Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Gamble, Gilding, Slade, Swift and Turner: Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member, Regeneration and Development Services) and R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member, Streetpride) at the invitation of the Chair; together with Co-opted Member:- Mr. B. Walker.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Whysall and Parish Councillor Blanksby

151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

152. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the public or the press.

153. COMMUNICATIONS

It was noted that Parish Councillor F. Blanksby had submitted her apologies as she was recovering from a cataract operation.

Resolved:- That the Panel’s best wishes for a speedy recovery be sent to Councillor Blanksby.

154. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 3RD APRIL, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd April, 2009.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

155. CREATING AN IDENTITY FOR ROTHERHAM

Tracy Holmes, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, gave a PowerPoint presentation relating to an identity for Rotherham.

The presentation covered the following aspects:-

(1) Identity – a place for Branding:-

    - Local Government context
    - Role of Place Shaping
    - Whose brand it is anyway?
    - What is a brand?
    - Place/destination branding
    - Brand Values
- Making it real

(2) Flying the Flag – at home and abroad:-

- Marketing Rotherham – the 7 ‘P’s’
- What we have:- (i) a framework for achieving our aspirations; (ii) vehicle for making it happen; (iii) the will to go a step further; (iv) capability to shape messages and communicate effectively

(3) Moving forward:-

- Partnership working and communications
- Resources and investment over time
- Consultation and market research
- Marketing
- e-communications social networking technology
- be prepared for opposition but believe in the business case

Members of the Panel commented on:-

- The scale of the challenge
- The need for Value for Money
- Ways to change perception
- Branding
- The use of “Where Everyone Matters” strapline
- A Rotherham Flag
- The use of the ‘R’ symbol vs. the use of the Rotherham Coat of Arms
- The need to develop a unique selling point for Rotherham
- Good quality environment e.g. trees, flowers, green spaces etc
- Provision of flag poles
- The individual identities of the outlying settlements and their relationship with neighbouring towns
- The image of Rotherham as a key economic driver
- The impact of:- Ministry of Food and Imagination Library in terms of national and international attention
- The need for, and impact of, a Rotherham postcode and Rotherham telephone numbers throughout the borough
- The role of culture and the arts, and the importance of a good programme of town centre events

Resolved:- (1) That Tracy be thanked for her informative presentation.

(2) That arrangements now be made to commence a Scrutiny Review on the Image of Rotherham.

156. TOWN CENTRE AND RENAISSANCE MARKETING
Bernadette Rushton, Assistant Town Centre Manager, presented a report and gave a PowerPoint presentation on Rotherham town centre marketing.

The presentation covered the following aspects:-

(i) The context:-
- Vitality and viability of the town centre as a key priority for the council and key partners and stakeholders
- The need to increase footfall effectively, reduce shop unit vacancies, and improve perception

(ii) Marketing activity:-

(iii) Current Challenges:-
- Competition
- Current economic downturn
- Low confidence of existing businesses
- Investors being cautious
- Inactive landlords sitting on eyesore buildings
- Disruption created by physical developments
- Negative perception of the retail offer, car parking and safety

(iv) Opportunities:-
- Key successes of the Renaissance programme: Westgate, railway station; Keppel Wharf, Gateways etc
- Shopfront/Building improvement grants
- Low rents
- Business Grants Scheme
- Loyal customer base
- Indoor, outdoor and specialist markets
- Independent retailers
- Action against crime
- Events programme

(v) Rotherham Town Centre Marketing Plan:-
6 aims and associated actions

(vi) Rotherham Town Centre Marketing Group:-
Members of the Panel raised the following issues:-

- Expressions of interest in the Business Support Grants:- it was reported that 65 enquiries had been received from potential retailers. 2/3 applications had been worked up to recommendation stage and would be considered by the Cabinet Member in due course. Several other applications were on-going.

- Shopfront grants (for existing retailers):- this was due to be launched shortly and enquiries had already been received.

- Town centre lighting: it was reported that this issue had been acknowledged and work was on-going with Streetpride to replace orange with white lamps.

- High Street – 3 Cranes and George Wright buildings:- The Panel expressed concern about the length of time it was taking to resolve issues relating to these properties and stressed that a resolution was needed quickly. It was reported that these properties were now in administration.

- College Street – empty large shop units

- Lack of footfall

- Lack of free parking

- Reintroduction of through traffic on High Street with associated short stay parking

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

157. OLYMPICS 2012

Phil Rogers, Director of Culture and Leisure Services, presented a report and updated the Panel on the following:-

- first meeting of the Members’ Steering Group to oversee the
build up to the Olympic Event – held on 28th April
- appointment of a new Cabinet Member with a portfolio for Cultural Services and Sport
- lack of funding from the Olympic organising committee
- partnership with Sheffield City Council to host an Olympic Training Camp with the facilities at Rother Valley Country Park being available for water/distance running events.
- Submission of a bid for a 3 year programme of events for a Cultural Olympiad with events based in All Saints Square.
- proposed dovetailing into the existing sports support network already in place in Rotherham via the Rotherham Active Partnership and its support bodies.

- Promotion of the Annual Sports Awards including Rotherham Hall of Fame and Lifetime honours, and to promote links between sport and literacy
- submission of a bid to Sport England to fund a volunteer co-ordinator (3 years funding) which would have an element of the role based on delivery of Olympic themed work.
- on-going planning for Olympic themed events with themed years –Bronze, Silver, Get Set and Going for Gold
- further events in Clifton Park celebrating children’s play
- Big Screen action in conjunction with the BBC
- Extension of Rotherham’s Sports Volunteers programme
- Involvement of Rotherham’s Olympians

In addition an explanation was given of the risks and uncertainties and it was pointed out that the Service Area would give staff support to this project and seek external funding to support the events. However, it was pointed out that there was no allocated budget within RMBC finances to support these activities. Officers were currently considering, and hoping to be able to identify, a small amount to allow matched funding to be secured. It was pointed out that unless external funding was achieved the events would be relatively low profile and the sourcing of funding was a major concern as it was currently inhibiting planning.

Members of the Panel commented on the proximity of Sheffield’s facilities and the public’s perception regarding costs.

Resolved:- That the report and additional information be received, and progress noted.

158. GATEWAY PROGRAMME

Andy Newton, Project Officer, (assisted by Lesley Shepherd, Business Support Technician) presented a report and gave a PowerPoint presentation relating to a substantial programme of works which had been implemented in partnership with the Council’s Neighbourhoods Service as part of the Housing Market Renewal Area (HMRA) Programme.
It was explained that succeeding annual programmes had comprised of works which were intended to raise the profile of key Gateway routes emanating from Rotherham Town Centre by means of high quality public realm treatments, thereby raising public perception, and that of visitors to the Borough, as well as providing a more pleasing backdrop for local residents. Reference was made to the total amount of expenditure achieved since 2005/06, plus match-funding.

Typical works included:

- enhanced street lighting treatment
- bespoke street name signage incorporating the Borough Coat of Arms
- high quality fencing, bollards and other street furniture items
- soft landscaping works
- Public Art
- high quality footway treatment

It was pointed out that treatments followed a continuous theme, colour, style and branding, with subtle individual area differences. Maintenance was carried out by Streetpride.

Reference was made to the importance of involving local people and to recognising local history etc and to the installation of public art features. Also in appropriate places local materials had been used in the designs e.g. red sandstone, granite.

Areas that had benefited from this treatment, some of which was still ongoing, included:-

- Parkgate/Rawmarsh corridor
- Eastwood/Dalton corridor
- Swinton corridor
- Fitzwilliam Road
- Meadowbank Road, Rotherham
- Knollbeck Lane, Brampton

It was pointed out that the programme included a substantial element of consultation with HMRA Steering groups, local ward members, local interest groups and local residents.
A breakdown of HMRA expenditure by financial year was presented, together with an indication of the 2009/2010 allocation.

The Panel’s attention was drawn to future proposed works including:

- Doncaster Road, East Dene
- Fitzwilliam road, Eastwood
- Knollbeck Lane, Brampton
- Rowms Lane, Swinton
- High Street, Rawmarsh
- Ryton Road, North Anston
- Tickhill Road, Maltby

Members of the Panel referred to:

- Public realm works in the town centre
- Similar treatments in the South of the borough
- Delay in the replacement of damaged features
- The Parkway footbridge
- Maintenance of the soft landscaping
- Value of materials used
- Damage, theft and vandalism

Resolved:- That the contents of the report and presentation be received, and the progress to date be noted.

159. THE FORWARD PLAN - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JULY, 2009

Consideration was given to the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1st April to 31st July, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

160. MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 27TH MARCH, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 27th March, 2009.

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

161. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STREETPRIDE HELD ON 20TH APRIL, 2009
Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Streetpride held on 20th April, 2009.

Resolved: That the contents of the minutes be noted.

162. MINUTES OF JOINT MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBERS FOR REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND STREETPRIDE HELD ON 20TH APRIL, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of a Joint Meeting of the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Development Services and Streetpride held on 20th April, 2009.

Resolved: That the contents of the minutes be noted.

163. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES HELD AS FOLLOWS:-

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services held as follows:-

- 30th April, 2009
- 20th April, 2009

Resolved: That the contents of the minutes be noted.

164. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - APRIL 2008 TO FEBRUARY, 2009

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Strategic Director for Environment and Development Services, detailing performance against the revenue budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate as at the end of February 2009 and providing a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2008/09 financial year.

In presenting the April 2008 to February 2009 report, it was reported that an update of the year end position suggested that the Environment and Development Services Directorate’s position had finished the year with a slight under spend, but further work was ongoing to confirm this position.

The Panel acknowledged the work of the Directorate to bring this budget to this position.
Resolved:- (1) That the current position be noted.

(2) That officers be commended on their efforts to manage the Environment and Development Services Directorate’s budget.

165. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECYCLING GROUP HELD ON 17TH MARCH, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Recycling Group held on 17th March, 2009.

Reference was made to the opportunity to purchase wormeries for schools and to the increased cost.

The Panel added its support to taking this initiative forward.

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