

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Thursday, 6 September
2007

Time: 4.00 p.m.

DRAFT AGENDA

THEME – EQUALITIES

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 and Communications
 - (1) To consider the nomination of a Member to the three Scrutiny Reviews:-
 - Corporate Complaints Review Working Group.
 - Review of Advice Centres.
 - Review of Area Assemblies.
 - (2) Timing of Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel meetings.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and the press.

For Monitoring:-

6. Equality Standard for Local Government - Achievement of Level 4 (report herewith) - Presentation by Carol Adamson of the Equalities and Diversity Unit (Pages 1 - 7)
7. Embedding Level 4 Equality Standard (information herewith) - Presentations from Children and Young People's Services and RBT (Pages 8 - 9)

Consideration will be given to:-

- What are your Directorate's main Equality and Diversity objectives and

targets?

- How is your Directorate embedding the additional strands of promoting age, religion and sexuality equality into equality work?
 - Provide an update on equality impact assessments and outcomes achieved.
 - Provide a summary of the outcomes of equality monitoring of service delivery you have carried out under the RMBC Equality Monitoring Policy and Guidance 2005.
 - What are your Directorate's plans for rolling out further equality and diversity training to employees?
8. Briefing on Our Shared Future Report and Rotherham Community Cohesion Action Plan Update (report herewith) - Presentation by Waheed Akhtar, Michael Clark and Carol Adamson of the Chief Executive's Directorate (Pages 10 - 16)
9. Women's Strategy Update (report herewith) - Presentation by Janet Spurling of the Equalities and Diversity Unit (Pages 17 - 21)

Minutes - For Information:-

10. Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 19th July, 2007. (Pages 22 - 26)
11. Minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 13th and 27th July, 2007. (Pages 27 - 43)
12. Minutes of a meeting of the Asylum Seekers Working Party held on 26th July, 2007 (herewith) (Pages 44 - 47)

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Thursday, 18 October 2007**

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor Whelbourn
Vice-Chairman – Councillor Austen
Councillors:-Cutts, Dodson, Foden, J. Hamilton, Johnston, Littleboy, Mannion,
Pickering and Sangster

Co-opted Members

Debbie Heath (Voluntary Action Rotherham)
Councillor A. Buckley (Parish Council Representative)
David Morton (Parish Council Representative)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCRUTINY

1	Meeting:	Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel
2	Date:	6 September 2007
3	Title:	Equality Standard for Local Government - Achievement of Level 4.
4	Directorate:	Chief Executive's Directorate

5. Summary

To inform the Panel that the Council has achieved Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) at 31 March 2007, and highlight areas for continued action to consolidate this achievement and meet the changing requirements of the ESLG and wider equalities and diversity legislation.

6. Recommendations

Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel:

1. Welcomes the achievement of the Equality Standard Level 4.
2. Notes the additional requirements placed on Local Authorities in relation to the implementation of the Revised Equality Standard for Local Government (Paragraph 7.3).
3. Notes the actions taken to achieve Level 4 and areas for development to facilitate progress to Level 5 of the Equality Standard (Paragraph 7.3 and appendices 1 and 2).

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background:

The Equality Standard for Local Government was developed as a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream disability, gender and race equality within Council policy and practice. The Equality Standard has been adopted by the Audit Commission as a Best Value performance indicator (BV2a).

The Equality Standard uses five levels to introduce a systematic approach to improving equality in all aspects of policy-making, service delivery and employment. Achievement of each level is based on the authority's own self-assessment. The levels can be summarised as:

Level 1	Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy
Level 2	Assessment and consultation
Level 3	Setting equality objectives and targets
Level 4	Information systems and monitoring against targets
Level 5	Achieving and reviewing outcomes

7.2 RMBC Position:

RMBC's claim for Equality Standard Level 3 was audited in summer 2006. External assessors reviewed our submission of evidence against Levels 1 to 3 and validated this by interviewing a selection of Councillors, managers, service delivery employees and representatives from local community and partner organisations (including Rotherham Partnership, Rotherham PCT, Diversity Forum and GROW). The auditors rated our progress highly and in recognition of this, RMBC was amongst the first five Local Authorities to be awarded the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) Equality Mark Certificate in February 2007.

Achievement of Equality Standard Level 4 was a Year Ahead commitment for 2006/2007. Achievement of this target was declared within the RMBC Annual Performance Plan for the BVPI 2a return, year ending 31 March 2007. This is based on the corporate self-assessments against the Equality Standard Levels 1- 4 criteria, compiled by officers within the Equality and Diversity Team, CXD, and departmental/service specific self-assessments which are continuing in all Directorates (including both strategic partners - RBT and 2010 Rotherham Ltd).

Directorates have made significant progress on the Equality Standard and we are confident that the Council has sufficient evidence to demonstrate achievement at level 4. (see appendix 1). However, there is still work to do to embed this level fully throughout all areas of the Council. Level 4 is a critical stage of the Equality Standard. It is the time when the monitoring of activities designed to improve equality within service delivery and employment, should begin to demonstrate an upward trend of improved outcomes. Therefore, Level 4 must be fully embedded to enable the Council to move to Level 5.

7.3 Future action:

New guidance published in 2007 on the Equality Standard for Local Government, requires that in order to maintain achievement at level 3 and above, all Councils must mainstream equality in relation to religion and belief; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and age by 2009. It was recommended within the RMBC Service Planning Guidance for 2007-2010, that Directorates begin to consider how to mainstream these equality strands within their service plans from April 2007, where they were not already doing so. Quality assurance of equality objectives within these service plans showed that

this process has begun. Further action on these equality strands is also part of the Equality and Diversity Unit, CXD, Team Plan.

The recommendations at appendix 2 set out the key areas where further action is required to fully embed Level 4 in order to make progress to Level 5. Action was agreed to address these issues at the Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group meeting on 21 March 2007 and at CMT on 21 May 2007. Since then, Directorate Equality Officers/Coordinators have been attending a series of workshops with the Equality and Diversity Team to plan progression to Level 5, including the requirement to respond to the new revised criteria and guidance on the Equality Standard. A further follow up meeting to plan and recommend specific improvement projects on these issues and on achieving Level 5 has been scheduled for 10 September 2007. Officers have also been in liaison with colleagues within neighbouring authorities, in particular Sheffield CC and Barnsley MBC, to benchmark RMBC performance and share best practice.

8. Finance

Equality requirements are integral to service plans and service delivery, therefore improvement action is mainstreamed within current arrangements for service and financial planning.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Commitment and leadership of equalities work is essential to maintaining progress to achieve Equality Standard Level 5. The structure and membership of the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group is currently being reviewed to ensure that the current rate of progress is maintained.

Work to build networks and capacity to involve and respond to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and faith communities is still at an early stage and this will need continued support from all Directorates as this work is developed.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The performance-led approach to mainstreaming equality that is promoted by the Equality Standard, aims to contribute to achieving sustainable social and economic improvements for Rotherham Borough; demonstrate in action Rotherham's vision for Fairness as set out in the Community Strategy and contribute to eliminating the inequalities identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

Equality and diversity, community cohesion, and community involvement remain central to the governments modernising agenda and form substantive parts of future policy and performance agendas as set out in Local Government Bill and the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The recommendations at appendix 2 were agreed as priorities for embedding the Equality Standard Level 4 at the Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group (CEDSG) meeting on 21 March 2007 and CMT meeting on 21 May 2007. A series of workshops are being held with Directorate Equality Officers/Coordinators and the Equality and Diversity Unit to continue to develop approaches to make progress on these issues.

New criteria and guidance on mainstreaming religion and belief; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; and age equality within the Equality Standard is set out in the Revised Equality Standard Guidance, 2006, I&DeA/Centre for Local Policy Studies.

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Implementing the Equality Standard for Local Government in RMBC

Timeline

- **January 2004** - Equality Standard introduced - Council at Level 0
- **December 2004** - Equality Standard Level 1 achieved.
- **June 2005** - Equality Standard Level 2 achieved.
- **December 2005** - Equality Standard Level 3 achieved.
- **October 2006** - External audit of Level 3 confirmed strong achievement
- **February 2007** - RMBC awarded I&DeA Equality Mark Certificate for Level 3
- **March 2007** - Equality Standard Level 4 achieved

Summary of action to achieve Level One

- Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, CMT and Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group (CEDSG) provide leadership.
- Equality Standard for Local Government adopted and Corporate Equality Strategy implemented.
- Managers in all Directorates engaged in a series of awareness raising events that included equality baseline assessment of their service.
- Member scrutiny established through the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.
- Equality officers/coordinators, Equality Champions and Equality and Diversity Steering Groups established in all Directorates.

Summary of action to achieve Level Two

- Launch of the refreshed Community Strategy - includes Fairness theme.
- Refreshed Race Equality Scheme 2 and action plan published.
- Corporate and service level consultation and community involvement with partner, voluntary and community sector organisations and communities of interest.
- Directorate Equality and Diversity Action Plans set equality objectives and targets under the four key areas of the Equality Standard. These are leadership, consultation, service delivery (including monitoring) and employment.
- 3-year schedule of equality impact assessments agreed
- Council-wide interpretation and translation service based in Adult services.
- Implementation of the new RMBC racist incident procedure supported by training for staff.

Summary of action to achieve Level Three

Leadership and Commitment:

- Rotherham Compact agreed by Rotherham Partnership includes codes of practice for working with the voluntary and community sector
- New strategies address inequality, for example, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Children and Young People's Single Plan and Well-being Strategy, Older People's Strategy.
- Service and Financial Planning Framework mainstreams fairness objectives in service plans.
- 46 out of 63 Councillors have completed equality and diversity training

Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny:

- New Consultation and Community Involvement Framework developed.
- New networks set up to improve consultation and community involvement with communities of interest. These are the BME Strategy Group, the Mosque Liaison Group, the Rotherham Inter-faith network and the Women's Strategy Group.
- All Member Scrutiny panels have co-opted members drawn from community and voluntary sector organisations.

Service Delivery and Customer Care:

- Detailed self assessments and evidence gathering against the Equality Standard criteria for Levels 3-4 completed by all departments/services, identify good equality practice and areas for development.
- Customer Access Strategy implemented - Customer Service Centres are located in areas of high population and high indices of multiple deprivation.
- Allocation of resources to make Council buildings accessible for disabled people.
- 3-year schedule of equality impact assessments implemented in all Directorates.
- The new Procurement Strategy action plan promotes equality at all stages of contracting.
- Continued improvements on reporting and handling racist incidents.
- Introduction of corporate equality monitoring guidance.
- Continuing progress on the review of the Council's interpretation and translation services.
- 100% of equalities and diversity BVPIs are median or top quartile.

Employment and Training

- Policies in place, e.g. Equal Opportunity in Employment, Bullying and Harassment, Guidelines for Making Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Employees, Employees Domestic Violence Policy, Religious Observance Policy, Work-life balance initiatives
- BME Worker Group, Disabled Workers Group, Women's Issues Network and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Worker Group provide a forum for workers.
- New pay and grading structure currently being implemented following job evaluation.
- Targets and positive action to address workforce under-representation e.g. Equip training placements for BME people, making recruitment and selection processes more accessible for learning disabled people, Investors in Education for young people.
- Equality and diversity training in all Programme Areas using a variety of methods such as e-learning, training courses, open learning and drama based training.
- CMT agreed a corporate equality training strategy and an external consultant commissioned to design equality training courses and train in-house trainers.

Summary of action to achieve Level Four

- Development of Rotherham Joint Disability Equality Scheme, Partnership Community Cohesion Action Plan, Rotherham Women's Strategy, BME Strategy for Rotherham and RMBC Gender Equality Scheme.
- Positive developments in equality and diversity are communicated widely through Council publications and other media.
- Community of interest research profiles published and disseminated to key stakeholders.
- Requirements for mainstreaming equality objectives within service planning and performance management strengthened for 2007-2010.
- Regular monitoring and scrutiny of progress on equality objectives carried out by Equality and Diversity Unit, CEDSG, CMT, Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- Implementation of equality monitoring and analysis of service user profiles, customer satisfaction and complaints by ethnicity, gender, disability and age in all Directorates.
- Results of the Quality of Life Survey 2007 have been analysed for BME, disabled, older and young residents and further research with these communities of interest is underway.
- Strengthened processes for promoting equality through procurement are being implemented.
- Detailed data relating to workforce representation is published by strategic HR.
- Workforce Planning Matrices in all Directorates identify actions for developing workforce representation and other employment equality issues such as work life balance.
- The impact of new pay and grading structures is monitored on an ongoing basis, including in relation to job role, salary scale, grade, gender, ethnicity, disability and age.
- 23 equality trainers across all Directorates and VCS trained to deliver in-house equality and diversity training to RMBC employees.

Priorities for Embedding Level 4

Directorates to:

1. Involve more employees in completing the Equality Standard self assessment templates for each department/service area, to raise awareness and understanding of building equality in service delivery.
2. Continue to monitor the implementation of equality impact assessment action plans and collect evidence of positive outcomes achieved.
3. Ensure that equality impact assessments are carried out during the development of all new policies, strategies and plans.
4. Collate service equality monitoring data, analyse it and report outcomes to Directorate Management Teams. (Analysis of service user profiles and customer satisfaction to be reported; broken down by ethnicity, gender, disabled people and age groups).
5. Publish annual summary reports of the outcomes of Directorate equality monitoring of services on the Council website. Circulate monitoring reports as appropriate to service user and scrutiny groups, where this is relevant and beneficial to the function and purpose of these groups.
6. Report the results of equality monitoring of complaints to the Corporate Complaints Group and Directorate Management Team. (This is being led by the Corporate Complaints Officer in conjunction with the Corporate Complaints Group.)
7. Roll out equality and diversity training as relevant to employee job roles, using the training packages designed by Abacus consultants.
8. Establish methods of raising awareness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender equality with employees.

Chief Executive's Directorate to:

9. Work with Community Planning Team in Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Services, to support communities of interest networks to become sustainable.
10. Set up a forum to involve service user and community representatives in scrutiny of the Council's progress on achieving its equality objectives. (This is being achieved through six monthly equality-themed joint scrutiny panel meetings, including co-opted members, led by Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel. The first meeting is 6 Sept 2007).
11. Develop plans with Directorate Equality Officers/Coordinators and Champions to achieve Equality Standard Level 5 by 2008, taking steps to ensure processes put in place to promote equality at Levels 1-4 achieve positive outcomes.
12. Continue action on HR equality issues, including equal pay, workforce representation, employment and training.

Information pack to support the Equalities Themed meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel 6th September.

What is the Equalities standard?

The Equalities Standard is a way for local authorities to ensure that there is no discrimination against disability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or age in Council policy and practice across 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

The Equality Standard uses five levels to help measure the improvement in equality in all aspects of policy-making, service delivery and employment. The levels can be summarised as:

Level 1	Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy
Level 2	Assessment and consultation
Level 3	Setting equality objectives and targets
Level 4	Information systems and monitoring against targets
Level 5	Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Progress against the levels of the Equality Standard is measured through self-assessment. We are required to produce documentation covering all departments to demonstrate achievement at each level claimed. Assessment is based on the whole authority, so the authority is only as good as the lowest performing department or service. External audit of the Council's self assessment is required at levels 3 and 5. Rotherham was externally approved to have achieved Level 3 in 2006 and declared Level 4 in March 2007. A key part of embedding this is to question our services on what they are doing

New guidance on the Equality Standard for Local Government requires that in order to maintain achievement at level 3 and above, all Councils must mainstream equality in relation to religion and belief; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and age by 2009. It was recommended that Directorates begin to consider how to mainstream these equality strands within their service plans from April 2007, where they were not already doing so.

Legal duties to promote equality

Race Equality Duty- Duty on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful race discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

Disability Equality Duty- Duty on all public bodies to promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people, eliminate unlawful disability discrimination, eliminate disability-related harassment, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, encourage participation by

disabled people in public life and take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Gender Equality Duty- Duty on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Sexual Orientation Regulations- Duty on all public bodies to protect against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (perceived or actual):

- in the provision of goods, facilities, services, education
- in the use and disposal of premises
- in the exercise of public duties

The Employment Equality Regulations 2003 protect employees from discrimination because of their actual or perceived **religion or belief**. Discrimination is unlawful in relation to:

- recruitment and selection
- terms and conditions of employment offered and or applied
- opportunities for training, training itself, job promotions and transfers
- harassment and victimisation
- dismissal, including redundancy
- post employment, for example provision of references

Age regulations- New legislation that gives individuals the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of age in the workplace. It is now illegal to discriminate against individuals on the basis of age in employment and vocational training.

What are Equality Impact Assessments?

An Equality Impact Assessment is judging whether or not policies, services and procedures are having an adverse impact on a particular group of people due to gender, race, disability, sexuality, age or religion or in the case of new or changing policies a potential adverse impact. In other words, is the policy or procedure being provided in a way that meets the needs of the customer and not in a discriminatory manner? The idea is to identify any unintended impacts or "institutional" barriers, acts or omissions that negatively affect individuals and communities because of factors of race, gender or disability.

The results of the Equality Impact Assessment are used to set equality objectives that become part of service plans, leading to improvements to services and employment practices. This should help the Council to improve the services by identifying where improvements are needed and taking appropriate action and help the Council to become a better employer by identifying the needs of its different groups of employees and making changes as appropriate.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO SCRUTINY

1.	Meeting:	Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	6 September 2007
3.	Title:	Our Shared Future - Report from the Commission on Integration & Cohesion
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive's Directorate

5. Summary

This report outlines the findings and recommendations from a report published by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion which makes clear that the impact of growing diversity is locally specific and therefore needs local solutions that address everyone in communities, regardless of their background.

6. Recommendations

The Panel is asked to:

- a) Note the report and the recommendations of the Commission.**

7. Proposals and Details

The Commission for Integration and Cohesion was announced by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 28 June 2006. The Commission is a fixed term advisory body set up to consider how local areas can make the most of the benefits derived by increasing diversity; but will also consider how they can respond to the tensions it can sometimes cause.

A report was published on the 14th June 2007 by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 'Our Shared Future', which makes clear that the impact of growing diversity is locally specific and therefore needs local solutions that address everyone in communities, regardless of their background. The Commission has adopted four key principles:

1. A sense of shared futures, that binds communities rather than divides them
2. A model of rights and responsibilities that creates a sense of citizenship and the obligations that go with membership of a community.
3. An emphasis on mutual respect and civility, on the basis that mutual respect is fundamental to integration and cohesion.
4. Visible social justice, prioritising transparency, fairness and trust in institutions.

Key elements of the report

An analysis of factors affecting integration and cohesion: to date, evidence of what drives integration and cohesion has been patchy. New data makes it possible to identify a number of issues, showing that factors affecting cohesion are complex and vary from place to place.

A new definition of cohesion and integration: Cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; integration is principally the process that ensures that new residents and existing residents adapt to one another (see appendix A for further details).

A typology of five family groups of areas that could potentially experience tensions or lower levels of community cohesion and integration and suggestions for possible approaches for promoting cohesion (see appendix B for more details).

Key Recommendations for Councils

The Commission makes some key recommendations of direct concern to councils and partners. These are outlined below:

- The need to map communities and identify any tensions and opportunities for promoting cohesion.
- Monitoring BVPI cohesion performance indicators and developing locally specific cohesion indicators. (Perception measures are particularly highlighted as important in tracking people's sense of well-being.)
- Mainstreaming issues of integration and cohesion into Sustainable Communities Strategies, LSP management and wider service delivery.

- Local authorities' workforce strategies should have clear action plans for achieving a representative workforce.
- Political parties consider again how they can ensure their candidates better reflect the diverse communities they serve.
- Enhancing the role of citizenship ceremonies, particularly to include all young people and a new programme of voluntary service for young people expressly linked to citizenship.
- Developing welcome packs for new migrants which might be linked with local contracts.
- Maintaining a communication plan to keep all communities abreast of changes and reasons for decision making, and myth-busting strategies to rebut myths and misinformation.
- Engaging local media to report responsibly based on facts in relation to migration and community relations issues and actively rebut myths in between and during election periods.
- Increased partnership working with voluntary, community and faith sector in promoting community cohesion and integration (including funding issues)
- Greater emphasis on working with young people and schools to promote cohesion; and also with women, faith communities and inter-generational work.
- Increased focus on promoting cohesion through housing, community development and regeneration policy.
- Review delivery of English language support and more flexible use of resources for language provision and translation.
- A wider role for employers in promoting cohesion and integration, e.g. through English language support, cultural training and supporting employee volunteering.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications in relation to the recently published report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

This report makes clear that no single factor determines cohesion. Most of the significant falls in perception of cohesion occur in communities experiencing a series of negative factors simultaneously, (for example a combination of deprivation; inequalities; such as in access to jobs and educational attainment; levels of diversity in an area; migration; crime and anti-social behaviour; and concerns about fair allocation of public services).

Improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues at the same time at a local level. It therefore needs to be about mainstreaming work (for example making sure physical regeneration schemes take account of the need to build social integration) and about targeted interventions (for example work to promote understanding between young men from different backgrounds). The findings and recommendations outlined in the report will be tested by practitioners and politicians.

A number of the recommendations from the report are already being addressed and applied within Rotherham through the Community Cohesion Partnership Group and Rotherham Community Cohesion Action Plan and through wider work on promoting equalities and reducing inequalities. Further work will take place to review the recommendations of this report to understand how we are addressing these issues locally and to identify and address any gaps

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Corporate Plan and Community Strategy (Proud Theme)

The proposed Local Government Bill contains a specific work stream on community cohesion.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

“Our Shared Future” (2007) Commission on Integration and Cohesion

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Proposed new definition of integration and cohesion

An integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

A new integration and cohesion typology

Chapter 4 and Annex B of the report introduce five family groups or types of areas, and one thematic group or type of area, that have been highlighted by analysis. These are used to suggest possible activities in each type of area that public agencies might want to prioritise or share ideas around.

Although being in a particular group may mean certain issues are important for a particular area, it is not suggested that others are irrelevant. The family groups have been developed as a descriptive way of linking themes of particular importance to areas experiencing particular challenges. The groups are listed in the table below; with examples of the sorts of areas included in these groups ('changing' or 'stable' in the list below relates to the level of immigration to these areas):

Group	Description / Examples	Possible focus of interventions
a) Changing less affluent rural areas	Typically areas experiencing complex patterns of immigration for the first time, with Eastern European migrants coming to work in agriculture or food processing.	Integration support for new migrants, promoting interaction between groups and communicating clearly how resources are allocated.
b) Stable less affluent urban areas with manufacturing decline	These are spread across the North and Midlands – this includes some where manufacturing was textiles – the classic cohesion example where longstanding White and Asian communities are living parallel lives. The majority of these areas do not fit this model and the primary issue will be deprivation.	Tackling deprivation and inequalities, promoting interaction between groups, communicating clearly how resources are allocated and building a shared sense of belonging.
c) Stable less affluent urban areas (without manufacturing decline)	These are spread across the country, but there is an interesting group in the South East, where house prices in these areas are comparatively lower, and are attracting newcomers. This is causing clashes with the existing community. Where the newcomers are from BME communities this conflict becomes racialised, and there may be growing support for the far right. The majority of these areas though, do not fit this model and the primary issue will be deprivation.	Communicating clearly how resources are allocated, calming tensions (perhaps by work with the local media) and targeted actions with specific parts of the community.

Group	Description / Examples	Possible focus of interventions
d) Changing less affluent urban areas	These are spread across the country – some are coastal towns, some are places reliant on manufacturing – they tend to be places with high demand for low skilled labour, resulting in increased numbers of migrant workers, so issues may relate to competition for jobs.	Getting new migrants settled, tackling deprivation and inequalities, promoting interaction between groups communicating clearly how resources are allocated, work with the VCS and building a shared sense of belonging.
e) Areas with tensions arising from a single issue	Towns or suburban areas which are not deprived, but in which there is a single issue such as terrorism arrests or a proposed centre for asylum seekers which is causing tensions.	Calming tensions, targeted actions with specific parts of the community and building bridges between community groups.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCRUTINY

1.	Meeting:	Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	6 September 2007
3.	Title:	Rotherham Women’s Strategy All wards
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive’s Directorate

5. Summary

This report provides an update for the Panel on the development of Rotherham Women’s Strategy and highlights the main priorities and key objectives that the strategy intends to address.

6. Recommendations

Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- 6.1 Note and endorse the contents of this report.**
- 6.2 Agree the areas listed under paragraph 7.3 as the key issues to be progressed within Rotherham Women’s Strategy.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Introduction

A multi-agency working group has been established to develop Rotherham Women's Strategy, including Elected Members, RMBC officers, representatives from voluntary and community sector organisations, statutory partners and Rotherham Chamber. The strategy has been informed by research that includes local and national statistics and through broad consultation with Rotherham women to be sure it reflects their priorities and concerns. The current draft is being reformatted to make it shorter and more sharply focussed and will be launched later this year once approved.

The first broad aim of the strategy is to ensure that the needs, priorities and aspirations of women are identified, acknowledged and addressed by all partners. The second is to make sure that women's achievements and contributions in all fields, traditional and non-traditional, are recognised and celebrated.

Rotherham Women's Strategy contributes towards meeting the Gender Equality Duty to eliminate sex discrimination and promote equality between women and men, which came into force from April 2007 as part of the Equality Act (2006). The gender duty is a positive, legal duty on public bodies to demonstrate that they treat women and men fairly with regard to policy making, public services and employment practices.

7.2 Rationale for the strategy

Popular misconceptions and stereotyping about women and women's roles in society still persist. For example a commonly held view is that women no longer experience disadvantage compared to men, but statistics show us that there are still many aspects of life where women experience inequality due to their gender. Although a lack of financial resources contributes to many women's disadvantage, women face social and physical barriers as well as economic ones. In addition women often face further discrimination due to age, civil/marital status, disability, ethnicity, faith or sexuality. Thus at the same time as considering gender these other factors need to be taken into account.

“Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault.” (EOC, 2006)

7.3 Priorities and key objectives

Clear priorities have emerged from consultation, which are summarised below, together with their links to the relevant Community Strategy theme. A broad list of the main objectives under each block is included in Appendix 1.

Summary of priorities:

- Barriers to participation in employment, learning opportunities and community life are removed, enabling women to fulfil their potential.
(Achieving, Learning and Proud)
- Rotherham becomes a place where women feel safe and are safe in all situations.
(Safe)
- All women have opportunities to take part in a range of inclusive events and activities – celebrating diversity, promoting community cohesion and achieving healthier lifestyles.
(Proud and Alive)
- Women’s achievements and contributions are promoted and celebrated - in employment; enterprise; sport; community and public life; and as parents and carers.
(Achieving and Proud)

The costs of access to leisure activities and learning opportunities, and of public transport and childcare, were viewed as a barrier by women. This reflects the research findings on gender differences in income and the profile of women’s economic activity in Rotherham. Another serious barrier for many women is a lack of confidence which prevents them from engaging in new activities and taking opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The strategy has focused on developing actions to deliver these priorities, supported by several broad underpinning actions to facilitate a more “gender aware” approach to service planning and delivery overall. The group has looked to integrate the fairness and sustainable development cross-cutting themes thoroughly in the actions and objectives for the other themes.

8. Finance

Some actions build on existing work and are likely to require more officer time rather than extra financial resources - such as strengthening equality impact assessments and collecting better data disaggregated by gender to inform future work and ensure women’s needs are met.

Other actions, for example, addressing women’s concerns with regard to transport, access and safety, will have financial implications, but can be incorporated into planned work, such as programmes for refurbishment or design specifications.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

As stated in 7.1 failure to consider the needs and priorities of women means RMBC will not be in compliance with the Gender Equality Duty.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Women's Strategy reflects and contributes to the seven priority vision themes as set out in the Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

A Profile of Women in Rotherham (April 2006)

Equal Opportunities Commission

- Facts about Women & Men in Great Britain 2006
- Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice - England and Wales (November 2006)
- Working Paper Series No. 34 Promoting gender equality in transport 2005
- Sex and Power: who runs Britain? 2007
- Survey of women at work (2005)

OCSI - Study of Deprivation in Rotherham (October 2005)

Research into the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Rotherham – January 2004

Rotherham MBC "Improving your library services" Resident survey 2005/6

Widespread consultation has already been undertaken during the development of the strategy and consultation with partners will follow approval of the draft strategy within RMBC.

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Appendix 1

Priorities and Key Objectives

Barriers to participation in employment, learning opportunities and community life are removed, enabling women to fulfil their potential.

- Increase women's employment options, employment rate and average earnings
- Increase the numbers of women with new start businesses or undertaking start up training
- Support the development and sustainability of quality, affordable, accessible early years and childcare
- Widen participation through providing learning opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of all women and by promoting learning for all young and adult women
- Increase women's confidence to engage in opportunities and build self esteem and confidence building into learning opportunities
- Increase the representation of women in local democracy

Rotherham becomes a place where women feel safe and are safe in all situations.

- Build women's safety into service development and provision
- Improve women's confidence in their own safety
- Increase women's access to safe and effective public transport
- Make Rotherham a vibrant, successful and safe town centre with good quality family friendly facilities

All women have opportunities to take part in a range of inclusive events and activities – celebrating diversity, promoting community cohesion and achieving healthier lifestyles.

- Improve access to, and information about, services and activities for all women
- Provide a range of sport, leisure and cultural activities to meet the needs of all women
- Promote women's mental health and well being
- Support delivery of key actions for women in Rotherham's Joint Public Health Strategy

Women's achievements and contributions are promoted and celebrated - in employment; enterprise; sport; community and public life; and as parents and carers.

- Recognise and celebrate women's achievements and contributions to life in Rotherham
- Encourage and support women to be active in community life and local decision-making

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 19th July, 2007

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Dodson, Littleboy and Sangster.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cutts, Foden, J. Hamilton, Johnston, Mannion, Pickering and Councillor A. Buckley.

Also in attendance:- Councillor Hussain, Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest to report.

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

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

13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Angela Smith, Neighbourhood Strategy Manager, presented a report which provided members with an update on the Rotherham Community Development Strategy 2007 which was a year ahead commitment in the Corporate Plan 2006/7. The aim of the Community Development Strategy was to ensure that the Council and its Partners delivered services which were responsive to and tailor made to the needs and aspirations of our Customers. It sought to ensure that services extended choice and control, giving individuals and community groups a real say over services and strengthen the role citizens and communities played in shaping the places they lived.

The principal risk associated with the development and implementation of the Community Development Strategy, was the potential lack of ownership and commitment from all key delivery partners and the engagement of voluntary and community groups. Consequently the implementation of the Community Development Strategy would require effective co-ordination, co-operation and monitoring across a number of statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and community organisations. The objectives of the Strategy were more likely to be achieved, and the results longer lasting, if there was strong inter-agency working at the local level.

A commitment to working in partnership to improve the quality and integration of a community development approach, which was in line with community needs and aspirations, was, therefore, fundamental to the success of this Strategy and Action Plan. The success of the strategy would be measured through the delivery of the Action Plan, which

contained clear milestones, task managers and lines of accountability. It would be the role of the Community Involvement Manager to oversee the delivery of the Community Development Strategy with the seven Area Partnership Managers being responsible for its delivery at a local level and would form part of the overall Performance Management Framework for the Area Assemblies.

It was noted that all partners had considered the following five key objectives:-

- To develop the skills of key individuals in agencies and communities to enable better joint working and mutual understanding.
- To develop vibrant communities through increased local activity giving people more of a say in the development and delivery of local services in their own community.
- To create well organised and governed communities through the provision of effective capacity building through partnership working.
- To ensure that services were responsive and inclusive to the needs of our communities.
- To build cohesive communities that recognised diversity and were inclusive and accessible.

The report contained a detailed action plan of how the above aims would be achieved.

A question/answer session ensued and the following issues were raised by the Scrutiny Panel:-

- The need to include Parish Councils as key partners.
- The need to review the financial implications.
- Ways of communicating with minority groups.
- Developing activity with the partners.
- Future of Community Assets and Buildings.

Resolved:- (1) That the Strategy and Action Plan be supported.

(2) That the review of Community Buildings being undertaken by Asset Management include seeking the views of all Members of the Council, Parish Councils and service users including those shown in the Green Spaces Audit.

14. BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 3RD MAY, 2007

Tim Mumford, Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services, and John Walker, Chief Elections and Electoral Registration Officer,

outlined the matters set out in the report circulated which gave feedback from the elections held on 3rd May, 2007.

The key issues discussed by the Scrutiny Panel related to the following:-

- Personal identifiers and postal ballots.
- Nominations and briefings.
- Postal ballot opening and personal identifier verification process.
- Polling day activity.
- Counting of votes.
- Parish Council elections.

The successful administration of these elections was welcomed and support was given to the various actions being taken to increase turnout, including the increased use of postal voting.

Resolved:- (1) That the matters reported be noted.

(2) That the Elections Team be thanked for their hard work in managing the changing electoral processes.

(3) That a report on the procedures for the next elections be submitted to this Panel prior to the elections taking place.

15. AREA PLANS PROGRESS UPDATE

Michelle Musgrave, Director of Neighbourhood Development, outlined the matters set out in the report circulated which provided Members with an update on the progress of each of the seven Area Assembly Area Plans.

The report included detailed progress reports for each of the seven areas, together with a route map for how community plans were fed into the Council and its partners decision making structures. The community strategy themes were linked to the Council's five priorities of Safe, Alive, Learning, Achieving and Proud.

The Panel welcomed the development of these Plans and the progress being made in each Area Assembly. The Panel noted that several scrutiny reviews had been taken into account in developing these Plans, an example being off road motorcycling nuisance.

Resolved:- (1) That the good progress being made be welcomed.

(2) That the promotion of working together between residents, partners and the Council be encouraged.

(3) That a more targeted communications process be developed to incorporate all relevant groups and members of the community.

(4) That an update on the Neighbourhood Charter's development be

submitted to this Panel in six months' time.

16. UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL STATUS TARGET

Paul Griffiths, Community Leadership Manager, gave a comprehensive report on the present position relating to each Parish Council in respect of Quality Parish Council status.

The Panel reviewed the position with the various Parish Councillors, together with the action being taken by a number of Parish Councils to gain this status.

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

(2) That an update be submitted to this Panel in six months' time.

17. MAKING ASSETS WORK - THE QUIRK REVIEW

Angela Smith, Neighbourhood Strategy Manager, outlined the matters set out in the report circulated which provided a short briefing on the main findings arising from the Barry Quirk Review on community management and ownership of public assets following Sir Michael Lyons (2004) findings that there was a relationship between active community involvement and economic development. Translated through into the Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities, the White Paper promised increased opportunities for communities to manage and own local public buildings and land.

Supported by Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, the Quirk Review had reported that transferring public assets to communities not only led to more responsive services that met local people's priorities, but could also create more confident empowered communities with greater civic spirit.

The Panel noted that this was not a legislative requirement at the present time, but it was clearly an intention to achieve better use of assets. Reference was made to a review taking place of Community Buildings by the Asset Management Team.

Resolved:- (1) That the early implications for the Council arising from the main findings of the Quirk Review of Community Management and Ownership of Public Assets be noted.

(2) That the establishment of a cross directorate working group to consider identification of public assets that were likely to be affected by the recommendations of the Quirk Review be supported.

(3) That the review of Community Buildings being undertaken by Asset Management include seeking the views of all Members of the Council, Parish Councils and service users including those shown in the Green

Spaces Audit. Where a decision was being taken on particular community buildings the Ward Members of that area must be involved in the process from the beginning.

18. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 7TH JUNE, 2007

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June, 2007 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

19. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH AND 29TH JUNE, 2007

The Scrutiny Panel noted the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 8th and 29th June, 2007.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
Friday, 13th July, 2007

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Austen, Boyes, Burton, Clarke, Doyle, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Whelbourn.

Also in attendance was Councillor Wardle (Chair of the Audit Committee)

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

30. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLANS

Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, presented the submitted report indicating that the Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy was based around the following four key visions of the National Procurement Strategy :

- Vision for leadership, management and capacity
- Vision for partnering, collaboration and supplier management
- Vision for systems that allow business to be done electronically
- Vision for stimulating markets and achieving community benefits

Implementation of the Strategy was via the four action plans corresponding to the visions and the report provided an update on progress against those action plans. The full action plans were submitted as an appendix to the report.

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

- risks to the Authority of actions that were either amber status or on hold
- timescales associated with the actions
- risk of fraud
- developing a policy on the Council's use of Trading and Charging powers and duties for local authorities in the 2003 Local Government Act
- reviewing tendering processes to ensure elimination of barriers to completion, consultation strategy and involvement of RiDO

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- framework to ensure this Committee has the opportunity to challenge decisions at appropriate stages of the procurement process
- need to consider possible requirement for further training/orientation for Members around procurement

Resolved:- (1) That the actions to implement the Procurement Strategy be noted and ongoing actions be approved.

(2) That consideration be given to the involvement of RiDO in developing the Strategy and action on Procurement particularly with regard to reaching Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and small and medium enterprises.

(3) That the Members' Training and Development Panel be requested to consider the potential need for further training/orientation for Members around Procurement.

(4) That a progress report be submitted in September, 2007, such report to include timescales for actions.

31. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF 'REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE'

The Committee considered the submitted report relating to the above review which had been undertaken by the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel, chaired by Councillor Doyle.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were covered :

- opportunities for creative thinking
- how different communities look after older people
- need for direction and responsibility to be identified in the report
- direction towards working with voluntary services/partners
- input of older people's champion
- best practice
- Older People's Strategy

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

(2) That, prior to submission to Cabinet, the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel be requested to update the report bearing in mind best practice elsewhere and with reference to the Older People's Strategy and the Older People's Champion.

32. BEST VALUE GENERAL RESIDENTS SURVEY

Miles Crompton, Research Co-ordinator, presented the submitted report which indicated the results and key findings from the 2006 Best Value General Residents Survey for Rotherham and outlined steps to disseminate these. It was a statutory requirement on all local authorities to undertake such a survey. The survey was conducted in Autumn 2006 by MORI and measured quality of life, access to, and general satisfaction with, the customer facing services provided by the Council and other partners.

The report drew specific attention to :-

- Background
- Main Findings
- Key Issues for Consideration
- Weighting Issues
- Dissemination and Further Analysis

The budget for the BVPI survey was held by the Policy and Partnerships area within the Chief Executive's Directorate. The tendering process and development of the survey was undertaken together with other Directorates.

The findings of the survey needed to be disseminated effectively to inform policy development, priorities and service improvement for the Council and its partners. The success would depend on ensuring that the findings were being properly considered and used to inform priorities and service improvement.

There was a risk with the 2006 BVPI survey in that the results would not be directly comparable to previous BVPI and Quality of Life surveys data. The Audit Commission had introduced some changes to the wording and changes to the methodology that could have an adverse effect on the reliability of the results. This survey, like all surveys, however reliable, could only provide a snapshot at a particular point in time and was based on a sample (only one per cent of Rotherham adults took part). Care, therefore, needed to be taken with the findings.

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

- random sampling
- inclusion of socio-economic groups in sample
- weighting of the sample
- need for short sharp message rather than reams of statistics

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- inclusion of leisure facilities provision
- sources of information on which people form views
- concerns regarding the Advertiser's approach to the Council and potential withdrawal of any advertising income provided by the Council
- need for a shared cost exercise to inform the public of issues, considering other forms of media information
- need for further work in respect of Wentworth North and Rotherham South
- complaints procedure

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

(2) That the concerns and views now discussed be pursued.

(3) That Cabinet and the Chief Executive be requested to consider how priorities in this document reflect on the Year Ahead Statement and Corporate Plan.

33. BVPI 8 - PAYMENT OF INVOICES WITHIN THIRTY DAYS

Further to Minute No. 185 of the meeting of this Committee held on 23rd March, 2007, Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, presented the submitted quarterly progress report relating to the above.

The report indicated the revised annual targets for performance of BVPI 8 as agreed with RBT. Following a drop in performance against this indicator in May, 2006, a series of measures were put in place and the situation improved steadily. The final outturn figure for the year was 91% against a target of 95.90%.

Performance against BVPI 8 was not as consistent as it should be and work was ongoing to instil and embed good practice in this area of work.

Recent performance achieved as follows :

April	-	97%
May	-	95%
June	-	91%

It was noted that performance in June was affected adversely by the recent flooding as disruptions resulted in missed payment runs.

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

- realistic targets
- cost implications of work required/training etc.
- action in respect of persistent underperformance
- IT issues

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and the current course of rectifying action be supported.

(2) That consideration of the need for a scrutiny review be given on receipt of the next progress report in October, 2007. The report to include savings over the last few years.

(3) That Cabinet be requested to consider that, where there is persistent underperformance within a programme area, that programme area be required to make up the resultant shortfall in savings from within existing budgets.

34. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th June, 2007, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

35. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS REVIEW

Resolved:- That consideration of this matter be deferred until the next meeting.

36. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows :-

(a) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the last Panel Meeting had considered :

- Readiness for the Children's Trust Arrangements
- Integrated Services for Children and Young People's Services

(b) Councillor Doyle highlighted the unviable workload for his Panel for the month of July.

General concern was expressed, and particular attention focussed, on health scrutiny and the Authority being 'inundated with documentation that was detracting from the scrutinising job in hand.

Reference was made to :

- potential additional resource issues

- raising with M.Ps., the local PCT and the Strategic Health Authority concerns regarding the amount of work being generated on a monthly basis, together with the poor quality of documentation

Resolved:- (1) That Cabinet be made aware of this Committee's concerns and the potential additional resource implications.

(2) That this Committee's concerns regarding the amount of work generated by health scrutiny and poor quality documentation be raised with local M.Ps, the PCT and the Strategic Health Authority.

(c) Councillor Akhtar reported -

- the review of Highways was complete and would probably be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee
- the scoping meeting for the review of the community use of buildings was scheduled for 19th July, 2007
- there had been a short report to the last Panel meeting on the 'flooding' situation

(d) Councillor McNeely reported :

- the presentation on the Rural Strategy was to be strengthened
- the need for further work in respect of dealing with void properties
- there had been a verbal report to the last Panel Meeting on the 'flooding' situation
- the September Panel Meeting would consider the 'smoke-free' position

(e) Councillor Whelbourn reported ongoing work in respect of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

(f) Councillor Stonebridge reported :

- work was ongoing regarding the review of the use of consultants
- a joint meeting with representatives of Area Assembly Chairs regarding community calls for action had taken place and a further meeting had been scheduled

(g) Cath Saltis reported that the scrutiny review of Water Fluoridation was to be considered at the next meeting of Cabinet on 18th July, 2007.

37. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following items to keep Members informed and avoid any unnecessary delay in processing the matters referred to)

38. LABGI FUNDING

The Chairman referred to discussions at the Regeneration and Asset Board regarding the utilisation of a small element of the above which was earmarked for rural business units.

Resolved:- That the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel be requested to look into this matter.

39. FLOOD UPDATE

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, referred to the emergency response to the recent floods and to the public meetings that had taken place at Catcliffe and Whiston on 11th and 12th July, 2007 respectively. It was noted that a further public meeting was to be held in Dinnington tonight.

The Committee, whilst discussing generally the recent events, concentrated on the way forward in respect of Scrutiny's role and involvement following the immediate aftermath.

Resolved:- (1) That the report on the floods in 2000 be forwarded to Members of this Committee.

(2) That this Committee consider the report from the Emergency Planning Team on the recent floods.

(3) That this Committee analyse the reports referred to in (1) and (2) above and identify critical issues.

(4) That this Committee consider the emergency planning arrangements and links with local areas/local knowledge with a view to having more integrated robust emergency arrangements.

(5) That this Committee considers it important to :

(a) learn from what has happened

(b) consider the requirements of victims of the floods

(c) consider the Government response

(d) consider the response of the Environment Agency to the floods in 2000.

(6) That this Committee consider the need for scrutiny reviews on major structural issues e.g. building on flood plains.

(7) That, in the meantime, information be sought in respect of work done elsewhere regarding building on flood plains.

(8) That this Committee considers that the following issues should be raised at the meeting with M.Ps. :

- building on flood plains
- financing issues of the floods and the need to review the Belwyn scheme of compensation
- local business monies

(9) That appropriate officer support should be provided for Members at area assembly meetings.

(10) That this Committee places on record its thanks and appreciation with regard to the tireless efforts of everyone involved in the recovery operation

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
Friday, 27th July, 2007

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Austen, Clarke, Doyle, Jack, McNeely and Wardle.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyes, Burton, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Whelbourn.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Akhtar declared his personal interest in Minute No. 42 of this meeting (RBT Performance Update), as he is a Member of the RBT Board.

41. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

42. RBT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee welcomed staff from RBT Connect Limited: Paul Broadberry (Chief Executive), Jill Dearing (Performance and Improvement Manager) and Paul Briddock (Head of Information Systems).

Mr. Broadberry and his colleagues presented a report detailing the progress, performance and achievements of RBT for the period 1st January to 31st May, 2007.

The presentation and subsequent discussion included the following salient issues:-

- Staffing and recruitment issues in the Contact Centre, including shift patterns and altering levels of staff at different times to cater for the varying levels of calls received;
- Quality of service provided and ensuring that adequate time would be spent on a call, according to the needs of a customer;
- Action taken to reduce the level of abandonment of calls (ie: caller hangs up the telephone if the call is not answered promptly);
- Data protection and time implications of RBT staff calling back the customers later on;
- The importance for the Council's overall budget of achieving the Council Tax collection performance targets;
- Councillors' surgery reporting system;
- ICT provision and support for Elected Members;
- ICT systems and back-up systems for emergency planning;
- The importance of ICT for business continuity in the event of emergency situations occurring;
- Implications of the imminent review of the Council's ICT strategy.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and presentation be received and the contents noted.

(2) That it is the opinion of this Committee that the Council must, as a matter of urgency and in the light of the ICT strategy, review the ICT practices, systems and levels of support for Elected Members.

(3) That this Committee welcomes the involvement of BT and RBT in business continuity planning in the event of disasters and emergencies.

(Councillor Akhtar declared his personal interest in the above item, because he is a Member of the RBT Board)

43. PROCUREMENT LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Consideration was given to a report presented by the RBT Client Manager concerning the Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy, which contains an action to develop a set of local indicators in order to measure the Council's procurement function in terms of delivery of the Procurement Strategy and day-to-day management of the procurement function. The report contained details of the indicators developed to date, proposed targets and the first quarter's reported performance.

The Committee learned that Rotherham's Corporate Procurement Strategy was developed in line with the National Procurement Strategy and as such many of the actions contained within this Council's Strategy fall from the National Strategy. The suite of indicators developed reflect key issues within the Strategy, as detailed below.

Performance against the Local Performance Indicators will be reported to the Procurement Panel on a quarterly basis; performance against procurement savings will continue to be monitored on a monthly basis at Procurement Champions' meetings.

Of the fourteen indicators, (details of which were appended to the report):-

- * five are status green, with performance on or above target
- * three are being baselined
- * two have a nil return
- * one will commence after September 2007

Work is currently ongoing to further develop two indicators:-

- increase percentage spend with voluntary and community sector organisations;
- percentage of contracts to be let with whole life costings being considered at tender stage.

Work is currently being undertaken with Recycled Action Yorkshire on how best to report and record against:-

- ten per cent of value of materials in a new build development above 1,000 square metres to be from sustainable sources, e.g. renewable, recyclable, eco-friendly.

Resolved:- (1) That the local performance indicators developed to date be supported and the current performance be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, to be held on 19th October, 2007, providing (i) an update of the local performance indicators and their targets; (ii) the setting of targets; and (iii) an update of performance against targets.

44. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS 2006/07

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Customer Services Client Manager containing details of the complaints received and handled during 2006-07, and outlining the approach to be taken to improve the management of complaints across the Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

The annual corporate report for complaints for 2006-07 has been produced for the last time using the data provided by all Directorate Complaints Officers from their different recording systems. A summary of the key points from the analysis was contained in the report, with full details of the performance achieved by Directorate over the year included as the appendix. Additionally, the lessons learnt from complaints closed within the period were also appended to the report.

Future reports on complaints will be derived from the new corporate system that went live at the beginning of June, 2007 and which is integrated with the Council's Siebel Customer Records Management system. This will make it easier to performance manage complaints across the Council. Further work is being considered to link the corporate system with Surgery Connect to provide a holistic view of a customer's interaction with the Council. This will become more and more important as the Council becomes reliant on the richness of its customer insight information in shaping services in the future.

As a consequence of the recent publication of the Local Government Ombudsman's provisional year end statistics for Rotherham, a performance clinic has been held to help to identify what actions are needed to address the continuing under achievement in being able to meet the Ombudsman's target to respond to their first enquiry letters.

During consideration of this issue, Members discussed:-

- the definition of a complaint;

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- the need to improve performance in responding to the first enquiry about complaints, from the Local Government Ombudsman, within 28 calendar days;
- staffing resources within directorates and expertise in dealing with complaints to the Council;
- informing Ward Councillors of the outcome of complaints affecting their Wards;
- the suggested scrutiny review of the corporate complaints process.

Resolved:- (1) That this Committee notes the contents of the report submitted and the statistics on Complaints Management for 2006–07.

(2) That this Committee notes the action plan, contained at Appendix C of the report submitted, in particular the proposed joint Member and Officer review of the complaints process and procedures that is to be undertaken (Minute No. 45 below refers).

(3) That future monitoring reports about complaints made to the Council be submitted to this Committee at quarterly intervals.

45. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS REVIEW

Resolved:- (1) That, further to Minute No. 44 above, a review group be established to undertake the scrutiny review of the Council's corporate complaints procedures and systems (including complaints about RBT and 2010 Rotherham Limited).

(2) That, initially, the review group shall comprise the Chair (Councillor Stonebridge) and other Elected Members and/or co-opted members from each of the Scrutiny Panels.

(3) That consideration be given to enlarging the membership of the review group, after the initial scoping exercise for this review of corporate complaints.

(4) That the review group shall consider: (i) the need to baseline the level of expertise amongst staff involved in dealing with complaints, in order to identify any training issues; and (ii) ways of obtaining the views from the general public about the Council's complaints procedure and any subsequent revisions.

46. QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2006/07

The Principal Officer (Performance Management) presented the Quarter 4 Performance Report for 2006/2007, emphasising that:-

- 60% of the Corporate Plan indicators measures hit their target and 63% of the reported measures show either an improved direction of travel or have maintained their top score;
- 63% of the Best Value performance Indicators have improved or maintained the best possible score;
- Corporate Health, Education, and Community Safety are areas that have shown the least rapid improvement this year.

Members debated a number of the indicators and issues contained in the report submitted.

Resolved:- (1) That this Committee notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to performance, as now reported.

(2) That the areas where budgetary pressures may have affected performance be noted.

(3) That this Committee notes the actions being taken to address the "red" measures and issues, as identified in the report now submitted.

(4) That this Committee notes that a report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Corporate Management Team which will cover the actions required relating to the performance of Corporate Performance Assessment indicators and the risks associated with the transition to the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

(5) That the performance reporting timetable for 2007/08 be noted.

(6) That discussions take place with the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services and with head teachers, to ascertain the possibility of reporting school pupils' key stage assessment progress at an earlier stage in the academic year and also more frequently than the current annual reporting of results.

(7) That a multi-agency performance clinic be arranged in respect of educational attainment and Councillors Doyle, McNeely and G. A. Russell be invited to attend.

(8) That the South Yorkshire Authorities' Joint Leaders' Meeting be asked to consider the possible introduction of a method of assessing the performance and effectiveness of the South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan as a County-wide, sub-regional policy.

(9) That, with reference to resolution (8) above, a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, about the quality performance management of the Local Transport Plan, both as it affects the Rotherham Borough area and its implications for the whole of the South Yorkshire sub-region.

(10) That, with regard to the quality accreditation of leisure facilities, the Director of Culture and Leisure Services provide details of all leisure facilities in the Rotherham Borough area which are considered to have attained this level of accreditation, both in the private, public and the voluntary/community sectors, together with a brief summary of which quality awards and accreditations qualify for inclusion in the CPA indicator.

(11) That the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services ensure that appropriate measures are in place to utilise all of the financial years' budget allocations for disability access improvements to the Council's buildings, in the year in which such financial resources are allocated.

(12) That the method of reporting ill health retirement statistics be noted.

47. CONSOLIDATING THE EQUALITIES AGENDA : SCRUTINY'S CONTRIBUTION

The Scrutiny Adviser submitted a report concerning the considerable progress made by the Council in the way that it addresses equality and diversity issues. The report submitted explored scrutiny's role in consolidating and strengthening this work in the Borough.

The Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel has an equalities remit as part of its terms of reference. Currently scrutiny takes place of equalities champions from each service area and any strategies concerning equality such as the Women's Strategy, Asylums Seeker's Strategy and the Corporate Equality Strategy. The Panel also monitors performance of the Council against the Equalities Standard for Local Government and any new policy work such as the Community of Interest profiles or the Trade Justice Policy statement.

Further consolidation and strengthening of this work is required in order to improve the Council's performance, with a major test for the Council being to embed the Level 4 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government and to achieve Level 5. A requirement of this is to ensure that there is external challenge to ensure that services the Council provides meet the needs of its communities.

To facilitate this, the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel could help embed monitoring and address issues of equality further by having "Equalities themed meetings". This will subject the service and its strategies to more external scrutiny, from which they will benefit, and ultimately it should lead to more service improvements. It was noted that other Scrutiny Panels might also be involved in this scrutiny process.

Resolved:- That the contents of the report be noted and this Committee endorses the proposal for the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel to co-

ordinate "Equalities Themed Meetings" on a six monthly basis.

48. DEVELOPING HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY REVIEW - FIRST DRAFT

The Committee considered the first draft of the report of the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group (commissioned by the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel) who had looked at current practice for the planning, development and design of streets and roads in village and local centres. This review also examined the extent to which consultation with local businesses and communities is undertaken with a view to making recommendations to improve this process. Encompassed within the review were:-

- an overview of the Government's recent proposals for the design of roads and streets, in addition to current thinking on community involvement and public engagement in the design of public spaces;
- the current internal processes for designing roads and streets within village and local centres;
- how the Council undertakes consultation with local residents and businesses affected by a new street or road development;
- the views of Elected Ward Members, the public, parish councils and Blue Light Services.

The review identified changes with a view to improving current practice, a principal one being the development and adoption of a design code and a design panel which would set out a specification applicable to a hierarchy of roads and detail the appropriate aesthetics and finishes at each level. It was noted that the review's recommendations included a list of measures which would be used to trigger the establishment of a design panel for any individual highway design/traffic management scheme.

The Committee also listened to the comments of a local resident who raised questions about the implementation of the Bramley traffic management scheme. It was agreed that this resident should meet with a Scrutiny Officer and with the Director of Planning and Transportation Service, to consider these questions in more detail.

Reference was also made to the Government's introduction of the planning gain supplement, a policy which would secure measures for community gain (eg: highway improvements) as an integral part of the planning approval process, instead of local planning authorities having to rely on the current system of Section 106 planning agreements. The review report, now submitted, would be amended to state that such community gain should be provided within the general locality of a new development, rather than being restricted to the actual development site itself.

8 PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 27/07/07

Resolved:- (1) That the first draft report of the Developing Highways Scrutiny Review, as now submitted, be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Committee endorses this scrutiny review's recommendations, with the emphasis upon public consultation and the involvement of all stakeholders (including Area Assemblies and Parish Councils) in the development of highway schemes.

(3) That the establishment of Design Panels and the use of the design code for individual highway schemes, as detailed in the report now submitted, be supported.

(4) That the review report, as now amended, be forwarded to the Cabinet for further consideration.

49. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ADVICE CENTRES

Further to Minute No. 178 of the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 9th March, 2007, the Scrutiny Adviser submitted a report concerning the proposed review of community legal advice and information services. The report listed a number of issues to be considered as part of this suggested review.

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

(2) That a review group be established to undertake the scrutiny review of community legal advice and information centres.

(3) That the review group shall comprise the Chair (Councillor Stonebridge) and five other Elected Members, one from each of the Scrutiny Panels.

50. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, held on 13th July, 2007, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

51. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Akhtar reported that the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel review of the community and public use of school facilities was on schedule to be completed by December, 2007.

(b) Councillor Austen reported:-

(i) that the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel review of the Neighbourhood renewal Fund had now had two meetings to interview

witnesses; and

(ii) the recent attendance of herself, Councillor Jack and Councillor Akhtar at the IDeA Scrutiny Programme seminar.

(c) Councillor Doyle reported that:-

(i) the first annual scrutiny review, by the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel, of the revised contracts for dental services would begin during September, 2007; and

(ii) the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel would have a training workshop about the Performance Plus performance monitoring system on Thursday 20th September, 2007 (provisional date) and members of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee were welcome to attend that workshop.

(d) Councillor Stonebridge reported that:-

(i) the Centre for Public Scrutiny was collecting together scrutiny reports from local authorities about the impact of flooding; Rotherham would be sending its scrutiny documents prepared during 2000/2001 after the flooding of the Catcliffe area; these documents would be part of the review of the impact of flooding being undertaken by Parliament's Environment Select Committee;

(ii) Nick Raynsforth had recently replaced Tony Wright as Chair of the Centre for Public Scrutiny;

(iii) the scrutiny review about the Council's use of consultants was on schedule to report before the end of October, 2007;

(iv) the Working Group which was considering the implications of the new Community Call for Action (contained in the latest Local Government Bill) would be debating suggested protocols at its forthcoming meeting during September; the Working Group was also aware of the implications of the Police and Justice Bill, which included a similar proposal about community call for action; and

(v) the draft of the Council's annual report on scrutiny was being issued to Elected Members and to partner organisations, for comment, before being submitted for approval to the full Council meeting on 10th October, 2007.

52. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

**THE ASYLUM SEEKERS WORKING PARTY
26 JULY 2006**

Present:- Councillor Terry Sharman (in the Chair); Councillor St. John.

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Ellis and Bev Booker.

B71 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7TH JUNE, 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th June, 2006 were noted.

B72 MATTERS ARISING

Refugee Week

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Project Team Leader reported on the success of the Refugee Week held between 17th and 25th June, 2006.

The Deputy Mayor had hosted the launch of the event at the Bailey Suite.

Refugees had presented folklore stories from Iran, Palestine and Africa and the Deputy Mayor had linked with stories from Ireland.

The event had been co-ordinated by the Multi-Disciplinary Team and for the first time had been jointly publicised with Sheffield Authority.

One idea for next year was to take the event to wider parts of Rotherham in order for communities to become more inclusive and representative.

B73 PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION TO FAILED AND DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORTED BY SOCIAL SERVICES

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Project Team Leader, presented a report which outlined the responsibility of Adult Social Services, under Section 21 of the 1948 National Assistance and Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act, to support those single asylum seekers who have failed in their application for asylum, and who are destitute and have a need for care and attention that does not arise solely from destitution.

An example would be of an asylum seeker in Rotherham who has a long term illness, and fails in their asylum application.

Although they can apply for Hard Case Support (a system of emergency accommodation and the weekly provision of £35 in vouchers) from the Home Office, this is either not easily accessed due to the length of time for applications to be considered, or not taken up by people because support is dependent upon the applicant agreeing to return to their own country.

There are currently 6 customers being supported by Adult Services.

The point was made that It is difficult to plan for the accommodation needs of this group of asylum seekers.

Legal Services have been consulted about the provision of Local Authority accommodation for destitute adults with community care needs.

Appendices A and B of the report set out the advice from both Legal Services and Adult Services respectively.

The meeting was informed that the Adult Social Services Team was presently addressing this issue in relation to a protocol by which they managed statutory duties. A report on this matter was to be submitted to the Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care and Health in due course.

The meeting discussed funding issues with regard to the Community Care budget.

The meeting was informed of funding available from the Health Authority for only two groups of criteria (1) for people with HIV and (2) for people with Mental Health needs. Rotherham presently had one person supported with Mental Health needs which was funded via a Charity.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

B74 LANGUAGES

In accordance with Minute No.67, Andrew Crowley, Asylum Project Team Leader, reported on the extension of the language clusters to incorporate new languages which could not be catered for at present.

These languages now included:-

Somalia	Amharic
Russian	Hindi
Mandarin	Lingala
Swahili	Pushtu

Residents who spoke these languages were already present in Rotherham and it was possible to obtain an interpreter in these languages within the Police Authority and the Primary Care Trust.

This offered a wide range of options and opportunities to more people in meeting the needs of people being dispersed to RMBC.

Reference was made to the National Interpretation Service.

In addition, the Consortium of Local Authorities was compiling a common briefing pack translated into approximately twenty languages.

Ann Clegg, Acting Head of Inclusion Support Service, reported that three new staff at the Welcome Centre were fluent in more than one language. This skill was very good in terms of co-ordinating meetings for children being integrated into school.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

B75 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Project Team Leader, reported challenges in terms of performance against 2 of the 13 key Performance Indicators relating to the work of the Asylum Team in a new Contract with the Home Office.

These were:-

1. Responding to requests to provide accommodation from the Home Office
2. Responding to complaints within five working days

The meeting was informed that Rotherham's accommodation was presently full but that it was hoped to take on more private sector property in the near future.

Asylum seeker numbers were consistently rising and accommodation must be of a satisfactory standard. Staff from 2010 and Housing Associations were being asked to carry out inspections to ascertain suitability of properties.

There was presently a total of 620 asylum families in Rotherham but numbers were the lowest for years.

Agreed:- That a full report on performance against all 13 Performance Indicators be submitted to the next meeting.

B76 UPDATE ON STAFFING AND FINANCES AT THE WELCOME CENTRE

In accordance with Minute No. 69, Ann Clegg, Acting Head of Inclusion Support Service, submitted a report on progress following the extension of the existing Welcome provision to all school aged newly arriving children.

As from 1st September, 2006, and subject to CRB checks, a Teacher in Charge had been appointed who would be looking at all primary and secondary curriculum work.

In addition, two Inclusion Support Workers who were able to work as cover supervisors, and a 0.5 Primary teacher, had been appointed.

Three of the new staff were fluent in more than one language and all had experience in teaching newly arrived children.

Resources had been purchased for the primary classroom and minor alterations to the toilets and a sink and "wet area" to the primary classroom was presently awaited.

Total costs from 1st April, 2006 to 31st March, 2008 were projected to be £222,300. The total income of this Service budget was £225,000 therefore it was projected to show a balanced budget.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

B77 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

British Citizens from Lebanon

Andrew Crowley, Asylum Project Team Leader, reported that requests from the Local Government Association and the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside had recently been received seeking the Authority's response to people coming to the region from Lebanon.

These are British citizens with dual nationality status and there are approximately 20,000 in total. In the event of some of these citizens being accepted, the Emergency Planning process would be activated within RMBC.

The meeting discussed:-

- Accommodation options
- Costs
- Funding

Liaison was taking place with the Housing Advice Team.

Agreed:- That Members of the Asylum Seekers Working Party be kept fully informed on the situation with regard to the asylum of British subjects from Lebanon into Rotherham.

B78 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Wednesday, 27th September, 2006, commencing at **9.30** a.m.