

CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

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

Date: Monday, 11 June 2007

Time: 11.30 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. Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Customer Services and Innovation held on 21st May, 2007 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 5)
To consider the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Customer Services and Innovation held on 21st May, 2007.
5. Disability Discrimination Act and Service Provision from Police Stations (report attached) (Pages 6 - 12)
To note the content of the report and agree that a member of the Directorate Management Team liaise with South Yorkshire Police Service.
6. RBT Performance Update (report attached) (Pages 13 - 20)
To consider the attached report of the Chief Executive, RBT
7. Minutes of the meeting of the Procurement Panel (herewith) (Pages 21 - 26)
To consider the minutes of the meeting of the Procurement Panel held on 14th May, 2007
8. Liaison with RBT
To consider any questions received from Elected Members
9. Registration Services - New Fees for Statutory and Non-Statutory Services (RBT to report)
10. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Monday 30th July, 2007 at 11.30 am

CUSTOMER SERVICES AND INNOVATION
21st May, 2007

Present:- Councillor Wyatt (in the Chair); Councillor Hodgkiss.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jackson.

94. COUNCILLOR BURKE

Members stood in silence for one minute following the recent death of Councillor Burke.

95. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH APRIL, 2007

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 16th April, 2007.

Resolved:- (a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April, 2007 be approved as a correct record.

(b) That a report on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Service Provision from Police Stations be submitted to the next meeting for deliberation.

96. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - YEAR END REPORT 2006-07

Consideration was given to the content of a report which set out the year end performance in respect of Corporate Health Best Value Performance Indicators monitored and reported on by the Chief Executive's Directorate and Local Performance Indicators owned by the Chief Executive's Directorate.

In addition the report included a year end update on the major risks in the former Corporate Services Directorate and actions being taken to mitigate those risks.

The report addressed the responsibilities of Cabinet Members to ensure that Directorates are managing business risks thoroughly and appropriately.

The report highlighted the situation in respect of :-

Status green star indicators:-

BVPI 12 Days/shifts lost to sickness

BVPI 16a % of Employees with a disability

BVPI 17a % of BME Employees

Status Blue Circle Indicators:-

BVPI 11a % of top 5% of earners that are women

BVPI 11c % of top 5% of earners with a disability

Status Red Triangle Indicators:-

BVPI 11b % of top 5% of earners from minority ethnic communities

BVPI 14 Early Retirements (excluding ill health)

BVPI 15 Ill Health Retirements

Awards, Accreditations & Achievements**Strategic Partnerships**

The PFI Schools project won “The Best Operational Education Project” at the Public Private Finance Awards 2006 in London in May 2006, was a finalist in the Municipal Journal Local Government Achievement Awards 2006 for “Public Private Partnerships Achievement of the Year” and won Contract Journal Awards for “PPP/PFI Award” in London in October 2006.

Strategic Human Resources

Strategic Human Resources was shortlisted as finalists in the June M. Awards under the category of Pay and Workforce Achievement of the Year. Strategic HR was also a runner up for a CIPD HR award.

The Investors in People refresh took place week commencing 13th June and re-accreditation was achieved.

Legal & Democratic Services

Law Society accredited Trainers have been trained and are now being developed/promoted further. The Legal Service has provided training for C&YPS and EDS during 2006/07.

Local Performance Indicators

Local performance indicators have been identified for all Services within the former Corporate Services Directorate and were shown at Appendix B to the report.

Strategic Partnerships

Of the 5 LPIs within this service area, 2 are shown as status green, 1 as

blue and 2 as red.

Strategic Human Resources

Of the 8 LPIs within this service area, 5 are shown as status green and 3 as red. It should be noted that all LPIs for Strategic Human Resources relate to Council wide targets.

The status red indicators were outlined along with the actions being taken to address/improve performance.

Particular reference was made to the risk registers and management issues relating thereto.

Resolved:- That the performance of these key corporate Best Value Performance Indicators, Local Performance Indicators, achievements of the Directorate and actions taken in respect of managing business risks be noted.

97. RBT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Chief Executive, RBT, submitted a report on the progress and performance of RBT for the period March, 2007, with a presentation by the Service Leader, Performance and Improvement, highlighting:-

- Revenues and Benefits Employee wins RMBC's "Young Person of the Year" Award
- Dinnington Customer Service Centre opening planned for 10th April 2007
- All Contact Centre SLAs met
- 100% performance on ICT SLAs
- Registrars training guides recognised as national 'Best Practice'
- All Council Tax and Housing Rent bills were successfully issued on time
- Renewal of the Rotherham Grid for Learning

In addition, reference was also made to :-

- Rotherham Connect
- IVR Progress
- Customer Services/Public Access
- HR and Payroll
- ICT
- Procurement
- Revenues and Benefits
- Progress against Corporate Initiatives
 - Consultation
 - Complaints

- Equalities
- Investors in People

Particular comments were made in respect of SLA's which were under achieving and action being taken to redress this, the need to improve the level of engagement with YPO and the action taken to progress work on IT and Information Strategy.

Resolved:- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.

(ii) That the Chairman be informed of when IVR is fully activated.

(iii) That Members appreciation be conveyed to staff for the good work being done.

98. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PROCUREMENT PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Procurement Panel held on 16th April, 2007.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

99. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING GROUP

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Communications and Marketing Group held on 12th April, 2007.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

100. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER PANELS, GROUPS, ETC.

Consideration was given to representation on the following groups listed below and the need to nominate representatives to those groups and bodies.

Resolved:- (1) That the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Customer Services and Innovation attend meetings of the Council's E Government Board.

(2) That Councillor Hodgkiss attend meetings of the Data Protection and Information Group.

(3) That Councillor Wyatt shall remain as Chair of the Fair Trade Group, and attend meetings, together with Councillor Hodgkiss.

(4) That Councillor Wyatt (Chair), Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services and Councillor Stonebridge, Chair, Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee attend the meetings of the Procurement Panel.

(5) That Councillors Wyatt and Hodgkiss attend meetings of the LGA Rural Commission.

(6) That Councillor Wyatt attend meetings of the Rotherham Environment Forum.

101. LIAISON WITH RBT

Members of the Council had asked questions about the following issues:-

(a) home visits to attend to Members ICT problems

This issue has now been resolved.

(b) links with Crowden Outdoor Centre by e-mail and the internet

Discussions were progressing on the best way forward to provide links to the Centre.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	a) Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods b) Cabinet Member for Customer Services
2.	Date:	a) 5 th February 2007 b) 12 th March 2007
3.	Title:	Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Service Provision from Police Stations
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report is a follow-up to the one received by Cabinet Member on 27th November 2006, which outlined Neighbourhoods position in relation to the DDA Service Plan target of ensuring “all customer service points are fully wheelchair accessible, with hearing loops, and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by March 2007”.

That report raised issues in relation to the services provided from the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Offices. Although the majority of the SNTs are based in local Police Stations, rather than Council owned buildings, the Council is nevertheless providing a service from those buildings and needs to ensure adequate access to those services. This report provides an outline of what this means for the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate and South Yorkshire Police.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet Member is asked to:

- **NOTE THE CONTENT OF THIS REPORT**
- **AGREE THAT A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM LIASE WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE SERVICE IN RELATION TO THE ISSUES ARISING FROM THE ACCESS OFFICER’S AUDIT (OUTLINED IN ANNEX 1).**

7. Proposals and Details

The DDA and service provision

The DDA does not just address the responsibility of employers, but also addresses issues for those bodies providing services to the public, including the Police Service. From October 2004, service providers should have made improvements to the physical features of their premises to ensure that it is not unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use the services provided there.

All of these duties are underpinned by the concept of reasonableness, so factors such as the scale of the problem that is making it difficult for disabled people and the resources of the service provider would be significant factors to consider when deciding what course of action should be taken.

Issues were raised about the services provided by the SNTs following the DDA progress report received by Cabinet Member on 27th November 2006. Although the majority of the SNTs are based in local Police Stations, rather than Council owned buildings, the Council is providing a service from those buildings and needs to ensure adequate access to those services. This report aims to outline the implications for the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate and South Yorkshire Police.

What does this mean for the police service?

In practice, for the Police Service, the implication is that they should be giving consideration to:

- Ensuring information available to the public is accessible for disabled people;
- Providing meeting venues with adequate accessibility for disabled people
- Ensuring methods of contacting the police can be used by disabled people, including those with a hearing impairment;
- Having seating in the waiting area;
- Communication aids like an induction loop at the reception and in interview rooms, and;
- Communication support. For example British sign language interpreters, should be considered when you have to interview disabled people who require this.

From October 2004 the physical changes that might be required should also have been given due consideration. This will mean looking at physical access to police stations for a range of disabled people, including wheelchair users, but also people that are hard of hearing, have a visual impairment or a learning disability. Some issues are obvious - like looking at the front entrance to see if there is a way of providing step free access with wider doors that are easy to open. However other issues should be considered like the signage, counter height and whether improvements could be made to lighting. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) would recommend that anyone considering improvements to physical access takes professional advice, and access auditors are usually best placed to provide this.

The DRC would emphasise that these duties apply only when an agency is providing services to members of the public or sections of the public - so the

court process itself for example would not be covered by this legislation and, at present, the duties would not apply in most situations where someone had been arrested.

SNT Offices

Although the majority of the SNTs are based in local Police Stations, the Council is providing a service from those buildings and needs to ensure adequate access to its services. In relation to service provision, **it is the service provider that is responsible for providing access to the service users not the landlord.** However, as South Yorkshire Police are themselves providing services from the offices shared by the SNTs, they have a duty to ensure reasonable access to the Police Stations in this instance.

The Police Stations, incorporating the SNT offices (Maltby, Rawmarsh, Wath, Main Street) would need to conform to the duties outlined above. Specifically, they would need to address the following basic criteria:

1. Is there car parking?
2. Is there level access from public transport?
3. Is there level or ramped access preferably with steps?
4. Is the reception accessible and with appropriate equipment e.g. Induction Loop?
5. Are the corridors wide enough?
6. Are any interview/meeting rooms accessible and with appropriate equipment?
7. Is information available in alternative formats?
8. Is contrast good between walls, floors etc?
9. Is appropriate seating available?
10. Are there accessible toilets available?
11. If any rooms are above ground level, is there an accessible lift provided?
12. Are there clear emergency routes with level access?
13. Are procedures in place for the above for employees and visitors?
14. Is there clear information and directional signage?
15. Are there reasonable alternatives should any of the above be a problem?

BVPI156, if the council uses that as its standard, does not consider points 2, 7, 8, 9, 11,12 and 13. It is important to note that discussions are taking place corporately regarding what standard should be used and the current position is that it will almost certainly be above BVPI 156. However, the timescale for this decision is, as yet, unclear.

8. Finance

There are no significant financial implications arising from this report. However, there would be significant financial implications should South Yorkshire Police request that the Council contribute to meeting the costs of any required works. It is therefore vital that the Directorate explores how South Yorkshire Police plan to address the required works and in what timeframe.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to address the DDA agenda within the context of SNT offices would almost certainly prevent the Directorates achievement of its service plan target of ensuring “all customer service points are fully wheelchair accessible, with hearing loops, and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by March 2007”. However, it is likely that this agenda will be high on the Police Service’s agenda as a provider of services from its various local police stations. It is vital that there is effective liaison with South Yorkshire Police, to establish their plans to address the physical features of their premises to ensure that it is not unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use the services provided there.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Recent inspections by the Audit Commission have consistently raised the issue of DDA compliance. Effectively addressing the DDA agenda relating to the services provided from the SNT offices will make a significant contribution towards the Service Plan Target, and place the directorate in a very strong position in relation to BVPI156 when compared to the council’s overall performance against this indicator.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

N/A

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SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICES AND BV156 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

These offices/locations presented a variety of problems and vary from excellent at Maltby to unbelievable at Dinnington. The issue here is about are they accessible to the public at all times: the ones in the police stations certainly, but the other ones were closed or only open at certain unadvertised times.

Maltby – Wentworth Valley Team

This office is in the new police station and does not fully meet even BV156 due to the location of one accessible toilet that does not allow sufficient turning room in front of the toilet and the lift has no voice indicator. The office also would not meet Part M 2004 as the ramp/path to the main entrance is extremely long with no resting places, no handrails and no signage from the accessible parking places. These spaces are not marked out correctly and have no signage and are too far from the main entrance. The internal doors are only 760 – 770mm and not 800mm as required in Part M, however, the meeting rooms are accessed by wheelchair users. The accessible toilets have no contrast and are white on white and the location of the upper toilet is virtually inaccessible to wheelchair users due to the turn required to access the door.

Dinnington – Rother Valley South

This was manned now and again apparently and it is in a really run down building that the public do not access. The office is moving to the new One Stop Shop.

Wharncliffe Place – Rotherham South

This is only manned either morning or afternoons and there is no signage to indicate when. The majority of contact is by telephone and if not direct is rerouted from the main police station. The office is accessible to wheelchair users via a ramp, however, the intercom needs to be lowered to 900mm and would then meet the basic BV156 standard for access. The problem here is signage for location and details of opening times.

Rawmarsh Police Station – Wentworth South

Once again access was difficult if we were members of the public. The facility does not fully meet BV156 as there was no Induction Loop fitted, no vision either side of internal doors and the accessible toilet required new handles, the flush handle lowered and the hand drier relocated.

Main Street – Rotherham North

Although not a requirement of BV156 the following have been raised:
An issue around car parking for disabled people as there is no parking in front of the building and no signage to indicate where any parking spaces are. A problem that was highlighted by a member of the public and confirmed during the visit was the ramp is out of sight if you approach from the town side and there is no signage to tell you it is there.

(The facilities meet BV156 for the public; however, the office for the Community police was slightly overcrowded and had a ratio of something like 1 cubic foot per person!).

Wath Police Station – Wentworth North Team

The position of this building makes it unlikely that any disabled person would visit as it is located on a very steep hill. There is one parking space for disabled motorists at the top of the hill. The signage for the location of the station and the parking is very poor. There is a ramp to the entrance but the layout of this and the steps are very interesting and do not meet any guidelines or standards.

Brinsworth Police Station – Rother Valley West

This is closed for refurbishment and a visit will be arranged on completion of the work.

**Minute No. 198 of Meeting of Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Monday 5th February 2007**

Further to Minute No. 154 of 27th November, 2006, the Access Officer submitted a report on issues that had been raised with regard to services provided from the Safer Neighbourhood Team offices.

Although the majority of the SNTs were based in local police stations, the Council was providing a service from the buildings and needed to ensure adequate access to those services. In relation to service provision, it was the service provider that was responsible for providing access to the service users not the landlord. However, as South Yorkshire Police was providing services from the offices shared by the SNTs, they had a duty to ensure reasonable access to the police stations in this instance. Accordingly, the stations would have to conform to the duties set out in the report.

It had since been ascertained that, under the South Yorkshire Police's Equality Scheme, all their buildings would be fully inclusive and accessible and to a higher standard than that of BVPI156.

It was noted that the Safer Neighbourhoods Team Manager had had no involvement in the report or the visits to Offices. Discussion took place on Annex 1 which set out all the Safer Neighbourhood Offices and how/if they met BVPI156. Particular reference was made to the office accommodation situation at Dinnington and how it fitted in with the Council's Customer Services Strategy and Accommodation Strategy.

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

(2) That the Safer Neighbourhoods Team Manager liaise with South Yorkshire Police in relation to the issues arising from the Access Officer's audit as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

(3) That further investigation take place of the office provision at Dinnington.

(4) That the report be referred to the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Innovation and attention drawn to the different customer access and protocols of the various agencies going into a One Stop Shop.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Sustainability & Innovation Cabinet
2.	Date	11 th June 2007
3.	Title:	RBT – Performance Update
4.	Programme Area:	RBT

5. Summary

The report presents the progress and performance of RBT for the period April 2007.

6. Recommendations

That the information in the report be noted

7. Proposals and Details

Highlights

Highlights for the period have included:

- RBT Annual Awards Evening
- Public Access programme identified as a significant priority workstream within the contract re-negotiation.
- Dinnington CSC opened 10th April 2007
- All Contact Centre SLAs met
- IVR developments for pilot in Streetpride
- Swinton Nationality Checking Service
- 100% performance on ICT SLAs
- BVPI8 97%

7.1. Service by Service Overview

7.1.1. Customer Services / Public Access

The revised SIP proposed for the Public Access programme has not been accepted by the RMBC Client. Concerns have been raised with regard to achievement and affordability and the Council has included the Public Access programme as a significant priority workstream within the contract re-negotiation. Areas which have been identified as critical to moving forward include:

- Overall programme affordability
- Development of self service electronic channels
- Suitability of the solution architecture
- Utilisation of the CRM system
- Integration between CRM and back office legacy systems
- Multi-skilling resources and flexible work force management
- Alternative methods of cash payment for citizens
- Inclusion of remaining Council services through the BPR methodology
- Development of joint services with third parties through Customer Service Centres

The Public Access Programme is now challenged with supporting the renegotiation team whilst managing current project activities, a review of the organisational structure, roles and responsibilities are being conducted along with prioritisation of existing projects. The client has requested the following BPR Change Management projects be put on hold:

- Neighbourhood adaptations
- License and Permissions

- Environmental Health
- Children and Young People

Meanwhile work continues in the following areas:

- BPR Change management Projects
- Adult Social Services
- Neighbourhoods – Initial presentations on the revised way of working have been conducted.
- Corporate Complaints
- E-Services for anonymous users
- Contact Centre and CRM Technology Project
- CRM Integration Projects

In relation to service performance the main focus remains on the delivery of the existing services and it is pleasing to report that the Contact Centre SLA's were achieved for the month. Achievement on the percentage of calls answered within 15 seconds and the percentage of calls not abandoned is primarily a result of an increase in staffing levels and a decrease in call volumes, the service continues to employ agency staff and use Customer Service Centre staff to fill vacancies which require RMBC backfill. The open advert remains on the intranet with little interest from prospective candidates.

The Contact Central system has had further intermittent problems in April and as a result it has been proposed that the decoupling of Contact Central from Siebel in order to improve system performance will take place mid June 2007.

The expansion of the Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) across Contact Centre services continues and as a result of a recent review it is proposed to amend the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) currently on the Revenues and Benefits line to include the option for customers to be transferred to the automated payment line. This option will be a positive move for council tax payers whom require just to make a payment and avoid them having to wait for a call operator to become available.

The Registrars Service continues to encounter major problems with the RON system and the GRO are working hard to find a solution. As a pilot site (along with other pilot sites) we are able to continue using RON with few problems. Most other authorities currently have to register manually and then back capture, which is causing major problems nationwide for staff and LAs. It is anticipated that after authorisation from the RON project board, LA's will have the option to revert to using RSS (the previous registration system) until RON becomes fit for purpose nationally.

Finally, Swinton CSC is now taking Nationality Checking Service appointments for the Home office. There were 31 applications for citizenship undertaken in April 2007 and on average 4 telephone calls from customers wishing to make an appointment or enquiring about the new service.

7.1.2. HR and Payroll

Within HR the service has been preparing over the last few months for the implementation of the annual implementation of the increments for staff in April. The work behind this event included prior consultation with managers to avoid the same issues as in previous years when staff were paid incorrectly as a result of incorrect base data. It is pleasing to report that this prior consultation with managers resulted in a successful process this year.

In relation to the Calls made to Customer Services helpline the Easter break saw a decrease in call volumes however, as a result they returned to exceptionally high levels over the last two weeks in April. Because of the high volume of calls and the callers are continuing to have difficulty getting through to the 4141/4242 help lines however, the introduction of Call Queuing now proposed to be in place for the 4th June 2007 will give the Customer Services Team the intelligence by way of statistics to make further improvements by aligning the resource available to peaks and trends.

Overall Payroll coped extremely well with the affects of Job Evaluation (JE) on the processing timetable during March but SLA performance was affected with 178 errors reported based on 25,055 payslips generated and as a result performance of 99.29% was recorded and the target of 99.50% missed. This was not unexpected given the extra work associated with checking whether someone has accepted JE or not and if they have applying the additional element breakdown required.

In addition performance of SLA HR 20 - The seeking of references within 48 hours SLA target of 95% was not achieved, The reason behind this underperformance related directly to eleven references been overlooked by a new employee who has subsequently had further training. There is no underlying problem with the process and this will not re-occur.

Finally the valued contribution of the Advice & Guidance Service to the Council has continued by contributing to areas such as Sickness Absence Management with the key priority for the Sickness Absence Team to help address the Council's performance in respect of Sickness Absence Management. The team work directly to support managers through a raft of proactive measures, and in liaison with colleagues in Strategic HR, the BV12 return has fallen year on year. The team was pleased to hear the confirmed outturn BV12 for 2006/7 has dropped from the previous year's level of 10.62 days to 9.62 days. This is a reduction to well below the year's target of 10.46 days and represents a Gershon saving of over £1M for the Council.

In recognition of the work done to support absence management, the team was awarded Team of the Year in the Performance category at this year's RBT Awards Night. In order to provide the opportunity for further improvement in this area the team have put forward proposals to introduce a second tier of sickness triggers which it is understood will now be taken forward.

7.1.3. ICT

Within ICT staff behind the scenes continue to maintain the ICT infrastructure and technology which deserves some recognition in terms of the continued reliability of our networks/communication and support. It is an area which in his day and age we take for granted however has become an essential item of our day to day working life.

In relation to the performance against the SLA's this service continues to maintain its 100% achievement with the majority of the new SLA targets now being fully measured and all targets continuing to be achieved. The availability measures are now measured across over 600 devices spread through the offices in the borough on a 24/7 basis. Work is still ongoing within the agreed timescales to monitor/baseline the remaining SLA's.

7.1.4. Procurement

The Procurement card pilot commenced during April with a test phase and a number of card transactions were required to generate data in order to test the interface with the bank. An interim control, statement reconciliation and GL posting process have been agreed with Finance and Audit for the duration of the pilot. Four cards have been passed over to EDS for the P-Card trial.

With regards to performance around the SLAs the PR01 target remains under review however, all other SLA measures are confirmed as above target.

It is pleasing to report that performance for BVPI8, payment of invoices within 30 days was 97% for April however, it is noted at this time of year it is normal for an increase in performance .

7.1.5. Revenues & Benefits

Within the Benefits service it is reported that the annual Housing Association rent increases were received and completed in April this was in line with the legislative guidelines. In addition April saw the service commence the work on claim reductions with the initial process to issue review forms to selected customers who have been identified as high risk for having changes in their circumstances, likely to affect their entitlement to benefits.

In relation to Council Tax and the performance of this area it is reported that recovery action has already started on council tax payers whom have failed to pay the first instalment and reminders have being issued. In comparison to last year there has been a 50% increase in the number of reminders being issued in April (6,107 (2007/08) to 4,162 (2006/07)) and a 37% increase in amounts outstanding. (£589k (2007/08) to £431k (2006/07)).

In relation to the month of April collection levels have slightly reduced in comparison with the same month last year. This reduction is down to the reduced amount of payments made in advance of the new financial year. Some customers on receipt of their new year's bills like to pay in advance and in some cases pay in full for the year.

In 2006/07 an amount of £832,380 was paid in advance of the year equating to 1.05% of the total net debit.

For 2007/08 these advance payments are £683,106 which against this year's net-debit is 0.83%

The difference is 0.22% which is slightly more than the difference in the two years collections at this period in the year. In percentage terms, this means that we have collected slightly more in April 2007, when excluding the advance payments.

Looking back at previous years figures for advance payments it shows that for 2007/08 we have dropped below 1% for the first time:-

2002/03	1.15%
2003/04	1.15%
2004/05	1.47%
2005/06	1.28%
2006/07	1.05%
2007/08	0.83%

The above figures indicate a downward trend since 2004/05, with less people paying in advance. This could be as a consequence of the more flexible payment options now available with more customers to pay on a monthly scheme rather than paying the full or half year in advance. However, the reduction in advanced payments may also be as a consequence of the level of the council tax which now prohibits customers from paying large sums in advance.

Finally, the number of direct debit payers has risen to 58,617, which using the Audit Commission calculation recommendations means that 63.94% of taxpayers pay by this method

7.2. Progress against Corporate Initiatives

7.2.1. Equalities & Diveresity

Mandatory roll-out of the Marshall's e-learning package is going well with the deadline for all staff to complete by the 1st June. The second RBT representative has begun the Equality and Diversity Training course and continues in June and July.

The Equalities Steering group is on target to complete the Level 4 portfolio in time for July's deadline.

7.2.2. Investors in People

The RBT interviewees have been selected for this year's Portfolio Review of the new standard. A group from Rotherham Connect and a number of representative employees have been contacted to arrange their appointments.

7.2.3. Consultation/Complaints

RBT have forwarded details of the on-going consultation activity (Employee Satisfaction survey, Client Customer Satisfaction surveys and Customer exit surveys) to the consultation team for possible inclusion in the annual consultation plan.

In June the ICT Print Customer Satisfaction base lining survey (internal to RMBC customers and those from 2010 Rotherham Ltd) will commence. This survey will be forwarded to a selection of customers electronically with others receiving a hardcopy format to gauge their views on the print service and the quality of service that they receive. This survey will take place over a 4 week period and upon it's conclusion the results will be evaluated and assessed to make sure that the survey has provided meaningful feedback that can be used as part of service improvement plans.

An action plan is currently being compiled by the Corporate Complaints Officer to help improve complaints performance across the Council as a whole, and will be included as part of the Annual Complaints report that will be submitted by Mark Evans, Customer Service Client Officer. A significant emphasis will be placed on improving response times to the Local Government Ombudsman following the provisional results declared by the Ombudsman's for 2006 - 07.

In addition the 4th June will see the launch of the new Corporate Comments, Compliments and Complaints system - an important milestone to the Council as this will mark the end of the individual systems currently utilised across the directorates. The management information from this system will also be a useful tool in identifying trends and any performance issues.

8. Finance

The contract with RBT includes a service-credit arrangement, the effect of which is that whenever any SLA target is not achieved, a calculation based on the amount by which the target was missed and a number of other factors,

results in a decrease in the amount of service charge payable. In other words, there is a financial penalty for RBT as a direct consequence of its underperformance. A total of £23K has been deducted from the service charge to date, and further amounts disputed by RBT are under discussion.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If RBT is unable to achieve the SLA targets in the contract, in particular where these are also BVPIs or other statutory PIs, alongside the importance of some of the services delivered by RBT (Revenues and Benefits, Procurement Service), this may impact on the council's CPA rating. There may also be a negative effect on the council's reputation and the perception of the RBT joint venture. Where there is underperformance, particularly where this is persistent or related to statutory PIs, the client team will work with RBT to develop action plans to redress the situation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The RBT contract exists to modernise council services to enable the delivery of the council's priorities. RBT's performance will impact on the CPA score and a number of service and corporate inspections. RBT has responsibility for delivering services including a number of BVPIs and LPI's

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None

Contact Names:

Paul Broadberry, Chief Executive, RBT, X2414, paul.broadberry@bt.com

Jill Dearing, Service Leader, Performance & Improvement X 3367,
Jill.dearing@rotherham.gov.uk

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Title	Procurement Panel
Date	Monday 14th May, 2007
Start time	11.00 am
Venue	Council Chamber, Rotherham Town Hall
Chair	Councillor Ken Wyatt

Attendees	Init	Programme Area
Ken Wyatt	KW	Councillor
Carol Adamson	CA	CEX
Simon Bradley	SB	RBT Procurement Manager
Abi Dakin	AD	RBT
David Finch	DF	Client Officer
Tim Gollins	TG	Supporting People Manager
Sandra Greatorex	SG	Voluntary Action Rotherham
Peter Hunter	PH	RiDO Investment Team
Sarah M ^c Call	SM	Client Officer
David Rhodes	DR	Environment & Development Services
Laura Townson	LT	Children & Young People's Services
Jeff Wharfe	JW	RiDO - Rotherham Partnership

Apologies	Init	Programme Area
Andrew Bedford	AB	Strategic Director of Finance
Bob Crosby	BC	Neighbourhood Services
Lesley Dabell	LD	Voluntary Action Rotherham
Jon SurrIDGE	JS	Environment & Development Services

Minutes		
Ref	Item or Action	Action Owner
32/07	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting of the Procurement Panel, held on Monday, 16th April, 2007, were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
33/07	Matters Arising	

	<p>Minute No. 25/07 (Demonstration of E-Tendering and Open Framework Agreements) was subject to a further meeting of the four Local Authorities next week. Liaison would take the Members' Secretariat with regard to the training of Members to use the system.</p> <p>With regard to Minute No. 26/07 (Recycled Content Paper), this would be form part of the Print Strategy, which was currently being developed.</p>	SB
34/07	<p>Barriers from the Voluntary and Community Sector</p> <p>The Procurement Panel received a presentation from Sandra Greatorex, Voluntary Action Rotherham, which provided information and drew specific attention to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to the Voluntary and Community Sector. • Benefits. • Working Together. <p>Panel Members asked:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How Voluntary Action Rotherham saw the issues moving forward and the potential for TUPE disputes. - Improvements to sustainability and environmental performance and the offer of a workshop to assist groups within the voluntary sector. - Improvements to tender documents and discussions as part of the RBT Annual Plan, a copy of which would be provided to Voluntary Action Rotherham once it had been signed off. <p>Agreed:- That Sandra be thanked for her presentation.</p>	SB
35/07	<p>Supporting People and the Corporate Procurement Strategy</p> <p>Tim Gollins, Supporting People Manager, introduced a report, which detailed actions within Supporting People, which supported the Corporate Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>Specific reference was made to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to re-procure current contracts. • Procurement programme. • Governance structure. • New services procured. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four themes of the Corporate Procurement Strategy. • Delivery of the programme on three key areas. • Supporting People Team. • Leadership, management and capacity. • Partnering, collaboration and supplier management. • Systems that allowed business to be done electronically. • Stimulating markets and achieving community benefits. • Release of efficiency savings. • Risks in driving forward cost savings through procurement. <p>Panel Members asked:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for the Supporting People Programme and the likelihood of this reducing. - Accreditation programme and whether equality standards were built in. - Spend and take up of services. - Involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sector. - Commissioning arrangements and priority processing. - Funding arrangements for the White Swan Project. - Opportunity to influence the delivery of the five year Strategy. - Sharing of information through a Members' Seminar. <p>Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.</p> <p>(2) That arrangements be made for a Members' Seminar on the Supporting People and Corporate Procurement Strategy.</p>	TG
36/07	<p>Environmental Standards for Contracts</p> <p>David Rhodes, Property Environmental Manager, introduced a report, which focused on improvements to environmental performance.</p> <p>Specific reference was made to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual improvement and encouragement of support to partner organisations, contractors and suppliers to 	

	<p>improve environmental performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting resource providing free advice and services. • Environmental performance questionnaire. • Procurement/contract criteria and the questions asked. • The guide to evaluating sustainable procurement responses. <p>Panel Members asked:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational commitment to improving environmental performance. - Questionnaire and basic questions organisations should be asked and whether this could be linked to pre-tender documentation. - Weighting in the tender process. - Awareness raising with external providers and local requirements. - External certificates of registration. - Equal standards and gaps for the voluntary and community sector. - Best practice of environmental management systems. - Obligations to use environmental management practices in the procurement stage. - Organisations who provide advice free of charge to help improve efficiencies and environmental performance. - Accreditation process and checking of submitted documentation. - Minimum standards required. - Practical use and fine tuning of the legislation. <p>Agreed:- (1) That the reports and information be noted.</p> <p>(2) That David Rhodes present to the next Procurement Managers' meeting on how to use and assess these clauses</p>	<p>DR</p>
<p>37/07</p>	<p>BVPI8 – Payment of invoices within 30 days</p>	

	<p>Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, introduced a report, which focused on BVPI 8, which measured performance of the payment of undisputed invoices within thirty days.</p> <p>Progress against actions to improve performance were noted.</p> <p>Simon Bradley advised that RBT still have three members of staff chasing late GRNs.</p> <p>Agreed:- That the performance of BVPI 8 be noted and the current course of rectifying action be approved.</p>	
38/07	<p>Action Plan Update</p> <p>Sarah McCall drew the Panel's attention to the actions which were either amber or red and provided an update on actions to resolve in respect of each one.</p> <p>Particular reference was made to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APR4.08 – Strengthening of the Council's arrangements for managing high risk. • APR1.09 – Skills Matrix. • APR1.13 – Update and review Procurement Strategy. • APR2.03 – Trading and charge powers. • APR4.02 – Corporate set of equality standards. • APR4.03 – Review of tendering processes. • APR4.04 – Policies that outline decisions. • APR4.05 – Training for staff. • APR4.06 - Engaging with the local market. <p>Agreed:- That the information be noted.</p>	
39/07	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Procurement Panel made reference to the sub-regional "Meet the Buyer" event organised by Sheffield Chamber of Commerce recently and took notice of the lower number of attendees than in previous years. Invitations to the voluntary and community sector appear to have been overlooked or little information had been provided to promote the event.</p> <p>It was suggested that more publicity be provided on events such as this in the future and that invitations be more widely distributed.</p> <p>Agreed:- That this future course of action be noted.</p>	

Next Meeting		
Date	Monday, 18 th June, 2007	
Time	11.00 a.m.	
Venue	Town Hall, Rotherham	

Dates of Future Meetings

The dates for future meetings of the Procurement Panel were agreed as follows:-

Monday, 16th July, 2007 starting at 11.00 am

All actions to be completed prior to the next meeting unless otherwise stated.