

CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

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

Date: Monday, 2 March 2009

Time: 10.00 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 Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Neighbourhoods 3rd Quarter (April to December) Performance Report, 2008/09 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2008/09 – Progress to 15th January 2009 (Pages 5 - 9)
5. Sheltered Housing Neighbourhood Centres Review update (Pages 10 - 18)
6. Future Demand & Budget pressures for Adaptations (Pages 19 - 26)
 - 6.1 - De-pooling Service Charges
 - 6.2 - Area Plan Priorities 2009/2010
7. Exclusion of the Press and Public
The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under those paragraphs listed below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
8. Canklow Regeneration Programme – Next Steps (Pages 42 - 57)
(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))
9. Rehousing of Residents at Cliffe Bank, Swinton (Pages 58 - 65)
(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	2 March 2009
3.	Title:	Neighbourhoods 3rd Quarter (April to December) Performance Report, 2008/09 All Wards Affected
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

This report outlines the 2008/09 key performance indicator 3rd quarter results for the Neighbourhoods elements of the Directorate.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member is asked to note the results and the remedial actions in place to improve performance.

7. Proposals and Details

At the end of the quarter, 13 (72%) key performance indicators are currently on track to achieve their year end targets. This is a deterioration from 90% last year.

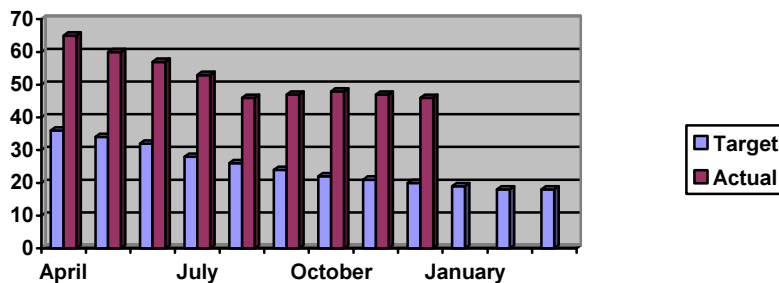
There are 5 indicators that are rated 'off' target, and are shown as a red triangle alert in Appendix A.

Exceptions

BV 212 Empty property relet times (ALMO)

Performance has improved since the start of the year but is still 'off target' and showing deterioration from 37 days to 46 days when compared with last year.

The number of void properties has decreased in December from 420 to 410.



NI 156 Number of households in temporary accommodation (Kirsty Everson)

Performance at end of December is 64 with a target of 51. This compares to 68 in November and ahead of the recovery plan control target of 80. Performance clinics have been held since September where operational issues were raised, an action plan has been developed to improve performance. January will see a further reduction in the number of people in temporary accommodation following the introduction of the new allocations policy in December.

Performance to the end of January 2009 is 58 households in temporary accommodation compared to the recovery plan control target of 75.

NM 72 Urgent repairs completed in time (ALMO).

Performance at the end of December is 97.86% with a target of 99%. Current trend is identifying a reduction in the % repairs completed in time.

BV 211a Programmed / Responsive repairs (ALMO).

Performance at the end of December is 47%, well behind the monthly control target of 59% planned and below the year end target of 53.66%.

NI 160 Overall satisfaction with the landlord service (Neighbourhoods).

There were 853 customer responses to the Status Survey completed in November 2008. 76% satisfaction against a target of 77%. Satisfaction has increased by 2% since the last survey.

8. Finance

The Councils financial management system is identifying rent lost as a result of voids of £948k. Based on current performance the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting a loss of income of £1.26m compared to £1.1m at the end of the last quarter.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The main risk is associated with the accuracy of our data which underpins each performance indicator. To mitigate this risk, the Directorate has developed a new Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan to improve the management of data quality.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The new national performance indicators contribute to the Councils Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) judgement which will be reported for the first time in November 2009. The Neighbourhoods elements of the Directorate are accountable for 14 National Indicators (NI). Some of these indicators are new so we are in the process of establishing reporting and measurement systems. Of the 14 indicators, 5 indicators are not yet available to be reported upon. The progress of these indicators are;

- 3 indicators (NI 3 Civic participation in the local area, NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood, and NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality. These are based on the Place Survey to be reported by March. Ownership of these are under negotiation between Chief Executives and Neighbourhoods.
- 2 indicators have been deferred by the Government (NI's 12 'Refused and deferred Houses in multiple Occupation' (HMO'S) licence applications leading to immigration enforcement activity) and NI 190 (Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health) to 2009/10, and
- 2 indicators are currently unavailable for reporting due to the lack of information. These relate to NI 182 'Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services'. Information has been received on the levels of satisfaction and reporting will be available for March and NI 183 – 'National issues for collection of baseline data from Consumer Direct', which is an annual return (i.e. reported at the end of the year only).

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The report has been discussed with Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate Management Team. The performance results for Neighbourhoods are attached (Appendix A). The indicators rated 'on target' are shown as a green star and those that are rated off target are shown as a red triangle alert.

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Appendix A: Neighbourhoods and Adult Services - Neighbourhoods Performance Indicator Outturns for December 2008 (3rd Quarter)

Line No.	YTD	Measure	Good performance & Measure type description	Baseline 07-08	December	This time last year	DoT from same time last year	08/09 Target	Responsible Director / PI Manager
Outcomes Framework 1: Improving Health and Emotional Well-being									
1	★	NI 184 Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Bigger is better	NA	80.00%	NA	NA	75.00%	Michelle Musgrave Janice Manning
Outcomes Framework 2: Improved Quality of Life									
2	★	BV 66a % Rent Collection	Bigger is better, 100% is best	98.47%	99.02%	98.85%	✓	98.49%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
3	★	BV 66b % of tenants in rent arrears	Smaller is better, 0% is best	2.89%	3.49%	2.82%	✗	2.87%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
4	★	BV 66c % of tenants with an NSP	Smaller is better, 0% is best	11.25%	9.06%	7.97%	✗	11.23%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
5	★	BV 66d % of tenants evicted	Smaller is better, 0% is best	0.27%	0.16%	0.19%	✓	0.26%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
6	▲	NM 72 Urgent repairs completed in time	Bigger is better, 100% is best	98.48%	97.86%	98.34%	✗	99.00%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
7	★	NM 73 Non-urgent repairs completed in time	Smaller is better, 0 is best	9.42	6.02	9.37	✓	9.00	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Simon Bell
8	▲	NI 160 Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services	Bigger is better, 100% is best	74.00%	76.00%	NA	NA	77.00%	Michelle Musgrave - Robin Walker
9	▲	BV 212 Average Relet Times	Smaller is better, 0 is best	37	46.14	35.00	✗	18	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Adrian Cheetham
Outcomes Framework 4: Increased Choice and Control									
10	★	BV 213 Homelessness cases prevented through housing advice casework	Bigger is better	8	6.30	6.00	✓	5	Kirsty Everson Martin Humphries
Outcomes Framework 6: Economic Well-being									
11	★	BV 64 Private sector homes demolished / made fit	Bigger is better	79	83	30	✓	120	Michelle Musgrave Paul Benson
12	★	NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered	Bigger is better	122	100	NA	NA	145	Michelle Musgrave Tracie Seals
13	★	NI158b % change in non decent council housing	Bigger is better 100% is best	29.70%	45.48%	18.86%	✓	54.95%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Ramona Youhil
14	★	PSA 7 Number of vulnerable households no longer living in decent accommodation in the private sector	Bigger is better	344	477	32	NA	420	Michelle Musgrave Paul Benson
15	★	NI 187 Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	Lower is better	NA	60	NA	NA	62	Michelle Musgrave Paul Maplethorpe
16	▲	NI 156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	Smaller is better	53	64	NA	NA	51	Kirsty Everson Martin Humphries
Outcomes Framework 9: Commissioning and Use of Resources									
17	▲	% Programmed / Responsive expenditure on repairs	Bigger is better	39.00%	47.00%	NA	✓	53.66%	2010 Rotherham Ltd - Gary Kyte
18	★	HMR2 % Housing Market Renewal Spend	Bigger is better, 100% is best	112.00%	64.20%	79.72%	✗	100.00%	Michelle Musgrave Joel Gouget
<p>▲ Red Triangle = Indicator did not hit target</p> <p>★ Green Star = Shows indicator did hit target</p> <p>↑ Improvement in performance from last year</p> <p>↓ Deterioration in performance from last year</p> <p>→ No change in performance since last year</p>									

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS
2.	Date:	Monday 2nd March 2008
3.	Title:	Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2008/09 – Progress to 15th January 2009
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

The report sets out details of the progress on the 2008/09 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) for the period to 15th January 2009.

6. Recommendations

THAT THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT ARE NOTED.

7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1 Schemes totalling £82.457m were approved by the Cabinet Member on 31st March 2008, revised to £79.011m on 30th June 2008 and further revised to £79.019m on 8th December 2008. As at 15th January 2009 spending on the HIP totalled £56.422m (71.40%) of the approved programme. Details of the progress on schemes within the HIP are listed in Appendix 1.
- 7.2 The programme is divided into two sections, between the schemes managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd (totalling £66.863m) and those managed by the Council (totalling £12.156m).

2010 Ltd Managed Schemes

- 7.3 To date, 2010 Ltd-managed schemes have incurred expenditure of £51.413m (76.89%).
- 7.4 2010 Ltd have indicated there is a potential risk of an additional £216k expenditure on the windows budget due to an increase in the number of windows that need to be fitted. 2010 Ltd will seek to minimise the potential financial risk and manage spending within the overall programme to offset any impact.
- 7.5 Following the December report to Cabinet Member flood costs have been finalised at £0.149m and is contained within the overall budget managed by 2010 Ltd

RMBC Managed Schemes

- 7.6 The remainder of the programme is monitored by the Council and £5.009m (41.21%) of the programme has been spent.
- 7.7 Several of the larger schemes have had little or no expenditure as yet, but most are projecting to be on target by the end of the year. These include:
- 1 **Disabled Adaptations, Public and Private Sector (£3.104m)**–
The problems identified in the last monitoring report with the invoicing of work from 2010 Ltd is continuing to contribute to the relatively low expenditure figures in Appendix 1 and has also affected the ability of the RMBC Grants team to effectively monitor the budget. However both RMBC and 2010 Ltd finance staff are working closely to resolve this issue.
 - 2 **Dinnington Transformational Change (£715k)** – Monksbridge Terrace Acquisitions may not complete this financial year but reserve projects

have been identified and it is expected that the funding identified will be spent.

- 3 **Non-Traditional Investment – Structural (£755k)** – Approval received from Cabinet Member in July to repair properties in Dalton, Catcliffe and Ulley. The programme commenced in early 2009 but it is now anticipated that two thirds of the work at Catcliffe (£500k) will be completed by the end of the financial year. This will result in a required commitment of £255k in 2009/10 and the corresponding resources will be rolled forward accordingly.
- 4 **Sheltered Housing Modifications (£1.706m)** – 2010 Rotherham Ltd began work on Phase 1 on 27th October and the tenders for Phase 2 have been evaluated. Provisional savings of £188k against the 2008/09 budget have been identified due to the competitive pricing by the building contractors.

8. Finance

- 8.1 To support the Approved Programme, resources totalling £79.011m were originally identified.
- 8.2 Receipts from Right to Buy (RTB) contribute to this total and sales to the end of October totalled 22 which is behind the revised yearly prediction of 100 with a forecast of not many more sales materialising. There is a risk that if no more RTB sales were achieved this could result in a £0.906m shortfall in resources, based on the current average usable amount received.

Cabinet Member may wish to consider requesting the use of part of the current balance of £3.471m from sale of HRA land which has not been used due to the removal of the ring-fence on capital receipts. This ring-fence previously allowed all HRA capital receipts to be utilised to fund the HIP. 100% of land receipts can be treated as 'usable' as long as they are used for Affordable Housing or Regeneration type works. In 2007/08 no such schemes were identified corporately for use on appropriate General fund schemes.

We may need to reprioritise schemes to take account of any shortfall in useable capital receipts.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- 9.1 The 2008/09 programme, as in previous financial years, is supported by assumed levels of RTB Receipts. The Council has no direct control over the numbers of these sales (which also affect HRA rent income and Major Repairs Allowance resources). In line with paragraph 8.2 it would be prudent to prepare options to reduce the programme by up to £1.2m.

- 9.2 The report has highlighted potential cost pressures relating to decent homes refurbishment (para 7.4), floods (para 7.5) and disabled adaptations (para 7.7.1) which will need to be managed and closely monitored in the year.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The HIP supports the following Corporate Plan Priority and Cross Cutting Themes and is central to the longer term Housing Strategy:

- Rotherham Safe
- Sustainable Development
- Fairness

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 31st March 2008
Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 30th June 2008
Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 15th September 2008
Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 13th October 2008
Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 10th November 2008
Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods 8th December 2008

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HIP FORECAST FUNDING 2008/09**Appendix 1**

	REVISED PROGRAMME 2008/09 £	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AS AT 15/01/09	PROJECTED EXPENDITURE AS AT 15/01/09
DECENT HOMES - PHASE 2			
Refurbishment	51,059,176	41,277,128	50,923,000
Windows	6,000,000	4,303,589	6,216,000
DSO DH Void Programme	1,500,000	461,517	1,647,000
Capital Management Fee	4,914,847	3,560,917	4,914,847
Phase 2 Sub Total	63,474,023	49,603,151	63,700,847
OTHER DECENT HOMES SCHEMES			
Replacement of Central Heating	1,225,000	853,374	1,225,000
Electrical Board & Bond	125,000	78,964	125,000
CO Meters to Vulnerable Properties	150,000	104,546	150,000
Install Smoke alarms + CO Meters to solid fuel properties	480,000	138,996	480,000
Other Decent Homes Sub Total	1,980,000	1,175,880	1,980,000
TOTAL DECENT HOMES EXPENDITURE	65,454,023	50,779,031	65,680,847
OTHER CAPITAL PROJECTS			
District Heating Conversions	750,000	572,271	750,000
Wharnccliffe Flats	125,000	21,202	48,000
Disability Discrimination Act Works	300,000	-4,208	150,000
One-Off Properties	100,000	16,660	100,000
Victim Support Scheme/Safer Homes	50,000	317	50,000
EPC Surveys	84,000	27,297	84,000
Flood Costs	0	464	149,000
Other Capital Projects Sub Total	1,409,000	634,003	1,331,000
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORED BY 2010	66,863,023	51,413,034	67,011,847
FAIR ACCESS TO ALL			
PRIVATE SECTOR			
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,404,000	729,475	1,404,000
PUBLIC SECTOR			
Disabled Adaptations (Public Sector)	1,700,000	390,357	1,700,000
Fair Access To All Sub Total	3,104,000	1,119,832	3,104,000
REGEN./NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL			
PRIVATE SECTOR			
Home Assistance Grants	30,000	23,112	26,000
Maltby Transformational Change Masterplan(RHB)	860,000	311,893	1,208,000
Dinnington Transformational Change Masterplan(RHB)	715,000	98,048	440,000
Rural & West Baseline Report(RHB)	0	8,249	0
Private Sector Support(RHB)	118,000	170,624	247,000
Move on Accommodation(RHB)	227,000	0	110,000
Thurcroft(RHB)	290,000	2,500	258,000
Pathfinder Projects	3,500,000	1,890,065	3,500,000
PUBLIC SECTOR			
Tarran Estates and Miscellaneous Properties	100,000	287,697	0
Non-Traditional Investment - Structural	754,542	8,630	500,000
Dis-Investment Non-Traditionals(RHB)	40,000	0	0
Small Environmental Schemes	50,000	3,872	51,000
Sheltered Housing Modifications(RHB)	1,706,000	519,493	1,441,000
Garage Site Investment	500,000	462,206	500,000
Regeneration/Neighbourhood Renewal Sub Total	8,890,542	3,786,389	8,281,000
OTHER - PUBLIC SECTOR			
Research & Information	82,000	75,427	83,000
'Key Choices' Property Shop	79,000	11,288	21,000
Carry Overs from 2007/08	0	16,278	16,278
Other Public Sector Sub Total	161,000	102,993	120,278
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORED BY RMBC	12,155,542	5,009,214	11,505,278
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	79,018,565	56,422,248	78,517,125
ESTIMATE OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE			
	£m		
Supported Capital Expenditure(R)	1.264		1.264
Major Repairs Allowance	13.235		13.235
Almo Funding - £55m Less £1.881m to repay 07/08 Unsupported Borrowing	53.119		53.119
Disabled Facilities Grant	0.832		0.842
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	1.600		1.600
General Fund Contribution To DFG's	0.572		0.572
Tenants Contributions to DFG Grants	0.000		0.026
Cont.to Garage Scheme Works	0.000		0.013
Regional Housing Board	2.329		2.329
Regional Housing Board C/F from 07/08	0.835		0.835
DCLG Survey Funding	0.000		0.008
Pathfinder Grant	3.500		3.500
Capital Receipts	1.725		0.474
TOTAL	79.011		77.817

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Cabinet Members for Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:-	2nd March 2009
3.	Title:-	Sheltered Housing Neighbourhood Centres Review update
4.	Directorate:-	Neighbourhood & Adult Services

5. Summary

On the 29th September 2008 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods received a report with proposals to review the usage and charging arrangements for the communal facilities attached to sheltered housing schemes. It was agreed that consultation with tenants and residents would take place, initially in relation to the charging policy. This report provides the outcomes from the consultation, as well as interim recommendations on proposed charges from April 2009.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

- **Notes the outcomes of the consultation process;**
- **Agrees to adopt the protocol in Appendix 1 in relation to the charges for the centres, to take effect from 6th April 2009;**
- **Defer any final decision on the use of the guest bedrooms until the broader review has taken place, and note the progress being made on this by the Neighbourhood Investment Team;**
- **Agree to the increase in laundry charges.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 On the 29th September 2008, it was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods that a full asset review should take place to appraise the options for the future use of the Neighbourhood centres attached to sheltered housing schemes. It was also agreed that specific consultation would take place in advance in relation to proposals to discontinue the provision of guest bedrooms, to increase the cost of using the laundry and to introduce a protocol for charges and use of the centres by tenants, residents and other stakeholders. The protocol is included as Appendix 1.

7.2 In line with what was agreed, a consultation programme commenced in November 2008 and was delivered by the Neighbourhood Centre Manager. The process was done by sending a letter explaining what was the consultation process would involve to every tenant in sheltered accommodation with on site communal facilities. A questionnaire was also sent with a prepaid return envelope. A series of 49 consultation meetings were held in Neighbourhood Centres to offer tenants a further opportunity to express their opinions. The response to the questionnaire was positive with 746 questionnaires returned. Overall attendance at the meetings was good, enabling lively discussions around the future use of the Neighbourhood Centres. The questionnaires were collated and analysed by the Neighbourhood and Adult Services Performance Team.

7.3 Overall, the response to the proposed changes was extremely encouraging. The vast majority of respondents agreed to the following proposals:

- the centres being hired to other groups at times where there is no regular tenant activity.
- Allowing the centre activities to involve the wider community with sensitivity to be taken into account in relation to activities such as grandchildren's parties and activities involving young people.
- Non-residents should be allowed to join in the regular activities as many tenants felt that activities would cease without their involvement.

Some concerns were however raised at the consultation meetings that the increased use of the centres may lead to more noise, parking problems and security issues on the schemes. In addition, there were mixed views about charging non residents for use of the centres, either by a regular weekly charge, or on a "pay as you go" basis. Indeed, a press article against the proposal to charge non residents was covered by the Rotherham Advertiser in relation to a centre with a regular bingo club involving the wider community.

7.4 On the specific questions relating to converting the guest bedroom in centres to other usage, and on increasing the laundry charges, again the response was mixed. During the consultation meetings a small number of tenants expressed the view that the guest bedroom was an important part of their tenancy agreement and that it benefits them if they live in a one bedroom bungalow, and need family to stay with them at times when they are taken ill. This opinion is not however reflected in the usage of this facility more broadly across the schemes, and some have not been utilised for many months/years. The proposed increase in the cost of the laundry charges was by far the most contentious issue of the consultation process. Although 51% of tenants were in favour of an increase, additional comments suggested that tenants felt that the proposed rise from 10p to £1 was too large an increase in one step and should be done in stages. The majority feedback suggested a rise to 50 pence.

7.5 Based on the above, it is proposed that:

- The protocol in Appendix 1 is introduced from 6th April 2009. The Neighbourhood Centre Manager should work with the wardens on every single scheme and establish where the pay as go approach should be introduced, and how the income collected would be safely deposited and accounted for. This includes identifying those non residents who would be willing to pay the weekly charge for full use of the buildings and making appropriate payment arrangements.
- The laundry charges are increased from 6th April 2009 from 10p per wash and 10p per dry to 50p, and from April 2010, this should be increased to £1 per wash and £1 per dry.
- Any decision about the longer term use of the guest bedrooms be deferred until the broader review has taken place.

7.6 It is also proposed that all tenants are contacted and given feedback from the consultation and details of what has been agreed. This should take place immediately to enable 1 months notice of the proposed changes taking effect.

7.7 In relation to the broader review of the centres, Appendix 2 provides a summary of the work being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Investment Team. It is proposed that consultation commences with Elected Members during March and April to discuss and review the information currently held about the centres and to determine options for their future use. This will also include further consultation with tenants, before the first set of recommendations are presented to the Cabinet Member in June, with final recommendation due in September 2009.

8. Finance

8.1 All tenants who live on a Sheltered or Aged Persons Scheme with a Communal Facility pay £3.98 per week communal facility charge. This gives

an estimated income of £445,000. This is the only source of income for the centres and is used to pay for maintenance, refurbishment, running costs and the Neighbourhood Centres Managers salary. All monies generated from the hire charges will be credited to the budget and reinvested back into the centres. The additional income will also be used to assist with meeting the costs of running the centres which has been increasing year on year.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

- 9.1** Neighbourhood centres have formed an integral part of RMBC's sheltered housing provision, and until now have been entirely funded from tenant's service charges. Any changes to the way sheltered housing is provided and funded would impact significantly on the viability of the centres in that they rely on income from tenants. Any proposals considered as part of the asset review will also need to ensure that the funding structure for the centres reflects their usage.
- 9.2** The current method of collecting charges for laundry is not sustainable, however most of the machines used in the laundry are not suitable for conversion to coin operated boxes. The introduction of the Key Fob system on Neighbourhood Centres will reduce the risk of the machines being used by non residents in the first instance. The wider asset review of the centres will need to take into account broader security issues and the overall control environment.
- 9.3** There has been some adverse publicity over the introduction of charges for non residents. However to satisfy the Housing Revenue Account rules, there must be some contribution for usage by non residents credited to the HRA. If income cannot be generated through the use of the protocol in Appendix 1, the Council would need to make provision from its General Fund resources to make a contribution in place of that due from non residents.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- 10.1** Neighbourhood Centres have the potential to be a community resource to assist older people and vulnerable people to live independently and contribute to their community. In addition they also offer opportunities to act as a base for more integrated local service delivery. However, since they were developed, usage of the centres, the profile of tenants and the role of the warden have all changed significantly. In addition, only a few centres are furnished to a modern, contemporary standard. Policy developments around self directed support and enabling older people to retain their independence do not necessarily mean that older people will want to use an on site facility, preferring to access community and commercial facilities available to the wider population e.g. using high street hairdressers, using family friendly pubs for social activities and celebrations etc. The asset review will need to take account of the broader development across the Council to ensure that the centres compliment, rather than duplicate existing resources available locally.

10.2 As an RMBC asset, the centres could offer opportunities for locality based office accommodation, or touch down points for agile workers. The Worksmart initiative will be engaged to ensure that all possible uses for the centres in the future are explored as part of the review.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:-

Sheltered Housing – Neighbourhood Centres Review update – 29 September 2008

Sheltered Housing Community Building Review – 2nd April 2007

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Appendix 1

Protocol for hire and use of the Neighbourhood Centres

In April 2007, the Council approved the principle that Neighbourhood Centres on sheltered schemes should be opened up to more wider community and non-resident use as a means of generating extra income and making best use of the buildings as a community resource. In line with this, any income received from hiring out centres, or through non residents using the centres would be credited and ring fenced for use within the overall budget.

In terms of resident usage, it is proposed that from 6th April 2009:

- all regular activities for the residents of schemes should be given priority over other activities
- activities should be pre booked using the booking system organised and managed by the Neighbourhood Centre Manager
- Any resident may book the centre for either a group activity or for more personal use such as to celebrate a birthday or anniversary. If a resident books the centre for personal use, the centre must remain available for other residents to access it as normal. Residents using the centres for their own use will be responsible for guests and visitors' conduct whilst on site.

In terms of non-resident usage, it is proposed that:

- Any residents living in a nearby sheltered or aged person property who does not have access to a Neighbourhood Centre, is offered the opportunity to use the facilities. If the use is to be regular (at least twice a week), it is proposed that a payment of the communal facility charge of £3.98 a week is negotiated and added to their tenancy agreement by way of a variation. The charge would then be collected as a service charge through the normal collection methods by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Any resident can arrange for this to take place through the Neighbourhood Centre Manager.
- For non- residents who wish to use the centres on a regular basis, but whom are not RMBC tenants, the weekly charge would need to be collected through an invoicing arrangement.
- Where existing activities already operating in the centres have non tenants participating, those non –residents will be charged on a “pay as you go” basis. The amount payable will be agreed between paying residents and the Neighbourhood Centre manager, with monies collected and deposited by either the organiser of that activity (such as a TARA treasurer) and paid over to the Warden working on the scheme. Alternatively, the Neighbourhood Centre will arrange for payments to be made periodically through the sundry debtors arrangements.

In terms of the centres being used by commercial business organisations, it is proposed that:

- All bookings will be made through the Neighbourhood Centre Manager at a cost of £10.00* per hour. Bookings must be made in advance and the Council's normal "conditions of hire" agreement will be issued relating to the use of Council buildings. This charge will also apply to small business operating form centres such as hairdressers.

In terms of centres being used for community and voluntary based organisations, it is proposed that:

- All bookings will be made through the Neighbourhood Centre Manager at a cost of £6.70* per hour. Bookings must be made in advance and the Council's normal "conditions of hire" agreement will be issued.
- This will include the use of the Centres for Councillors' surgeries, those run by the Neighbourhood Champions and any ad-hoc meetings such as Safer Neighbourhood Teams events.

Where there are requests to use the centres for activities involving young children (e.g. as a play group, crèche or to hold birthday parties for grandchildren), the Neighbourhood Centre Manager will conduct consultation in advance with every tenant on the scheme before a decision is made to the hire out the centre in this way. This is to ensure that concerns raised by some tenants about children using the centres is addressed, without providing a blanket exclusion on any activities involving children and young people.

No fee will be charged for use of the centres in the following circumstances:

- Where an event/ training/ surgery has been organised by the tenants of the sheltered scheme as part of their social activities.
- Where the centre is being used to hold meetings of local TARA's (Tenants and Residents Associations). There are often members of TARA's who are not residents of the particular sheltered scheme. This is because TARAs often cover geographical areas broader than the sheltered site. Usage will still be free as long as there is at least one sheltered housing tenant involved in the TARA for the scheme at which it is operating. If the TARA has no tenants from the scheme involved, then the normal hire charges will apply.

This protocol will be reviewed annually and will be managed by the **Neighbourhood Centre Manager**.

**These charges are in line with charges for similar venues made by other Council departments.*

Appendix 2

Neighbourhood Investment Services are undertaking an asset review of all Neighbourhood Centres. The review will appraise each centre to establish whether they are sustainable in their current form to enable us to determine a future use for the centres.

To support recommendations an overview database providing full details of each centre has been created, the details include:

- Centre Location
- Ward
- The facilities available within each centre.
- Condition of the centre.
- Service requirements/usage
- Identify risks
- Rental income, expenditure and the payback period
- Costs to improve to ensure 'fit for purpose' and DDA compliance
- Initial community comments/concerns/aspirations
- Other community facilities within the neighbourhood.

The database has highlighted that the expenditure, usage and investment requirement of centres varies significantly. This in addition will help to identify sustainable options relating to future use and viability

Neighbourhood Investment Services are also undertaking a review of Community Buildings in alignment with the Neighbourhood Centres Review. A mapping exercise of all Neighbourhood Centres and Community Buildings has been undertaken to establish where the facilities are located and the potential option of merging the activities / service provision where facilities are identified in close proximity to another. This has the potential to create cost savings, resolve issues outstanding with community group management at specific locations and provide an opportunity for an alternative sustainable development.

Resident consultation is being undertaken regarding the future use of guest bedrooms and the option to allow non residents, and others to hire the centres. Questionnaires are currently being evaluated to establish whether residents favour the centres being used in the wider context. This will include use for local service providers E.g. Safer Neighbourhood bases and Health provision.

Consultation with Ward Members will commence in the period March to April 2009 to discuss the review and information on centres within their wards and determine options that could support their future use.

Once initial consultation with Members has been completed, draft recommendations can then be formulated based on their use, condition, investment requirement, location and distance to other community facilities within the area.

Initial Recommendations will consist of:

- **Retain and Investment-** retain the centre in RMBC ownership for the use of the community and provide investment to improve the condition of the building.
- **Investigate demand and review-** work with the community to investigate ways to increase the usage of the centre and retain in our ownership. Following this exercise, review to establish a final recommendation.
- **Investigate an alternative use-** the centre is unsustainable in its current form. There is no demand and a high investment requirement therefore RMBC will investigate an alternative use for the building/land.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	2 March 2009
3.	Title:	Future Demand & Budget pressures for Adaptations
4.	Directorate:	NEIGHBOURHOOD & ADULT SERVICES

5. Summary

This report provides details about projected demand and subsequent budget pressures affecting the funds that the Council makes available to manage requests from disabled people to carry out adaptations to their properties. It follows on from a report presented on the 13th October 2008 in relation to the general pressures affecting the budget which at that time included works associated with the Decent Homes programme. This report provides an overview of:

- The number of Adaptations undertaken during 2007/2008 and the current year to the 31st January 09.
- An estimate of the likely costs over the next 3 years of adaptations and the implication on the budget.
- An analysis of the significant changes in the number of adaptations undertaken recently.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member considers the report and agrees that a bid to the Corporate Capital programme goes forward to meet the costs associated with the anticipated demand for adaptations in future years as detailed in the report.**

7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1** On 13th October 2008, a report was presented to the Cabinet Member outlining the general pressures on the funding available to provide adaptations to disabled people. At that time, it was agreed that one of the pressures relating to delivering adaptations aligned to the Decent Homes programme, should be contained by 2010 Rotherham Ltd as part of the overall Decent homes programme. This decision was welcomed and did alleviate the overall budget pressure, however there still remains more demand for adaptations than the available resources.
- 7.2** On the 7th September 2005, The Cabinet approved to increase the funding available to manage the projected future demands for adaptations. The indicative amounts agreed were as follows:

Year	Public sector Adaptations (Council stock)	Private Sector adaptations (for which the Disabled Facilities Grant is received as a contribution)
2005/06	£1.72m	£1.68m
2006/07	£1.72m	£1.68m
2007/08	£1.31m	£1.31m
2008/09	£1.43m	£1.43m
2009/10	£1.56	£1.56

- 7.3** For 2008/9, in line with what was agreed, the Council has maintained an additional contribution to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) - this is the grant provided by CLG to all Councils to use to meet their statutory obligations to provide adaptations in private sector accommodation. The total available for private sector adaptations was £1,404,000, of which £832,000 was comprised of the DFG. The Housing Investment programme also prioritised resources for public sector adaptations and the budget approved by the Cabinet Member for 2007/8 was £1.7m – higher than that anticipated in 2005. However, due to the reduced amounts of capital receipts from council house sales within the year, in part as a result of the economic downturn and the impact on the housing market, the resources available for the public sector have not reached the anticipated budget. This will be reported in a subsequent paper on the Housing Investment Programme, including recommendations to balance the budget.
- 7.4** **Demographic and Population changes** - Based on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹ conducted in 2007, there are an estimated 18,471 households in Rotherham with one or more members in an identified support needs group. This represents 17.3% of all households which is higher than the national average of 13.4%. 22% have a long term illness - 10.5% of whom are of working age with a long term limiting illness. The figure for

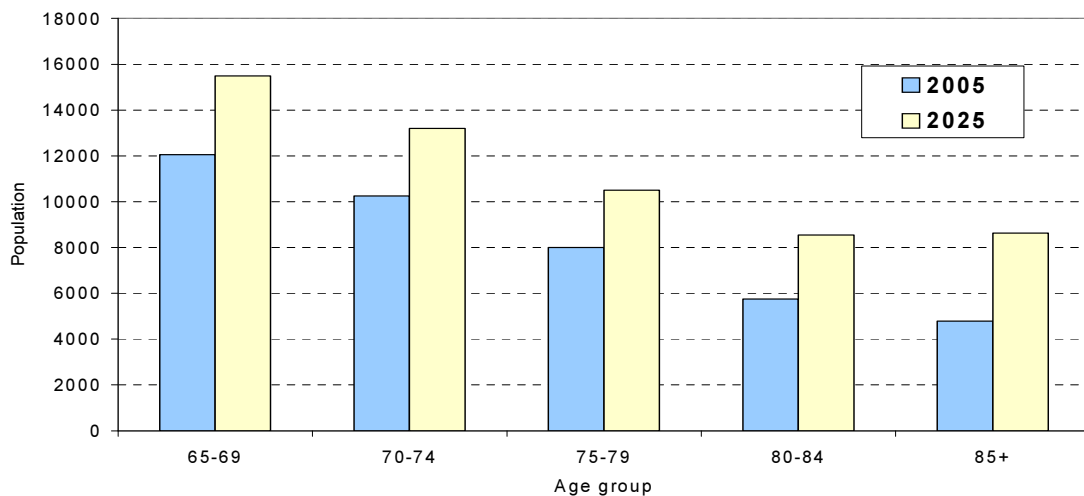
¹ S.H.M.A : Strategic Housing Market Assessment, *Fordham Research*, September 2007

children with a limiting long- term illness is identified in the 2001 census as being 2,913. This is 5.02% of all dependent children in Rotherham, which is 16% above the national average. The RMBC Housing Strategy also states that 34% of all households have one person with a disability and that a third of all households with a disabled person are likely to require further adaptations to their home.

According to JSNA², The most significant demographic change occurring in Rotherham is the growth in the number of older people. Rotherham now has more people aged over 50 (1 in 3 people) than people under 16 (1 in 5 people). The current projection for the number of over 65's in Rotherham is set to increase by approximately 3% by 2010. 40.8% of the Rotherham population is currently identified as over 65 and the projection to year 2020 indicates an increase by 13.6% which would mean that 54.4% of the Rotherham population would be aged 65 an over. In addition, the number of people over 85 years will increase by 80%. Although it is anticipated that people will remain healthy for longer than they do now, the increase in numbers of older people will have significant implications for health and social care services and for informal carers.

7.5 Projections for the growth in the numbers of older people are shown below:

Predicted Growth in the over 65 Population Groups from 2005 to 2025-2-p3



7.6 Demand levels for adaptations - The statistical analysis above suggests that the consistent and incremental change in demographics will generate higher demand for adaptations to support individuals sustain their independence. This has already been experienced and the increase in the number of adaptations is evidenced in the table below:

Year	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09 to Jan 09
No. of	485	426	506	485	694	828

² J.S.N.A.: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, September 2008

adaptations						
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- 7.7 The data above suggests that in 2008/9 the Adaptations team has experienced a 29 % increased in referrals compared to 2007/08. This is primarily attributed to the response by the Community Occupational Therapist team in dealing with an outstanding backlog of cases. By April 2009, it is assumed that there will be a gradual stabilisation of the level of normal through-put cases. Further stabilisation of demand from the public sector will be achieved by the impact of the adaptations carried out through the Decent Home programme. Figures to date suggests the installation of 586 Level access showers and 836 over bath showers. Nevertheless, a combination of the changes in demographic and the level of demands observed in the last five years indicate that there is likely to be an increase in demand for all types of adaptations that will have to be undertaken to meet the needs of disabled people living in Rotherham.
- 7.8 **Managing the impact of increased demand** - A strategy to manage the increases in cases in 2008/9 has been implemented by the Adaptations team to deal with increases in referrals. Whilst the current budgetary pressure can in part be attributed to the backlog of Occupational Therapy cases, it is important to note that this is likely to provide an indicator of the true demand in Rotherham for adaptations. Based on the budget set at the start of the year, should all the backlog cases up to January 2009 and the normal throughput of referrals (currently at a rate of 60 per month at an average cost of £4K per adaptation) be processed by the Adaptations team, then the budget would be overspent. To ensure that the remaining funding available for adaptations for 2008/9 remains within budget, the Housing Access Manager has strengthened the internal process for agreeing work, with each case being heavily scrutinised before being considered for approval. The Adaptations Panel, which considers all cases, has improved terms of reference and a new preferred partner contract has commenced so that costs for adaptations have now been agreed on a schedule of rates from 3 approved suppliers. However, as at 30th January 2009, there are 282 cases outstanding that have not as yet been processed due to the potential financial impact on the available resources. The total backlog of cases will increase by the end of the Financial year to 402 cases should referrals continue at the anticipated rate i.e. 60 per month. The impacts of this increase on overspend would then be as follow:

	Awaiting Approval	Potential cost of backlog cases	Page 29 Remaining available budget as at January 09	Potential Overspend as at 31 st March 09
Public sector	176 cases	£704,000	£214, 000	£960,000
Private sector	106 cases	£424,000	£143, 000	£640,000

7.9 Recommendations – Although pressure on the Adaptation’s budgets will be reduced in the longer run as benefits from the Decent Home programme and the 2010 Ltd Preferred contract agreement filters into the wider system, the ongoing demand and the changes in demographic profile require that there should still be an increase in the Adaptations budget for the next 2 years from 2010/11. It is proposed that a bid is made to the Corporate Capital programme to increase the amounts available from 2010/11. Assuming the Occupational Therapy backlog is reduced by April 09 and the demand for adaptations through the normal route does not exceed more than 20%, it is proposed that funding should be increased by 6% for each year from 2010/11. This would mean increasing funding by 6% for the public sector from the available resources in the Housing Investment programme. For the private sector, it is proposed that the Council’s contribution is increased by 6% more than the previously required 40% top up i.e. corporate funds would be allocated that represent 46% of the Government’s allocation under the Disabled Facilities Grant.

The table below represents the proposed sums that should be prioritised in the Housing Investment Programme from 2010/11 for public sector adaptations:

Year		Cost above baseline with 6% uplift for each year	Total budget required for public sector
2010/11	2009/10 baseline £1.8m	£114,894k	£1.914
2011/12	2010/11 baseline £1.914	£122K	£2.037m

The table below represents the proposed sums to be bid for corporately for the private sector budget, with an assumption that the private sector government allocation fund will increase by 2% year on year:

Year	Disabled Facilities’ Grant from CLG	RMBC contribution to Private sector adaptations @ 46% of the DFG	Total budget for Private sector
2010/11	£866K	£609K	£1.474M
2011/12	£883K	£625K	£1.508M

8. Finance

- 8.1** Rotherham's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocation for 2009/10 has been approved for the sum of £849K as the specified capital grants. In the past, Local Authorities have been required to fund at least an additional 40% of the grant value through their own resources. CLG have now lifted this requirement with effect from April 2008 however the increasing demand for adaptations supports that this practice should be maintained.
- 8.2** For the public sector, funding is made available through the Housing Investment Programme allocation either from Capital Receipts or Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) and it is proposed that this is uplifted by 6% each year from 2010. The proposed expenditure for 2009/10 is set at £1.8m. This figure includes all minor adaptations types of works up to the value of £1,000 which are ordered directly by the Occupational Therapists to 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Historical data shows the cost for minor adaptations averages to the value of £250,000 per year. This is 13.8% of the public sector funding based on a budget of £1.8M.

9. Risk and Uncertainties

- 9.1** A major risk to funding through the HIP allocation relates to Capital Receipts which are not expected to be high in the following financial year due to the current economic climate. This may impact on available resources to the HIP allocation for adaptations.
- 9.2** Insufficient allocations for the provision of adaptations will impact on the Council's ability to deliver its mandatory duties, as well as impacting on performance indicators monitored by CSCI. The current backlog of cases will directly impact on the waiting times for both major and minor adaptations - it is projected that the average waiting time will increase to 12, against a target of 4 weeks. The alternative would be to process all outstanding claims and allow the budget to be overspent. As stated earlier, the increased demand in 2008/9 has been driven by the increased level of referrals from Occupational Therapists as a result of reductions in their backlog of assessments, as well as overall increases in demand. There is a risk that should this demand continue the Adaptations backlog will also continue, impacting on customers needs. Failure to meet these objectives could also impact on the CSCI star rating for Adult services although the adaptations indicators are not threshold PAF indicators.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- 10.1** Promoting independence is a key area within the CSCI Self assessment survey which is informed by the timescales taken to deliver adaptation's service. The current backlog of cases will directly impact on the waiting time for both major and minor adaptations. The target time to commence adaptation work following an assessment is four weeks. Due to the current

funding pressures the focus is on the urgent cases in order to remain within budget which is in turn resulting in a backlog. There are 282 cases in the backlog system which is expected to stabilise at approximately 400 cases by year end. To date 565 cases have been processed within 4 weeks period as specified within contractual agreements with providers. This means that by year end only 58.5% of cases would have been dealt within a 4 weeks period.

The requirement to undertake adaptations clearly aligns to a number of the key priorities set out in the Councils Corporate Plan. These include:

- Rotherham Alive; Rotherham people will feel good and they will be active and live life to the full, have fun and have good lives.
- Rotherham Safe; People will be protected and nurtured and a preventative approach will be taken to minimise accidents, hazards and to develop resilience.

10.2 Government emphasis is increasingly being placed on health improvement and the prevention of disability, these is reflected in the government document "Independence Matters." This document sets out the framework to modernise services for disabled people by:

- enabling people to live as independently as possible and improve their quality of life;
- creating fairer, more consistent services;
- developing services that respond to the expressed needs and aspirations of disabled people;
- ensuring that services fit the needs of individuals; and
- Maximising the control that people have over the services they receive.

10.3 In the "National Service Framework for Long Term Conditions", there is clear reference to how Local Authorities need to improve the delivery and timeliness of adaptations provided to disabled people and specifically states how Local Authorities should meet this requirement.

11. Background and Consultation

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods –a National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society. CLG - 2008

The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (SI 2008/1189)

The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/1190)

Disabled Facilities Grant - The package of changes to modernise the programme (CLG)

Projected Future Demands for Disabled Adaptations – The Cabinet, 7th Sept 2005

Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods - Disabled Adaptations funding

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	2nd March 2009
3.	Title:	De-pooling Service Charges
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

The Audit Commission recently inspected the ALMO and highlighted that some of the specialist services could be potentially de-pooled to make the charging structure equitable and fair for all tenants. De-pooling in this context relates to situation whereby the tenant only pays for the services that they receive.

The Inspectors highlighted that the costs of cleaning communal areas, and those associated with the provision of an estate caretaker were currently pooled. This means the costs for these services are met by all tenants of the Borough, irrespective of whether they received the services or not.

The report considers a number of options for Cabinet to consider which are outlined in the proposals and details

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member considers the following options:

1. Commissions the work associated with de-pooling charges in respect of:

- A. Communal cleaning and caretaking services.**
- B. De-pools charges for one of the services identified**

If commissioned a further report will be presented giving details of how the project will be implemented.

Or

3. Considers that no action is necessary as the current charging structure is equitable and fair.

7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1 De-pooling in the context of rent relates to situation whereby the tenant only pays for the services that they receive. It is currently the case that additional charges for sheltered accommodation, such as Rothercare, Communal Facilities and the Warden, are borne by the recipients of those services, so they are effectively de-pooled.

The actual rent charged for the Sheltered Services is established by dividing the costs of providing that service by the number of users. This is then shown as a separate charge item on the rent account, so tenants can clearly identify what they are paying for.

The recent Audit Commission inspection identified that the costs of cleaning communal areas, and those associated with the provision of the estate caretaking service were currently pooled. This in effect meant that the costs associated with these services were being met by all tenants throughout the Borough, irrespective of whether they received a service or not.

This practice goes against the Audit Commissions equitable and fair charging structure for rent and the issue was identified as a potential weakness in the Commissions feedback sessions during their recent inspection. In addition it was also highlighted as a recommendation in HQN's indicative inspection report in February last year

To address the issue the Council would have to consider changing its charging structure and levy additional rent for those services identified in this report

- 7.2 In terms of costs and options the following issues have been identified:

Communal Cleaning - the cost of providing the communal cleaning service is currently £140k per annum. The cleaning service is currently received by 3,850 Council tenants and 146 Leaseholders, all living in communal blocks of flats.

In terms of funding Leaseholders currently pay £22 per year, which brings in £3,200 in revenue. The remaining £136,800 comes directly from the HRA, and is funded by rent payers.

De-pooling involves reducing the rent for a property by the value of the service charge and then restructuring the reduced rent to the formula rent that has remained unchanged¹.

To bring in an effective structure all the costs associated with the communal flats would have to be stripped back to get to a position where the tenants rent is differentiated from all the other charges. Once this position had been attained service charges could be built up dependant on tenant's choice and the level of services they wished to receive.

It is estimated that an additional charge of 0.75p per week would have to be levied to recover the costs currently associated with communal cleaning. It is also anticipated that the current charge for leaseholders would have to be uplifted to £35 per annum, so that irrespective of tenure the charges would be equally apportioned.

¹ HQN Briefing – Page 1 Implementation of tenant service charges by Tony Huff December 2008

Housing Benefit confirmed that cleaning communal areas would be eligible for rebate. Using this assumption and the fact that 64% of tenants are in receipt of some form of Housing Benefit, out of the 3,850 tenants affected only 1,386 will be potentially liable to pay the charge. The remaining 2,464 could have the charges met by increased rent rebate.

Estate Caretaking - In terms of estate caretaking the issue is more complex as the majority do not work at a fixed location. The service is currently split into north, south and central areas where staff can work anywhere within these localities. Only 3 of the central caretakers spend any significant time at a particular location and these are linked to refuse collection duties at Beeversleigh, Masborough and Warncliffe flats.

Two options are proposed:

a) Recharge the costs for the specialist caretakers only – using information from activity based costing we have established that the 3 caretakers spend 34% of their time carrying out specialist functions associated refuse collection in the areas identified. A total of 468 tenants derive benefit from this particular service and to de-pool the charges the costs associated with 1 full time equivalent, plus equipment and materials, would have to be recharged. To recover these costs it is estimated that each resident would have to pay an additional 0.72 per week in de-pooled charges.

Or

b) Determine that all tenants benefit from the caretaking service and have potential access to service provision within their own neighbourhood. This would in effect mean the current charging structure was fair and should remain the same.

Housing Benefit confirm that the regulatory requirement for the payment of rent rebate is dependant on 'whether the service is connected to the provision of adequate accommodation'. The Benefit Service indicates that the specialist work associated with refuse collection and chute maintenance would make this element eligible for Housing Benefit.

Using the same rational as communal cleaning, if 64% of tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit then only 168 tenants out of 468 would be liable to pay an additional charge. The remaining 300 would have any increase met by additional rent rebate.

7.3 If de-pooling is considered an option the Authority wishes to pursue, then the following actions would need to take place:

- a) All the costs associated with the communal flats would have to be re-calculated to get to a position where we are able to differentiate what is rent and what a service charge is.
- b) Consultation – Neighbourhood staff would have to consult with tenants and leaseholders about the level of service required and the amount of rent they would be willing to pay for such services. The process would enable residents to make more informed choices about the services they received.
- c) Amending ANITE's rent module – sub-accounts would have to be set up for rent accounts affected by the new charging structure.
- d) Statutory Notification – A 28 day notification letter itemising the new charges would have to be sent to the all tenants affected by the changes.

- e) Further work would have to be carried out with Housing Benefits to ensure all the new charges where benefit eligible and that the IT systems could post payments to rent accounts.

8. Finance

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with the HRA Accountant and de-pooling the charges as outlined would be cost neutral, after taking account of administration and contract costs.
- 8.2 It is envisaged that the proposal would have no impact on the current level of subsidy.
- 8.3 The de-pooling of service charges from the rent would reduce the rent into a net rent figure, which would pay for the rental for accommodation only. Under the rent restructuring rules the properties affected by service charge de-pooling would see an exceptional rise in their rents back to the previous rent level before the de-pooling of service charges².
- 8.4 The following model gives an indication as to the effect of applying a £5 service charge³.

	Normal Rent Restructuring	With de-pooled Service Charge of £5
Formula rent 2008/09	£58.60	£58.60
Actual rent 2007/08	£47.60	£47.60
2008/09 uplifted rent (6/7 actual rent x RPI x ½%)	$£47.60 \times 1.039 \times 1.005 =$ £49.81	$(£47.60 - £5.00) \times 1.039 \times 1.005 =$ £44.48
2008/09 calculated actual rent (uplifted rent + {formula rent – uplifted rent}/9)	$£49.81 + (£58.60 - 49.81)/9 =$ £50.79	$£44.48 + (£58.60 - 44.48)/9 =$ £46.05
Calculated rent + service charge	£50.79	$£46.05 + £5.00 =$ £51.05
Tenants' limit rent (uplifted rent + £2)	$£49.81 + £2 =$ £51.81	$£49.81 + £2 =$ £51.81
Actual rent to be charged + service charge (lower of limit rent and calculated rent)	£50.79	£51.05
Additional income		£0.26

- 8.5 In this example the LA is gaining £0.26 additional income from the tenant through de-pooling. If however the calculated total charge was greater than £51.81 then the limit rent would apply and the rent would need to be reduced so that the total limit was not exceeded. The service charge element would not be adjusted.⁴
- 8.6 For rent restructuring purposes increases in charges each year are limited to RPI + 0.5% + £2 week covering both the tenant rent + service charge increases. This includes during the process of de-pooling. Service charges once de-pooled can only be increased by RPI + 0.5%⁵.

² HRA Accountant – Nisar Ahmed

³ HQN Briefing – Page 2 Implementation of tenant service charges by Tony Huff December 2008

⁴ HQN Briefing – Page 2 Implementation of tenant service charges by Tony Huff December 2008

⁵ HQN Briefing – Page 1 Implementation of tenant service charges by Tony Huff December 2008

9. Risks and uncertainties

- 9.1 Failure to de-pool charges could result in criticism at the next Audit Commission inspection as the Authority could be seen as not having a fair and equitable charging structure.
- 9.2 The tenants that are currently subsidising the identified services but derive no benefit from it may challenge the current charging structure as being unjust. This could be difficult to defend if the Local Government Ombudsman were to become involved.
- 9.3 Housing Benefits have made an initial determination that the charges relating to communal cleaning and the specialist caretakers would be eligible for Housing Benefit. But they require more detail about the cleaning contract costs and the duties and responsibilities within the specialist caretaker's job description.
- 9.4 Implementing additional charges during the 'credit crunch' could have an impact on affordability especially when tenants have had above inflationary rent increase, at 6.9%, for the past 2 years. This could bring adverse publicity to the Council and ALMO, at a time when the economy is in recession.
- 9.5 Even though the majority of tenants (64%) are in receipt of Housing Benefits and will have any increase met by rent rebate, a significant number will still be affected. This could place this group on the margins of poverty, whilst those eligible for Benefits remain trapped where it not viable for them to get paid employment.
- 9.6 Conversely the revised charging structure could increase the number of tenants eligible for Housing Benefit. The revised rent would be set against the claimant's applicable amount, to assess if they are eligible for rent rebate. Indeed if a new claim were successful it could passport the applicant to other forms of benefit. For example Supporting People Grant and other non-housing related benefits, such as free school meals.
- 9.7 To test the assumption that creating service charges will detrimentally affect the demand for certain types of property, benchmarking has taken place with RSL's that have already carried out this procedure. The Shoreline Group, Stockton and Harrow have all carried out de-pooling to some extent and early indications highlight that there has been little impact on demand. The organisations contacted said tenants seem content with de-pooling charges as it increased local choice about what services are provided and they can have some influence over what is charged, and how it is charged. It is also seen to be fairer and more transparent – paying for services you get. It increases engagement of tenants in the cost of providing services, introducing an additional driver to obtain value for money. It can help prioritise spending – as with leaseholders, tenant priorities can change when a cost is attached to an option.
- 9.8 Any alteration to the rent structure could impact on the income collection rate. If bad debt provision is assessed at 2%, then it not unreasonable to assume that amending the charges could add £3k to the actual arrears. In context this would only be a 0.3% increase to an outstanding debt of £942K.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- 10.1 Failure to implement a fair and equitable charging structure across the areas highlighted in this report could invoke criticism from the Audit Commission at the next inspection of the Housing Service.
- 10.2 In terms of Policy the tenancy agreement and sign-up process for the properties affected by the recommendations in this report would to be amended. This would enable the correct charges to be implemented from the onset of a new tenancy

11. Background Papers and Consultation

HQN Indicative Inspection Report

Audit Commission Interim Report

HQN briefing – Implementation of Tenant Service Charges

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	2nd March, 2009
3.	Title:	Area Plans Priorities 2009/10
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

In July 2008 the Government published the '**Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power**' White Paper which takes forward and develops the commitments made in the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper and states that a new 'duty for Councils to promote democracy' will be introduced.

The **New National Indicator NI 4** encourages councils to "increase the number of people who feel they can influence decision making

This report details the consultation process undertaken to develop the 2009/10 Area Plans and identify key local issues, including details of consultation activities, number of residents consulted and activities undertaken to ensure inclusion of hard to reach groups.

6. Recommendations

The Cabinet Member is asked to receive the report and note the progress made to date

7. Proposals and Details

The engagement and involvement of the community plays a vital role in ensuring the success of the Council's Corporate Plan, Rotherham Partnerships Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

The Area Plan Consultation is a two way process with communities and individuals to find out the things that matter to them, their priorities and to use this information to work in partnership with locally based services and make improvements to the area. This is done by delivering projects so that Rotherham is a better place to live and which provide opportunities for local communities to;

- Work with local people to improve their quality of life
- Take action to tackle local issues
- Enable communities to influence plans and services for the area (including those of partners) to make sure they are what people want
- Increase public participation in the decision making process – so that residents are aware that the council actively seeks and values their input
- Bring together all those who live and work in an area in a positive and active partnership
- Work with communities to celebrate their areas so that people feel they belong to the Community and get on well together

The Area Plan Consultation, like all surveys however reliable, can only provide a snapshot at a particular point in time, and is based on a sample.

The 2008 Rotherham Place Survey sample size was 1,890 which works out at 270 people per Area Assembly. The Area Plan Consultation process was 3,200 people as detailed in Appendix 1.

Differences in the numbers of people that the Area Assemblies were able to consult with were influenced by factors such as people refusing to take part because they did not feel that their response could change anything, differences in numbers of vol/com sector groups in the Area Assembly Area , other consultations which have recently taken place, i.e. Parish Planning and the Place Survey itself, as well as consultation undertaken by partners in the statutory and vol/com sector (consultation fatigue).

Whilst it is useful to see responses across each Area Assembly, comparisons should not be made as the consultation across each Area Assembly, whilst planned and inclusive of all the relevant target groups cannot be identical.

Care therefore needs to be taken with the findings.

The consultation process to identify the priorities of local citizens in each area was spread over a three month period from October to December 2008.

7.1 Survey Methodology

Although various methods of consulting with people were used to meet the needs of specific groups, a robust and consistent consultation process was agreed which met with the guidelines contained in the CCI Framework.

The Area Assemblies utilised an on-line survey format to enable consistency across all areas and the ability to compare responses and priorities. This survey was completed either electronically on-line, during face to face targeted consultations or at other local community or focus groups within the vol/com sector and partners, street surgeries and walkabouts, visioning events, and young people's conferences.

This softer approach enabled the engagement of harder to reach groups such as younger/older people or people from BME Communities who might not be reached through traditional forums.

7.2 Target Groups

This year the Neighbourhood Partnership team developed a consultation plan and then within this plan each Area Assembly team was asked to develop their own localised plan for their consultation, ensuring that the consultation included all the relevant groups, ages, gender, ethnicity etc and so that recording of the 'softer consultation methods' could take place. Consultation also included TARA's, local businesses and carers groups.

7.3 Survey Questions

Desk top research took place to identify concerns highlighted at public meetings, from within existing reports or planning documents including partner and stakeholder information which would be reflected in the survey questions. Questions to be included in the consultation were also developed following consultation with partners including NHS Rotherham and South Yorkshire Police.

Questions were identified which could be clearly linked to the themes within the Sustainable Communities Strategy across all areas which would reflect previously identified priorities a 'reality check' approach to what was identified in last years plans.

- "On the whole, do you think that over the last 12 months your local area has got better or worse as a place to live",
- "Thinking about where you live, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving including health, facilities and services, education and skills and crime and Community safety.

This year the Area Assemblies consultation was aligned with the questions within the Place Survey in relation to whether or not

- "People feel informed about their local area"
- "People feel they are able to influence decision making"
- "Whether or not they are aware of the work of the Area Assemblies"
- "Whether or not people wish to become involved in improving the Community" (a range of options was offered, including Area Assembly meetings or volunteering , other local Community groups or organisations or specific focus groups).

7.4 Priorities

From the Area Planning consultation exercise each area was able to identify priorities which can be clearly linked to the wider priorities and objectives of the Rotherham Partnerships Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, particularly linking in to the Safe and Proud themes.

The top ten priorities were identified for each Area Assembly. (attached as Appendix 2). Whilst the numbers of Area Assembly consultation samples was inconsistent, the results can be seen to be reflective of the community as they reflect the outcomes of other consultations undertaken by our partners in the statutory and vol/com sector. The top 3 priorities across all the Area Assemblies were:

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Fear of Crime
- Street Scene issues (clean streets/roads and pavements).

7.5 Next steps

Area Plan priorities will be included in service planning across directorates via the Council's Service Planning checklist (Chief Executives Performance Management). The priorities will also be linked into the Proud Board where dissemination across Rotherham's Theme Boards will be agreed.

Because the Area Plan Consultation process is in effect a snapshot of people's views at a set time, some of the information contained in the survey, in relation to the 'any other comments' that people made when completing the survey may require further investigation. This will be undertaken in conjunction with key partners at a specific focus group, for example comments regarding anti social behaviour may need to be looked at in more detail to identify if the ASB issue is across the Area Assembly area or targeted to a specific area or group of people in a community. This intelligence could then be addressed through the Area Assembly Neighbourhood Action Group.

Priorities from the consultation will be presented to Coordinating Groups throughout January and area plan actions will be developed. These priorities will also inform projects submitted under the Area Assemblies Devolved Budgeting Process to be implemented from April 2009.

It is vital that the information gained from the consultation about the numbers of people who feel they can influence decision making and who wish to get involved with Area Assemblies is used by the Area Assembly teams, particularly ensuring that people who want to be involved are offered the opportunities to do so in the ways they expressed. An important element this year will be to feedback to local communities the outcomes of the consultation in terms of priorities but also the outcomes of project proposals submitted under the devolved budget process which will address actions to meet the community priorities identified. This should enable people to feel that they can influence local decision making if they can see tangible results and particularly if projects are delivered organisations or groups they are familiar with.

8. Finance

This report has no current financial implications for RMBC.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The principal risk associated with the identification of priorities and successful Area Planning Consultation, is the potential lack of ownership and commitment from key delivery partners. This risk will be addressed by clear statements of ownership of key actions in the Area Plans and a robust performance management structure overseen by the Neighbourhood Partnership Unit Manager and the 7 Area Partnership Managers.

A further risk is ensuring that the timetables for the Area Plan/Community consultation meet the timescales set for feeding into the Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The desired outcome for successful Area Plans is that they will be integrated into RMBC's Neighbourhoods Service Plan, Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement as well as delivering against the Outcomes Framework as follows:

Making a positive contribution – Councils ensure that people who use services are encouraged to participate fully in their Community and that their contribution is valued equally with other people.

The Area Assembly Teams do this by ensuring Communities have support and information to develop their involvement with issues that affect their lives

Economic well-being – access to income and resources sufficient for a good diet, accommodation and participation in family and Community life.

People are not disadvantaged financially and have access to economic opportunity and appropriate resources to achieve this.

Area Assembly Teams address this by breaking down barriers that prevent people accessing employment e.g. poor transport links and by supporting development of social enterprises and Community owned facilities

Improved Quality of Life – by creating opportunities for individuals to influence the services which are being delivered at a local level

Exercise Choice and Control – through the meaningful involvement of people in the development of Area Assemblies/Area plans and Neighbourhood charters

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Rotherham Community Strategy – 2005

ODPM Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity – 2005

ODPM Vibrant Local Leadership – 2005

ODPM Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter – 2005

Area Assembly Profiles 2006

Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' October 2006

Government White Paper 'Communities in Control' - 2008

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Appendix 1. Area Assemblies Consultation Outcomes for 2009/10 Area Plans

	RVW	RVS	WV	WN	WS	RN	RS
Total No of events	3	6	17	3	10		1
Total Number of Groups	7	26 (333 people involved)	11	2	12 (75 people)	23	20
Total Number of Individuals	486	367	155	1004	131	402	647
Total	486	700	155	1004	206	402	647
% Men	41%	40	35.	52	36.	36	
% Women	59%	57	64.	48	63	60	
% BME Communities	3%	4	3.5	4.6	3.5	5	22%
%Young People	N/A	22	10.	N/A	25.6	45	29
%Older People	27	21.5	17	13	24	14	25
%People with LD or PD	33 people	55 people	N/A	86 people	33 people	52 people	122 people
% who feel informed	49	54	56	36	46	33	34
% who feel they can influence decisions	24	26	25	19	22.	19	22
% who want to be involved in AA	17	36	28.5	12	30	20	15

APPENDIX 2. Consultation Outcomes - Priorities

Area Assembly	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Priority 7	Priority 8	Priority 9	Priority 10
RVW	Anti-social behaviour	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Facilities for CHYP	Criminal Damage	Fear of Crime	Opps for access to learning new skills	Parks/ open spaces	Drug Misuse	Comm facilities and activities	Motorcycle nuisance
RVS	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Anti-social behaviour	Facilities for CHYP	Criminal Damage	Fear of Crime	Increased employ ment opps	Drug Misuse	Comm facilities and activities	Access to GP Services	Clean Streets
WV	Anti-social behaviour	Facilities for CHYP	Parks/ open spaces	Increased employ ment opps	Criminal Damage	Comm facilities and activities	Opps for access to learning new skills	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Clean Streets	Drug Misuse
WS	Anti-social behaviour	Facilities for CHYP	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Increased employ ment opps	Fear of Crime	Clean Streets	Drug Misuse	Comm facilities and activities	Criminal Damage	Opps for access to learning new skills
WN	Parks/ open spaces	Anti-social behaviour	Facilities for CHYP	Increased employ ment opps	Clean Streets	Criminal Damage	Comm facilities and activities	Drug Misuse	Fear of Crime	Play Areas
RN	Facilities for CHYP	Anti-social behaviour	Fear of Crime	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Parks/ open spaces	Criminal Damage	Increased employ ment opps	Comm facilities and activities	Drug Misuse	Clean Streets
RS	Anti-social behaviour	Facilities for CHYP	Clean Streets	Roads/ Pavement Main – tenance	Criminal Damage	Fear of Crime	Increased employ ment opps	Services for the Elderly	Drug Misuse	Comm facilities and activities

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