

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION**

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

**Date: Monday, 19 May 2008**

**Time: 11.30 a.m.**

### **A G E N D A**

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence
4. RBT - Performance Update (Pages 1 - 12)
5. Corporate Complaints (Pages 13 - 28)
6. Representatives on Outside Bodies
  - (1) E Government Board  
Cabinet Member and Advisor for Sustainability and Innovation
  - (2) Data Protection and Information Group  
Councillor Hodgkiss
  - (3) Fair Trade Group  
Councillor Wyatt (Chair); Councillor Jack
  - (4) Procurement Panel  
Councillor Wyatt (Chair)  
Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services  
Councillor Whelbourn, Chair, Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee
7. Liaison with RBT

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Sustainability &amp; Innovation</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>19th May 2008</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>RBT – Performance Update</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Financial Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The report presents the progress and performance of RBT for the period March 2008.

**6. Recommendations**

That the information in the report be noted.

## 7. Proposals and Details

### Highlights

Key points for the period include:

- Recruitment for Maltby JSC commences;
- 'Tell Us Once' work continues;
- Welfare Rights and Money Advice annual figures released;
- Payroll accuracy SLA achieved for third consecutive month;
- HR support continues with Rotherham 2010 employees;
- CMT confirms all RMBC graphic design and print requirement to be commissioned via RBT Design and Print;
- Procurement Card trial in Legal Services;
- Annual billing complete in Revenues and Benefits;
- SLA underperformance in Revenues and Benefits;
- Council Tax Collection improvement on 2006/07.

### 7.1. Service by Service Overview

#### 7.1.1. Customer Services / Public Access

It is pleasing to report that the Service achieved all of its contractual targets for March.

Within the Partnership's generic Contact Centre, testing of the new Housing Repairs systems has been carried out in readiness for the go-live date of 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2008. Regular meetings have taken place with 2010 to discuss issues and risks. Some test failures remain outstanding however this will not impact on the go-live date.

All contact centre repairs staff have now been trained in the new system. Four 2010 work planners are to be permanently co-located with contact centre staff in Bailey House from the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008.

Within our Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre individual staff performance targets were implemented on 1st March, 2008 for all agents in order to improve performance. Stretched targets have been agreed with staff who are already meeting the minimum standards. In order to evaluate the first phase it is planned that targets will be rolled out to the generic Contact Centre by July 2008.

During March the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre received exceptionally high call volumes resulting from Council Tax Year End billing and Benefit Notification Letters. In order to handle this expected increase additional resources were made available including a combination of specialist staff from Local Taxation and Benefits Assessment, Customer Service Centre staff and specialist agency staff.

Recruitment for the new Maltby Joint Service Centre (JSC) has commenced. Adverts have been placed for the positions of Customer Services Representatives, Customer Service Advisors, and Team Supervisor, ring-fenced to RMBC. Interviews were scheduled to take place during week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> April; however due to a lack of applicants a further advert is to be placed with a closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> April. It has been requested by the Client that an advert ring-fenced to RMBC with no closing date remains on the intranet.

A change request has been raised by the Client to review and cost the options to extend payment facilities using the Pay Point Network. The Change request requires the service to look at other value for money options for customers seeking to make cash payments within the Maltby catchments area following the demolition of the existing Maltby office. A meeting is to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> April between all parties to discuss the way forward and report on alternative payment choices, the meeting will be chaired by Andrew Bedford.

Within our Registrars Service, 'Tell Us Once' leaflets are now being given to all customers who register a birth at Rotherham District General Hospital (RDGH). A meeting is to be arranged with RDGH management to explore potential 'Tell Us Once' delivery on site, rather than by means of referral.

The service is also now contributing to the corporate initiative to recover blue badges when a permit holder dies. An information leaflet detailing why badges need to be returned and access points for return are now included in death registration packs issued at the register office and RDGH.

In response to customer demand the enhanced marriage/civil partnership ceremony, has been made available all day Saturday at the Register Office. This longer service was previously provided on Saturday afternoons only

Within the Partnership's Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service it is pleasing to report on performance for the 2007/08 financial year. In the 12 months to 31/3/08 the Welfare Rights Service advised a total of 810 customers. Extra money that customers received as a result of using the Welfare Rights Service totalled in excess of £2.3 million. The Money Advice Service advised a total of 325 customers dealing with unsecured debts totalling over £3.2 million.

Over the last twelve months the Welfare Rights Officer based at Wath Town Hall has helped clients claim over £800,000 in benefits, they have also been awarded backdated lump sum payments totalling in excess of £115,000.

The delivery of Welfare Rights advice to users of the Breathing Space project is set to go live on 1st April, 2008 in the partnership's Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service.

Negotiations are still ongoing with Macmillan Cancer Care, to deliver welfare rights advice on their behalf to people in Rotherham living with and affected by cancer.

### **7.1.2. HR and Payroll**

It is pleasing to report that all of our HR & Payroll SLAs reported on or above target for March.

Within the partnership's HR Service, the Payroll accuracy SLA (HR03) achieved its contracted SLA target for the third consecutive month in March. Performance for the month is reported as 99.59% with 99 errors from 24,392 payslips produced.

The HR Helpline response rate is steadily improving and is especially impressive given the increase in calls received during March relating to the implementation of Job Evaluation (JE) phase 2. Calls resolved by the front line HR advisors has settled down to 80+ and the quality of call answering is consistently reported as good.

The issue of two letters relating to JE phase 2 saw an increase in the number of calls to First Line but these were handled effectively and did not detrimentally affect the SLA figures. The First Line Team is also engaged in logging all JE appeals following the notification of the new pay bands in preparation for review after the deadline date.

RMBC General and School's payrolls were successfully closed for the financial year end with the weekly payroll scheduled for closure on Tuesday 1st April. The Teacher's Pension End of Year Certificate was also completed and returned prior to the due date.

Managers were contacted during March with details of employees due to an April increment for further validation before the changed salaries were applied to payroll records. Additionally, validation work continued in relation to job evaluation phase 2 to ensure that all pay elements to be ceased or reviewed were captured ahead of April pay, protections identified and contract weeks amended where appropriate.

Full scale testing of the pension banding development was undertaken during March to ensure all specified requirements were captured. The changed arrangements will be implemented for April. Details of the pension changes were communicated via employee's payslips, a Management Briefing and also a HR Newsletter.

The Chancellor's budget confirmed previously published changes to NI rates and tax percentage, however, the higher tax band threshold was increased from £34,600 to £36,000pa. HMRC has confirmed that the new tax thresholds will be introduced for all payments made after 17th May 2008.

Activity within the Partnership's HR Consultancy Service in March has been at a reduced level with just the regular Recruitment and Selection and PDR courses being run. Recruitment activity is picking up during April and we have a number of Assessment Centres already booked in. During 2007/08 a total number of 39 training courses and 18 assessment centres were delivered. This level of activity equates to around 150 working days. Income from this activity allows a full time additional resource to be deployed within the Consultancy team, yet represents a significant saving to the Council compared with the cost of external provision of training and assessment centre services.

An initiative undertaken by the team this year has been to target short term sickness. We have proactively engaged with all managers who have received notice that one of their employees has hit a trigger for action. Initial analysis shows that, excluding schools, this initiative has produced a 300% increase in recorded actions following receipt of a trigger. We believe that this will be a contributory factor in the anticipated further reduction of the key BV12 indicator. Further analysis will be available later in April.

The closure of the Rotherham 2010 Barbot Hall unit and termination of employment of the staff on grounds of redundancy was to be effective from the end of March. The team has been working on this since December and have dealt with the 38 staff on a one-to-one basis. The resultant outcome is 22 redeployments and 16 who either took redundancy to pursue work outside 2010/RMBC or took early retirement. All employees who requested redeployment were accommodated.

Finally, Kimberley Lewis, Senior Assistant (First Line) achieved the short-list for the Council's Young Person of the Year Award. This recognition was extremely well deserved and reflected the excellent work undertaken by Kim and her colleagues on the HR Helpline.

### **7.1.3. ICT**

All monthly SLA measures were achieved in the partnership's ICT service.

The ICT refresh is currently only being carried out on a minor scale and mostly on older D600 laptops. We are to present a proposal on how the refresh will be restarted in earnest as soon as possible.

A Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was submitted to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive on 8th February to provide print and photographic services. This is currently being evaluated by SYPTE.

The second edition of Schools ConnectED Newsletter will be launched during April '08. The Partnership's Design & Print Service will be showcasing work recently produced for Maltby Manor Primary School and St Bernard's Comprehensive School.

As part of the Council's branding strategy towards improving public satisfaction rates, and to improve its core and associated brands, the Council's CMT sanctioned that all of RMBC's graphic design and print requirements be commissioned via RBT Design and Printing Service. To ensure that best practice standards are adopted and the Council brand is managed effectively, the use of the Design and Print Service is mandatory and is to be adopted by all Directorates.

All design and print work must be directed through the Design and Print Service, whether or not the work is to be produced in-house. RBT Design and Print will work closely with RMBC's Head of Communications and Marketing to finalise branding guidelines and to help police the brand.

#### **7.1.4. Procurement**

The Partnership's Procurement Service processed almost 16,000 invoices during March '08. A proportion of these were aged invoice queries which have now been resolved by RMBC officers due to the financial year end.

All SLAs for March reported above target with the exception of the following:

- PR01 – The Percentage of catalogued goods or services delivered within the "lead times" displayed in the item file

This measure reported performance of 86.44% against the contractual target of 88.72%. This drop in performance was due to one supplier 'Supplies Team' who experienced a system failure with their electronic ordering system due to an internal upgrade. This resulted in orders raised by RMBC between 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March not being received until the 19<sup>th</sup> March. The fault was rectified immediately with all purchase orders placed since the 19<sup>th</sup> March delivered on time and to an improved standard, this was purely down to the new upgrade.

- PR03 – Percentage of undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services that were input within 25 calendar days of such invoices being received by the Purchase to Pay Team.

Performance of 99.03% is reported on this measure against its target of 99.22%. This underperformance is due to year end closure and the increase in processing aged invoice payments.

Training continues to be delivered on a regular basis across the whole Council by Procurement experts. The training is constantly being enhanced through attendee feedback forms which are circulated on completion of the program. Training sessions are now scheduled in for April with twelve staff booked on the beginner course. Due to year end commitments no procurement training took place in the month of March.

e-RFQ is now live and working and refresher training has been delivered across all P2P teams. The focus will be on e-sourcing quotations in the market place that have a value of between £5k and £50k.

Legal Services are to trial a procurement card in the week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> April which will enable magistrate court litigation fees to be processed online. Providing the trial is a success up to five cards will then be rolled out within Legal Services. A meeting with the Co-Operative bank and the Office of Government Commerce has now been arranged for 8<sup>th</sup> April, which will focus in on our support for key suppliers where possible in helping them achieve level three status which will in turn benefit the Council.

Procurement savings to the end of February are at £2,240k; shared between RMBC and RBT at £762k and £1,478k respectively. The method statement for addressable spend capture applicable from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 08 has now been agreed with the RMBC Client and will form part of the monthly report moving forward. .

BVPI8 performance for March is reported at 96% with the figure for the year 2007/08 reported at 94%, an improvement on the 2006/07 figure of 91%. Work is ongoing to advise officers of their requirement to receipt goods and services promptly.

Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) training for Councillors and the RBT bid team is now complete. An SCMS role-out plan has now been agreed for officers from within RMBC who are responsible for letting contracts currently outside of RBT Procurement. Twenty two nominations have now been received from the various directorates with courses now set up to run with three or four attendees per session; this will be delivered over the next three months.

The Procurement service continues to support the professional development of its staff with CIPS study sessions now being undertaken through the Durham Logistics on-line VOLTS system. All application forms have been submitted to CIPS and staff are now enrolled to complete their exams at the end of May 08. We currently have fourteen staff sitting a total of twenty examinations across all levels.



### **7.1.5. Revenues & Benefits**

March has seen an intense period of activity for the Partnership's Revenues and Benefits Service as the month incorporated both year end and annual billing for Council tax and NNDR for 2008/9.

This year the Service has supported the Contact Centre in dealing with the anticipated upsurge in telephone enquiries and initial feed back is that the use of Revenues and Benefits staff greatly enhanced the service with 93% of calls being answered, a big improvement of previous years.

In respect of annual billing, 110,000 Council Tax bills, 6,000 NNDR bills and 25,000 benefit notifications were issued in the four weeks following the 10<sup>th</sup> March. This alongside the additional duties of supporting the Contact Centre has resulted in an increase in the Services' workload in respect of both Revenues and Benefits. To address this issue the Service has commenced overtime to alleviate this peak in workload and ensure the Service is well placed to meet the coming year's challenges.

The collection of Equality monitoring data has commenced, the Service issued 25,000 questionnaires and has already received back some 2,500 completed questionnaires. These will be input to Northgate once the required module has been implemented.

The Benefits Service has maintained a 4\* CPA rating this year and performance, in general, holds no concerns, with the exceptions detailed later in this report. However the Service faces the challenge of meeting the new National Indicators next year and work is underway in respect of the collection and monitoring of these. These indicators along with the implementation of the "Harder Test" and new contractual SLAs mean that the Service faces a number of challenges in the new fiscal year.

In respect of the fraud element the SLA targets have been achieved. In addition, work has continued with the financial investigations and three confiscation orders have now been obtained.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is live effective from the 7<sup>th</sup> April. The only outstanding item is the e-benefits module of LHA which is awaiting the software upgrade required. This will be installed the weekend of the 12<sup>th</sup> / 13<sup>th</sup> April 2008, going live the week commencing the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

All SLAs have been achieved with the following exceptions:

#### **RB02/BV09 – Percentage of Council Tax collected for the year**

The Service has achieved an in year collection figure of 97.1%. Whilst this is below the target of 98% it is an improvement on 2006/7.

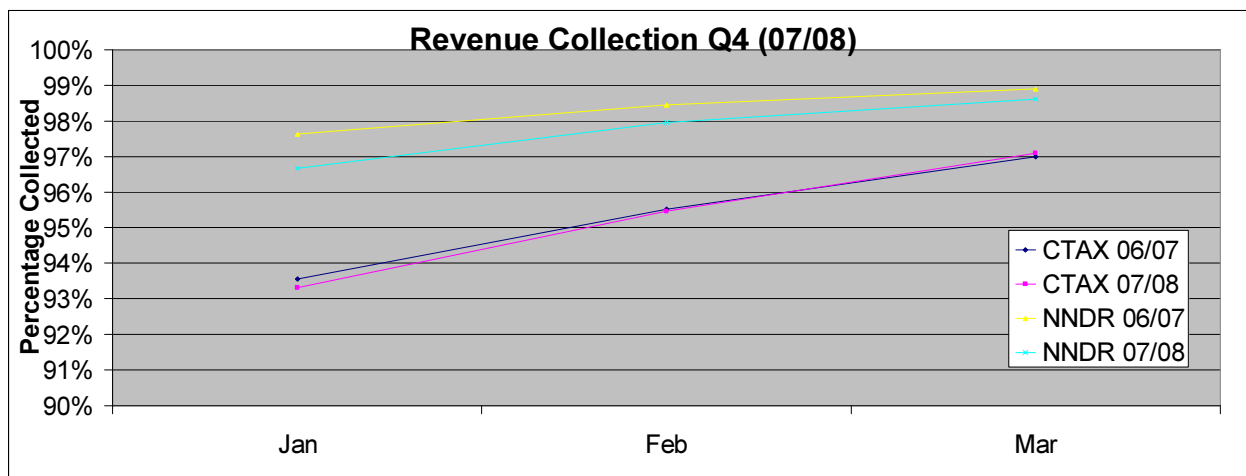
This year has seen the implementation of the Council tax action plan and the resulting tightening of the recovery timetable. It is interesting to note that, whilst the number of reminders issued as dropped by 12%, despite the earlier issuing of reminders, the number of summonses issued has increased by 10%. This indicates that there is an increased number of taxpayers struggling to pay their Council tax and this is backed up by the actual number of court orders obtained which exceed 10,000 for the first year ever. Year on year comparison of liability orders obtained shows an increase of 18%, more startling is the increase since the commencement of the contract, which shows an increase in court orders of 42%. In this context the collection rate of 97.1% is impressive when consideration is given to the 42% increase in recovery work required to enforce collection of the Council tax.

**RB03/BV10 – Percentage of National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) collected for the year**

The Service has achieved an in year collection rate of 98.6%, a reduction of 0.3% on 2006/7.

The Service is to review the current procedures and introduce an action plan to resolve the failure to achieve the SLA target. This action plan will be made available to the Client for information once drawn up.

The graph below shows the 2007/08 performance in Council Tax and NNDR Collection across the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter compared to the same period in 2006/07.



**RB04 – Council Tax cumulative debt compared to Year End Net Collectable**

This measure reported in at 5.26% against its target of 4.80%. This is an improvement on the 5.33% reported for 2006/07. There is continued positive direction of travel in this measure and it is anticipated that last year’s action plan for RB02 (Council Tax collection) will generate a further improvement in this measure going forward.

**RB09 – HB Overpayments recovered in period**

Performance for 2007/08 is reported at 41.07% against a target of 42.50%. This is an improvement on the 41.00% reported in 2006/07.

Over the past two financial years there has been a marked reduction in the amount of Housing Benefit overpayments generated. Furthermore due to the increased performance of the Housing Benefit Fraud team a larger proportion of overpayments generated are fraudulent claims for Housing Benefit. By the nature of these fraudulent overpayments are more difficult to collect. Despite this performance has improved on 2006/07.

**RB20 - Number of reductions in benefit entitlement in year**

Performance in this measure is reported at 13,629 reductions against the annual target of 14,020.

In September 2007 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) suspended the transfer of data between Local Authorities and itself. As a result, Risk Files which identify the risk of Fraud and error occurring in Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims were unavailable for the service to work from. The DWP and the RMBC Client acknowledged this and reduced the target accordingly, however it remained stretching. The service had developed its own Risk Files to recompense for this; however this did not make up for the volume of work lost from the DWP. Note, this measure is to be amended in accordance with the new Performance Management Framework from April 2008.

**7.2. Progress against Corporate Initiatives**

**7.2.1. Equalities & Diversity**

The Benefits Service has completed all the background work required before monitoring begins. 25,000 monitoring forms were sent out with benefits application forms in March. We have received 3,500 responses and this data will be entered into the system for analysis as soon as the Equalities module has been implemented. Once analysed, any disproportionate groups will be consulted, in order to make improvements to the service in time to produce successful case studies for the Council's December 2008 deadline for Equality Standard for Local Government level 5.

### **7.2.2. Investors in People**

A demonstration of the Council's PSe training module has been arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> May, whereby all RBT service development officers are invited to view the system and understand their responsibilities in entering training and development data.

The PDR process has begun and a review of completed PDRs will commence at the end of May.

Plans for interim management targets are in early planning stages, with a view to inclusion in PDRs.

Tighter control of spend on Training and Development will ensure a clearer link to return on investment in line with recommendations.

### **7.2.3. Consultation/Complaints**

#### **Consultation**

The complainant satisfaction survey pilot that RBT undertook on behalf of the Council has been completed, with the results being presented to the Customer Services client prior to formal cascade to the wider Council. Around 28% of customers responded to the survey (41 people in total), the majority of whom were Rotherham 2010 Ltd customers (21) with 12% specifically related to RBT complaints (5 people). Key comments from customers, across the Council, has highlighted that customers are dissatisfied with the outcome to their complaint and the length of time taken to respond. The expectation is for these issues to be addressed through the Complaint Officers forum.

The internal procurement satisfaction survey, of all RBT cedar users (with the exception of those in the Procurement service) is still being analysed. The overall response rate was relatively low (around 10%) and therefore is likely to have an impact on the statistical relevance of the actual outcome. That said the comments will still be taken forward by the section as part of its commitment to improve the service.

#### **Complaints**

In March 2008 RBT received 8 Stage 1 complaint points, 5 of which related to the Revenues and Benefits service and the remaining 3 related to the Contact Centre. Cumulatively, from the 1st April 2007 until the 31st March 2008 RBT received 92 complaints, the majority of which relate to the Revenues and Benefits service. Given the overall number of service users the amount of complaints received across all RBT services remain low.

In the month of March 9 complaint points were closed, with 8 of them being closed within target, and therefore an 89% success rate for the month. Cumulatively performance in closing complaints (from the 1st April 2007 – 31st March 2008) within target equated to 90%, with 85 of 94 complaints being closed in time. Although this is a fall of 1% from the cumulative figure that was reported at the end of February 2008, it is a 10% improvement on performance from the 2006 – 07 annual out turn. With this level of performance RBT remain a positive contributor to the overall RMBC figure.

Over the year 40% of complaints were upheld in the customers favour, with the other outcomes being Not Upheld (51%), Partially Upheld (2%), Inconclusive (5%) and Withdrawn (2%). These outcomes are being analysed further as part of complaints evaluation within RBT.

## **8. Finance**

The contract with RBT includes a service-credit arrangement, the effect of which is that whenever any SLA target is not achieved, a calculation based on the amount by which the target was missed and a number of other factors, results in a decrease in the amount of service charge payable. In other words, there is a financial penalty for RBT as a direct consequence of its underperformance.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

We proactively manage risk to prevent negative impacts on performance that may affect our CPA rating or service delivery.

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

The partnership is responsible for key areas of service delivery and therefore has a key role in the delivery of BVPI's and LPI's.

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

None

### **Contact Names:**

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**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Sustainability &amp; Innovation</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> May, 2008</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Report on Corporate Complaints</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>Financial Services</b>

**5. Summary**

This report provides details of the complaints received and handled during quarters 2 and 3 of 2007/08, across the Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

**6. Recommendations**

**Members are asked to note the report.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Overview of Performance

Detailed performance statistics for Quarters 2 and 3 are provided in Appendix A. Information on the number of complaints by ward is included in Appendix B. The key statistics for these two quarters are as follows:

	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Number of complaints received	365 <i>(from 235 people)</i>	261 <i>(from 227 people)</i>
Average percentage of complaints closed across the Council within time	77%	79%
Percentage of total complaints closed that were upheld	33%	33%
Percentage of complaints closed that were not upheld*	53%	47%
Largest category of complaints	Quality of service - 171 (47%)	Quality of service - 116 (44%)

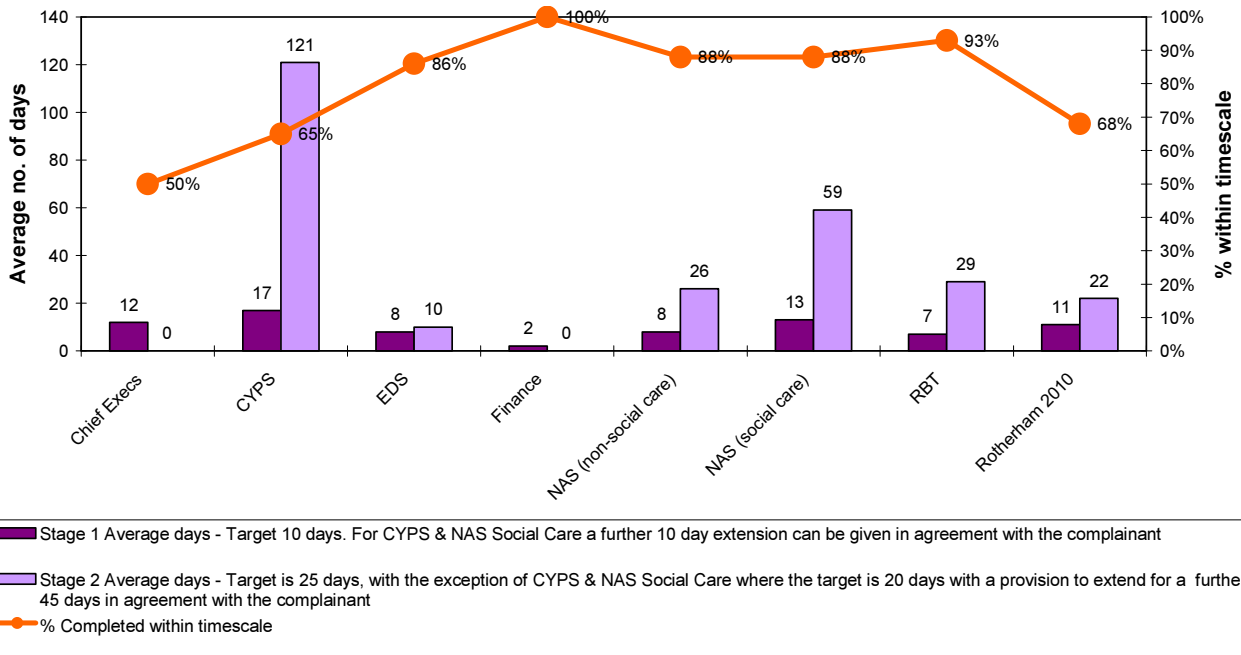
\* Includes complaints classed as "Dealt With" by CYPS and NAAS.

Individual Directorate performance is shown in Figures 1 and 2. The key comments on this performance for the two quarters are follows:

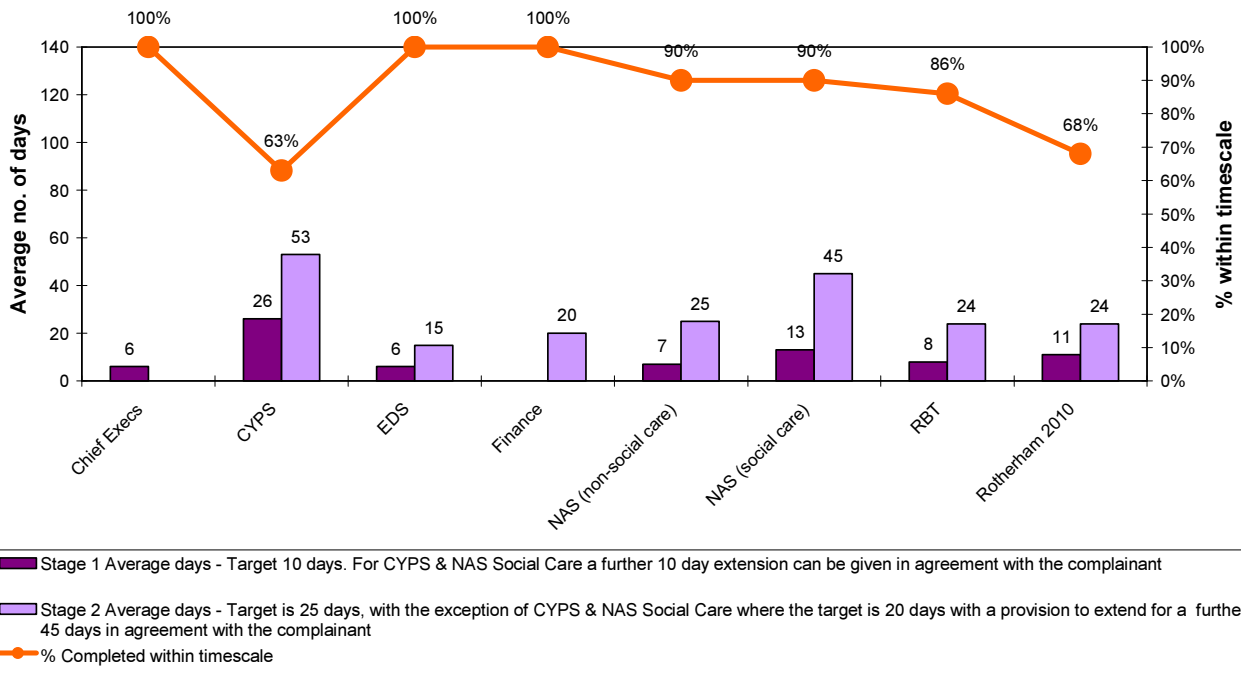
- As anticipated in the last quarterly report, 2010's performance of 68% for complaints closed within time was impacted by a number of complaints and reminder alerts being un-actioned from when the new system was launched. Whilst measures were put in place to prevent this from re-occurring the percentage in quarter 3 remained at 68%. 2010 have commented that this was due to a lack of available staff resource on complaints, which is being addressed.
- In Quarter 2, 33% of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were upheld. This changed in quarter 3 to 34% at Stage 1 and 27% at Stage 2. These are high percentages that need further attention to ensure complaints are being dealt with robustly at Stage 1. This has been highlighted to the Scrutiny Panel undertaking the review into complaints. It has been suggested to the Panel that the current procedure should be updated so that there is a greater involvement of the Directorate Complaint Officers at Stage 1.
- The majority of complaints in both quarters were around Quality of Service followed by Actions of Staff. These issues are being picked up through the Corporate Complaints Officers Forum. Further work will be done to learn from feedback and track this more fully through the reporting, including ensuring any relevant actions are completed and reported within this report in future.
- Economic and Development Services drop in performance in quarter 2 was deemed to be as a result of staff attrition which has been addressed.

Once the Scrutiny Review of Corporate Complaints issues the findings of their review – due at the end of April – further work will take place on developing the Corporate Complaints process which will also be a Year Ahead Commitment for 2008/09.

**Figure 1 - Qtr 2 average no. of days to close a complaint and the % that were within target timescale**



**Figure 2 - Qtr 3 average no. of days to close a complaint and the % that were within target timescale**



*Note: The percentage shown for complaints dealt within timescale by Neighbourhoods and Adult Services is different to that already reported by the Directorate. This is due to a difference in the number of complaints where the Council's revised working day rationale based on that used by the Local Government Ombudsman has been applied.*



## 7.2 Actions being taken to improve complaints management

The following actions have or are in the process of being introduced with a view to improving complaints management. Progress and monitoring of their impact will be reviewed regularly at the Complaint Officers Forum meetings.

- a) Complaints that are already out of date, or alternatively which will go out of date in 5 working days are being highlighted in a complaint status report which is being produced and cascaded to complaint officers twice a week. This is in addition to the system reminder alerts that highlight complaints that are in danger of missing their target date.
- b) Complaints entered onto the Siebel system are being audited for data accuracy and quality of response. This has resulted in a number of issues being identified around closure dates and categories and targeted feedback given to individual Directorate Complaint leads on the accuracy of data and the quality of response that has been provided.
- c) NASS and RBT have introduced a centralised quality assurance process for reviewing all complaint responses. This is to ensure that they are appropriate and address the salient issue. Through this process it is felt that the quality of responses has improved as well as becoming more customer focused.
- d) NASS have introduced a further reminder process for complaints management. This is activated through a set of reminders in the outlook calendar of the manager responsible for responding to a Stage 1 complaint. These reminders are set for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> day respectively.
- e) 'Learning from customer' interviews is something else which NASS are using to identify lessons that have been learned and to track how any changes are being implemented. This process is currently being modified for roll-out within RBT, but is something that should be rolled out across the Council and 2010 to positively impact on the high percentage of complaints that are being upheld.
- f) 2010 have recruited an additional customer services officer who will help to manage complaints performance, both in terms of system usage and tackling progress within the respective services. Also it is planned that officers at local offices will be trained to deal with a customer who initially is not satisfied with a service that could be remedied by making a quick phone call to prevent an enquiry leading to a complaint.
- g) CYPS are adopting a more flexible approach to handling complaints; this involves the Complaints Team discussing with complainants what outcomes they want from the complaint, and where it is appropriate getting a Senior Manager to respond to their complaint. This can be where a fuller response is sought or when there are additional questions after a Stage 1 response has been sent. This has meant a successful response to complaints which may have previously gone to stage 2. This is designed to speed up a response based on what the complainant is seeking. This approach has resulted in three Stage 2 complaints being averted in this quarter.
- h) RBT are scoping an internal process to more effectively map the implementation of lessons learned from the moment of identification through to the fulfilment of any

action that is taken. This process will involve key review dates to assess on-going progress.

### 7.3 Local Government Ombudsman complaints

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 no reports of maladministration have been issued against the Council. A breakdown of complaints received by the Ombudsman for quarters 2 and 3 is shown in table 5 of Appendix A.

The final year-end figures will be received by the Council in April when the Ombudsman's Letter will be issued. This will contain details of the Council's performance in responding to their first enquiry letters within 28 calendar days.

Early indications from speaking with the Local Government Ombudsman this month indicate that the Council's performance in responding to first enquiry letters is set to improve on last years 34.7 calendar days to 29.9 calendar days. Whilst the Ombudsman acknowledged this as a significant improvement they are expected to highlight key issues around Planning and Building Control and Adult Social Care.

In order that issues can be identified ahead of future Annual Letters it has been agreed with the Ombudsman that they will provide the Council with a half-yearly interim report in order that corrective action can be taken sooner.

### 7.4 Learning from complaints

One of the main objectives of having the corporate procedure is to ensure the Council is listening and learning from complaints received and taking the necessary preventative action.

This is an ongoing development area for the Council to ensure it is learning from the feedback from customers are providing. The learning points declared for both quarters are listed in the following table. Further work will be undertaken with the Corporate Complaints Officers to ensure that more detailed information on the specific issues and actions are included in future update reports which will help pull out the key learning points. It is also proposed to track actions to ensure that they are completed.

Issue	Recommendation	Action
<b>Economic &amp; Development Services</b>		
Recruitment – Casual Pool Lifeguard.	Consistent approach is taken by all staff involved with recruiting process.	Staff meeting to discuss this to take place.
Displays in Libraries.	Closer working relationship between district libraries regarding requests for displays.	Instruction sent out to staff.
Oil spillage from vehicle.	That a more detailed procedure be introduced.	Work is taking place on the procedure.
Issues at Greenlands Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wooden fence to be installed.</li> <li>• Fencing to be modified.</li> </ul>	Work has commenced.
Allocation of town centre pitches	Review of procedures	Reports submitted to Cabinet Member.

Issue	Recommendation	Action
Customer signatures on planning applications were available on internet	Signatures no longer scanned in on planning applications.	Policy adopted
<b>RBT</b>		
Incorrect signage at the Dinnington CSC.	Install a temporary sign until the replacement arrives.	Temporary sign ordered and the issue has been highlighted to the project team for future CSC roll-out.
Incorrect calculation of a customers Housing and Council Tax benefit.	To raise this issue with the member of staff responsible and the wider team to guard against re-occurrences.	Progressed as per recommendation.
Due to an error by a member of staff a customer complaint was not actioned. As a consequence a further complaint was received about the delay in handling their contact.	To review local processes to ensure that complaints are identified and actioned appropriately through the complaints team.	Progressed as per recommendation with further guidance issued to staff.
<b>Children &amp; Young Peoples Service</b>		
Communication with a child placed Out of Authority returning to Rotherham.	It has been recognised on this occasion that communication was poor.	An apology was given and discussed with the child individually. Assurances were given that this wouldn't happen again.
Complainants automatically progressing their complaint to the next stage.	Not applicable.	Complaints Unit adopting a flexible approach to handling complaints that may have previously gone to stage 2. The Complaints Team have been discussing with the complainant what outcomes they want from the complaint and where it is appropriate within the complexity of the complaint have explored the idea of whether it would be appropriate for a Senior Manager to respond to their complaint.
Complainant was not happy with the outcome of stage 1 and requested they progress to stage 2.	Not applicable	After the Complaints Manager had discussed the issues with the complainant it became clear that they didn't wish to progress to stage 2 but thought it was their only alternative to get some further answers. This was dealt with outside the complaints process via the service manager.
Complainant dissatisfied with treatment during a case conference, particularly when trying to communicate her thoughts.	Not applicable	Discussed and agreed different methods of participation in conference that would help the complainant express her views.
Issues relating to the delay and lack of progress of a complaint.	Not applicable	This part of the complaint was accepted and upheld. The complaints team now have admin support and procedures in place to ensure e mails/letters are dealt with and appropriately allocated immediately.

Issue	Recommendation	Action
<b>Neighbourhoods and Adults (non-social care)</b>		
Complaint (not upheld) Attitude of a dog warden when fining a customer for allowing their dog to foul.	The way staff deal with customers.	Body cam system now operational. Video evidence recorded at the scene can be reviewed if complaints are received.  Staff training refreshed on a regular basis (dealing with difficult customers).
Landlord participating in the Landlord scheme complained that there had been a delay in rent payment.	Use of this payment method. Information provided by staff regarding how long it would take for a cheque to be raised and sent.	BACS payment recently implemented (electronic payments). This will increase efficiency of payments under the scheme.
Use of communal facilities by a minor.  Inappropriate management of centre funds.	Although the complaint was not upheld it has been agreed that Wardens require clear guidelines regarding the use of communal facilities i.e. who can use them, type of activities and the financial management of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide guidance to Wardens regarding the use of the communal facilities, who can use them, type of activities etc.</li> <li>● Provide guidance in consultation with Finance, regarding the accounting of financial activities in the centres.</li> </ul>
Removal of floral tributes in garden of remembrance.  Way that their enquiry was dealt with.	There is a clear policy in respect of floral tributes. However, a sign in the garden of remembrance had been removed and not replaced.  Officer aware that the use of the word "lucky" was not appropriate.	The sign had not been replaced. Staff informed to check on a regular basis.  Staff made aware of case and to be aware of using sensitive language.
Delay in receipt of a Right to Buy (RTB) application. There were a number of internal delays before the form reached the RTB team.	Strengthen Advice provided to customers regarding how to return the form e.g. Hand deliver or send by recorded delivery.  Stamped addressed envelopes could be provided with RTB pack.  Documents prioritised, faxed or scanned not sent in internal mail.	Sticker placed on RTB docs to clarify advice.  An additional guidance note in respect of returning forms is included in the 1 <sup>st</sup> RBT letter that is sent with the form.  Additional note placed on 1 <sup>st</sup> advice letter.  All 2010 Office's informed to fax or scan. SAE sent out with the form.
<b>Neighbourhoods and Adults (social care)</b>		
Conduct of Staff at Nethfield Court. Not giving resident cup of tea because they were lying in bed.  Lack of Physiotherapy support.	Training for staff on Health and Safety Risk Assessments and values training.  Information about what services can be expected refreshed and updated.	Staff instructed to ensure Service users are allowed (within reason) to make their own decisions and assess the risks of their actions for themselves.

Issue	Recommendation	Action
<p>Complainant wrongly prioritised for when she should have an Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment.</p> <p>Additional waiting time would have been significant due to backlog of requests for OT.</p>	<p>Check to see if this was a one off incident due to human error.</p> <p>Review currently underway in relation to how to address the backlog.</p>	<p>Closer monitoring of how people are prioritised.</p>
<p>Late response to issues raised about In House Residential provider.</p>	<p>Ensure managers are aware of when issues need to be formally registered as complaints.</p>	<p>The following guidance to be sent to all first line managers. Unless concern being raised is:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not already known to the manager and he or she can take immediate action to remedy the situation</li> <li>• simple to resolve</li> </ul>
<p>Delay in visit from OT following complainant's wife's discharge from hospital.</p>	<p>Service user was not on the phone therefore the OT did not inform that a visit would be delayed due to sickness and the Christmas break.</p> <p>Improvements to communication systems recommended.</p>	<p>Letters to be sent in future.</p>
<p>Lack of provision for homecare leading to a delayed hospital discharge over Christmas period. Holiday periods and seasonal sickness can put pressure on the service and reduce capacity to meet demand.</p>	<p>Short term emergency homecare response to be set up during holiday periods.</p>	<p>New Commissioning strategy has resulted in a larger volume of hours being purchased on a block arrangement. This will enable commissioners to assess unused capacity and oblige providers to meet demand where spare capacity exists.</p>
<p>Missed Call to homecare service user.</p>	<p>Secondary checking to ensure that calls not accidentally missed.</p>	<p>Initiating a secondary checking system of work programmes before they are dispatched. The Directorate is also currently considering the acquisition of an electronic system for this purpose.</p>

## 7.5 Customer Satisfaction

A customer survey form seeking satisfaction levels in the procedure from those who make complaints is currently being piloted. The form will be sent out to all complainants who receive stage 1 or stage 2 responses to their complaint. Weightings are being applied to the questions so as feedback from the various customer groups can be assessed on the procedure rather than on the outcome of their complaint.

## 8. Finance

There are no financial implications contained in this report.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The formal complaints procedure has allowed the Council to address risk to the organisation at a strategic and operational level. Individual complaints can identify potential risks at an early stage and allow immediate preventative and corrective action.

A positive response to complaints is reflective of an organisation committed to continual improvement and a willingness to communicate with stakeholders and customers. Failure to respond appropriately to complaints is likely to result in an increasing litigation against the Council and in the volume of Local Government Ombudsman investigations.

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

The area of complaints was a key focus in the last CPA Inspection, and inspectors were keen to see developments moving forward.

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

The Directorate Complaint Officers have been consulted on this report.

### **Contact Name:**

**Mark Evans**, Customer Services Client Manager, Transformation and Strategic Partnerships, Ext. 6540.

## Performance Statistics for Quarters 2 and 3 - 01/07/07 to 31/12/07

### Table 1 – Complaints received by Directorate

Quarter 2					
Directorate	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total
CEX	1 (from 1 person)	0	0	1 (from 1 person)	2 (from 2 people)
CYPS	86 (from 37 people)	20 (from 3 people)	0	0	106 (from 40 people)
EDS	43 (from 42 people)	3 (from 3 people)	0	2 (from 2 people)	48 (from 47 people)
Finance	1 (from 1 person)	1 (from 1 person)	0	0	2 (from 2 people)
RBT	22 (from 14 people)	6 (from 3 people)	0	0	28 (from 17 people)
NASS	57 (from 40 people)	33 (from 4 people)	0	3 (from 3 people)	93 (from 47 people)
2010	77 (from 71 people)	8 (from 8 people)	0	1 (from 1 person)	86 (from 80 people)
<b>Total</b>	<b>287 (from 206 people)</b>	<b>71 (from 22 people)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7 (from 7 people)</b>	<b>365 (from 235 people)</b>
Quarter 3					
Directorate	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total
CEX	1 (from 1 person)	0	0	0	1 (from 1 person)
CYPS	32 (from 26 people)	11 (from 2 people)	0	2 (from 2 people)	45 (from 30 people)
EDS	30 (from 30 people)	5 (from 5 people)	1 (from 1 person)	8 (from 8 people)	44 (from 44 people)
Finance	0	0	0	0	0
RBT	16 (from 15 people)	2 (from 1 person)	0	0	18 (from 16 people)
NASS	60 (from 45 people)	5 (from 5 people)	1 (from 1 person)	2 (from 2 people)	68 (from people)
2010	76 (from 75 people)	5 (from 5 people)	1 (from 1 person)	2 (from 2 people)	85 (from people)
<b>Total</b>	<b>215 (from 192 people)</b>	<b>28 (from 18 people)</b>	<b>3 (from 3 people)</b>	<b>14 (from 14 people)</b>	<b>261 (from 227 people)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Qtr 2 RMBC complaints (excluding LGO) = 358 complaints from 228 people.</li> <li>2. Qtr 3 RMBC complaints (excluding LGO) = 246 complaints from 213 people.</li> <li>3. Customers may have been counted more than once as their complaint escalates through the stages or if they have submitted more than one complaint in the period.</li> </ol>					

**Table 2 – Complaints received by Category**

Quarter 2								
Directorate	Actions of staff	Cost of service	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Other	Quality of service	Total
CEX	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
CYPS	14	1	2	3	8	13	65	106
EDS	15	0	2	0	7	1	23	48
Finance	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
NASS	38	2	9	2	7	9	26	93
2010	12	0	10	1	18	4	41	86
RBT	7	0	2	1	2	0	16	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>365</b>

Quarter 3								
Directorate	Actions of staff	Cost of service	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Other	Quality of service	Total
CEX	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CYPS	8			1	1	7	28	45
EDS	8	0	1	0	12	0	23	44
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NASS	17	3	3	4	5	9	27	68
2010	10	1	12	4	15	15	27	85
RBT	5	0	2	0	0	0	11	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>261</b>



**Table 3 – Complaints closed by Directorate**

**Quarter 2**

Directorate	Stage 1						Stage 2						Stage 3					Total
	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	CDW	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	CDW	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	
CEX	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
CYPS	0	0	0	0	1	69	13	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86
EDS	18	24	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Finance	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
NASS	17	25	4	1	0	6	3	5	14	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81
2010	47	22	2	2	1	0	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81
RBT	7	12	0	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>328</b>

**Quarter 3**

Directorate	Stage 1						Stage 2						Stage 3					Total
	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	CDW	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	CDW	CU	CNU	CPU	CI	CW	
CEX	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CYPS	0	0	0	0	11	35	2	11	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64
EDS	8	10	10	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
NASS	11	31	11	1	7	6	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73
2010	51	19	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	76
RBT	7	7	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>270</b>

**KEY**

CU	Closed upheld	CI	Closed inconclusive
CNU	Closed not upheld	CW	Closed withdrawn
CPU	Closed partially upheld	CDW	Closed dealt with

**Table 4 - Complaints dealt with within Complaint Procedure Timescales**

Directorate	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			2007/08 Cumulative Totals			2006/07 out-turn
	Closed in time	Closed	% of complaints closed in time	Closed in time	Closed	% of complaints	Closed in time	Closed	% of complaints closed in time	No. of complaints closed in time	No. of complaints closed	% of complaints closed in time	
CEX	2	3	67%	1	2	50%	1	1	100%	4	6	67%	N/A
CYPS	42	84	50%	56	86	65%	40	64	63%	138	234	59%	81%
EDS	39	42	93%	43	50	86%	34	34	100%	116	126	92%	87%
Finance	0	0		1	1	100%	1	1	100%	2	2	100%	100%
NASS	62	79	78%	71	81	88%	66	73	90%	199	233	85%	81%
2010 Ltd	28	32	88%	55	81	68%	52	76	68%	135	189	71%	81%
RBT	23	26	88%	25	27	93%	18	21	86%	66	74	89%	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>81%</b>

**Table 5 - LGO Decisions (including any decisions that rolled over from previous periods)**

Quarter 2								
	Closed – awaiting clarification	Maladministration with injustice.	Local settlement	Maladministration	No maladministration	Ombudsman discontinuing	Outside jurisdiction	Total
Chief Execs	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
CYPS	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
EDS	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NASS	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
2010 Ltd	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
RBT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RMBC</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>

Quarter 3								
	Closed – awaiting clarification	Maladministration with injustice.	Local settlement	Maladministration	No maladministration	Ombudsman discontinuing	Outside jurisdiction	Total
Chief Execs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CYPS	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
EDS	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	6
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NASS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2010 Ltd	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
RBT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RMBC</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>

## APPENDIX B

## Analysis of complaints received by Council Ward (includes LGO complaints)

## Quarter 2

Ward*	CEX	Finance	CYPS	EDS	NASS	2010	RBT	Total
Anston and Woodsetts	0	0	11	4	4	2	2	23
Boston Castle	0	0	3	5	0	3	1	12
Brinsworth and Catcliffe	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	6
Dinnington	0	0	7	1	5	1	0	14
Hellaby	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Holderness	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	5
Hoover	0	0	6	0	2	2	0	10
Keppel	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	6
Maltby	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	5
Rawmarsh	0	0	17	2	1	7	0	27
Rother Vale	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Rotherham East	0	0	7	2	8	14	0	31
Rotherham West	1	0	0	0	31	2	7	41
Silverwood	0	0	0	1	3	7	2	13
Sitwell	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	8
Swinton	0	0	0	5	2	4	5	16
Valley	0	0	9	3	4	4	0	20
Wales	1	2	1	3	6	1	0	14
Wath	0	0	6	3	1	5	0	15
Wickersley	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	6
Wingfield	0	0	10	2	10	16	2	40
No Ward specified	0	0	22	5	7	5	8	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>365</b>

\* The numbers are derived from the address of the complainant.

## Quarter 3

Ward *	CEX	Finance	CYPS	EDS	NASS	2010	RBT	Total
Anston and Woodsetts	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	9
Boston Castle	0	0	8	3	0	3	1	15
Brinsworth and Catcliffe	0	0	0	5	1	2	1	9
Dinnington	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Hellaby	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Holderness	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	4
Hoover	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Kepple	0	0	1	0	1	3	1	6
Maltby	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	5
Rawmarsh	0	0	8	3	2	6	1	20
Rother Vale	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	7
Rotherham East	0	0	2	1	2	11	0	16
Rotherham West	0	0	0	1	7	8	1	17
Silverwood	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	8
Sitwell	0	0	1	4	4	1	1	11
Swinton	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	5
Valley	0	0	1	1	3	4	3	12
Wales	0	0	0	3	13	1	0	17
Wath	0	0	1	2	0	6	0	9
Wickersley	0	0	2	4	2	1	1	10
Wingfield	0	0	2	4	1	20	1	28
<b>No Ward specified</b>	0	0	14	5	19	4	2	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>260</b>

\* The numbers are derived from the address of the complainant.