Service is integral to the performance within the Neighbourhood Service Plan to “provide specialist accommodation and services to deliver sensitive services to vulnerable customers by 2006.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- The Homelessness Act 2002.
- “ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services” – Audit Commission March 2003
- Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008
- Cabinet Member meeting 19.09.05

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	19 January 2006
3.	Title:	Funding Initiative providing additional Thermal Comfort
4.	Programme Area:	NEIGHBOURHOODS

5. Summary

The report identifies the works and qualifications applicable to existing thermal comfort grant aid, and sets out the amendment needed to the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, in order to accommodate a new scheme for providing additional thermal comfort. It also identifies a need to provide additional delegated powers to the Head of Service, to allow Officer approval of energy efficiency grants, in accordance with the new scheme operated under the South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme (administered by Doncaster MBC on behalf of Sheffield CC).

6. Recommendation

1. **THAT THE COUNCIL ADOPT THE AMENDMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX D**
2. **THAT PUBLIC NOTICE IS MADE OF THE AMENDMENT**
3. **THAT THE HEAD OF SERVICE BE GRANTED ADDITIONAL DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHEME UNDER THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE HOUSING AND REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT (ADMINISTERED BY DONCASTER MBC ON BEHALF OF SHEFFIELD CC).**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 This revised report, following the part approval of a report to Cabinet Member on 14th November, identifies a new funding initiative to improve thermal comfort in homes. The previous report resulted in the following resolution :-

“That participation in the South Yorkshire and Regeneration Partnership Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme be supported”.

7.2 For that support to be made operational within the Borough, and for grants to be approved at Officer level there are two further requirements:

- i) adoption of an amendment to the private sector housing assistance policy, as set out in Appendix D;
- ii) an additional delegated power to the Head of Service.

7.3 The thermal comfort scheme follows a Regional bid to the Regional Housing Board, which resulted in a Regional Fund Allocation to help achieve the PSA 7 Target for decent homes thermal standard.

7.4 Doncaster MBC implements the scheme which is available to all South Yorkshire local authorities at nil cost. Doncaster was chosen for this because it already services the existing energy schemes. Sheffield CC is the fund holder (please see Appendix A for the flow of operation).

7.5 Qualifying homes are ones below the thermal comfort level, and occupied by vulnerable home owners over the age of 18 years, who are in receipt of a recognised benefit (listed within Appendix D part 2). The grant is 100% of approved works for qualifying persons, unless another source of public funding is available.

- Grant can be for funding a shortfall between the cost of a Warm Front Grant Scheme and the amount of money available through that scheme;
- Full central heating where no central heating exists and includes for cost of changing from solid fuel to gas;
- Replacement boilers, where boilers are beyond economical repair providing that they are over 20 years old including any necessary work to radiators;
- Cavity wall and loft insulation.

7.6 The grant money is paid direct to the Contractor who will be on an approved list; one of these is Rotherham based (see Appendix B).

7.7 The amendment of the existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy is necessary in order that the defined vulnerable households can benefit from the new scheme (the relevant parts of the existing policy are set out in Appendix C and the new scheme is in Appendix D).

7.8.1 The advantages for qualifying clients are:

- Additional money is available;
- The age limit is brought down to 18 years;
- There is no restriction of Council Tax Banding.

7.8.2 There are no disadvantages because any clients who do not qualify for delivery under the new scheme, still qualify under the existing one.

8. Finance

8.1 There are no grant capital costs directly related to the Council. The money is a regional allocation from the ODPM via the Regional Housing Board to the administering authorities.

8.2 This scheme is to be operational when there is a final written agreement between the administering authorities. There is £750k to be spent before April 2006. This will be followed by another £1M allocation in 2006/07 and a further £1M in 2007/08. There is no firm formula for allocation to each authority other than the aim to be equitable. It will need positive marketing if Rotherham is to gain full advantage.

8.3 The cost to RMBC will be in referral, verifying applications and ensuring that they are from eligible applicants in accordance with the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. This part of the work at this stage will be absorbed by the existing workforce in the Adaptations and Essential Works Agency and Home Energy Efficiency Neighbourhood Services. If, however, the scheme were to grow beyond what is currently planned that situation would need to be reviewed.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If the Council does not participate in the scheme:

- i) vulnerable households will be deprived of thermal comfort in circumstances that could be avoided;
- ii) falling behind neighbouring Authorities in terms of available housing providing thermal comfort;
- iii) missing the opportunity to compliment the HMR activity in terms of sustaining a range of quality affordable homes;
- iv) without additional thermal efficiency, the risk of fuel poverty is increased to vulnerable households.

It is unclear at this stage how long the scheme will operate and how far reaching it will be in meeting the needs within the Borough.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- Alignment/contribution to cross cutting issues of sustainable development, equalities and diversity, regeneration and health;
- Rotherham Safe;
- Rotherham Alive;
- Rotherham Achieving.

The improvement in thermal comfort for houses occupied by vulnerable people in the private sector housing stock, will aid sustainability of that housing.

The thermal improvement of such housing will also protect vulnerable persons from the risk of thermal discomfort and reduce health risks of occupiers. The opportunity to apply is open to all home owners who are defined as vulnerable persons, or those with families who are over 18 years of age and in receipt of a recognised benefit.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Regional Housing Board Bid made in 2003.

This report was presented to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods on 28th November 2005 and Cabinet on 30 November 2005

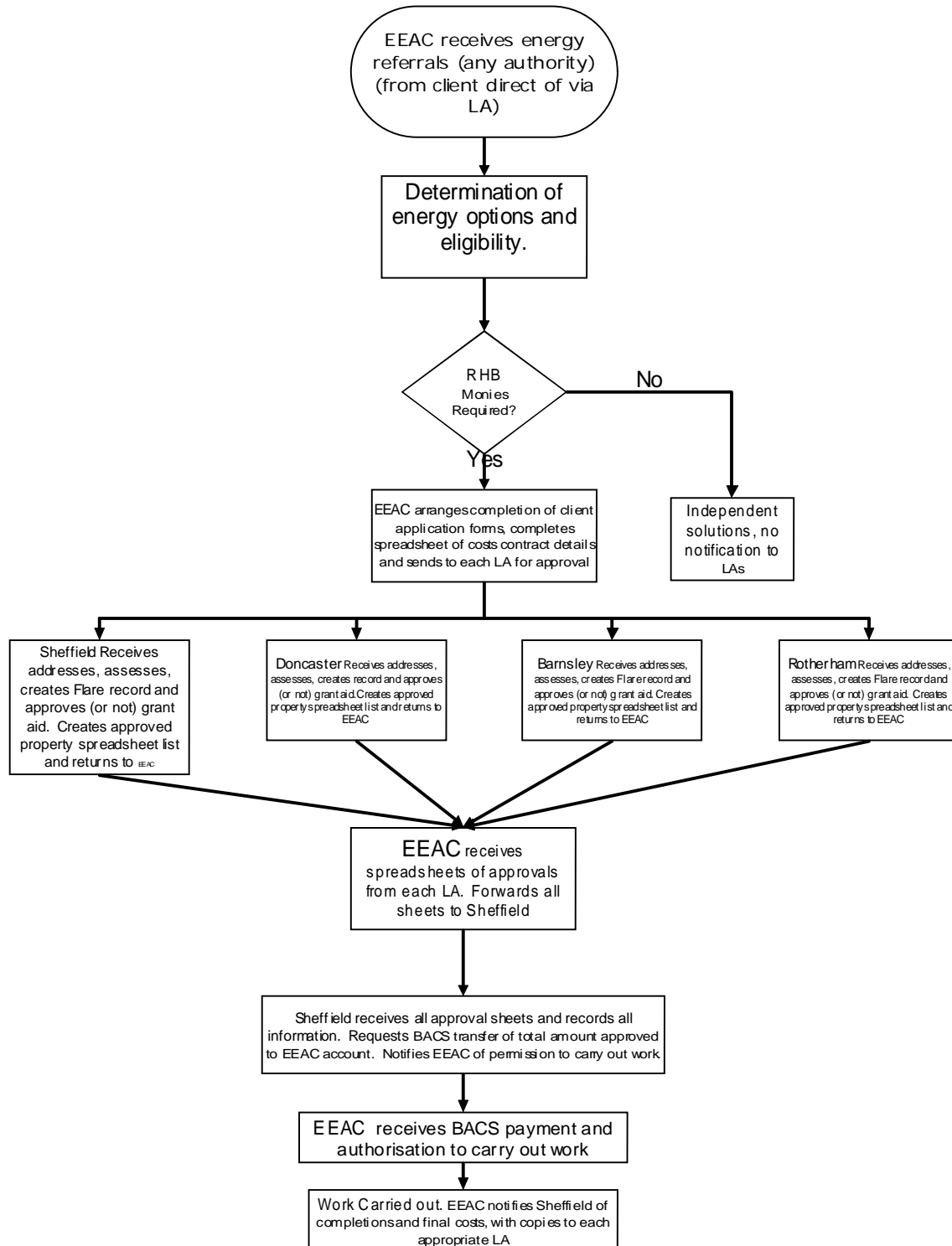
Contact Name

David Cherry, Housing Solutions Officer

Tel. 01709 334382, e-mail address dave.cherry@rotherham.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – Note equates to route for proposed scheme and EEAC stands for energy efficiency advice centre.

Sheffield Process Route for Approval Payment and Monitoring of Energy Grants through Save and Warm



APPENDIX B

Contractors for South Yorkshire Housing and Housing and Regeneration Partnership energy Efficiency Grant Scheme,

Contractor	<u>Address</u>	Contact Details
INSULATION		
Cosyhome Insulation Ltd	Insulation House St Mary's Bridge Town End Doncaster DN5 9AG	Tel. 01302 325256 Fax. 01302 768578
Millfold Insulation Ltd	Galax Building Eastwood Industrial Estate Fitzwilliam Road Rotherham S65 1SL	Joanne Tel. 01709 538980 Fax. 01709 363102 Laura Cross (surveyor) Tel. 01709 386481
Solarwall	Green Lane Trading Estate Clifton York YS30 5PY	Tel. 01904 690824 Fax. 01904 690369
Viscount Environmental Ltd	Jilcar Way Wakefield Europort Castleford WS10 5QS For BMBC Referrals Terry Essex 17 Queens Road Doncaster DN1 2NQ	General enquiries: Tel. 01924 227799 Referrals: Andrea Tel. 01924 227787/6 Fax. 01924 227790
HEATING		
Heating Direct	Durston House Chesterfield Road Worthing BN12 6BY	Brenda Peace (Scheme Manager) Tel. 01903 698240 Mob. 07769 700306 Natalie Brady (Referrals) Tel. 01903 698232 Email. nbrady@d-h.co.uk Gemma Kavanagh (Referrals) Tel. 01903 698203

		Email. gkavanagh@d-h.co.uk
Harlow & Milner	Milner Way Ossett WF5 9JN	Andrew Nicholson Tel. 01924 277771 Fax. 01924 280102 Email. Andy.Nicholson@harlow-milner.co.uk
Dowling Construction	Unit 18 Gunhills Industrial Estate Armthorpe Doncaster DN3 3EB	Paul Dowling Teresa (Referrals) Tel. 01302 830533 Fax. 01302 830544 Email. teresa@dowlingconstruction.co.uk
Contractor	<u>Address</u>	Contact Details
RS Plumbing and Heating	17 Butterill Drive Armthorpe Doncaster DN3 3RY	Richard Hardy Tel. 01302 835015 Mob. 07795 460527 Email. Richardhardy3@tiscali.co.uk
Walkers Heating	18 Lancaster Street Barnsley S70 6DX	Geoff Walker Tel. 01226 293912 Fax. 01226 770918 walkersheatingltd@yahoo.co.uk

APPENDIX C

Existing provisions within the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for Thermal works.

- Thermal works are currently available under the existing policy for the essential works grant is to properties in Council Tax band A or B that are occupied by elderly owner occupiers aged 60 years or over, registered or eligible for registration disabled owner occupiers and families with children under 10 years. All of whom are also in receipt of a means tested benefit: or that the notional contribution calculated in accordance with section A10 (please see below) of the major works Grant Policy is not greater than £1000 contribution for the following works (the schedule of which includes):-
- Provision of insulation to the roof space including the lagging of tanks, cylinders, water pipes and draught proofing.
- Extending existing heating system
- Provision of full central heating
- Replacement of defective solid fuel central heating with gas fired boiler unit.

A10 Means testing in case of application by owner occupier (or tenant but in the newly available scheme applications are restricted to owner occupiers who are vulnerable, living in non decent homes regarding thermal comfort and in receipt of a benefit and having a minimum age of 18 years).

For owner occupiers (the existing grant) is applicable to:-

- an application that is accompanied by an owner occupation certificate and
- also includes for means testing

Rotherham Borough Council

Regulatory Reform Act 2001

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order, 2002

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY – SUPPLEMENTAL

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2003, the Council adopted its current Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for the purposes of Article 4 of The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order, 2002.
- 1.2 That policy contains details of grant and loan assistance schemes available to eligible occupiers of private sector living accommodation for the adaptation, repair and improvement of that living accommodation.
- 1.3 Since the adoption of the policy a further form of assistance has become available:

An Energy Efficiency Grant scheme operated through a partnership of South Yorkshire local authorities, including the Council, (“the South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership”). Details of this scheme can be found in Section 2.0 below.

- 1.4 The new scheme mentioned in paragraph 1.3 above supplements the existing forms of assistance, and will be operated together with the original schemes, for so long as the relevant scheme (whether an original scheme or a new scheme) remains in operation, provided that no person shall be eligible for assistance under an original scheme, if she/he is eligible for assistance under a new scheme.
- 1.5 This document, together with the original policy document forms the Council’s adopted Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for the purposes of Article 4 of The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order, 2002.

2. The South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme (administered by Doncaster MBC on behalf of Sheffield CC)

Home owners who are 18 years of age and above may qualify for grant funding providing that they are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits set out below, and providing that there is no other public sector grant available for the works.

Please see the following qualifying benefits a householder needs to receive to make them eligible for the grant:

Income Support or Minimum Income Guarantee

Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit

Income Based Job Seekers Allowance

Disability Living Allowance

Attendance Allowance

Working Tax Credit which includes a disability supplement (where household income less than £15,050)

Child Tax Credit (where household income less than £15,050)

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (which includes constant Attendance Allowance)

War Disablement Pension (which includes mobility supplement)

Long Term Incapacity Benefit

Eligible Work to achieve “the Standard”

The Standard is that set out in the Government guidance document “A Decent Home” so far as it relates to thermal comfort within the Decency standard and to alleviate fuel poverty.

The work required, and which may be funded from the funds provided by the Council only where no other source exists may include:

- Warm Front “top up” grants.
- Full central heating (inc fuel switching from solid fuel to gas), where no central heating exists.
- Replacement boilers, where boilers are beyond economical repair and they are over 20 years old. (This may include replacement of radiators providing that the requirement for it is due to the replacement of the boiler.)
- Cavity wall and loft insulation.

The above mentioned details of the scheme may be varied from time to time. Details of the scheme in force at any particular time may be seen at the Council Offices at Neighbourhoods, Norfolk House, Rotherham, S65 1HX, between the hours of 10 am and 4pm on any working day, and copies may be obtained on request.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	Thursday 19th January 2006
3.	Title:	DECENT HOMES PROGRAMME – PROGRESS REPORT
4.	Programme Area:	2010 Rotherham Ltd.

5. Summary

The report outlines the progress of the Decent Homes programme to date, including the levels of customer satisfaction, and sets out the schedule of future Decent Homes work to be undertaken when 2010 Rotherham Ltd. is awarded two stars by the Audit Commission.

6. Recommendations

- a) That the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel notes the progress to date, and
- b) continues to receive regular reports on the Decent Homes Programme.

7. Proposals and Details

Enclosed is a report which sets out the total number of properties brought up to the Decent Homes standard between February 2002 and December 2005. The 2731 properties making up the total to date are broken down by contract area, with property numbers listed against the principal contractors, Bramalls and Wates. This report is Appendix A.

A further report (Appendix B) sets out the latest cumulative figures indicating customer satisfaction with the Decent Homes programme.

There are two customer satisfaction surveys carried out:

- Exit Questionnaires - these are handed to the tenants by the contracting partners upon completion of the Decent Homes works.
- Postal Questionnaires - these are sent by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. six months after completion.

The initial exit questionnaire is designed to determine the satisfaction levels with the work being carried out, whilst the postal questionnaire is focussed on the actual quality of the kitchens, bathrooms etc.

The postal questionnaires indicate that the figures collated so far have been on an improving trend since the surveys were started in July 2005.

More sophisticated measurement techniques will be employed in the next phase of the Decent Homes programme. These are set out in the invitation to tender for Decent Homes works in 2006-2010. KPI's will be linked to financial incentives ensuring that contractors performance is incentivised.

Appendix C looks ahead to Phase 2, setting out the programme of works to be undertaken when 2010 Rotherham Ltd. is awarded two stars by the Audit Commission. The programme schedules the works necessary to complete the Decent Homes programme, bringing all Council properties in the Borough up to the required standard by the year 2010.

The programme consists of refurbishment work (internal & external) and security work (doors & windows). The drivers for this programme are set out within the 2010 Investment Plan but can be summarised as being based upon customer priorities, the highest rated being security. By following this programme all of our tenanted properties will reach a standard which as a minimum complies with, and in some elements exceeds, the Governments' Decent Homes guidelines by 2010.

The proposed timetable for the procurement process for Phase 2 is as follows:

- Tender returns – 30th January 2006
- Evaluation and appointment of contractors – February / March 2006
- Commencement of work on a phased basis – April - July 2006

This process is being carried out in consultation with all stakeholder groups.

8. Finance

Funding for the scheme is provided through the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and the total budget available for the work was set as £31.3M. This includes all planning, design and management fees, building construction works, site works and services.

Total original budget	£31,302,000
Total construction expenditure (Estimated Final Accounts)	£30,865,831
Proportion of total construction budget	99%

It is to be noted that the remainder of the budget will be spent on the windows and doors work supporting the Decent Homes programme. This work is currently being carried out by 2010 Rotherham Ltd.'s Direct Labour Organisation.

Appendix D details the current position, broken down into spending by both partners, the direct works, housing, professional fees and the current windows and doors programme.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

By the time Members receive this report, the most significant uncertainty – the award of two star status for 2010 Rotherham Ltd., on which the future programme depends – will have been removed.

Assuming that 2010 Rotherham Ltd. is able to proceed with Phase 2 of the programme as scheduled, the primary risks focus around:

- securing contractors and tradespeople to deliver the programme in a competitive market
- ensuring that we have the project management capacity to oversee the delivery of a programme on such a scale
- ensuring that we use the programme to contribute to the wider Community Strategy agenda – providing, for example, local employment and training opportunities for our most deprived communities as well as delivering Decent Homes
- ensuring that the work carried out is sustainable

The Decent Homes Team at 2010 has a good working knowledge of the market, and the progress of other ALMOs completing Decent Homes Programmes, and plans are in place for a phased expansion of the team to cope with the additional work presented by Phase 2.

2010 is a member of the South Yorkshire Decent Homes Group, which shares practice and experience within the South Yorkshire region. 2010 Rotherham Ltd. is also partner within the Local Strategic Partnership, addressing the themes of Rotherham Safe and Rotherham Proud in particular. The Executive Management

Board has a keen awareness of the Community Strategy and the role the Decent Homes Programme can play in improving the quality of life.

The issue of sustainability will be addressed through a commitment to tenant consultation and involvement, and to improved estate management. The priorities within the Decent Homes Programme were set by tenants during the Options Appraisal process, which selected the ALMO as the way forward. The continued involvement of customers through the Decent Homes Focus Group, the employment of Customer Liaison Officers under each contract, and the work of Neighbourhood Champions, added to the focus on quality work and customer satisfaction, will ensure the sustainability of the investment.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Decent Homes programme is performance managed and measured against 6 Key Performance Indicators. As well as the two Customer Satisfaction indices noted above, the others relate to:

- Number of properties completed
- Actual Spend against target
- Quality
- Properties completed within the programmed timescale

Moving into Phase 2 provides an opportunity to review these indicators and ensure that they are the best tools to monitor performance as we accelerate the programme.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Contact Names : Mark Johnson, Business Manager (Development)

DECENT HOMES PROGRAMME**APPENDIX A****SUMMARY****BASIC INFORMATION**

Total properties handed
over to date

Bramall

Thrybergh Pilot Scheme	32
Thrybergh 1a	78
Thrybergh 1b	86
Thrybergh 1c	65
Wath 1a	73
Wath 1b	73
Wath 1c	145
Henley	87
Masborough	136
West Melton 1a	164
West Melton 1b	159
Wath 1d Central	226
Wickersley 1A	145
Wickersley 1B	68
Wath 1E Mop Up	25
Ravenfield 1A	7

Bramall Totals 1569

Wates

Canklow Pilot Scheme	32
Canklow Phase 1	83
Canklow Phase 2	72
Canklow Phase 3	91
Canklow Scheme 1 Voids	20
Canklow Scheme 2 Voids	24
Canklow Scheme 3 Voids	24
East Herringthorpe Ph 1	149
Eastwood	106
Blackburn & Richmond	241
Beeversleigh	49
Broom Valley Ph1	46
Broom Valley Ph2	55
Broom Valley Ph3A	40
Broom Valley Ph3B	50
Broom Valley Ph3C	32

Wates Totals 1114

DSO

Stream B 48

DSO Totals 48

Partnership Totals 2731

APPENDIX B

Decent Homes Phase 1 - KPI Monthly Performance – November 2005								
	Description	Target	July	August	September	October	November	December
1. Customer Service Satisfaction – Exit Questionnaires								
	Overall Satisfaction - Partnership		Jul-05	Aug-05	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05
1.1	% Response Rate		68.20%	68.35%	68.87%	72.43%		
	Target		75%	75%	75%	75%		
1.2	% Overall Satisfaction		95.80%	96.30%	96.33%	96.65%		
	Target		90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Overall Satisfaction - Bramall							
1.3	% Response Rate	75%	56.38%	55.87%	60.10%	68.64%		
1.4	% Overall Satisfaction	90%	100%	100%	99.59%	99.67%		
	Overall Satisfaction - Wates							
1.5	% Response Rate	75%	78.74%	80.90%	79.36%	76.35%		
1.6	% Overall Satisfaction	90%	93.10%	93.73%	93.38%	93.85%		
	Specific Satisfaction Targets - Partnership							
1.7	Information supplied	90%	82.08%	84.97%	85.59%	88.34%		
1.8	Management of the Works	90%	83.89%	84.41%	84.79%	86.02%		
1.9	Programming of the Works	75%	79.63%	79.16%	77.22%	81.10%		
1.10	Disruption caused by the Works	75%	73.20%	79.90%	87.35%	88.02%		
1.11	Quality of the Work	75%	83.57%	84.39%	84.94%	86.82%		
	Specific Satisfaction Targets - Bramall							
1.12	Information supplied	90%	98.34%	98.87%	98.98%	98.40%		
1.13	Management of the Works	90%	94.97%	94.89%	93.85%	94.71%		
1.14	Programming of the Works	75%	95.21%	95.23%	94.49%	95.00%		
1.15	Disruption caused by the Works	75%	77.85%	92.03%	77.45%	92.82%		

1.16	Quality of the Work	75%	96.32%	96.50%	95.12%	95.82%		
	Specific Satisfaction Targets - Wates							
1.17	Information supplied	90%	74.59%	75.33%	73.70%	75.83%		
1.18	Management of the Works	90%	77.32%	77.70%	77.26%	78.11%		
1.19	Programming of the Works	75%	69.71%	68.06%	68.52%	68.26%		
1.2	Disruption caused by the Works	75%	69.22%	69.22%	67.71%	70.06%		
1.21	Quality of the Work	75%	75.67%	75.96%	75.74%	76.85%		
2. Customer Product Satisfaction – Postal Questionnaires								
	Overall Satisfaction - Partnership		Jul-05	Aug-05	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05
2.1	% Response Rate		28%	28%	28%	31.96%		
	Target		75%	75%	75%	75%		
2.2	% Overall Satisfaction		80%	80%	83%	78.86%		
	Target		90%	90%	90%	90%		

2010 Programme of Works

APPENDIX C

D= Decent Homes Works
S= Security Package

2010 Programme - Decent
Homes Plus works

Community	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
ANSTON				D	S	
ASTON-CUM-AUGHTON				D	S	
BLACKBURN AND WESTHILL					S	D
BRAMPTON AND WEST MELTON			S		D	
CANKLOW					S	D
CATCLIFFE AND BRINSWORTH		D		S		
CLIFTON		S			D	
DINNINGTON				S	D	
EAST DENE		D	S			
EAST HERRINGTHORPE		S			D	
EASTWOOD			S			D
FIRBECK, LETWELL AND GUILDINGWELLS		S		D		
GREASBROUGH		D		S		
HARLEY		D			S	
HARTHILL AND WOODALL				S	D	
HELLABY AND BRAMLEY			S	D		
HERRINGTHORPE		D		S		
HOOTON LEVITT		S	D			
KILNHURST			D	S		
KIMBERWORTH		D			S	
KIMBERWORTH PARK EAST			D		S	
KIMBERWORTH PARK WEST			D		S	
KIVETON PARK AND WALES		S				D
LAUGHTON EN LE MORTHEN			S			D
MALTBY	S				D	
MEADOWS			S		D	
ORGREAVE AND WOODHOUSE MILL		D	S			
RAVENFIELD	D		S			
RAWMARSH AND PARKGATE EAST		S	D			
RAWMARSH AND PARKGATE WEST		S	D			
RICHMOND PARK			S	D		
ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE			D		S	
STAG		D			S	
SWINTON		D		S		
THORPE HESLEY AND			S		D	

Appendix D

DECENT HOMES SCHEME

COST SUMMARY

11-Jan-06									
Current									
COST SUMMARY	CATEGORY	Estimated Final Data				Cash Flow			
		Contract Data Properties No	GMP Value £	Properties No	Value £	Spend to Date £	% of Final Value %	Forecast 2005/6 £	2006/7
	BRAMALL	1623	18,424,312	1545	14,579,122	13,551,487	93	4,444,703	0
	WATES	1166	15,378,853	1140	12,936,909	11,004,719	85	4,066,265	0
	BUILDING WORKS - DSO	66	270,065	52	398,474	373,140	94	53,188	0
	HOUSING SUNDRIES	-	-		812,731	687,413	85	297,108	0
	FEES	-	1,703,661		1,438,594	994,451	69	457,863	52,381
	DECENT HOMES EXPENDITURE TOTAL	2,855	35,776,891	2,737	30,165,831	26,611,208	88	9,319,126	52,381
	WINDOWS & DOORS				700,000	625,681	89	700,000	0
	2010 DECENT HOMES CAPITAL BUDGET				30,865,831	27,236,889	88	10,019,127	52,381

TARGETS

No. of Properties in Decent Homes programme	2200	2737	124%
Decent Homes Budget	£ 31,302,000.00	£ 30,865,831	99%

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	19 th January 2006
3.	Title:	ODPM Consultation
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods

5. Summary

During November 2005 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a Consultation Paper on a proposal which enables local authorities to ask those bodies managing their housing under Section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 to carry out some or all of their functions relating to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. A Verbal presentation of the key issues will be made at the panel meeting.

6. Recommendations

THAT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL NOTE THE PROPOSALS IN THE CONSULTATION REPORT AND COMMENT AS APPROPRIATE

7. Proposals and Details

The office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises that Housing and housing management play a key role in providing safe and sustainable communities. Tackling anti-social behaviour features high among tenants. British Crime Surveys carried out shows that residents on low incomes often in local authority housing perceive the highest level of anti-social behaviour. Effective action and means to tackle anti-social acts is a major part of providing decent areas for people to reside.

The Consultation Paper produced in November 2005 suggests where an authority has delegated its housing management function it may also depending on local circumstances delegate responsibility for taking action to tackle anti-social behaviour as part of the management function.

A full report is being produced for Cabinet Member on 23 January 2006 along with a suggested response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in line with the 1st February 2006 deadline. This will include considerations of 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

8. Finance

There are no financial risks associated with this report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Risks and uncertainties will be highlighted in a presentation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- The Cabinet Member Report will take into account, Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- The report takes into account Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Priority to provide a safe place, a place for everyone and a place to live
- Neighbourhood Management Agenda

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Enabling Local Authorities to Contract their Anti-Social Behaviour Order Functions.

Contact Name : Helen Nixon Neighbourhood Standards Anti Social Behaviour Manager ext 4362



*Enabling local authorities to
contract their Anti-Social Behaviour
Order functions to organisations
managing their housing stock*

Consultation Paper

November 2005



Enabling local authorities to contract their
Anti-Social Behaviour Order functions
to organisations managing their
housing stock
Consultation Paper

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

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Ministerial Foreword

Housing and housing management play key roles in defining the qualities of areas in which people are happy to live. People want to live in safe, sustainable communities. Tackling anti-social behaviour is essential in building those communities and we are committed to supporting practitioners, and providing them with the means of doing so effectively.

I therefore invite your views on a proposal which we believe will help local authorities ensure that those in their area who are best placed to tackle anti-social behaviour can do so efficiently.

We propose to enable local authorities to ask those bodies managing their housing under s.27 of the Housing Act 1985 to also carry out some or all of their functions relating to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. We believe that this proposal will help those charged with front line delivery of services to take account of changes both in the role that housing management plays in meeting the needs of communities, and the way that local authorities choose to deliver their housing management services.

This document sets out the proposal in more detail, including how arrangements might work in practice. I look forward to hearing your views.

Yvette Cooper MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Responses

Please send your response, no later than 1 February 2006 to:

Mr Yemi Atiku
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
1/J6 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

E-mail responses are welcome. If you are replying by e-mail please include the words 'consultation response' in the subject or title. These and any enquiries can be sent to:

asbconsult@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone number for enquiries is:

020 7944 5143

Representative groups are asked to include a summary of the people and organisations they represent in their reply.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged. They may be published and deposited in the library of the Houses of Parliament. If the assumption that you will have no objection to such publication is wrong, please ask for your response to be treated as confidential. Corporate confidentiality clauses attached to outgoing e-mails will not be taken into account unless specifically requested. All comments will be aggregated in any statistical compilation of respondent's views.

This consultation paper conforms to the criteria set out in the Government's Code of Practice on Written Consultation at Annex 1.

A list of key organisations being consulted is at Annex 2.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

What is anti-social behaviour?

1. For the purposes of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 anti-social behaviour is defined as behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment alarm or distress. This manifests itself in a number of ways – nuisance noise, verbal intimidation, criminal damage or vandalism, abandoning cars, kerb-crawling, street drinking and begging, or groups of people intimidating others. The Government is determined to tackle anti-social behaviour wherever it occurs.
2. The vast majority of people behave in a way that does not cause other people to feel intimidated or unsafe but the anti-social conduct of an irresponsible minority has a disproportionate effect on communities and can hold back the regeneration of deprived areas and the safety and progress of the community as a whole.

Housing in safe, sustainable communities

3. Housing and housing management play key roles in making an area in which people are happy to live. People want to live in safe, sustainable communities. In particular, we know that anti-social behaviour features highly among the concerns of tenants. The British Crime Survey (BCS) shows that people within local authority housing and low-income areas perceive the highest levels of anti-social behaviour. The provision of effective and efficient means to tackle anti-social behaviour is therefore a key element of providing decent places for people to live.

Housing Management

4. The management of social housing involves a wide variety of activities. Traditionally it has focused on providing services such as lettings, tenancy sign up, rent collection and recovering rent arrears, planned and responsive repairs and tenant consultation.
5. In recent years the scope of housing management has broadened to include key elements of neighbourhood management such as tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, in addition to the more traditional tenancy management role.

6. In endeavouring to meet the needs and concerns of tenants at local level it has become increasingly important for landlords and housing managers to develop approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour as a core component of their management activities.

Changes in the way housing management is delivered

7. In addition to changes in the role that housing management plays in meeting the needs of communities, there have also been a number of developments in the way in which local authority housing management services are delivered.
8. Many local authorities do not carry out the day to day management of their housing stock; instead they focus on strategic functions and delegate operational functions to other organisations who manage housing stock on their behalf. 'Delegation', means that all the local authority's decisions relating to the discharge of a function are put into the hands of another organisation which then becomes the authorised decision maker responsible for the discharge of that function on behalf of the local authority.
9. These organisations include:
 - Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs)
 - Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)
 - Bodies managing housing as part of PFI schemes
 - Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
10. Where an authority delegates its' housing management functions, it may also make sense to delegate responsibility for taking action to tackle Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) as part of the management function.
11. The processes by which these delegations are made and the nature of organisations to whom an authority may choose to delegate its housing management services are covered in more detail in Chapter 2.
12. Wales – There were no ALMOs, TMOs or bodies managing housing as part of PFI schemes in Wales at the date of publication of this consultation paper.

The case for change

13. The Government believes that local authorities should have the flexibility to make appropriate local decisions to ensure that their functions are carried out as effectively as possible. This includes tackling anti-social behaviour.
14. The Government believes it is essential that local authorities are in a position to ensure those organisations to which they delegate or contract management functions are properly equipped to do the job, subject to proper controls and accountability.
15. The Government also believes that those managing housing stock are often best placed to tackle anti-social behaviour in conjunction with relevant partners. A range of tools is already available to local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour in the context of housing; these include injunctions, demotion orders and possession action. These tools may also be utilised directly by organisations managing housing on local authorities' behalf. However, those organisations are not currently able to seek Anti-social behaviour Orders (ASBOs) on behalf of local authorities. Instead, where an ASBO appears to be the most appropriate intervention, the housing management organisation must, in every case, ask the local authority to seek an ASBO through the courts to support them in tackling anti-social behaviour. (Further information on ASBOs and their place within the 'toolkit' of ASB measures is available in Chapter 2.)
16. While some ALMOs have developed ways of working with their parent authorities, a number have suggested that there are administrative difficulties and operational inefficiencies with the current arrangements. They have suggested that the process could be more effectively and efficiently delivered if the housing managers were able to seek ASBOs without having to ask that the local authority to pursue applications. For example, it may prevent unnecessary delays caused by liaison between the local authority and the housing management organisation in preparing cases to bring to court.
17. Local authorities need to be able to make decisions on how to tackle anti-social behaviour based on local circumstances. We believe that it would be sensible for local authorities to be able to ask those carrying out housing management functions on their behalf, to also carry out some or all of the ASBO functions where both parties agree. This consultation paper seeks views on this proposal.
18. **Chapter 2** sets out the legal framework around delegation of housing management functions and anti-social behaviour (including the means by which local authorities could contract out their ASBO functions). It also describes the bodies managing local authority housing in more detail.
19. **Chapter 3** sets out how the arrangements might work in practice and tells you how you can submit your views on the proposal.

CHAPTER 2

Background

20. This Chapter sets out the legal framework which governs local authorities' ability to delegate management of their housing stock to other organisations. It also covers legal measures available to local authorities and the housing management organisations with which to tackle anti-social behaviour. In particular it focuses on the current availability of powers to seek ASBOs and the means by which local authorities could contract out their ASBO functions.

The procedure for delegating housing management functions

21. As outlined in Chapter One many local authorities in England have delegated operational functions to other organisations who manage some or all of the housing stock on their behalf. This is in line with the Government's belief that local authorities should seek to improve the delivery of their housing services by separating their housing management functions from their strategic housing function. In addition in a number of areas tenants have exercised their statutory right to manage their homes. The Welsh Assembly Government is of the view that the operational and strategic housing functions should be separated but that it is for local authorities and their partners to determine the most effective means of achieving this locally.
22. The means by which local authorities delegate their housing management functions is governed by section 27 of the Housing Act 1985. This legislation contains an enabling power for local authorities to delegate their housing management responsibilities to other organisations. The relationship between a local authority and the organisation to which it delegates is governed and monitored by a management agreement between the two parties, which specifies both partners' respective roles and responsibilities. In terms of responsibilities for tackling ASB the agreement might include coverage of the following issues:
- Procedures for making complaints – i.e. identification of the person/s to whom tenants should make an initial complaint
 - Responsibilities for processing a complaint of ASB
 - Responsibilities for supporting complainants and witnesses.

- Taking action, e.g. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, injunctions, demotion and possession
 - Information exchange and data protection
 - Monitoring and review arrangements
 - Arrangements for liaison and consultation between the authority and the housing management organisation
23. All such delegations under section 27 of the 1985 Act are subject to the consent of the Secretary of State or in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales. The approval process is designed to ensure that the rights of tenants' rights are protected. There are two approval routes:
- **General approval** – The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued a General Consent that allows local authorities to delegate their housing management responsibilities without specific consent from the Government. This covers proposals involving competitive tendering provided that the agreement does not run for more than 5 years, contracts for less than 10 properties, and delegations to Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) under the Right to Manage. No equivalent document has been issued for Wales.
 - **Specific consent** – this involves the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the National Assembly for Wales in checking proposed management agreements to ensure that they are robust, and enforceable. This route must be followed for all instances in which the housing management functions are to be delegated to ALMOs and bodies managing housing as part of PFI schemes.
24. The effect of section 27 is to regulate the process by which a local authority appoints another housing body to manage council homes. The features of the delegation process (whether this is covered by the General or a Specific consent) regulates the local authorities' power to delegate housing management functions to another organisation in order to protect tenants' interests.
25. This process ensures that housing management responsibilities may be delegated only to those with appropriate skills and resources. It also ensures that the selection process has been influenced by tenants' views, following consultation requirements set out in Government guidance. Local authorities are also required to consult their tenants about matters of housing management and changes in the practice or policy of the authority under section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.
26. Local Authority tenants have the right to be consulted, make their views known to the local authority and for the authority to take these views into account before a final decision. Any managing organisation will have had to satisfy tenants, through the

procurement and selection process, and in running of any contract, that it is able to deliver a high quality service to standards set out in the management agreement.

27. It is also in local authorities' interest to ensure that only sound organisations manage their housing. This is important as housing managers deal with a whole range of sensitive people issues, including managing tenancies, enforcing tenancy agreements, and dealing with problems, like anti-social behaviour, which affect the quality of people's lives. Such organisations are dealing with some of the most vulnerable sections of society.

Housing Management Organisations

28. This section provides an overview of the different types of organisations to which a local authority may delegate its housing management functions.

• Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs):

29. An Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) is an organisation set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. Ownership of the housing stock remains the local authority and tenants remain secure tenants of the authority. ALMOs are normally companies limited by guarantee with council nominees, tenants and independent members on the board.
30. As its name implies, an arms length body has a significant degree of independence from its local authority. The relationship between them is set by the terms of the management agreement. It rests with local authorities to devise arrangements which best suit their circumstances, encouraging a business-like and innovative approach to the management of their housing stock.

• Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs):

31. The Housing (Right to Manage) Regulations 1994 allow properly constituted tenants' organisations to set up Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) and to take on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of their estates. Ownership of the housing stock remains with the local authority and tenants remain secure tenants of the authority.
32. In order for tenants to take responsibility, a prospective TMO must undergo a statutory training and development programme, negotiate its management agreement and allowances with the local authority (based on a statutory modular agreement), in which they decide which functions they wish to manage and the level of responsibility. The TMO must be assessed as competent before it can take on management and have the support of most tenants in the area. Tenants do not have to undertake housing

management activities tasks themselves. They can employ staff, use local authority housing staff or employ a managing agent.

• **Bodies managing housing as part of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes:**

33. A local authority may opt to pursue a PFI scheme to manage and improve part of its housing stock. PFI is not an option for the whole of the stock but is usually chosen for individual estates or groups of houses with high investment needs. In housing PFI the local authority retains ownership of the stock and the tenants retain their secure tenancies. A consortium of private sector firms (usually consisting of a bank, a housing association and a building contractor) raise capital to refurbish or replace homes under a contract negotiated with the local authority. The consortium then provides repairs, maintenance and a range of housing management services to the stock as part of the contract. The private consortium is paid on a performance basis.
34. A typical PFI contract lasts for about 30 years. Throughout that time tenants remain tenants of the local authority. Following consultation with tenants, local authorities are able to delegate, or sub-delegate, their housing management function to the appropriate member of the consortium or the sub contractor employed by the consortium to undertake the housing management role. This role is mostly, but not always, undertaken by a housing association.

• **Registered Social Landlords (RSLs):**

35. Registered Social Landlord (RSL) is the technical name for social landlords that are registered with the Housing Corporation in England and the National Assembly for Wales in Wales – most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies. RSLs are private landlords (they are classed as voluntary not for profit sector bodies in Wales) run as businesses but they do not trade for profit. Over the last decade, many new associations have been formed to manage and develop homes transferred to them by local authorities (where the RSL takes full ownership of the stock).
36. Local authorities may also, if they wish, enter into agreements with RSLs, to enable RSLs to manage some of their stock while retaining ownership of that stock. Where this occurs, it is often on the basis of localised neighbourhood arrangements.

Powers available to tackle ASB

37. As outlined in Chapter One social landlords (local authority landlords and Registered Social Landlords) have a number of measures available to them to tackle anti-social behaviour as it impacts on their tenants and the wider community.
38. These include measures introduced by Part 2 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 such as flexible housing injunctions (often known as Anti-social Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs)) and demoted tenancies. New measures under the Housing Act 2004 are also

now available for use giving landlords the right to refuse a secure tenant's request for a mutual exchange in certain cases of anti-social behaviour and measures to suspend tenants' right to buy on anti-social behaviour grounds.

39. All these tools are linked in some way to tenure or the landlord's housing management function but other tools are available to tackle ASB which are not linked in anyway to these factors. They include Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

ASBOs

40. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides for Anti-social Behaviour Orders. These can be made against any person aged 10 or over who has acted in an anti-social manner, defined as 'a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household' as the perpetrator.
41. Currently ASBOs may be sought through the courts by local authorities (including English County Councils), police forces, British transport police, registered social landlords and housing action trusts and county councils. These agencies are known as 'relevant authorities' under the law for the purposes of seeking ASBOs. Where registered social landlords manage local authority housing stock (see paragraphs 34–35) they may therefore, as a relevant authority, apply for ASBOs in their own right.
42. It is important to note that regardless of the applicant ASBOs are granted at the discretion of the court (i.e. the court considers whether or not it is reasonable to make an order).
43. Orders can be used against persons living in any type of housing and to tackle anti-social behaviour in a wide range of situations and settings. ASBOs are civil orders made by a court which may, for example, prohibit a person from specific anti-social acts or from entering defined areas on a map (exclusion zones). An order lasts for a minimum of two years.
44. The purpose of an ASBO is to protect the community from anti-social behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress, not to punish the perpetrator. Breach of the order is a criminal offence.
45. If a magistrate court is imposing an ASBO as a stand alone measure against a young person (10–17 years old), it will be obliged to make an Individual Support Order (ISO) if it takes the view that the order would prevent further anti social behaviour. ISOs contain positive obligations designed to tackle the causes of anti social behaviour. For example, a counselling order designed to tackle substance misuse.

46. As noted above landlords also have housing injunctions available to them as a tool for tackling anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour orders and injunctions are useful tools and operate in a similar manner in that they prohibit specified forms of conduct and can be used to put a stop to such conduct quickly. In many cases it will be possible to use either of these measures and landlords and housing managers working on the case will have to make a decision on the individual case details as to which measure is the more appropriate.

Powers available to tackle ASB under delegation

47. Currently an organisation to which a local authority delegates its housing management functions may utilise some of the powers available to the authority for whom it is carrying out the management function. This includes those measures outlined previously which are linked to form of tenure or housing management functions, for example housing injunctions, demotion and possession on anti-social behaviour grounds.
48. However, the housing management organisation may not currently utilise legal measures which are not in anyway linked to tenure or their management activities. This means that they may not seek an ASBO on behalf of the local authority because ASBOs are not linked in anyway to tenure or housing management functions. Instead where they identify that an ASBO would be the most appropriate intervention they may approach the local authority and request that they seek an ASBO to support them in tackling ASB. As noted earlier, registered social landlords form an exception as they are relevant authorities for the purposes of seeking ASBOs and may therefore pursue applications in their own right.

The means of enabling local authorities to contract their ASBO functions

49. The Government has added section 1F to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to enable local authorities to make arrangements for all or some of their ASBO functions to be exercised by organisations or types of organisations defined by an Order by the Secretary of State. This power was introduced by the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.
50. This power is not limited to housing, and therefore could be used, subject to consultation, to allow local authorities to contract their ASBO powers to other organisations or bodies. However, local authorities may only make contracting arrangements with bodies covered by an Order made by the Secretary of State.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

51. To tackle anti-social behaviour effectively, all agencies must work together in partnership. There are a number of key partnerships which facilitate this including Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England, or Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) in Wales. The CDRP or CSP is a statutory partnership established in each local authority area. The partnership must undertake an audit of crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour) and produce a strategy for reducing these problems. A number of organisations undertaking housing management activities on behalf of local authorities, including a number of ALMOs, are active members of their local partnership.

CHAPTER 3

The proposal

52. We propose to make it possible for local authorities to be able to ask those managing their housing under s.27 of the Housing Act 1985 also to carry out all or some of their ASBO functions on their behalf. This would include ALMOs, TMOs and those managing stock as part of PFI schemes (where these are not an ALMO, TMO or RSL).
53. We believe that this would enable those best placed to tackle anti-social behaviour to do so efficiently and effectively. It could reduce operational inefficiencies caused by the current need for local authority officers to become involved in cases handled by housing officers employed by a housing management body. We need to make sure that an authority's decisions about how to deliver their housing management service do not interrupt the way they respond to anti-social behaviour.
54. In addition, the contracting out of ASBO functions, where it is considered appropriate, may also strengthen the effectiveness of ASBOs by passing operational responsibilities to front line service providers. Those delivering services directly are likely to be best placed to understand local circumstances and to work with the local community in gathering evidence. They are also likely to be best placed to monitor the conduct of such persons subject to an ASBO, including taking swift action where any breaches occur.
55. This chapter describes how these contracting arrangements could work in practice.

Setting out the process

56. As Chapter 2 sets out, the power to enable local authorities to make arrangements for their ASBO functions to be exercised by other bodies is in section 1F of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. If this consultation exercise showed that there was support for enabling local authorities to delegate their ASBO functions to housing management bodies, the Secretary of State would need to make an Order under that Act, and this would need to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.
57. The purpose of such an Order would be to entitle a local authority to ask an organisation to which it had already delegated housing management functions (under s.27 of the Housing Act 1985) to carry out some or all of its ASBO functions, also by delegation. Local authorities could not make such arrangements before an Order is in place.

58. Once an Order is in place, local authorities would not have to seek any further consent before making contracting arrangements with their housing management bodies. However, the Secretary of State would issue guidance on how local authorities could use the power. Local authorities and management organisations would be required to have regard to this guidance when making local arrangements, and as they operate under those arrangements.

Scope of contracting arrangements

59. We believe that it is important to consider how contracting arrangements should work in practice. Section 1F gives the Secretary of State the power, when making an Order, to attach conditions to the contracting arrangements. This means that the Order could set limits on the circumstances in which all local authorities could ask an organisation to carry out these functions on its behalf, or could define how the arrangements should operate in each case. For example, an Order could state that an organisation could only carry out ASBO functions where the anti social behaviour was related to housing or committed by a secure tenant of the local authority. An Order could also specify a date by which contracting arrangements should be reviewed. Section 1F also enables local authorities to build in similar conditions or limitations to the arrangements they make with contracting organisations.
60. It is likely that the Secretary of State will set out in guidance the general principles by which contracting arrangements should operate. As indicated above, local authorities and their housing management organisations will be required to have regard to this guidance.

Effect of contracting arrangements

61. Entering into a contracting arrangement for the delivery of ASBO functions would not remove any of the local authority's responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Any ASBO application pursued under such a delegation would be pursued in the local authority's name, and would be subject to the same consultation requirements as any other. Local authorities who have made contracting arrangements would still be able to pursue ASBOs directly.
62. Section 1F provides that for all purposes (except those relating to criminal proceedings or contractual relations between the local authority and the contractor) acts of the contractor are in effect acts of the local authority. Employees of the organisation contracted to carry out ASBO functions on the local authority's behalf would be treated as local authority officers for the purposes of related legal proceedings.
63. There would be no change in the position that, while a range of organisations may apply for ASBOs, final decisions on whether an application is appropriate and whether an ASBO should be issued will always be for the Courts.

Ensuring accountability

64. We see no problem with increasing community involvement in delivering safer communities, including ASBO functions, providing safeguards are in place and working effectively. We recognise that ASBO's are powerful tools and that there may be concerns that by enabling local authorities to contract their ASBO functions we are diluting accountability and risking misuse of these powers. We are satisfied that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure that functions would only be contracted out where there is confidence they will be exercised sensibly.
65. Asking a housing management organisation to also carry out ASBO functions on its behalf would not diminish the accountability or legal liability of the local authority for the exercise or non-exercise of those functions. We believe that linking the Order to those bodies already delegated housing management functions under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 will help achieve proper accountability. Chapter 2 described how section 27 works, including the requirements to which organisations managing local authority housing are subject.
66. As noted earlier it is likely that the Secretary of State will set out in guidance the general principles by which contracting arrangements should operate. This will be likely to include coverage of our expectations upon authorities to set clear and enforceable standards of performance which contractors will be expected to meet. In addition authorities will need to establish rigorous approaches to monitoring and reviewing those standards on an ongoing basis.
67. For example, where an authority chooses to delegate its ASBO functions to a TMO, we would expect the authority to clearly establish their requirements regarding the organisation's governance and procedures for exercising those functions and for these to be included in the management agreement between the parties. Protocols will also need to be established to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are properly identified and avoided.
68. When deciding whether to enter into a contracting arrangement, local authorities would need to assess whether the housing management body has sufficient resources and training to undertake the role. In addition, local authorities would need to consider the implications a contracting arrangement might have on how it carries out its wider responsibilities for addressing anti-social behaviour.
69. Within these principles, we believe that local authorities should be able to make local decisions about what arrangements are most appropriate for their circumstances. Including conditions in an Order, which would then have to apply to all contracting organisations, may not give local authorities this same flexibility. We therefore do not propose that the Secretary of State attaches any conditions to the Order. We welcome your views on this (see paragraph 72).

How would it work in practice?

70. Local authorities would be free to choose whether or not they wish to contract out their powers. If they do and those delivering housing management services on their behalf feel it is best for the authority to continue to make ASBO applications, some of which may be at the suggestion of the housing manager, then they may continue to do so. We are simply trying to ensure that local authorities have the flexibility they require to make those choices.
71. If a local authority opted to make a contracting arrangement, it could do so with any body managing its housing under delegation via s.27 of the Housing Act 1985. However, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) already have powers to pursue ASBOs under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Given this, it is already open to local authorities to ask a RSL managing its housing to pursue ASBOs as part of the housing management arrangements. It may not therefore be necessary for local authorities to make separate contracting arrangements under this Order for RSLs.
72. Where an authority had delegated housing management functions to more than one organisation, for example, if there was an ALMO and a TMO operating in the area, the local authority could make contracting arrangements with more than one body. An authority in this position would need to consider the most efficient and effective solution to their circumstances, and whether making more than one contracting arrangement would have resource implications.
73. In addition, local authorities may wish to consider whether it would be more efficient to ask the relevant housing management body to deliver its front line ASBO functions on a broader basis, rather than only where the anti-social behaviour was linked to housing or tenants. We believe that it should be for local authorities to make these decisions according to local circumstances. However, in doing so, an authority would need to take account of its wider responsibilities for tackling crime and disorder, and ensure that any contracting arrangements would not unduly effect how these are discharged.
74. The contract between the local authority and the housing management body will need to set out in detail the terms of contracting arrangement including its duration, the process for reviewing it, and standards of performance which the contractor must achieve. This proposal is not about increasing the number of ASBOs issued and is not designed to provide an opportunity for bodies to profit from tackling anti-social behaviour. Therefore, we certainly would not expect arrangements between local authorities and organisations contracted to carry out these functions to work in a way which encouraged this. It is likely that any guidance the Secretary of State issues on this will highlight these principles.
75. Delegating responsibilities for carrying out particular functions should not necessarily increase overall costs. Indeed, one of the purposes of the proposals in this consultation

paper is to avoid duplication of effort by the local authority and housing manager in cases where the latter is best placed to undertake ASBO functions. Since local authorities already monitor many aspects of the performance of their housing managers, adding their performance on ASBO functions should not significantly affect the total work involved.

Consultation questions

76. We would welcome your views on the following questions:
- a) Do you support the proposal to make it possible for local authorities to be able to ask any organisation managing their housing under s.27 of the Housing Act 1985 to also carry out all or some of their ASBO functions on their behalf?
 - b) Do you agree that the Secretary of State should not attach any conditions to an Order made as part of this proposal, and that local authorities should set any conditions when making local arrangements? If not, what national conditions should be set?
 - c) Do you have any other comments about the proposal, including any practical implications you think it might have?

Wales

77. This consultation will be of limited interest in Wales where there are no ALMOs, TMOs or PFI housing projects so that the majority of these proposals will have no effect. However, Welsh consultees are invited to give their general comments and to respond specifically to the following questions:
- a) Do you feel any order under Section 1F of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to delegate local authority functions in relation to ASBOs should extend to Wales also to establish these powers if needed in future?
 - b) What are your views on Paragraph 73 of this consultation which describes the possibility of a housing management body delivering ASBO functions even if not limited to housing. This may be of interest in Wales where, like England, it is open to RSLs to apply for ASBOs.

Confidentiality

78. A summary of responses to this consultation will be published by 1 May 2006 at the address below.

<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/housing/consult>

Paper copies will be available on request.

79. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
80. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.
81. The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances; this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

ANNEX 1

Code of Practice on Consultation

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.**
- 2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**
- 3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
- 4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
- 5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
- 6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact

Adam Bond,
ODPM Consultation Co-ordinator,
Room 2.19, 26 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2WH; 020 7944 8922
or by e-mail to: adam.bond@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

ANNEX 2

List of Key Organisations being Consulted

All Local Housing Authorities in England
Arms Length Management Organisations
Association of London Government
Association of Tenants in Control
Audit Commission
BME TARAN
Chartered Institute of Housing
Commission for Racial Equality
Confederation of Co-operative Housing
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
Housing Action Trusts
Housing Corporation
Local Government Association
National Audit Office
National Council of YMCAs
National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations
National Federation of Arms Length Management Organisations
National Housing Federation
PFI consortia
Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group
Tenant Management Organisations
Tenant Participation Advisory service
Tenants and Residents Organisations for England
The Tenants Union

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE FORWARD PLAN

1 JANUARY – 30 APRIL 2006

T.C. Mumford, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

KEY DECISIONS TO BE MADE BY THE CABINET MEMBER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND HEADS OF SERVICE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Executive Director: Tom Gray

Representations to: The Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Rotherham Borough Council, Neighbourhood Services, Norfolk House, Walker Place, Rotherham S65 1HX.

KEY DECISIONS BETWEEN 1 JANUARY AND 30 APRIL 2006					
Matter subject of key decision	Proposed date of key decision	Proposed consultees	Method of consultation	Steps for making and date by which representations must be received	Documents to be considered by decision-maker and date expected to be available*
January 2006					
Area Assembly Models	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
Aids and Adaptation Review	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
Neighbourhood Management	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
Neighbourhood Charters	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
Warden Service	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
One-Stop Shop (Adaptations)	5 th September and 22 nd September	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	September 2006	Report
HMR Plans	5 th September and	Cabinet Member,	Delegated Powers,	September 2006	Report

	22 nd September	Scrutiny	Scrutiny			
February 2006						
Envirocrime Enforcement Policy	3 rd October and 20 th October	Cabinet Member, Scrutiny	Delegated Powers, Scrutiny	October 2006	Report	
Council House Rents	8th February	Council Meeting				
March 2006						
April 2006						

NEIGHBOURHOODS
5th December, 2005

Present:- Councillor Ellis (in the Chair); Councillor N. Hamilton (Policy Advisor).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hall, Kaye and P. A. Russell.

130. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO OCTOBER, 2005/06

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted the Housing Revenue Account outturn position for the period April to October, 2005.

It was currently estimated that the HRA would achieve a surplus of approximately £1.3M. This was as a result of:-

- Less Right to Buy sales than predicted which had resulted in an increased level of rental income
- Current indications of a 1% void property level opposed to the 1.6% estimated
- Decreased income levels as a result of opt outs of Rothercare and the Warden Service. Payments by Neighbourhoods to Social Services would, therefore, be lower.

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

(2) That the Acting Executive Director of Social Services be asked to submit an update report on the Warden Service.

(3) That the Finance and Accountancy Manager submit a report on the work undertaken on the Repairs and Maintenance budget.

131. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO OCTOBER, 2005/06

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report on the General Fund Revenue Budget position for the period April to October, 2005, as follows:-

Neighbourhood Services (excluding Waste Strategy) – £50,000 underspend due to the new legislation regarding the responsibility for the transfer of statutory duty for the provision of dog kennelling from the Police Authority to the Council not coming into effect.

Waste Strategy - £34,000 anticipated overspend through a combination of underspends (vacant posts) and additional costs in relation to extra processing costs for hazardous waste and high tonnage costs in relation to Blue Box collections.

An underspend of £230,000 from the £540,000 received from the Commutation Fund was predicted as a result of reduced consultancy costs supporting procurement and the award of £218,000 Performance Reward Grant by DEFRA to support rural recycling.

Neighbourhood Development – Predicted underspend of £100,000 due to the number of vacant posts within the current establishment.

Neighbourhood Management – Predicted to be within budget.

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

(2) That the Neighbourhood Strategy be submitted to a Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods' meeting in January, 2006.

(3) That a report be submitted to the 19th December, 2005, meeting on the funding situation regarding the reallocation of Community Partnership staff to the Neighbourhood Programme Area from the Chief Executive.

132. 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.

133. DSO BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO OCTOBER, 2005/06

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted the current budget position for the Waste Collection and Housing Services DSO's for the period April to October, 2005.

The Housing Services DSO was forecast to be within budget up to 19th May, 2005. The DSO was now part of 2010 Rotherham Ltd. and reporting was directed to the Board as from that date.

Based on activity levels, expenditure and income levels for the period and estimated turnover for the remainder of the financial year, the projected outturn position on the Waste Collection account was a small surplus.

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

(2) That the Acting Executive Director of Finance be requested to attend the 19th December, 2005, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods meeting regarding the financial arrangements between the Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred)

134. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM PARTNER PROJECT - INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

The Manager and Register, Cemeteries and Crematorium submitted a report summarising the evaluation process for the selection of the 3 companies to be invited to negotiate for the Cemeteries and Crematorium Partnership project.

Following the OJEU, 4 companies had expressed an interest in bidding for the partnership contract. Each had been evaluated and scored and 3 recommended to proceed to the Invitation to Negotiate stage.

Details were also submitted of 4 models for the Payment and Performance Mechanism for consideration, each with their advantages and disadvantages.

It was noted that the timetable stated at Appendix 3 of the report submitted would be amended to take account of reports being submitted to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet.

Resolved:- (1) That the procurement of a strategic partner for the cemeteries and crematorium be supported subject to the concurrence of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel and the approval of the Cabinet.

(2) That Option 2 be approved as the preferred payment and performance mechanism to be included in the Invitation to Negotiate documentation for the Partnership project.

(3) That a report be submitted to the 15th December, 2005, Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel and 11th January, 2006, Cabinet.

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

NEIGHBOURHOODS
19th December, 2005

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hall and P. A. Russell.

135. IMPACT OF KEY CHOICES AND PREVENTION INITIATIVES ON HOMELESSNESS

The Prevention and Support Team Leader submitted a report outlining how the introduction of Key Choices had improved choices available to homeless households and how the scheme was proving to be an effective tool in tackling homelessness in Rotherham.

As at 31st October, 2005, 590 properties had been advertised of which 85 had been allocated to applicants from within the Priority Group who had been accepted as homeless.

It had had a positive impact on the overall number of homeless households who had been rehoused. At 23rd January, 2005, the number of applicants accepted as homeless and owed a duty was 393 (including 262 families). At 31st October, 2005, this number had reduced to 251 (including 189 families).

Key Choices bids made by homeless applicants were monitored by the Prevention and Support Officers. If a homeless applicant was not actively bidding for suitable properties, their Homeless Priority was removed. Since the introduction of the scheme, 47 homelessness priorities had been cancelled. If an application was made by the customer, the case must be fully investigated within the internal target of 20 working days.

Between 1st April and 31st October, 2005, the Prevention and Support Team had provided advice and assistance to 1,314 customers through a drop-in service (average of 188 cases per month). Homelessness prevention work was undertaken with all of them, resulting in only 302 homelessness cases being investigated (average of 43 cases per month) with 161 cases being accepted (average of 23 cases per month). This compared positively to the period 1st April, 2004 to 31st March, 2005, when 1,209 homelessness cases were investigated (average of 101 cases per month) with 642 cases being accepted (average of 54 cases per month) with 694 cases being accepted (average of 58 cases per month).

It was noted that the Authority was not charged for those South Yorkshire Housing Association properties not in use due to reasons of the Association. They had had a programme of property refresh over the last 4 years which some of the 25% voids were a result of.

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

(2) That the impact of Key Choices on homelessness be monitored with a further report detailing progress in relation to prevention initiatives being submitted in March, 2006.

136. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY - MANAGEMENT OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES

The Head of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report outlining the results of the 3rd customer satisfaction survey undertaken on the management of Household Waste Recycling Centres highlighting the positive elements of the Service and showing areas where actions for improvement were required.

The survey was undertaken by teams of canvassers visiting each of the 4 sites on 6th and 10th July, 2005. A total of 149 people participated in the survey.

2% of those surveyed had admitted they took commercial waste onto the sites. Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham had employed a consultant to look at this issue.

The following points were raised:-

- Diversity was not included in the survey
- When interviewing those caught flytipping/littering, ask why they did not use the sites
- Steel ramps that became slippery in wet weather
- The need to empty the containers for glass and public

Resolved:- (1) That the high level of customer satisfaction with the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centre be noted.

(2) That the overall increase in customer satisfaction levels from the previous year be noted.

(3) That the action/comments highlighted required to continue to deliver Service improvements be noted.

(4) That an analysis of the reasons why flytippers etc. did not use the Recycling Centres be included in the next update report.

(5) That the Cabinet Member write to staff at the Household Waste Recycling Centres congratulating them on their efforts in light of the results of the survey.

137. 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.

138. HOUSING SERVICES DIRECT SERVICES ORGANISATION 2005/06

In accordance with Minute No. 133(2) of the meeting held on 5th December, 2005, the Acting Executive Director of Finance submitted a report clarifying the financial arrangements agreed upon the establishment of 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

Housing Services DSO had been transferred to 2010 on 19th May, 2005. The cash limit budget of the Council for 2005/06 had included a net surplus budget. If that surplus contribution was not received, the Programme Area would seek to address the shortfall either by successfully negotiating an appropriate arrangement with 2010 or by taking other appropriate action.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – contains details of expenditure to be incurred by the Authority)

139. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In accordance with Minute No. 131(3) of the meeting held on 5th December, 2005, the Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report on the transfer of Community Partnership staff from the Chief Executive's office to the Neighbourhoods Programme Area.

The Community Partnership was made up of 4 groups each of which had received external funding for a 3 year period commencing 1st November, 2004 to 31st December, 2006. Posts within each group had been limited to the funding period.

The budgets within the Chief Executive's Office had been set at zero as a direct result of expenditure being full covered through external funds and gross expenditure. As the responsibility for Community Partnerships had been allocated to Neighbourhoods the actual income and expenditure would be transferred but the need for a budget virement was not required as the overall position was a zero base.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 1 and 8 of the Act – employees of the Council/supply of services)

140. GARAGE SITES MANAGEMENT REVIEW - UPDATE AND FORWARD PLAN

The Cabinet Member considered an update and forward plan relating to the Garage Sites Management Review.

Since the last report was submitted on 15th November, 2004, the Programme Area had undergone a comprehensive restructuring process in which the Garage Site Review Team was no longer operational. The roles and responsibilities for the management of the garage sites were now delivered by various partners.

Having reviewed progress against the actions identified within the review report, it was clear that there was a need for a refresh of the work previously undertaken and the re-establishment of a clear operational and strategic focus to guide the work. There were some aspects that needed to be revisited in addition to emerging issues which were not previously considered.

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

(2) That the action points submitted in the report be approved.

(3) That a further report be submitted detailing progress against key actions in March, 2006.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred)

141. DENMAN ROAD FLATS - UPDATE

It was noted that the Pathfinder Programme Manager was not at the meeting due to sickness.

Resolved:- That the report be deferred until 9th January, 2006.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred)

142. REPAYMENT OF GRANT MONIES - EASTWOOD VILLAGE

The Housing Regeneration Manager submitted a report outlining proposals to refine the criteria relating to the repayment of grant for homes improved under the Group Repair Scheme.

The Council had received an approach from one household which suggested that there was merit in reviewing the criteria for proportionate grant repayment on sale of the property as the current guidance may not support the Council's agenda on health, diversity and value for money.

A case study was submitted setting out a situation where a homeowner wished to sell their property because the house was no longer appropriate for both his and his wife's needs. The homeowner believed selling the property was the only option. However, an alternative option could be to

have their home adapted to meet their needs and aspirations.

Discussion took place on the proposals. It was felt that a legal definition was required before any decision was made.

Resolved:- That the views of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be sought on the proposals and a further report be submitted thereon.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 5,7 and 8 of the Act – financial assistance provided by the Council/financial affairs of someone other than the Council/provision of services)

143. PETITION - REFUSE COLLECTIONS - KIVETON PARK AREA

The Democratic Services Manager reported receipt of petition, containing 55 signatures from residents of the Kiveton Park area regarding the alternate week collection service.

Resolved:- That the report be noted and be included in the report to be submitted in January, 2006, together with other petitions and surgery reports received.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 4 and 8 of the Act – services provided by the Council/provision of services)

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL**Thursday, 15th December, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Hall (in the Chair); Councillors Burke, McNeely, Nightingale, P. A. Russell, Vines, Walker and F. Wright. together with Mr. J. Carr (National Society for Clean Air) and Mr. D. Alderson (Housing Tenant Panel Representative)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hodgkiss and Mr. D. Willoughby.

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

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

There were no members of the press or public present at the meeting.

87. YEAR AHEAD - COMMITMENT 67 - REVIEW OF REGULATORY SERVICES

Resolved:- That Councillor F. Wright and Mr. J. Carr represent this Scrutiny Panel on the above Review Group.

88. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POSITION STATEMENT

In accordance with Minute No. 120 of the 12th October, 2005, Cabinet meeting, Andy Towleron, Policy and Research Manager, submitted a report on the Sustainable Development Position Statement.

The Position Statement acknowledged that all Programme Areas were involved in and committed to ensuring sustainable development and that good progress had been made. It also made a number of recommendations on how the actions and interventions could be developed further to support the Council's sustainable development aims and objectives as set out in the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and Year Ahead Statement and meet new legislative and other national requirements such as CPA 2005. It set out where there were strengths and weaknesses.

The document illustrated what the Council's main objectives were, its achievements and targets to demonstrate what it was planning to do over the coming years. The Members Sustainable Development Action Group played a key role in this issue.

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

- There was a need to get community partnerships on board and working to the same priorities as the Council

- A provisional date had been agreed for sustainable development training for Members.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

89. PROGRESS ON RE-HOUSING OF MALTBY TARRAN RESIDENTS

Chris Brown, Regeneration Officer, presented a progress report on the rehousing of Maltby Tarran residents. The main points were as follows:-

- The estate consisted of 86 non-traditional construction properties. 50% of which were now empty and awaiting demolition.
- Contract arrangements were being developed to start the demolition process which would be by way of a pilot of 6 properties (estimated March 2006).
- Not all of the residents wanted to move – there were a number of households that had not agreed re-location packages.
- There were significant difficulties in re-locating residents who wished to remain in Maltby due to the unavailability of alternative accommodation that was of an affordable price/rent. A number of owner/occupiers no longer had mortgages.
- It was predicted that it would take 10 years to re-locate everyone that stated a preference to move to another Council property in Maltby.
- 3 meetings had been set up for January, 2006, to meet with the residents to look how new build properties might meet their needs on the present site when cleared. It was anticipated there would be affordable housing, shared ownership or shared equity schemes.
- Negotiation would continue with those residents that could not be facilitated and attempts made to get them to broaden their range of opportunities.
- A masterplan and development plan for the whole area would be in place by May, 2006 before consideration could be given to Compulsory Purchase Orders.
- A report was to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods in January, 2006, containing proposals for enhancing re-location options.
- Work was taking place to change residents' perceptions of Housing

Associations. It was noted that the Housing Corporation was now saying that they would not grant funding to Housing Associations unless they had mixed tenure properties.

- Discussion were ongoing with the Head of Planning and Transportation with regard to Section 106 Agreements

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

90. WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that this was the second update report on the Waste Management Improvement Plan. The following issues were highlighted:-

- Establishment of a Waste Minimisation Team – Money had been granted from the Commutation Fund which was 1 year funding. However, it took time to establish such a Team. It would form part of the overall Council budget process.
- Impact Assessments on all Policies and Procedures/Equality and Diversity – There had been significant progress in getting to know the Service's customers and ensuring that the services were designed for the whole diverse population.
- Recycling Opportunities – There were proposals to increase the kerbside household recyclables in the Borough. By 31st March every household would have access to recycling on their door step.
- Longer Term Issue – The planning and development for the procurement of the waste disposal contract was a very significant work area. Rotherham was currently working to establish a working group with Barnsley and Doncaster. Rotherham and Barnsley had commissioned a feasibility study to identify the funding opportunities available, new methods and new packages, what was in the market place and what would deliver Rotherham's Waste Strategy. A report was to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods in January, 2006.
- The Corporate Management Team had established a sub-group focussing on the above of which the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods was a member. This was a big area of work within the Service although, at the same time, service developments and improvements had to be maintained which could raise some capacity issues.
- There were risks in that all 3 authorities had different Waste Management Strategies. It was a tight timescale for all the contracts.

- An application was to be submitted for the Charter Mark for Waste Management around customer standards of the organisation.
- A corporate action plan was currently being prepared on the issue of gypsies and travellers.

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

(2) That a more detailed report be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel in due course on the procurement of the Waste Disposal Service.

(3) That the action plan on gypsies and travellers be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel when completed.

(4) That Rotherham's representative on BDR be invited to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel when the issue of waste management was being discussed.

91. CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Panel noted the decisions made under delegated powers by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods on 14th and 28th November, 2005.

It was noted that a report on Thermal Comfort was to be submitted to the January Scrutiny Panel meeting.

92. ALMO INSPECTION

The Head of Housing Services reported that the inspection had been carried out from 24th November to 9th December, 2005. Feedback was continuing to be given on issues they had raised and there was still interaction between the Council and Audit Commission to ensure they had the clearest possible picture on how the funding was spent. The initial feedback contained a lot of positives around the Key Lines of Enquiry. There was a reasonably confident view that a 2* judgement would be received.

There was less confidence about the "prospects for improvement" around asset management and the capacity of the organisation. The Audit Commission had identified that the organisation, as yet, was not geared up to deliver for the future. Reassurances had to be given that the organisation had the capacity to do so. At the moment it was felt they may be classed as "uncertain". If so, there would be another inspection in 12 months. If "promising" or "excellent" there would not be an inspection for 2/3 years.

The decision would be confirmed the 2nd week in January, 2006.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

93. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th November, 2005, were noted.

It was noted that 2010 Rotherham Ltd. had been requested to prepare a report on gas appliances (Minute No. 84 refers).

94. PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th, 11th and 25th November, 2005, of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee were noted.

95. 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.

96. BUDGET 2006/07

The Finance and Accountancy Manager submitted a report on the budget 23006/07 including the Base Budget review, the mid-year budget position and Service specific proposals for 2006/07.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred)

97. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM PARTNER PROJECT - INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Manager and Registrar of the Cemeteries and Crematorium presented an update report on the evaluation process for the selection of the 3 companies to be invited to negotiate for the Cemeteries and Crematorium Partnership project.

Resolved:- That the report be received and Minute No. 134 of Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 5th December, 2005, noted.

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

1 MEMBERS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP - 09/12/05**MEMBERS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP
FRIDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair); Councillors Hall, Jackson, Walker and Wyatt.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Rushforth.

65. MINUTES

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th October, 2005, be accepted as a true record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Wyatt to the Group's membership.

66. OUTCOME AND FEEDBACK FROM ENVIRONMENTAL INDEX

David Rhodes, Property Environmental Manager, reported that the questionnaire for 2006 would be issued in January for completion by February. There would be input by Andy Towlerton (on sustainability and corporate issues), David Wilde (Local Action 21), Adrian Gabriel (Waste), Carolyn Barber (Bio-Diversity and himself (Environment Management). The results were normally known in March.

A number of meetings had been held with Business in the Community regarding the criteria for the Index. The Yorkshire Environment Group had also been invited to meetings and Rotherham's concerns conveyed and desire for a level playingfield for all the organisations involved including the Environment Agency.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

67. CPA/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The item was deferred due to the absence of Andy Towlerton, Policy and Research Manager.

68. SUSTAINABILITY AND PROCUREMENT - UPDATE ON TARGETS/PROGRESS AND EMERGING STRATEGY

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Councillor Wyatt reported that there was an emerging Procurement Strategy and that the Council had been shortlisted for Beacon Status for its work on procurement. The Assessors were to visit on 16th December where the procurement processes would be tested.

There had always been a very strong link between procurement and sustainability and it was felt appropriate that this Group keep a watching brief to ensure that the Strategy was delivered.

69. LOCAL AGENDA/ACTION 21 IN THE COMMUNITY

David Wilde submitted a progress report for the period October to November, 2005.

Progress so far included:-

- Continued work regarding renewable energy at Montgomery Hall, Wath upon Dearne
- Bio-diversity project at Austen Park, Aston
- Educational project at Thornhill Primary School and Youth Centre
- St. Mary's Primary School confirmed as Global Food Scheme School
- Rotherham Environment Forum (REF) promoting the Council's Sustainable Development Position Statement and debate on proposed M1 widening
- REF representation at Rotherham Environment Partnership and consulted on the Green Spaces Strategy
- Input into Education for Sustainable Development resource
- 'Supergrounds' projects started at St. Bede's and Brinsworth Howard Primary Schools.

Discussion ensued on the progress report. David also highlighted the following:-

- He had been involved in the development of a resource for Education Sustainable Development in South Yorkshire. It was a book aimed at primary schools which introduced Sustainable Development Education.
- Groundwork was able to deliver a NVQ Foundation Certificate in Sustainable Development. It was also potentially able to deliver "Professional Practice for Sustainable Development" to raise awareness of Sustainable Development in all professions.
- He was co-ordinating a group of Groundwork and Council officers to deliver sustainable development education in schools
- The Unesco Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was to be launched on 13th December. It was hoped this would bring increased funding.
- Community Action was referred to in the "Securing the Future", a National Sustainable Development Strategy. It was not evident as yet what this would entail but seemed likely to be a rebranding of Local Agenda 21.
- Training for Members

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

(2) That this Group would support the sponsorship of a display at Wath Montgomery Hall subject to a further report to the next meeting on the costs involved.

(3) That the issue of training for Members be raised at the Members' Training and Development Panel.

70. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - LOCAL AUTHORITY BUILDINGS

David Rhodes, Property Environmental Manager, reported that the second phase of the EMS included Neighbourhoods, Adult Services and the Town Hall. At present 2010 had been excluded due to the Audit Inspection but would be included after the New Year.

Training had been carried out as well as analysis of their activities which contributed to an environment impact and incorporated into an action plan to improve performance. All should be completed by Christmas.

David and Marie Swallow, Town Hall Office Manager, had carried out an initial review of the Town Hall and a draft programme developed. However, there had been no involvement from members.

The third Phase would include ECALS, RBT and Resources. In 2007 it was planned to concentrate on schools.

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

(2) That Marie Swallow be requested to supply a copy of the draft programme for all Members, together with a covering letter from the Chairman of this Group, asking that they notify her of any comments.

71. CARBON MANAGEMENT ACTION TRUST

David Rhodes, Property Environmental Manager, reported that an action plan had been developed and agreed by the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

There were 5 main parts to the action plan. At the present time 3 were being looked at – energy consumption within Council buildings, streetlighting and street furniture and energy consumption within residential properties. The remaining 2 in the New Year would be fleet transport and private sustainable transport.

There would be a number of meetings to bring the action plan forward.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

72. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Agreed:- That the following items be included on the agenda for the February, 2006, meeting:-

CPA/Sustainability Issues
Sustainability and Procurement – Update on Targets/Progress
Carbon Management Action Plan/Carbon Trust

73. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- (1) That a further meeting of the Sustainable Development Advisory Group be held at the Town Hall, Rotherham on Friday, 10th February, 2006, commencing at 10.30 a.m.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
Friday, 9th December, 2005

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); (none), Councillors Clarke, Doyle, Hussain, P. A. Russell and Sangster.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hall, G. A. Russell and R. S. Russell.

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hussain declared a personal interest in item 109 below "RBT Performance Update" by virtue of being a member of the RBT Board.

106. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

107. POLICY REVIEW 3 AND 4

Further to Minutes Nos. B148 and B149 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th November, 2005, Councillor Robinson introduced the submitted reports by the Chief Executive relating to the above.

The report on Policy Review 3 indicated that the process of policy refresh of key strategic policies, plans and strategies was now being implemented and detailed the progress showing the current position for each policy with estimated completion/reporting dates.

The report on Policy Review 4 indicated work taken forward on the policy review processes to secure strategic alignment between the Council's operational and service policies with the high level priority objectives of the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy. The report established those policies to be assessed and a timeline of key milestones that would lead to recommendations for future policy refresh and development.

Lee Adams, Assistant Chief Executive and Steve Eling, Policy Officer, elaborated on the proposals indicating that good progress was being made,

It was proposed to bring an update paper on the whole programme in the new year and reference was made to the involvement of scrutiny at the quality assessment stage.

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

- slippage in the programme
- need for a map of how the policies relate to each other

- reasoning behind the policies and key aims
- scrutiny involvement in the high level assessments
- grouping of issues under the Council's priority themes

Resolved:- (1) That the information and progress with regard to the Policy Review 3 refresh programme be noted.

(2) That, with regard to Policy Review 4, this Committee :

(a) supports the criteria for assessments to include the statutory requirement to undertake Equalities Impact Assessments

(b) notes the work plan for programme areas to undertake self assessments using the template provided and that the assessments be undertaken according to the timetable set out in the report

(c) agrees that further reports detailing the outcomes of the assessments and recommendations for actions including refresh be presented to this Committee in February and May, 2006.

(d) notes the co-ordination of consultation with the process of the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

(3) That Lee Adams be notified of the elected Members to be involved in the particular high level quality assessments.

108. RBT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Brian James, Chief Executive, RBT and Carol Mills, Executive Director, Resources who presented the submitted report detailing the progress and performance of RBT for the period August to October, 2005.

The relationship between RBT, RMBC and BT remained excellent, mutually supportive, challenging where necessary and highly productive.

The report set out :-

- Service by Service Overview covering
 - Customer Services/Public Access
 - HR and Payroll
 - ICT
 - Procurement
 - Revenues and Benefits
- Progress against Corporate Initiatives
 - Equalities

Investors in People
Consultation/Complaints
Audit updates

The following highlights of the last few months were outlined :-

- customer service centre programme was well under way with the town centre customer service centre having been formally opened
- confirmation of the Benefit Service's four star rating, the eBenefits project pilot and its attendance at the Benefits Team of the Year for the IRRV awards (finishing in the top five)
- RMBC rated second nationally in terms of cashable savings (under Gershon)
- £1m of procurement savings this year to date and the shortlisting for Beacon status of the Council's procurement service
- launch of the third and final phase of eProcurement which, amongst other things, would result in 80,000 fewer pieces of paper per year being handled
- the print function for Grove Road being delivered by the central print department
- Investors in People status being retained for a further three years
- new intranet created (launched in November)
- beginning of the self-service roll out in Human Resources and Payroll
- receipt of a Guardian award for the home working initiative in respect of recruitment and retention

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

- issues of referral when approaching contact centre
- video conferencing facilities within the Authority
- benefits from Rotherham's enhance reputation since the establishment of the RBT partnership
- challenging issues
- analysis of calls to the call centre
- Equalities Level 3 target

- Equalities champion
- use of IT systems to identify patterns of work activity and deployment implications
- capturing learning and the development of a knowledge pool
- improved channels of access for the public e.g. WiFi points
- wireless pilot
- Rotherham Renaissance programme and IT infrastructure
- co-ordinating information on projects
- Elected Members IT requirements

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

(2) That further work be carried out on the issues raised relating to links partnership, town team, Rotherham Renaissance and IT infrastructure.

(3) That progress be made relating to consideration of Elected Member IT requirements.

(4) That a further report be submitted on the issue of IT systems to co-ordinate information on projects.

109. CONNEXIONS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Joyce Thacker, Executive Director Connexions South Yorkshire, and Member and officer representatives from Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield Councils.

Joyce Thacker introduced the submitted report setting out the current situation with regard to Connexions South Yorkshire (CSY).

The report covered:-

- Introduction and background
- Current structure of the partnership
- Funding
- Connexions Service delivery model
- Connexions targets

- Number of young people aged 16 to 18 not in employment, education or training (NEET) and Not Known Targets
- Connexions NEET Target 2006
- Borough progress to date
- The movement of young people in and out of NEET
- Progress to meet the 2006 target
- Changing context: Youth Green Paper
- Key questions
- Future arrangements

Also submitted was (a) an appendix detailing partners delivering Connexions services across South Yorkshire and (b) a draft protocol for the scrutiny of CSY.

Joyce Thacker gave a powerpoint presentation on Connexions South Yorkshire. The presentation covered:-

- NEET's – South Yorkshire Trends November, 2003 to November, 2005
- Movement in NEET's November, 2004 to November, 2005
- Movement in Not Knowns November, 2004 to November, 2005
- Who becomes NEET and who leaves NEET?
- Analysis of Year 11 Destinations: November, 2005
- Key issues.

Joyce expressed general concern at the latest figures and outlined action to be taken.

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

- targeting issues in the districts and addressing such during the transitional period
- strategies to deal with the worrying high proportion of Not Knowns
- comparator figures nationally and regionally

- correlation/trends with Criminal Justice statistics
- data regarding children with special needs/learning disabilities
- inspection facility/support for the Connexions South Yorkshire Service
- the need for shared responsibility of the NEET target and general understanding of the different types of NEET targets
- retaining the 'Connexions' brand
- high proportion of young people leaving further education and into NEET
- need for case examples.

Consideration was also given to the submitted draft protocol developed as a framework for carrying out scrutiny of Connexions South Yorkshire. It was stressed that the submitted draft protocol related to the current situation which would inevitably change. Brief views were expressed.

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

(2) That Joyce Thacker be thanked for her informative and interesting presentation.

(3) That Joyce Thacker be requested to provide the information now discussed relating to the local authority's young people in and out of NEET and education and also GIS mapping.

(4) That a further meeting be held in three months when the position should be clearer about some of the issues raised.

(5) That, at the meeting referred to above, consideration be given to:-

(a) issues from the data to be provided by Joyce Thacker focusing on the qualitative work/achievements;

(b) the key questions raised in the report;

(c) the draft protocol for scrutiny of Connexions South Yorkshire.

110. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2005/06

The Committee considered the submitted budget monitoring report for the period 1st April to 30th September, 2005, detailing the projected revenue outturn for 2005/06 along with the actions being taken, or proposed to be taken, to deal with the projected over or underspends. The information

had been noted by the Corporate Management Team.

The report showed a projected overspend of £1,311,000 on the General Fund as compared with a projected overspend of £1,096,000 as at 31st August, 2005.

The report also showed a projected underspend of £1,300,000 on the Housing Revenue Account though a number of uncertainties needed to be resolved.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

111. BUDGET

Andrew Bedford, Acting Executive Director of Finance, gave a powerpoint presentation on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2006/07 and 2007/08 and update on the budget.

The presentation covered:-

- Local Government Finance Settlement 2006/07
- National position.
- Further relief of spending pressures
- Formula Grant
- Formula Grant and Relative Need Formulae
- Specific Grants
- Formula Grant : Adjusted 2005/06, net 2006/07, adjusted 2006/07 and 2007/08 with change and percentage change values
- Progress Report:
 - Base Budget
 - Present Policies Budget
 - Draft Budget
- Scrutiny Panels: next round considerations

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

- Local autonomy
- Allocation of ringfenced grant for schools
- Capital Strategy and options information for Scrutiny Panels
- Scrutiny Review recommendations

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

(2) That, for the next round of budget considerations by Scrutiny, the following information be made available:-

(a) Capital Strategy matters

(b) Scrutiny Review recommendations not implemented due to budgetary issues.

112. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November, 2005, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

113. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues:-

(a) Councillor Doyle reported:-

- that his Panel had arranged two one day Scrutiny Reviews and efforts were being directed at plain English

- on a meeting with Chairs of Health and that a joint Scrutiny Committee had been agreed to look at privatisation.

(b) Cath Saltis reported on behalf of Councillor G. A. Russell:-

- she had chaired a one day Scrutiny Review on the impact of domestic violence on children. A report was awaited.

- she had chaired the first meeting of the Looked After Children Sub-Committee.

(c) Councillor Stonebridge reported:-

- on a conference in Rotherham last Friday relating to elderly people and transport issues.

Agreed:- That a joint one day Scrutiny Review by this Committee and the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel be held in the New Year on older people and transport.

- that the half day session, originally scheduled for today, would be arranged early in the New Year.

- that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Wednesday, 21st December, 2005, at 9.30 a.m.

(d) Sioned Mair-Richards reported:-

- the availability of CD's and workbooks relating to Scrutiny issues.

- the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel was piloting with CIPFA a practical budget scrutiny exercise. The exercise was taking place on Monday, 12th December, 2005, at the Town hall from 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Members were welcome to attend.

114. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call- in requests.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
21st December, 2005

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor Jack), Councillors Barron, Clarke, Doyle, Hall, Hussain, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell, R. S. Russell and Whelbourn.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sangster.

115. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

116. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

117. GUIDE FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ON REPRESENTING THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND MEMBERS AND OFFICERS' INDEMNITY

Further to Minute No. 64 of the meeting of this Committee held on 30th September, 2005, Richard Waller, Team Manager, Non-Contentious Team, presented the submitted report relating to the above.

The report set out the terms of reference set by this Committee and the recommendations of the Corporate Management Team following consideration of the issue at its meeting on 29th April, 2005.

Also submitted was the draft Guide for Members and Officers on representing the Council on Outside Bodies and Members' and Officers' Indemnity.

The Guide was split into four sections and covered: (a) Council Representatives (b) Company Directors (c) Trustees and (d) Immunity and Indemnity.

A simple aide-memoire would be prepared for members and officers' use once the Guide had been approved.

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

- importance of knowing one's role and in which capacity the Council is being represented
- conflict of interest
- need to ensure aware of responsibilities and seek guidance

- immunity and acting beyond powers
- need to fulfil the community leadership role
- implications for indemnity at Parish Council meetings and surgeries
- defamation implications
- remuneration and risk
- circumstances in which indemnity would not be given
- reimbursement of Council or Insurer's costs
- training needs
- briefing requirements and arrangements

Resolved:- (1) That, subject to (5) below, this Committee supports the Guide and its adoption be processed through Cabinet.

(2) That, subject to (5) below, this Committee supports the proposed indemnity at Appendix E to the Guide and its adoption be processed through Cabinet.

(3) That the Guide, including the indemnity at Appendix E to the Guide, be referred to the Standards Committee for consideration.

(4) That the Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, training officers and identified contact officers look at the identified needs for representatives on outside bodies.

(5) That further work be carried out on vicarious liability and the clarification of conflicts of interest.

(6) That the Members' Training and Development Panel take up the issue of ensuring Members seek advice and training needs.

(7) That it be ensured that contact officers are identified and they keep in regular contact with representatives on Outside Bodies.

(8) That the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel be requested to review the issue of representatives on outside bodies, linking this to the Council's priorities and report back through the Cabinet.

(9) That Richard Waller be thanked for an informative report.

118. CO-OPTION ONTO SCRUTINY PANELS

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, presented the submitted report

indicating that, in order to help co-optees contribute to the scrutiny process, they had been provided with a comprehensive information pack. To enhance further their contribution, an extension of the co-option period from one to two years was proposed.

It was noted that, with the exception of the two tenant representatives on the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel, co-optees have served on scrutiny panels for a one year period.

The co-option process was outlined, indicating that, for some organisations, the completion of the process could take up to six months. Such delays prevented representatives from benefiting from relevant training.

By extending the co-option period to two years, the administrative burden of nomination would be reduced for the organisations represented and co-optees would benefit from greater continuity and make a greater contribution to the scrutiny process.

Resolved:- (1) That the production and distribution of the information pack be noted and welcomed.

(2) That, with effect from April, 2006, the usual period of co-option onto scrutiny panels be for a period of two years.

119. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November, 2005 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman subject to the joint one day scrutiny review on older people and transport (referred to in item 113(c)) being carried out by the Regeneration, Adult Services and Health and Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panels.

120. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor Whelbourn reported

- that the scrutiny exercise on 12th December, 2005 had proved very useful and highlighted good questioning techniques
- on an initial meeting with Speak Up on learning disabilities and the production of a booklet on 'how to vote' which was to be adapted for submission to the Youth Cabinet

Councillor P. A. Russell, as the Council's champion for learning disabilities, referred to a presentation that the Council was making in London on 18th January, 2006 and that the work being done by the

Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel on involving people with learning disabilities could be useful for the presentation.

Agreed:- That Sioned Mair-Richards be requested to look at the possibility of linking up the initiatives.

(c) Councillor Stonebridge reported

- he had been asked to do a scrutiny session at the LGA Driving Improvement Conference in Newcastle on 1st March, 2006
- he had been asked by the Economic Social Research Council to give a presentation on 'Managing the interface between scrutiny and the executive in a political environment' in Warwick on 18th January, 2006
- the desirability of a further joint meeting with the Cabinet

121. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests

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