

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY COHESION**

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

**Date: Monday, 27 November 2006**

**Time: 8.30 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. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October, 2006 (herewith). (Pages 1 - 7)
6. The Community Leadership Fund – Flexibility and Increase in Allocations to Members (report herewith) (Pages 8 - 10)
7. Update on Parish Councils (report herewith) (Pages 11 - 20)
8. Visit to London (Councillor Akhtar to report)
9. Year Ahead Update (Presentation by the Head of Policy and Partnerships)
10. Rotherham Reachout: Results of the 14th Survey (report herewith) (Pages 21 - 29)
11. Opportunity for All (Policy and Research Manager to report) (Pages 30 - 33)
12. Profiles Updates (Head of Policy and Partnerships to report)
13. Community Cohesion Performance Report (Head of Policy and Partnerships to report)

14. Annual Plan for the Group

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Monday, 18th December, 2006 at 8.30 a.m.

**COMMUNITY COHESION  
19th October, 2006**

Present:- Councillor Hussain (in the Chair); Councillors Ali and Sangster.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Burton.

**58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Sangster declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 13 (Rotherham Community Resource Programme Trust Limited) in view of his membership on their Board and left the room during discussion of this item.

**59. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18TH AND 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2006**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2006 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**60. ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN ROTHERHAM**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Catherine Dale, Research and Statistics Officer, on the main findings of a report commissioned by the Research and Policy team in Rotherham MBC to examine the Indian population in Rotherham.

The report represented a wider approach adopted by the Research and Policy Team to help to develop a greater understanding of the needs and priorities of the many communities in Rotherham based on the community of interest groups identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The findings will have implications for policy and service delivery.

The report is the sixth in a series of ten reports which will be produced by the Research and Policy Team over the next twelve months on the main (and diverse) communities of interest in the Borough. To date, five other reports have been completed; Older people, Irish community, Women, Chinese and the Pakistani community.

The report set out:-

- Introduction and National Context
- Summary
- Demographic Characteristics
- Ethnicity and Religious Characteristics
- Crime
- Family and Living Characteristics
- Education

- Household Characteristics
- Health Characteristics
- Economic Characteristics

Research so far had highlighted the fact that needs and priorities between the various communities are very different.

The results of the survey reflect the National findings. Generally, with some exceptions, the Indian and Chinese communities are the most educated and affluent groups.

The information will be used not only to influence the development of Area Plans, but to inform the next round of Service Planning at which time key partner agencies will be asked to refer to profiling work.

Resolved:- (1) That the findings of the report be received and taken into account by Programme Areas in developing policies and services.

(2) That the key findings of the report be disseminated to Programme Areas and interested partner agencies.

(3) That it be noted that this is the sixth in a series of reports to be developed by the Policy and Research Team looking at the needs and priorities of the main (and diverse) communities of interest in the Borough.

## 61. REACHING OUT: AN ACTION PLAN ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Consideration was given to a report presented by Catherine Dale, Research and Statistics Officer which summarised, *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*.

The Action Plan set out the Government's renewed drive to improve the life changes and opportunities of the most disadvantaged and hard-to-reach in society throughout the life-cycle. In addition, the Plan examines the reasons why, despite the huge progress being made, there are still individuals and families who are cut off from society and shows that through early identification, support and preventative action, positive change is possible.

Finally, the report briefly outlined how RMBC is working with its partners to address the issues highlighted in *Reaching Out*.

The Action Plan opened the next chapter in the Government's attack on entrenched exclusion, setting out:-

- **Five key guiding principles** which will inform the Government's approach and actions to tackle deep social exclusion
- **A series of immediate changes and pilots** built around a lifetime approach to tackling exclusion

The Plan concentrates on some of the most excluded groups, targeting deep exclusion as well as wide exclusion, and proposes more support for the following groups including actions built around a lifetime approach to tackling exclusion:-

- Very young children born into vulnerable circumstances
- Children and teenagers (those particularly at risk including children in care, teenage parents and those with the lowest educational achievement)
- Adults living chaotic lives

The Government will complement the Action Plan through further policy implementation and will continue a programme of active stakeholder engagement and discussion to inform the actions.

As a result of the initiative, Action Plans will be localised to suit the needs of Rotherham families.

Clearly, the Government recognises that in order to reach the most excluded, it requires a step change in the way in which central and local government – as well as the community and voluntary sector – address social exclusion. It means focusing on deep exclusion as well as wide exclusion. Additionally, the Government recognises that more needs to be done to promote multi-agency working to address multiple problems ensuring that services are incentivised to work around the individual, as opposed to individuals working around the service.

Comments are welcomed on the principles and actions within the plan and the Government would welcome any innovative examples or radical proposals for provision around those most at risk which could be used in taking forward the Action Plan.

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

(2) That the findings of the report and focus should be a key input into the Council's emerging Social Inclusion Framework.

(3) That Andrew Towleron, Research and Policy Manager, send a copy of the report to all Elected Members.

## **62. THE DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY AND DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Zafar Saleem, Manager, Equalities, Community Cohesion & Inclusion which gave details of the new Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which places a general duty on public bodies to actively promote equality of opportunity for disabled persons.

The report informs of the actions taken jointly by Rotherham MBC,

Rotherham PCT, and Rotherham Hospital Trust to adopt an innovative approach to comply with the new Disability Equality Duty, including the production of a Disability Equality Scheme.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their function, to have due regard to the need to:-

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled person;
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled person more favourably than other person

The overarching goal of the general duty is to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. A Steering Group has been set up to undertake a range of activities and initiatives in preparation for implementing the duty by December 2006.

It is the intention to present the final scheme to a meeting of the Cabinet in December, 2006.

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

(2) That the draft Disability Equality Scheme be received for comment at the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2006.

### **63. THE EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – INITIAL FEEDBACK FROM EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Zafar Saleem, Manager, Equalities, Community Cohesion and Inclusion which set out initial feedback from Auditors from the Centre for Local Policy Studies following an external validation of the Council's achievement of level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government carried out between May and August 2006.

The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) was developed as a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream disability, gender and race equality into council policy and practice at all levels. It recognises the importance of fair treatment and equal access to Council services and employment. The Equality Standard has been adopted by the Audit Commission as a Best Value performance indicator (BV2a).

Progress through the levels of the Equality Standard is measured through self-assessment. Councils are required to produce a documentation covering all service areas to demonstrate achievement at each level claimed. External audit is required at levels 3 and 5. The audit is designed to build in external validation of the self assessment, support benchmarking and provide guidance for improvement.

The external auditors have to be accredited to carry out audits of the Equality Standard. This is to ensure the audit process is rigorous and reliable. I&DeA in partnership with the Centre for Local Policy Studies, Edge Hill University, administer and validate the audit process and provide quality control.

The report set out:-

- Methodology of the Audit
- Auditors' Findings
- Leadership and Corporate Commitment
- Areas identified for improvement
- Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny
- Service Delivery and Customer Care
- Employment and Training
- Action required to achieve Level 4
- Next Steps
- Scoring Summary

Resolved:- (1) That the auditors' validation of the Council's achievement of Level 3, subject to internal moderation by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), be welcomed.

(2) That the findings of the audit be noted and the Equalities Team be congratulated on their work.

(3) To note that CMT have agreed to receive a revised action plan for achieving level 4, to be developed with the involvement and consultation of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, by 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2006.

(4) To note that CMT have recommended that feedback from the external validation is reported to the Cabinet and Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel, once formal notification is received from the auditors.

#### **64. LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK**

Consideration was given to a proposed programme of events for Local Democracy Week. This year the event runs from 16<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October and Councils and organisations around the country are running events throughout and around the week. As in previous years, Rotherham is taking part. Last year more than half of all local authorities across the

Country took part.

Local Democracy Week is an annual campaign coordinated by the Local Government Association (LGA). It aims to:-

- make councils more relevant and useful to young people
- encourage young people to 'take part take power'
- make Local Democracy Week bigger and better than before
- increase councillor involvement in citizenship teaching in schools
- get councils to devolve power, wherever appropriate, to local people

A small steering Group has been established to help develop and coordinate activities in Rotherham. This includes representatives from Children and Young People's Service and Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, together with Rotherham Partnership and the Chief Executive's Department.

Through this Group, a series of high-profile, inter-active and informative events have developed.

In addition, events aimed at promoting understanding and engagement with parish councils and discussion on the findings and implications of the latest Reachout findings are planned.

Resolved:- That the proposed programme of events planned for Local Democracy Week 2006 in Rotherham be noted and welcomed.

#### **65. ANNUAL PLAN FOR THE GROUP**

In order to plan the workload of the Cabinet Member, Community Cohesion, an Annual Plan has been prepared and was provided at the meeting for consideration.

Resolved:- (1) That the Annual Plan, as submitted, be approved.

(2) That a revised planned workload be submitted to each meeting.

#### **66. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **67. ROTHERHAM COMMUNITY RESOURCE PROGRAMME TRUST LTD.**

Zafar Saleem, Manager, Equalities, Community Cohesion and Inclusion, presented a report which asked that consideration be given for core



funding following a request from Rotherham Community Resource Programme Trust Limited.

The report set out the background on funding issues of the Company, other areas of income and staffing implications.

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

(2) That the Manager, Equalities, Community Cohesion and Inclusion be instructed to inform Rotherham Community Resource Programme Trust Limited that the Council is unable to support their request for core funding.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council)).

**68. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion take place on Friday, 27th November, 2006 at 8.30 a.m.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 November 2006</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>The Community Leadership Fund – Flexibility and Increase in Allocations to Members.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods</b>

### **5. Summary**

Members of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel have requested that the Community Leadership Fund remains as flexible as possible and that the budgetary allocation is increased to ensure maximum benefit for the citizens of Rotherham.

### **6. Recommendations**

**THE DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT:-**

- **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO CARRY FORWARD ANY UNSPENT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FUND ALLOCATION INTO THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.**
- **THAT THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY COHESION PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FUND TO BE INCREASED FROM £500 TO £1000 PER MEMBER AS PART OF THE BUDGET SETTING PROCESS FOR 2007/8.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

During July 2006 the Community Leadership Manager presented a report on the performance of the 2005/6 Community Leadership Fund to the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.

The report contained a summary of suggestions made by Members to ensure that the Fund remains as flexible as possible, is used to its full potential and that the underspend seen in previous years is avoided.

The following proposals were made and recommended:-

- Individual Members are able to carry forward any unspent Community Leadership Fund allocation into the next financial year.
- A reserve account will be set up into which any underspend is carried forward each financial year. All Members will be advised during March of their remaining balance. Any Members carrying monies over will receive a 'statement' during the first month of the new financial year illustrating the amount of carry over and the new balance to spend.
- The process be reviewed after one year of operation.
- The amount available for Members is increased from £500 to £1000 for the financial year 2007/8.

## **8. Finance**

The carry over of grants will be supported by the Community Leadership Manager and no extra costs will be incurred in respect of administration of the scheme.

An increase of £500 to £1000 per member will result in an increase in the Community Leadership Fund budget to £63000.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Following publication of the Annual report and regular reminders to Members 97.5% of the Community Leadership Fund budget was spent during 2005/6. This outperformed previous years by 13.5% and if a similar pattern of spending continues only very small amounts will be carried over from year to year.

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

The Community Leadership Fund makes direct links with the Governments agenda for Neighbourhood Arrangements as detailed in the discussion paper "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" :- The paper outlines a vision for Neighbourhood arrangements which include:-

- Local government playing a much stronger role in supporting active citizens and neighbourhoods.
- Extending Ward Members community leadership role at the centre of neighbourhood arrangements.
- Real decision making at a Neighbourhood level by the devolution of small budgets to ward councillors to tackle 'liveability' issues and improving the local environment.

### Community Strategy

The Community Leadership Fund contributes directly to the key themes of the Community Strategy; Achieving, Learning, Alive, Proud and Safe

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

- "Empowering people in their local communities" Speech by David Milliband to the New Local Government Network 18/01/06.
- Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter ODPM 2005
- Vibrant Local Leadership ODPM 2005
- Analysis of the Community Leadership Fund 2005-6 Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER</b>
---

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> November 2006</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Update on Parish Councils</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods</b>

### **5. Summary**

Following the signing of the Joint Working Charter, work has begun to ensure that Parish and Town Councils are able to play a full and pivotal role within Neighbourhood Management arrangements in Rotherham including the new way of working for Area Assemblies and the achievement of the Local Area Agreement target around Quality Parish Council status.

### **6. Recommendations**

**THAT CABINET MEMBER NOTE PROGRESS BEING MADE WITH:-**

- 1) ENCOURAGING JOINT WORKING BETWEEN RMBC AND PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS.**
- 2) DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL COUNCILS TO PLAY A PARTNERSHIP ROLE WITHIN THE NEW WAY OF WORKING FOR AREA ASSEMBLIES.**
- 3) ENSURING THAT THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT TARGET OF HAVING 15% OF ROTHERHAMS PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS WITH QUALITY PARISH STATUS BY MARCH 2007 IS ACHIEVED THROUGH JOINT TRAINING SESSIONS WITH THE YORKSHIRE LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION.**

**AND**

- 4) THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION IN ORDER TO CONTINUE WITH SUPPORT FOR THE FURTHER INTEGRATION AND WIDER ROLE OF THE TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

In February 2005 the government published "Citizen Engagement and Public services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter." This key discussion paper looked at the how best to develop and strengthen community level governance as part of a ten year vision for the future of local government.

The paper clearly indicated that the Government envisages local councils providing strong local community leadership, working in partnership with local authorities, improving the quality and range of services available and making an effective contribution to the sustainability of neighbourhoods.

In order to meet these challenges the following actions are being developed to support the integration and development of Parish and Town councils into neighbourhood management arrangements:-

### Progressing the Joint Working Charter

During March 2006 twenty three of Rotherham's twenty nine Parish and Town Councils signed up to the framework of joint working arrangements outlined in the Charter. A small handful of parish councils and parish meetings declined to sign the Charter.

The Joint working group who are overseeing the implementation of the Charter have contacted the remaining parish councils and meetings and invited them to re-consider signing up to joint working arrangements and meet with the group to discuss signing up to the Charter. As a result of this Firbeck Parish Council will be signing the Charter during November 2006.

It was agreed that the Charter would be a 'living' document and updated annually following a review process to be held in February 2007 between both parties. This will reflect changing circumstances, the latest policy drivers coming out of National and Local Government and the need for the development of stronger ties between the two tiers of local government.

The Joint Working Group have scheduled quarterly meetings throughout the coming year and have agreed an Action Plan. This group will monitor and implement the terms of the charter and ensure that the major themes (See appendix 1) are delivered.

### Supporting Quality Parish Council Status

Quality status requires a parish or town council to demonstrate that it is representative of the whole community, communicates with it's residents and is properly managed and responsible. The award enhances the status of local councils by demonstrating a level of competence that enables them to play a wider role in terms of consultation, delivery of services, information and partnership working. At the present time only Whiston has achieved Quality Parish Council status within Rotherham. RMBC has agreed a Local Area Agreement target with the government to support 3-4 local councils to meet Quality Status by March 2007. Recent research indicates that Maltby, Anston, Wales, Brinsworth and Wickersley are close to meeting the mandatory criteria but still require the clerk to obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

In order to ensure we meet this target the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (the awarding body) have been asked to facilitate several sessions to ensure that clerks are supported to submit completed portfolios for assessment during November 2006. The Community Involvement Unit are working with the YLCA as facilitators to deliver support and awareness raising sessions around the following;

- Introduction, mandatory tests and code of conduct.
- Communications, newsletters and annual report
- Putting the application together

### Area Assemblies

Parish and Town Councils are an integral part of the new way of working for Area Assemblies. They are a partner organisation and have representation on co-ordinating groups across the Borough and as such are able to ensure that action is taken on issues being raised at local level.

Parish councillors sitting on the co-ordinating groups will be supported by a training package as part of the capacity building of the co-ordinating groups to ensure that they have the skills required to play a full role and feedback issues to the parishes they represent.

### Parish Partnership Meeting

The Joint Working Group have approved proposals to develop the concept of a 'Parish Partnership Meeting'. This would involve all Parish and Town Councils having the opportunity to meet four times a year as a whole group. It has been suggested that two of the meetings will focus on planning issues while the other two will concentrate on general issues effecting all local councils.

Such meetings are an established part of arrangements in local authorities that have been recognised as developing good practice in this area. Milton Keynes hold 'Parish Assembly' meetings that regularly cover such diverse topics as Community Safety, Partnership Working, Waste Management and Standards and Probity in Parish Councils. An example constitution from the Milton Keynes Parish Assembly is attached in Appendix 2 for information.

The meetings will give Parish and Town Councils the opportunity to actively input into existing RMBC initiatives e.g Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Streetpride, etc and improve access and awareness of the council and other services. The Joint Working Group have already identified issues for the first meeting around training and community consultation techniques.

Local councils will be able to share good practice, build networks and improve their capacity to deliver improved services to local people.

Consultation on the structure and purpose of these meetings is currently taking place with the Joint Working Group and the first meeting will be scheduled during January 2007.

### Local Strategic Partnership

Following discussions with the Director of the LSP, it has been agreed that a representative of Parish and Town Councils will be asked to sit on the Proud Theme board. This will ensure that Parish Councils are represented at a strategic level on the Proud theme board who are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Community strategy performance indicators around;

- Broadening & widening engagement & eliminating barriers to participation
- Developing local democracy at a neighbourhood level
- Promoting and supporting the growth of the voluntary & community sector
- Developing the boroughs identity
- Promoting strong & cohesive communities

### Co – opted Membership on Council Bodies and Training

A Parish and Town Council representative currently sits on the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel as a co-opted Member. The YLCA are currently balloting Parish Councils to elect a second representative to sit on the panel.

In addition to this a Parish Clerk sits as co-opted member on the Member Development Panel.

Following the signing of the Joint Working Charter all suitable Member Development events have been opened up to Parish Councillors. The Joint Working Group have discussed developing Personal Development Reviews for Parish Council Chairs and providing Induction sessions for new Parish Councillors following next year's elections.

## **8. Finance**

Support for the CiLCA is being met from existing budgets within the Community Involvement Unit. The support sessions for clerks are likely to cost in the region of £1500.00

The following items will have resource implications if RMBC are to continue to support the further integration and wider role of Parish and Town Councils:-

- Support for IT projects to meet the Quality Status criteria
- Training and support for parish representatives on the Area Assembly co-ordinating group
- Delivery of the parish partnership proposals

Following a report on progress with Parish Councils to the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel during September 2006 the Scrutiny Panel expressed concern about resource implications if the Council continues to support the further integration and wide role of Town and Parish Councils. There would be budget implications as there are insufficient funds to carry out all the work laid out in the action plan as intended. The Panel requested that Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion be made aware of concerns and ask that the resource issue be included as part of the budget process.



## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

Successful neighbourhood arrangements exist where there are good relationships between the two tiers of local government. Parish and Town councillors will need continued support and encouragement if their role within the new Area Assembly arrangements is to be developed successfully. This support, guidance and advice will be provided through Neighbourhoods Community Involvement Unit.

Local councils may not meet mandatory elements around Quality Status, in particular the electoral mandate test (on first accreditation 80% of members of the council must have been elected). This may jeopardize the Local Area Agreement target around Quality Status. In order to address this risk, the YLCA are currently assessing each local council to establish who is eligible to apply for Quality status.

In order to minimise this risk, leading up to the Local Council elections during 2007, a publicity and awareness raising campaign will take place across the Borough, beginning with Local democracy week to highlight the role parish councils play in Neighbourhood Governance arrangements and how they can play an active part in these structures e.g. representation on the Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups. In addition to this the Community Leadership Manager is representing Neighbourhoods on a corporate working group to address and highlight issues around voter turnout.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The recent Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' indicates further developments in the vision for the role of Parish and Town Councils including:-

- Building on the existing parish structure to improve its capacity to deliver better services and represent the community's interests.
- Local authorities delegating additional functions and budgets to a Parish Council.
- Simplifying and speeding up the process of devolving the power to create parishes to district and unitary authorities and allowing them to implement the recommendations of parish reviews and to respond to petitions from local communities
- Offering Parishes a wider range of alternative names

### Community Strategy

Developing closer ties with Parish and Town Councils links with the PROUD theme and the key priorities: "Develop local democracy at a neighbourhood level, devolving powers and resources and increasing opportunities for engagement."

### Corporate Plan

Rotherham PROUD: Support Parish and Town Councils in achieving quality status: Develop a Parish Councils accord and strengthen joint working.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

- The Potential of Parish and Town Councils to Support Neighbourhood Arrangements LGIU June 2006
- Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Governance: Joseph Rowntree Foundation Seminar Match 2005.
- Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter ODPM 2005

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## Appendix 1 – Parish Council Joint Working group Action Plan 2006/7

Action	Target Date	Task Status (R, A, G, B)	Current Status
1. To hold quarterly meetings of joint Working Group to act as the monitoring framework for embedding the Joint Charter within RMBC, Parish Councils and Rotherham Partnership	June 06	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings of the Joint Working Group planned for June 06, Sep 06, Dec 06 and March 07</li> <li>• Meetings held in June and September</li> <li>• Further meeting scheduled (due to a number of emerging issues) for 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006</li> <li>• Annual conference to take place in February 07 to review progress made.</li> </ul>
2. To hold quarterly meetings of the officers group responsible for developing the Charter to ensure issues from Joint Working Group are actioned and reported back to the relevant stakeholders	July 6	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings of the officers working group scheduled for Oct 06, Jan 07 and March 07 (dependent on issues raised by the Joint Working Group)</li> </ul>
3. To strengthen the links between local councils, RMBC and Rotherham Partnership to ensure local councils are actively involved in the development and refresh of the Community Strategy	Mar 07	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting held with partnership officer for Proud theme board in July 2006.</li> <li>• Paper to Proud theme board on the 25/09/06 to agree parish council representation</li> <li>• Joint Working Group to decide on election mechanism on the 26/10/06</li> </ul>
4. To ensure the Integration of Parish Councils and Voluntary / Community sector organisations within the Neighbourhood Management Model	Nov 06	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination process for Co-ordinating group membership of the Area Assembly completed</li> <li>• Support programme for Parish Council representatives to be developed to ensure parish councillors play a full and active role within the Area Assemblies</li> <li>• Invite to be sent to the remaining Parish meetings and Parish councils to arrange a meeting re signing the Charter.</li> </ul>

<p>5. To produce a joint newsletter to improve communication between all stakeholders</p>	<p>March 07</p>	<p>G</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint working charter leaflet highlighting main points of the Charter produced and sent out to all parishes during July 2006.</li> <li>• Joint Working group have agreed that an article highlighting the work of Parish and Town Councils to be included in Council Matters.</li> </ul>	
<p>6. To investigate the support provision requirements to develop the capacity of Parish/Town councils</p>	<p>March 07</p>	<p>G</p>	<p><u>Training Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support/skills audit to be completed</li> <li>• Training for elected members opened up to parish councillors. . Recently planning training is being extended to evening sessions to ensure the maximum number of parish councillors can attend.</li> <li>• Performance and Development Reviews to be opened up to Parish Council Chairs</li> <li>• Induction programme for new parish councillors</li> </ul> <p><u>IT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting held with RBT during August 2006 to establish e-gov programme with parish councils. e.g provision of laptops Information/action point re:services Electronic link to RMBC websites (including list of members, contact details, access to annual report)</li> <li>• Online comments scheme</li> <li>• Online surveys</li> <li>• Online petitions</li> <li>• Online councillor surgeries</li> <li>• Pilot area to test a number of the above developments be chosen during October 2006</li> </ul> <p><u>Parish Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to all parishes during June 2006 advising them of support from Community Planning officers around parish plans, liaising with other</li> </ul>	

				partners and funding issues.
7. Training for officers and elected members to increase awareness around the roles, functions and potential of local councils.	March 07		G	<p>Training programme in place for elected members and officers lead by YLCA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme to be provided by the YLCA.</li> </ul>
9. Provide position statement around the QS essential criteria.	July 06		B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish number of local councils eligible to apply for QS during 2006/7.</li> <li>• Questionnaire sent to all parishes on the 13/06/06 requesting a current position statement relating to QS.</li> <li>• Questionnaire returns indicated that 5 parish councils are planning to apply for QS over the next six months</li> </ul>
10. Establish training programme for clerks to meet the CiLCA element of QS.	Nov 06		G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training plan agreed with the YLCA for clerks to obtain CiLCA to be undertaken November 2006 around;</li> <li>• Introduction, mandatory tests and code of conduct.</li> <li>• Communications, newsletters and annual report</li> <li>• Putting the application together</li> </ul>
10. Examine the feasibility of Quarterly Parish Partnership Meetings. The meetings will ensure proactive input into RMBC initiatives, build their capacity as elected community leaders and enable good practice to be shared between councils	March 07		G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be discussed at the Joint Working Group meeting on the 29/06/06.</li> <li>• Approved in principle by the joint working group at meeting of the 21/09/06</li> <li>• Structure being developed for approval at the next meeting of the joint working group on the 26/10/06.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Milton Keynes Parish Assembly**

#### **1. The Membership of the Assembly shall consist of:**

- The Milton Keynes Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Parish and Town Councils and two additional Members nominated Annually
- 2 representatives of each Parish and Town Council in Milton Keynes.
- Non speaking observers will be permitted to the public gallery
- Substitutions will be allowed (previously notified to Parish Liaison)
- Parish and Town Councils should forward the names of their representatives following their Annual Meeting each year

#### **2. Officers**

- The meetings of the Assembly will be attended by Parish Liaison, officers of Milton Keynes Council and others as invited

#### **3. Chair**

- The meetings of the Assembly shall be chaired by the Milton Keynes Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Parish and Town Councils

#### **4. Terms of Reference**

The Assembly may discuss Agenda Items:

- of interest or concern raised by any Parish or Town Council
- of interest or concern raised by Milton Keynes Council
- of interest to Milton Keynes Council and Parish or Town Councils raised by external partners or bodies

#### **5. Minutes**

The minutes of the Assembly will be distributed to all Parish and Town Councils and circulated to the Cabinet Members of Milton Keynes Council

#### **6. Powers**

The Assembly may make recommendations to Milton Keynes Council and other bodies as appropriate.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> November 2006</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Rotherham Reachout – Results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Survey</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Chief Executive’s Office</b>

## **5. Summary**

This report considers the findings from the 14th Rotherham Reachout survey, and outlines the key policy implications for the Council. It also provides an update on developments with Reachout more generally. The 14th Reachout survey was conducted between June & August 2006. The questionnaire allowed for a detailed and wide-ranging survey, covering topics including: the local physical environment the sense of community, local democracy and engagement with public bodies (especially the Council), Streetpride issues, Fairtrade issues, gambling, and health. The response rate for Reachout 14 was 32%, which is above average for this type of survey.

Attached is the executive summary of the full report.

(A copy of the main report is available on the Council’s Intranet and Internet and from Dawn Price, Corporate Consultation Officer, Chief Executive’s Office).

## **6. Recommendations**

**The Cabinet Member is asked to:**

- 1. Note the findings from the 14th survey of Rotherham Reachout and the policy and practical implications identified within this report.**
- 2. Note the positive developments in relation to the Panel, notably the reintroduction of the Reachout Newsletter, development of a Reachout web-page and the opportunity provided to panel members to visit and hear at first hand how their input has helped shape and inform services as part of Local Democracy Week.**
- 3. Consider its implications for service delivery and policy development.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The results provide interesting and useful information for the Council and its partners. The themes and key findings from the 14th Survey were:

### **Neighborhood satisfaction**

Panel Members were asked to identify how satisfied they were with the area that they lived:

- 59% of Panel Members told us that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, only 25% said that they were dissatisfied

When asked to consider their overall physical environment, Panel Members said that they were most satisfied with the following:

- 76% - street lighting
- 64% - maintenance of grass verges and shrub beds
- 56% - maintenance of road signs, bollards
- 54% - winter salting for roads

### **Local decision making**

Panel Members were asked to identify how they felt they were best placed in making decisions about their area.

- One in 5 Panelists feel that they can influence a decision making process
- 27% of respondents to these questions felt that they were well informed about local affairs
- A third of respondents feel that the Council and its Partners takes note of their views as residents in the Borough

### **Having your say and the Council**

Panel Members were asked to tell us their opinions on how they would like to have their say. The most popular methods were:

- 73% said that they would contact the Council department directly followed by
- 58% who said that contacting a local councillor would be their choice
- 34% said that completing a survey would be their choice of expressing their opinions to the Council
- 62 % of Panelists told us that when they have contacted the Council that staff have been friendly and helpful.

### **Cleanliness and Rotherham Streets**

Panel Members were asked how satisfied they were with the cleanliness of the streets of Rotherham.



- 59% said that they were very satisfied with the cleanliness
- 54% said they were happy with the manner that graffiti and rubbish was removed.
- 64% have seen the Safety Road banners.

### **Fairtrade**

Panel Members were asked a series of questions to determine whether they were familiar with the FairTrade process and also if they were supportive of Rotherham Councils aim to be a fair trade council.

- 83% support the Councils Fairtrade initiative
- 66% have heard of Fairtrade
- 55% currently buy fair-trade products

### **Gambling & Rotherham**

Panel Members were asked to express their opinions on the effects of Gambling, and whether they themselves have taken part in gambling in Rotherham.

- one third of respondents never take part in any of the forms of gambling mentioned.
- most common types of gambling are visiting a betting shop or an amusement arcade (15% and 12% respectively do either of these at least once a year).
- 35% of Panelists state that they would be happier if Rotherham did not have amusement arcades and casinos
- Panelists are more positive towards betting shops and bingo halls than towards amusement arcades and casinos.

### **Health**

These questions are requested by the PCT for the survey. Panelists were asked questions regarding the knowledge of skin cancer in Rotherham and questions relating to preventative measures.

- 59% do not know whether skin cancer is a problem in Rotherham,
- 74% have not received advice on using sunbeds in the last 5 years,
- 80% never use sunbeds.

*\* Please note that all percentages given relate to the percentage of the total respondents to that particular question, based on a total sample of 3500 random Panel Members mailed, with a response of 1107 returned.*

## **Wider developments**

There have been a number of important developments in relation to the development and operation of the Panel. These notably include

- As membership of the panel underwent a major refresh, the existing panel members will be thanked for their valued support and contribution, by a Borough wide visit that will begin Local Democracy Week; a tour of the Borough to see and hear at first hand how their contribution has shaped services. The Reachout Newsletter was produced and sent to all ex-Panelists to inform them of the changes in the Panel and to feedback the result from R12 & R13.
- Production of an Reachout Area Assembly Report was produced for the first time to provide a picture from both surveys. The results were presented in an Assembly by Assembly format so that this could be used in Area Assembly meetings. Copies of this and future reports are available from Dawn Price.
- The Reachout newsletter has been reintroduced, and a dedicated Reachout webpage has been developed. Reachout Surveys (both Full Reports and all Area Assembly Reports) are present including copies of the Survey itself. These are from Reachout 10 to the present. All other Survey information is directed to the Corporate Consultation lead, Dawn Price.

## **8. Finance**

Reachout is funded jointly by the Council and Rotherham Primary Care Trust. Ipsos MORI provided consultancy services to support the management of the 14<sup>th</sup> Reachout survey. The budget for Reachout is held by the Policy and Partnerships Service within the Chief Executive's Department.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The success of Reachout will largely depend on effective dissemination, feedback and ensuring that the results are used to inform policy development, priorities and service improvement.

The CMT has a key role to play, and has agreed to consider Reachout findings on a regular basis and ensure that the outcomes are used in an appropriate way to inform service planning and policy development. The success of Rotherham Reachout will largely depend on ensuring that the outcomes of such surveys are considered and are used to inform priorities and service improvement.

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

As a key element of the Council's approach to consultation, Reachout surveys are an important element of the delivery of Rotherham Proud as part of the Council (and LSP's new vision). Rotherham Proud emphasises the importance of effective community involvement in civic life and decision making, and Reachout is one way in which local residents can influence decisions made by the Council.

Effective use of Reachout will also be key to the theme of Excellent Council, with improvements in consultation and involvement helping to secure improvements in service delivery. How councils consult and the use of the results of consultation is a key line of enquiry in Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

**Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS):** Reachout enables the Council and its partners to gather the views of residents across Rotherham as to what services they feel are working well, what they would like to improve and which new services they would like developed. This will enable the Council and its partners to improve and develop services to meet the needs of its residents and in doing so contribute to the delivery of the NRS.

**Sustainability:** Reachout is a cornerstone of the Council's approach to consultation, and provides a key mechanism for consulting with local residents. Effective consultation and involvement are essential for a sustainable Rotherham

**Equalities Issues:** Reachout respondents are broken down into different socio – economic groups including gender, age, working status, ethnicity and disability.

**Corporate Performance Assessment:** The CPA assessment undertaken this Summer provided the Authority with the well deserved results it had hoped for. Consultation was mentioned as a key driver in the improvements for RMBC. Comments regarding Reachout and Strategic consultation driving improvements are:

- “..Reachout surveys are used to consult on satisfaction rates and drive improvement”
- “Consultation is effective in Rotherham. A longstanding citizen panel has been regularly consulted over the last five years on a wide range of council and partner issues.”
- “Rotherham ambitions are based on a sound analysis of need. Consultation for the recently revised community strategy was extensive and included work with community interest groups such as older people, lesbian gay bisexual and transsexual people, disabled people and BME residents”
- “There were some particularly innovative approaches to consultation with children and young people. Consultation outcomes are carefully tracked and are reflected in the final strategy and action plans”

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Reference materials: Rotherham Reachout: Findings from the 14th Survey of Panel Members. Report by Ipsos MORI: Executive Summary and Full Report.

A copy of the full report has been placed in the Members Room, Town Hall and will also be available on the Internet and Intranet.

The findings have been distributed to the officers within the Council including those involved in the drafting of the questions for the survey.

Individual summaries relevant to the Area Assemblies have also been prepared, and these have been forwarded to the Area Assembly Chairs and Officers for their consideration.

The questions were submitted through the Corporate Consultation & Community Involvement Group members from each Programme Area, these were then prepared and coordinated by the Corporate Consultation Co-ordinator, Dawn Price. All questions were considered by the

Group for effectiveness and readability, prior to full agreement with Ipsos MORI for Reachout 14.

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Reachout 14  
Executive Summary

1.1 Your neighbourhood

- Over half (59%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, 25% are dissatisfied
- when considering the physical environment, satisfaction is highest with regard to:
  - street lighting (76% satisfied)
  - maintenance of grass verges and shrub beds (64%)
  - maintenance of road signs, bollards, etc (56%)
  - winter salting for roads (54%)
- it is lowest with regard to :
  - winter salting of pavements (27% satisfied)
  - the quality of road surfaces (33%)
- on balance the majority of factors in the physical environment are seen to have improved. The greatest net improvements (% saying better minus % saying worse) are seen for :
  - street lighting (+12% net change)
  - efforts to reduce graffiti (+11%)
  - provision of dog fouling bins (+10%)
- the greatest net deteriorations are seen for :
  - the quality of road surfaces (-36% net change)
  - winter salting of pavements (-20%)
  - quality of pavements/footpaths (-17%)
- two-thirds (65%) agree people in the local area are friendly, and four in ten that people can be relied on (44%), rally round in times of trouble (41%) and tolerate different lifestyles (41%)
- fundraising and supporting education are the more frequently mentioned forms of voluntary activity undertaken (39% and 23% respectively mention these).

1.2 Local decision making

- one in five (21%) say that the PCT is good at involving local communities in making decisions, 15% that the Council is at this and 15% that the police are.

- One third feel that these public bodies take notice of the views of residents: 35% of the PCT, 30% for the Council and 29% for the police .

### 1.3 The Council

- The best ways of having a say in Council decisions are:  
contacting Council departments directly (73% mention this)  
contacting a local councillor (58%)  
completing a survey (34%)
- one in three (31%) have made a complaint to the Council in the last year, over half of these respondents say that staff are friendly (62% are satisfied), 50% that they are helpful, 33% are satisfied with the resolution of their complaint.
- problems relating to safety and travelling around are the issues respondents want dealt with most promptly; for example a blocked highway drain or dangerous footpath (69% and 67% respectively say this should be dealt with within 24 hours). Problems to do with the appearance of the local areas are seen as least important; for example removal of graffiti and cutting back hedges - 37% and 30% respectively are willing to wait for more than 7 days for these to be sorted out.

### 1.4 The streets of Rotherham

- 59% are satisfied with the cleanliness of Rotherham's streets, 38% are satisfied with the condition of the highways
- twice as many respondents are satisfied with how well their area is kept clear of vandalism, graffiti and rubbish as are dissatisfied (54% vs 24%).
- three-quarters (78%) are definitely aware of Streetpride; 14% think they are aware
- two-thirds have seen the Road Safety Banners (64%). Amongst those who have seen them 87% believe their message was easy to read and 58% that the message was relevant. A half (49%) felt that it made them more aware of road safety. They do see the banners as useful and informative (84% amongst those who have seen them).

### 1.5 Fairtrade

- Two-thirds (66%) have heard about Fairtrade, and 83% support the Council's aim of achieving Fairtrade status for Rotherham. Whilst half (55%) currently buy Fairtrade products, 87% say they would buy if the price were similar to non Fairtrade goods, and 76% if the price were a little higher.

### 1.6 Gambling in Rotherham

- Of those who take part in any form of gambling, most visit betting shops and amusement arcades. Respondents are more positive towards betting shops and bingo halls than towards amusement arcades and casinos.

### 1.7 Health

- The majority (59%) do not know whether skin cancer is a problem in Rotherham, one quarter (27%) says that it is a problem and 13% that it is not
- however awareness of the dangers of the UK sun is nearly as high as for the sun overseas (76% and 83% respectively say exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer)
- respondents are less likely to take adequate protective measures for themselves than for children with the wearing of sunglasses and loose clothing the most mentioned protective measures for the respondent (71% and 66% respectively) and using SPF25+ and wearing loose clothing the most mentioned for children (85% and 72% respectively)
- most (74%) have not received advice on using sunbeds in the last 5 years, 21% have received such advice. 80% never use sunbeds, 10% use them rarely. Amongst those who do use sunbeds, 79% do so in a commercial salon.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Community Cohesion Delegated Powers</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> November, 2006</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Opportunity for All</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Office</b>

### **5. Summary**

This report summarises, *Opportunity for All*, the eighth annual report on progress on the 1999 government pledge to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The report highlights key areas of progress, but points to significant challenges ahead.

### **6. Recommendations**

**The Cabinet Member is asked to:**

- a) **Note the report**
- b) **Consider its implications for service and policy development and delivery.**



## 7. Proposals and Details

In October, the Government published *Opportunity for All* – its eighth annual report on poverty and social exclusion. The wide-ranging report sets out the Government's current strategy and performance against key goals: eradicating child poverty; ensuring full employment; ensuring that older people live secure, active and fulfilling lives; and targeting help to the areas facing the greatest problems.

**Eradicating Child Poverty** - In last year's annual report it became clear that, despite significant progress, the government had failed on its first milestones - to reduce the number of children in low income households by a quarter by 2004/5. The current report confirms the target was missed. In 2004/05 there were 2.7 million children in Britain (2.8 million in the UK) living at below 60% of the median income before housing costs. Since 1998/99 this represents a decrease of 600,000 children. Some 19% of children now live in poverty according to this measure. The Government has accepted that more needs to be done if its targets are to be achieved. The report highlights that persistent poverty has decreased. Between 1991-94 20% of children were in poverty for three out of four years on the before housing cost measure. By 2001-2004 this had dropped to 13%.

**In-work poverty** continues to be an issue despite the introduction of the working tax credit and the minimum wage (which was raised to £5.35 in October 2006), with roughly half of children in poverty living in households where at least one adult works, the majority of which are couple families. And while child poverty has fallen, in contrast, the number of working-age adults living in low income households has remained broadly constant between 1996/97 and 2004/05. This is acknowledged more openly in this year's report, and the Government states its determination to make work pay. Four other characteristics of households with children in poverty are identified: *large families, disability, ethnicity, and social housing*. For example, although children of non-white ethnicity make up 12% of the total child population, they make up 20% of all poor children.

Although the number of **children living in workless households** has dropped from 18.4% in 1997 to 15.3% in 2006, just over half of children in poverty live in households where no one works. Around two fifths of poor children live in lone parent families, the majority of whom are without work. The government's target, to get 70% of lone parents into work by 2010 would lift a further 200,000 children out of poverty but it remains an ambitious target. The number of lone parents in work rose very rapidly from 45.3% in 1997 to 53.3% in 2002 but has been rising more slowly since then to its current level in 2006 of 56.6%

There has been limited progress on the **educational attainment** of young people. There has been no increase in the percentage of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 tests for English (currently 79%) and a one percent rise in Mathematics (currently 76%). The target is 85% for both by 2006. Progress in the percentage of 16 year olds with at least 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C in England has improved this year by 2.6% (current 56.3%, target 60% by 2008) and there has been a 3% increase in the number of 19 year olds with at least a level 2 qualification in England. Progress is being made on the reducing the number of schools achieving

below 20% on the GCSE target. These were meant to be eliminated by 2005. Although there are still 42, the number has dropped from 361 in 1997.

Progress on **people aged 50+ and retired people** has been more positive, with improvements in housing, healthy life expectancy at 65 and social care with 11.5% of those over 65 now receiving intensive home care that enables them to live independently. Most significantly the percentage of pensioners living in low-income households continues to drop from 28% in the baseline year 1996/97 to 17% in 2004/5. Pensions remain a problem, with the percentage of working-age people contributing to a non state pension in Great Britain dropping by 1% to 43%, with only 39% of women contributing.

There is positive progress on reducing the number of **working age people** without a level 2 NVQ and in the frequent use of illicit drugs by 16 to 24 year olds (down 1.2% on two years ago and now at 10.1%). Many of the other indicators have remained constant over the last year.

**Three major areas of concern** emerge from the report.

- **Health inequalities:** with evidence of higher levels of smoking among lower socio-economic groups and no decline in children's smoking; with a slight widening in the gap in mortality rates between routine and manual groups and the overall population; and obesity rates are still well above the 1997 baseline. While girl's obesity is slightly down, boy's obesity has risen to 16.2% of boys aged 2 to 10. There is however a reduction in smoking among pregnant women which is welcome.
- **Teenage mothers who are not in education, employment or training.** This has gone up this year by 1.2% to 29.2% but teenage conception is down.
- **The education gap of looked after children** has risen and this issue was addressed in the recent Green Paper.

There is evidence that the **National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal** is making some progress in reducing gaps between the most deprived areas and overall averages in several key indicators. These include: employment (now down to 9% compared to 12.8% in 2000); housing; and the key stage 2 attainment gap. There have also been reductions in fuel poverty. However, health inequalities are widening.

Locally, RMBC is working with our partners to address many of the issues highlighted in *Opportunity for All*. For example, work is currently taking place on the **Social Inclusion Framework**. The Framework takes forward Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's work on social inclusion, and will shape future work in this area. The Framework uses evidence based local and national research to help shape priorities, which are aligned to the strategic themes in the Community Strategy and the communities of interest in the refreshed Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS).

It is clear that, while the Government has taken poverty and social exclusion seriously and made genuine progress in reducing disadvantage, much more will need to be done if the government is to deliver on its *Opportunity for All* agenda.

## **8. Finance**

There are no direct financial implications from the report. However, addressing the overarching issues of poverty and social inclusion will continue to require significant investment and commitment from RMBC.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Although the Council is supporting and promoting activities that encourage social inclusion, without clear strategic social inclusion objectives, priorities or mechanisms for measuring our progress, it will be difficult for the Council to ascertain whether it is maximising impact for all residents in the Borough.

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

A commitment to social inclusion underpins the Council's community leadership role. It also underpins the seven shared Priority Themes of the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan, and other key strategies, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

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

*Opportunity for All - eighth annual report 2006*, Department of Work & Pensions, October 2006

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