CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

Venue: **Eric Manns Building, 45 Moorgate Street, Rotherham**

Date: **Monday, 4th January, 2010**

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 (as amended March 2006).

2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.

3. Minutes of meetings held on 19th October, 2nd and 16th November, 2009
    - see Minute Book dated Pages J44-55

4. Connecting Communities (Pages 1 - 14)

5. Empty Property - Update (Pages 15 - 50)

6. Allocation Policy Review (Pages 51 - 105)

7. Workforce Strategy (Pages 106 - 142)

8. Exclusion of the Press and Public
    Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Petition Update - Howard Road, Bramley (Pages 143 - 146)
    (Exempt under Paragraph 2 of the Act – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

10. Preferred Partner Contract for Adaptations (Pages 147 - 154)
    (Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

Agenda Item 4

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing & Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	4th January, 2010
3.	Title:	Connecting Communities
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executives

5. Summary

CLG and the GOYH is working with local authorities including Rotherham and their LSP partners to bring qualitative and quantitative intelligence to bear on the selection of places. These will be the places that face the greatest challenges in terms of worklessness and deterioration of community relations and community confidence.

6. Recommendations

   That the Cabinet Member:

- **Notes the update on the Connecting Communities areas - East Maltby & Dinnington**
- **Agrees that regular reports be brought to the Panel to update on progress**
- **Refers the report to CMT and Cabinet following confirmation from CLG to ensure corporate and political buy in to the scheme**

7. Proposals and Details

<u>**Connecting Communities**</u>

Background

Department for Communities and Local Government is working with GOs (Government Offices) and local partners is looking to deliver a new and intensive programme of activity in some of the wards and neighbourhoods suffering most from the effects of the recession and from low levels of civic engagement. The focus will be on the neighbourhoods which are likely to suffer particularly sharply from the recession and where residents feel that no one speaks for them or is responding to their needs.

The launch of the Connecting Communities took place on October 14th which was launched by John Denham (Secretary of State for CLG), where he announced a £12 million plan to reinvigorate and connect with those communities that are feeling the pressure from recession most acutely and ensure they are well placed to share fully in future prosperity and emerge stronger and more cohesive.

The programme has 3 key priorities:

Leadership investment in councillors and other leaders and frontline staff to support their confidence and skills in addressing problems in communities, listening and addressing issues head on.

Giving people a voice an honest and open debate about the challenges, even if this raises difficult and uncomfortable issues. People will be encouraged to act as community champions and have a bigger say in local issues.

Increased opportunities raising awareness of opportunities available to local people

Connecting Communities in Rotherham

Rotherham's NI1 and NI4 scores were low against the Place Survey and therefore have been identified by GOYH (Government Office Yorkshire & Humber) as an area which needs resources and support. GOYH has been working with local authorities in the region including Rotherham and their LSP partners to bring qualitative and quantitative intelligence to bear on the selection of places.

The focus will be on the neighbourhoods which are likely to suffer particularly sharply from the recession and where residents feel that no one speaks for them or is responding to their needs which will include white disaffected indigenous communities. The areas that have been identified as priority areas for interventions are:

- East Maltby
- Dinnington

East Maltby and Dinnington were selected as the two areas, because they are unlikely to benefit from related initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management Intensive Schemes and they are deprived communities with a high majority of disaffected indegenious white communities and these are also areas which suffer from:

- High Worklessness
- High crime & ASB
- Low educational attainment
- Low adult skills

The Chief Executive Directorate has been working closely with the Area Partnership Managers from Wentworth Valley and Rother Valley South to identify interventions and what support we need from GOYH to ensure local needs are being met. The proposals for East Maltby and Dinnington (Appendix 1) have now been approved by GOYH and are now awaiting approval from CLG.

Rotherham will begin their delivery of the project in the second wave from mid-November this year up to March 2010 and it is envisaged that there will be a 3rd wave to sustain the work

8.   Finance

The amount of finance and resources available are yet to be confirmed by CLG, but further resources will bring added value to existing engagement activities. The resources will be in the form of modest funding for immediate local priorities - the recruitment of skilled Community Activist e.g. Local Improvement Advisors; and community leadership training. Others may be about mentoring and signposting to best practice or communications support for local authority.

The NI4 Target Support Fund application from Rotherham for £77,000 has also been approved by CLG and this will complement the Connecting Communities Project.

The NI4 Target Support Fund Project currently includes support for **greater community involvement in decision making** structures including:

- active citizenship courses in a minimum of two prioritised neighbourhoods which will be in the identified connecting communities areas- East Maltby and Dinnington.
- active citizenship courses designed and delivered with disabled people for disabled people which will be delivered by Speak Up
- RMBC to work with Children and Young People Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium and the Area Assemblies in innovative ways to build greater active citizenship amongst young people leading to a number of young people's events in the 7 Area Assemblies

Meaningful communications – community engagement bulletins will be produced alongside the LSP newspaper 'Rotherham News' involving a VCS editorial reference group and training and development for local people to be involved in the community engagement bulletins.

9.   Risks and Uncertainties

If there is no intervention at a local level in East Maltby and Dinnington, then these communities will remain prone to disengagement and open to exploitation by those keen to undermine efforts to build cohesive communities.

10.   Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Improving the level of involvement of local people is a major part of the Government's agenda to delivering improved services and policies and greater user satisfaction, nationally and locally. The new "Duty to Involve" statutory duty, which came into force on 1 April 2009, requires the council to create greater opportunities for local people to have their say. The aspiration for the new duty is to embed a culture of engagement and empowerment. This means that authorities consider, as a matter of course, the possible information provision, consultation and involvement opportunities they need to provide people across all authority functions.

The Connecting Communities will complement existing community cohesion and PREVENT work we are doing. There are also important overlaps and links with other key concepts and policy areas, in particular community empowerment, civic participation and citizenship. The LSP are making this part of their core business through the Sustainable Community strategy and the LAA where our performance is measured against NI1 '% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well' and NI4 '% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area'.

The new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), places a strong emphasis on both customer engagement and responding to customer needs.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

1. Appendix 1 Connecting Communities - Identification of Target Areas
2. Link to John Denham's speech at the Connecting Communities Launch
http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/connectingcommunities

Contact Name: Zafar Saleem, Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager, (Chief Executive) 822757; zafar.saleem@rotherham.gov.uk

Asim Munir, Principal Community Involvement Officer, (Chief Executive) 822786, asim.munir@rotherham.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1
Annex 1: Revised TAAP

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: TARGET AREA ACTION PLAN (TAAP)

Government Office Region	Yorkshire & Humber
Local Authority District	Rotherham
Wave (1, 2 or later)	2
Target Area	East Maltby

Key issues to be addressed
Maltby is Defined around 4 SOAs covering eastern and south eastern Maltby with some minor adjustments with a 5,300 population. East Maltby is unlikely to benefit from related initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management Intensive Schemes and has deprived communities with a high majority of disaffected indigenous white community and is an area which suffer's from: • High Worklessness • High crime & ASB • Low educational attainment • Low adult skills The growth of the far right is seeking to exploit Maltby. This area has become more vulnerable and disillusioned as a result of suffering from above. Therefore intensive engagement is needed with these communities to up skill up our Members, Tenants and Community Leaders to deal with competing communications, correcting false information and exposing myths to maintain trust and confidence in the community. Intervention is also needed to improve perception in East Maltby and enable local residents to feel services are being improved as a result of their involvement. To enable this to happen, external support and resources are required to enable the local residents to have the confidence, knowledge and skills to participate effectively. The local media coverage particularly in Maltby is very negative and therefore support with communications is required to improve perception and enable residents to feel they are influencing decisions in their local area. We would be interested in taking up CLG' offer on support with communications and media support for Maltby.

RotherFed has member Tenants and Residents Associations in Maltby East. Birks Holt TARA is based in Maltby East. Central to the work of these groups is to encourage individuals to act as community champions or tenants representatives and have a bigger say in local issues and to help build the confidence and self-esteem of residents so that they feel that they can regain control over their estates, their lives and their futures. The number of active community associations has declined in these communities over the last five years for a variety of reasons and there is a need for dedicated community development interventions to reinvigorate some of the community infrastructure. Therefore we would like to take up CLG's offer of training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenants and leaders.

The Chief Executive Directorate has been working closely with the Area Partnership Managers from Wentworth Valley and also Rother Fed (Rotherham Federation of Tenants and Residents) to identify interventions and support needed for East Maltby.

Local MP's and the Leader have been briefed about this initiative.

Enhancing leadership

East Maltby would benefit from the central offer on leadership as elected members and leaders need support to enable them to deal with the current challenging issues more effectively. This will provide leaders from East Maltby with the necessary skills and confidence to challenge misconceptions and challenging issues and respond with action where needed.

Strengthening voice

In East Maltby, the Local Improvement Advisor would be able to facilitate strengthening the voice of local residents by engaging them in the development of the neighbourhood agreement.

Birks Holt TARA and the Youth Group at their centre have expressed interested in holding a Multi Cultural Open Day to improve awareness of other cultures, encourage positivity, help the TARA engage with the community more and provide positive activities to encourage people to become involved with the TARA. The group have asked for some music, foods from other cultures and opportunities for the youth group to dance and sing for the community as well. This would start the process of increasing tenant's awareness of housing in collaboration with cohesion issues.

As part of the NI4 Target Support Fund, support for greater community involvement in decision making structures has been built in. East Maltby would benefit from this support as well through existing structures such as the Area Assemblies and the voluntary and community sector.

Improving perceptions of service delivery

In East Maltby, it is envisaged that through developing the Neighbourhood Agreement with all the relevant stakeholders including the residents, they will have ownership in terms of what services they should expect from local services such as crime, housing, education and jobs.

These interventions will seek to address issues around unfairness and disempowerment and also help improved the NI1 and NI4 scores in Maltby. As part of the NI4 Target Support Fund, the Engagement Bulletin will able to feedback to local residents on how services have been improved as a result of their involvement.

Delivery solutions

East Maltby

- An Impact Survey has been carried out in October to lead to identification of priorities which will inform a Neighbourhood Agreement and address issues such as crime, housing, education and jobs
- Would benefit from Local Improvement Advisor to facilitate the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement x 10 days
- 1 x Leadership training session for elected members and leaders
- 1 x Communications and Media support training for elected members, leaders, residents and officers, as guidance is needed on communications and how to deal with negative local media, activism and perceptions.
- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenants and leaders

Funding requirements
£2500 for development of Neighbourhood Agreement in East Maltby which includes, room hire, publicity and printing and dissemination of the new Neighbourhood Agreement   £5000 for Birks Holt TARA and the Youth Group Multi Cultural Open day   - A Local Improvement Advisor to facilitate the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement x 10 days (CLG's offer)   1 x Leadership training session for elected members and leaders (CLG's offer)   1 x Communications and Media support training for elected members, leaders, residents and officers, as guidance is needed on communications and how to deal with negative local media, activism and perceptions (CLG's offer)   1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenants and leaders (CLG's offer)   If for any reason, the above training cannot be given, then we would need further £6000 funding to buy in expertise and resources locally or regionally e.g. REP to deliver the training.
Timescale
Neighbourhood Agreement   - October 2009- Impact Survey completed   - November 2009- identify from Impact Survey, people who wish to be involved in the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement   - December 2009- Appoint (LIA) Local Improvement Advisor to facilitate the development of a Neighbourhood Agreement   - January 2009- introduce LIA to relevant officers and members   - January- Feb 2009 8 Days of work with communities and partners on the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement   - March 2009- Launch of Neighbourhood Agreement   **Training**   1 x Leadership training session for elected members and leaders- February 2009   1 x Communications and Media support training for elected members, leaders, residents and officers, as guidance is needed on communications and how to deal with negative local media, activism and perceptions- February 2009   1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenants and leaders- March 2009   **Multi Cultural Open Day**   - Birks Holt TARA and the Youth Group Multi Cultural Open day- March 2009

Success measures
Success will be measured by: - Anecdotal evidence and feedback from local activists, elected members and frontline officers   1 x Neighbourhood Agreement for East Maltby which is published and disseminated   - Number of service improvements as a result of Neighbourhood Agreement and feedback carried out   - Number of people who have attended the training activities   - Results of the Place Survey (particularly NI4) and other relevant surveys in the area   - Promotion of connecting communities and celebration of successes in East Maltby and Dinnington done through current 'One Town One Community Initiative' which is being lead by Cllr Mahroof Hussain (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Cohesion)   - Increase in 'We asked, You Said, We did' messages in Maltby

Agreed by			
Government Office		**Date**	
Local Area		**Date**	

Annex 1: Revised TAAP

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: TARGET AREA ACTION PLAN (TAAP)</td></tr>
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Government Office Region	Yorkshire & Humber
Local Authority District	Rotherham
Wave (1, 2 or later)	2
Target Area	Dinnington

Key issues to be addressed
Dinnington is defined around 2 SOAs covering Central and Eastern Dinnington with some minor adjustments with a population of 3,600. Dinnington has been selected as one of the two areas, because they are unlikely to benefit from related initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management Intensive Schemes and is a deprived community with a high majority of disaffected indigenous white communities and these are also areas which suffer from: - High Worklessness   - High crime & ASB   - Low educational attainment   - Low adult skills   The growth of the far right is seeking to exploit areas such as Dinnington. This area has become more vulnerable and disillusioned as a result of suffering from the above. Therefore intensive engagement is needed with these communities to skill up our members, tenants and community leaders to deal with competing communications, correcting false information and exposing myths to maintain trust and confidence in service providers. Intervention is also needed to improve perception in Dinnington and enable local residents to feel services are being improved as a result of their involvement. To enable this to happen, external support and resources are required to enable the local residents to have the confidence, knowledge and skills to participate effectively. MORI was commissioned to undertake a Place Shaping Survey in Dinnington which was completed at the end of last year. This identified that: - Feedback after engagement activities is poor to local residents   - Not enough activities for young people locally   - Negative perception of young people   - High rate and fear of crime and ASB   RotherFed has member Tenants and Residents Associations in Dinnington.

There are three member groups in Dinnington (Clarence Howard TARA, High Nook TARA and St.Josephs TARA).

Central to the work of these groups is to encourage individuals to act as community champions or tenants representatives and have more of a say in local issues and to help build the confidence and self-esteem of residents so that they feel that they can regain control over their estates, their lives and their futures. The number of active community associations has declined in these communities over the last five years for a variety of reasons and there is a need for dedicated community development interventions to reinvigorate some of the community infrastructure. Therefore we would like to take up CLG's offer of an Improvement Advisor coupled with leadership training and training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenants and leaders to enable them to take more of an active role in the development of the Welfare Building and Recreation Ground, working with the Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group. The properties around Leicester Road in Dinnington where there is high crime and anti social behaviour and a young people's project to improve the perception of young people in Dinnington.

The Chief Executive Directorate has been working closely with the Area Partnership Manager from Rother Valley South, and also Rother Fed (Rotherham Federation of Tenants and Residents) to identify interventions and support needed for Dinnington.

Local MP's and the Leader have been briefed about this initiative.

Enhancing leadership

Dinnington would benefit from the central offer on leadership training for the Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group to enable them to lead and implement the potential action plan for the Welfare Ground and Building which is currently vacant.

Strengthening voice

The Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare need support from a Local Improvement Advisor to consider the future of the vacant Welfare Ground and Building which is owned by CISWO (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation). The welfare ground and building is located in an area where there are a high number of white working class people who worked in the coal mines and they feel the welfare building is their identity and they do not want to lose the building. The Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare need support from the Local Improvement Advisor to look at how their group can become self sufficient to take ownership of the building and be able to ensure the local community benefits from this resource, as there is high deprivation, unemployment, crime and ASB in the community where the welfare ground and building is located. The group want support to develop an action plan for the building and would like to take up CLG's offer of training around confidence and self-esteem, so that they have the skills, confidence and knowledge to take ownership of the building and maximise opportunities for the local community.

As part of the Local Democracy Week 2009 activities in Dinnington and the Place Shaping Survey, it was identified that young people need to work closely with the communities to improve the perception of young people in the area. Therefore we are proposing to develop projects in partnership with the Dinnington Comprehensive School that provide a range of activities that aim to give young people pride in their community. Activities include young people taking part in a drama shown in Old Peoples accommodation to improve perceptions, young people carrying out Gardening and Decorating projects across the area to show they are committed to the well being of their local community and dispel any myths and stereotypes of young people. This is an innovative way of empowering young people to be active in their local communities to address some of the issues such as crime, ASB and intergenerational issues.

The three TARA groups in Dinnington, Clarence Howard TARA, High Nook TARA and St.Josephs TARA would like to take up CLG's offer of training for building confidence and self- esteem of tenants to enable them to participate effectively in housing issues in their local area. For example Leicester Road is an identified Housing Market Renewal Regeneration Area where there will be potential new housing built. It is necessary to empower tenants to become champions in their areas to tackle some of the myths and issues around housing allocation, crime and ASB and ensure they are communicating consistent messages to rest of the community in Dinnington.

As part of the NI4 Target Support Fund, support for **greater community involvement in decision making** structures has been built in. Dinnington would benefit from this support as well through existing structures such as the Area Assemblies and the voluntary and community sector.

Improving perceptions of service delivery

The Area Assembly Coordinating Group made up of local service providers, elected members and parish councillors would like to take up the offer of communications support to enable them to feedback to residents more effectively as the Place Shaping Survey identified this as an area for improvement. Better feedback will ensure that local people will know if local services are meeting their needs and also tackle issues around unfairness and disempowerment and the way people particularly feel about issues pertinent to the area such as crime, ASB, young people and housing.

As part of the NI4 Target Support Fund, the Engagement Bulletin will able to feedback to local residents on how services have been improved as a result of their involvement.

Delivery solutions
- Local Improvement Adviser support to determine the future of the Welfare Ground and Building working with the Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group to develop an action plan and a launch event to disseminate and publicise the action plan for the Welfare Building and Ground
- 1 x Leadership training session for Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group

- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group
- 1 x Communications and Media support training for Area Assembly Coordinating Group
- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenant groups (Clarence Howard TARA, High Nook TARA and St.Josephs TARA)
- Projects in partnership with the Dinnington Comprehensive School that provide a range of activities that aim to give young people pride in their community

Funding requirements

- Projects in partnership with the Dinnington Comprehensive School that provide a range of activities that aim to give young people pride in their community- £2000
- Local Improvement Adviser support to determine the future of the Welfare Ground and Building working with the Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group x 8 days
- Launch and publicity of Action Plan for the Welfare Ground and Building which includes room hire, publicity, refreshments- £1000
- 1 x Leadership training session for Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group- CLG Support
- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group- CLG Support

- 1 x Communications and Media support training for Area Assembly Coordinating Group- CLG Support
- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenant groups (Clarence Howard TARA, High Nook TARA and St.Josephs TARA)- CLG Support

If for any reason, the above training cannot be given, then we would need further £8000 funding to buy in expertise and resources locally or regionally e.g. REP to deliver the training.

Timescale

Young People
- Projects in partnership with the Dinnington Comprehensive School that provide a range of activities that aim to give young people pride in their community- December 2009 to March 2010

Dinnington Welfare Building and Ground

- 1 x Leadership training session for Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group- January 2010
- 1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem Friends of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group- January 2010
- Local Improvement Advisor meets of Dinnington Miners Welfare Regeneration Group- January 2010
- Development of Action Plan for building and ground- February 2010
- Launch and dissemination of action plan- March 2010

Tenants

1 x training to build confidence and self-esteem of tenant groups (Clarence Howard TARA, High Nook TARA and St.Josephs TARA)- CLG Support- February 2009

Communications Support

- Communications and Media support training for Area Assembly Coordinating Group- February 2009

Success measures

Success will be measured by:
- Anecdotal evidence and feedback from local activists, Elected Members and frontline officers
- 1 x Action Plan for Welfare Ground & Building which is published and disseminated
- Number of people who have attended the training activities
- Number of young people participating in school projects
- Number of tenants empowered and participating in TARA meetings
- Improvement in perception of young people measured through surveys
- Improved feedback of service improvements as a result of engagement e.g. housing, crime, ASB etc.
- Results of the Place Survey (particularly NI4) and other relevant surveys in the area
- Promotion of connecting communities and celebration of successes in Dinnington done through current 'One Town One Community Initiative' which is being lead by Cllr Mahroof Hussain (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Cohesion)
- Increase in 'We asked, You Said, We did' messages in Dinnington

Agreed by			
Government Office		**Date**	
Local Area		**Date**	

Agenda Item 5

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	4th January, 2010
3.	Title:	Empty Property Update Report
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5.   Summary

Minute Number 188 of the Private Sector Empty Property Policy Progress Report to Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods in April 2009 requested an update report.

This report sets out the contribution that is being made by Neighbourhoods & Adult Services and 2010 Rotherham Ltd, to bring both private and public sector empty properties back into use within the Borough during 2009/10.

6.   Recommendations

That Cabinet Member:

- **Notes the progress being made in respect of bringing the Borough's private and public sector empty properties back into use.**

- **Receives a report from the Community Protection Unit outlining the activity and outcomes of the Pro-active Enforcement Team in order to inform activity to manage empty properties.**

- **Accepts a draft copy of a cross-directorate Empty Property Policy in April 2010.**

7.   Proposals and Details

Two scrutiny reviews (choice-based lettings and void turnaround times) were reported to Cabinet and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in September 2009. Progress against the recommendations arising from these reviews has been reported to Cabinet (3rd December 2009). During discussion about void turnaround times, concerns were raised regarding the overall issue of long-term voids, and it was agreed that a separate report would be produced that sets out RMBC's and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's approach to dealing with empty homes. This report should be read in conjunction with the over-arching void turnaround scrutiny review report and a separate report on performance reporting processes.

7.1   Background

In 2007/08 the number of empty dwellings in Rotherham was slightly lower than the national average however, in January 2009, the Empty Homes Agency announced that for the 2008/09 outturn, there were 783,633 empty dwellings in England (3.5% of all dwellings) and of which 4,273 (3.88%) were in Rotherham. This is a borough increase from 3.1% in 07/08.

The impact of the downturn may account for the increase in empty dwellings:

- Potential new households choosing to remain with parents/family for longer
- Households in financial difficulty returning to their parents or family
- Lack of available mortgage products leading to reduced sales

The empty homes picture for the borough is changing and the mid-year outturn for Rotherham demonstrates that the number of empties in the borough has reduced to 3,881 (3.53%). The Table below sets out the tenure of those dwellings.

Tenure Total number of dwellings is 110,000	Empty for less than 6 months Number	Empty for less than 6 months Percent	Empty for more than 6 months Number	Empty for more than 6 months Percent
Private Ownership and RSL Owned Dwellings	1,836	1.67%	1,408	1.28%
Council Owned Dwellings	438	0.40%	199	0.18%
Total Number / % Empty (Overall 3,881/3.53%)	**2,274**	**2.07%**	**1,607**	**1.46%**

Table 1: Indication of empty properties by number and percentage for both private and public sector properties

In order to comprehensively address empty property dwellings, a cross-directorate Empty Property Working Group (EPWG) has been created.

Attended by Key Choices, Community Protection Unit, Neighbourhood Investment Services (NIS) and 2010 Rotherham Ltd; the group provides a strategic approach towards delivering effective ways of reducing the number of empty properties in the Borough in both the private and public sector.

7.2   Private Sector Empty Properties

It is recognised that short term empty properties (less than 6 months) are vital to allow the housing market to function effectively and to facilitate both residential mobility and the improvement or redevelopment of the housing stock. Therefore the council does not focus activity on short term empties unless there are obvious signs of negligence and blight within specific communities.

For the longer term empties in the private sector (1,408) activity is monitored by the Private Sector Renewal Working Group (PSRWG) who are committed to reducing numbers of empty properties and has retained local performance indicator BVPI64 (NAS22) to monitor how many properties are successfully brought back into use.

PSRWG uses council tax data and area based masterplans/strategies to prioritise activity to bring private sector empty properties back into use. The target for 2009/10 is 135 long-term (over 6 months). So far, (end October 09) 81 private sector properties have been brought back into use.

The main area for PSRWG focus is where there are most concentrations of empty properties such as in Maltby (Little London and Model Village) and Dinnington (Doe Quarry Lane and Leicester Road). These areas have received targeted intervention by the Pro-active Enforcement Team in CPU.

This team has been enabled by investment (£180k) from the Regional Housing Board (RHB) facilitated by NIS. The objective is for 6 officers to be dedicated to working with absent landlords in these target areas. In order to understand whether this intervention has been effective a report from the CPU Manager is now required.

7.3   Council Owned Public Sector Empty Properties

For the longer term empties in Council ownership (199) activity is monitored by 2010 Rotherham Ltd who manages the housing on behalf of the Council. There are a number of properties that have been identified as being unable to let for a variety of reasons; for instance the properties may be:
- Managed by another Council Service e.g. Economic & Development Services, Children & Young Persons Service
- Earmarked for disinvestment such as demolition due to it's strategic location
- Awaiting decent homes improvements
- Retained by the Asylum Project Team
- Awaiting review by Neighbourhood Investment Services
- Used as a Community building

2010 Rotherham Ltd has produced an Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan that aims to;

- Reduce the number of long-term public sector properties that are having a detrimental effect upon the communities in which they are situated
- Set out mechanisms that will prevent tenancies failing and in particular those tenancies that fail during the first 6 months
- Maintain and improve the empty property turnover rate
- Continue to identify the ongoing situation with regard to the number, distribution and type of void council property throughout the borough, and to establish any trends which exist as to the reasons for these voids
- Continue to devise solutions that will address the reasons why properties become void

Separate to this report there is an over-arching void turnaround Scrutiny Review currently underway; the outcome of which will further seek to reduce the number of council owned empty dwellings.

There are national and local performance indicators attached to managing the public sector empty properties, namely BV212 – Time taken to relet a property and BV69 – Rent loss through voids. 2010's present performance is as follows;

- BV212: 18.79 days
- BV69: 1.67%

2010's Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan (Empty Homes Review – 22nd June 2009) can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2.

7.4   Public and Private Sector Empty Property Policy

2010 have produced an Empty Property Strategy to bring public sector managed properties back into use. There is a current Private Sector Empty Property Action Plan that has been utilised successfully to assist in delivering private empty properties brought back into use but there is no policy document to support it.

A joint Empty Property Policy will set out the Council's strategic direction for tackling council owned and private long-term empty properties and provide opportunities to utilise legislative tools such as Enforced Sale Procedures and Empty Dwelling Management Orders to bring them back into use.

In order to comprehensively address empty property dwellings, the newly formed cross-directorate Empty Property Working Group (EPWG) will produce a joint Empty Property Policy to:

- Outline the extent of the problem of empty properties within the borough against the national picture
- Build upon previous activity within both the public and private sector
- Provide a strategic blueprint for action to deal with empty properties within Rotherham.

There is recognition that the policy must be set within a framework that will align with the cross cutting themes of the revised Housing Strategy and the Single Conversation Investment Plan. Bringing empty properties back into use will help to meet housing need in Rotherham and will make a valid contribution towards the number of affordable housing units being provided as a whole.

The Council is committed to offering support and advice to owners of empty property and work with them to find solutions. However, where owners are unwilling to cooperate to find solutions then we will use legislative powers available to the Council to bring problem empty properties back into use. However, it should be noted that legislative powers are limited and as long as the empty property is secure and not causing 'blight' on the immediate area the property can remain empty.

8. Finance

Currently Regional Housing Board funding (£180k) enables a team of 6 officers in the Pro-active Enforcement Team within the CPU. These officers target worst affected areas in terms of empty properties however in order to understand whether this approach is the right approach, a summary of their outcomes is required to demonstrate what additionality has been achieved as a result of their work.

The Team is currently seeking an additional £36k to extend three officer contracts and £5k to employ an administration officer to manipulate the recorded data. This request is in addition to the £180k already invested into this team.

There is current commitment to support three of the six posts in 2010/11 subject to satisfactory outcomes in 2009/10.

Production of the Empty Property Policy is included in the currently allocated £180k.

Council owned empty property management is financed by the Housing Revenue Account or by individual Directorate funds.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The following give an indication of the risks and uncertainties that are related to the Council's activity that contributes towards bringing empty properties back into use.

▪ Failure to reduce the number of empty private sector properties throughout the Borough will have an adverse impact on the Councils Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) rating; H18 – The number of private sector empty properties (empty for longer than 6 months) as a percentage of the total private sector stock.

- Failure to reduce the number of empty properties may result in the Council's failure to meet the targets:
  - o BVPI 64 measurement of empty properties brought back into use
  - o BVPI 98 measurement of the percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness and standards
  - o BVPI 199 measurement of street cleanliness.
- Failure to deliver an Empty Property Policy may have an adverse affect on targets contained within the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and the overall drive to reduce the fear of crime.
- Failure to support the Homelessness Strategy, where it has been identified, through the Rent in Advance scheme, that empty properties have been used successfully to provide accommodation for potentially homelessness individuals, couples and families.
- Requirements of the 2004 Housing Act have placed increased demands on Environmental Health Officer availability nationally. Successful recruitment to date has relied on Agency staff because only short term contracts can be offered. Funding has been provided from Regional Housing Board and Transform South Yorkshire funding streams.
- Housing Market Renewal (TSY) Funding is not a long term funding stream and a long term financial strategy may be required. This will be mitigated by the Investment Planning required by the Private Sector Renewal Working Group as part of the Year Ahead Target to achieve PSA7 for the private sector by 2010.
- Regional Housing Board funds are to be reduced for 2010/11 and therefore there is a greater need to work more effectively and ensure value for money is achieved when bringing empty properties back into use.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The works carried out contribute towards the Corporate and cross cutting policy agenda related to Regeneration and in particular the priority for improving and promoting the image of Rotherham.

Empty properties being brought back into use contributes towards our key corporate strategic themes of:-
Rotherham Proud
Rotherham Safe

The benefits of adopting an Empty Property Policy, when considered within a regeneration context, are as follows;
- An increased supply of affordable housing
- Older properties brought up to a decent standard therefore improving the quality of the housing stock
- Retaining property that is of a Community or architectural value
- Reducing crime and disorder and the fear of crime
- A more sustainable housing market within targeted areas
- Contribute towards a strong, balanced housing market and sustainable neighbourhood

Contribution to the Corporate Assessment – The introduction of an Empty Property Policy helps to demonstrate commitment to tackling non-decency in the private sector (PSA7). PSA7 is a Neighbourhood Renewal Floor target and a responsibility of the LSP. Also, reducing the number of private sector properties empty for more than 6 months contributes towards the CPA rating.

Contribution to BVPI Performance;
- BVPI 64 - Private Sector Empty Properties brought back into use
- BV212 - Time taken to relet a property
- BV69 - Rent loss through voids.
- PSA7 - Tackling non-decency in the private sector
- NI156 - Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI155 - Number of affordable housing units

The Council's refreshed Housing Strategy identifies the need to make best use of the Borough's existing stock and bringing long-term empty properties back into use will contribute towards providing affordable housing of choice and creating sustainable communities.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

2010 Rotherham Ltd: Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan
Min 188 20/04/09 Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods: Private Sector Empty Property Policy Progress Report

Contact Name: Paul Benson, Private Sector Officer, Neighbourhood Investment Services, ext. 6477

Appendix 1: Empty Homes Review - Action Plan 22 June 2009

Action No.	Action	Target date	Task Owner & Task Manager	Task Status % Comp lete	Measure/ Milestone	Completed Outcomes
1	**Performance reporting by elements provided by all stakeholders for, Average re-let time, Rent loss and Percentage of Stock Vacant**	**1st July** **11th May 2009**	**Chris Gaynor** **Andy Williams**	**100%**	**Break down performance on average re-let time** (30th April)**, 1st July - complete** **Break down performance on Rent Loss Through Voids** (30th April)**, 1st July - Complete** **Break down performance on the percentage of stock vacant** (30th April) **1st July - Complete**	**Monthly performance identifying the impact on performance of:** ➢ **Neighbourhood Investment Team** ➢ **Neighbourhoods and Adult Services** ➢ **Housing Access Team** ➢ **Local Letting Policies**
2	**One team approach delivering the Empty Home service within 2010 Rotherham**	**30th June 2009**	**Adrian Cheetham** **Andy Chambers** **Tim Whitworth**	**95%**	**Multi trade impact teams** (5th May) **Complete** ➢ **Repairs completed during the 28 day termination period via Rotherham connect** (8th June) **Complete** ➢ **Keys collected by 2010 Rotherham** (8th June) **Complete** ➢ **Tenant incentives - Fond farewell scheme** (30th June) ➢ **Decent Homes work undertaken after a property is let, unless required to meet the Empty Property Standard** (8th June) **To review** ➢ **Amalgamate all current action plans relating to the management of the empty homes process** (23rd April) **Complete** ➢ **One team approach to service delivery within 2010 Rotherham** (8th June) **Complete**	**An accountable structure with clear operating priorities for Empty Homes Management**

3	**Review the processes for Choice Based Letting and implement efficiencies**	**8th June** **11th May 2009**	**Sandra Tolley** **Sandra Wardle** **Adrian Cheetham**	**100%**	➢ **Streamline the transfer process** (11th May) **Complete** ➢ **2010 Rotherham to produce the advert information in the format used by Key Choices** (8th June) **started 2 week pilot 25th June – issues with access to "G" drive**	**Efficiencies realised through partnership working between the Empty Homes Team within 2010 Rotherham and the Key Choices Team within RMBC**
4	**Empty Homes requiring Investment/ Sustainability decisions**	**8th June 2009**	**Paul Walsh**	**90%**	➢ **All 2010 Rotherham's referrals to go via the Asset Management Team** (20th April) **Complete** ➢ **Agreed target dates to be provided to 2010 Rotherham by the Neighbourhood Investment Team on receipt of a referral** (18th May) **Complete** ➢ **Evaluate efficiencies if the £20k threshold for investment decisions was raised to £25k** (8th June) **Ongoing with NIT & Ramona**	**Target times for all properties referred to NIT jointly agreed.** **Identified inefficiencies removed from the current process** **Clear lines of accountability**
5	**Empty Homes designated as Sheltered/Aged Persons**	**1st July** **8th June 2009**	**Sandra Wardle** **Diane Green** **Adrian Cheetham**	**90%**	➢ **Review the direct homes procedures (parallel advertising)** (11th May) **Complete** ➢ **Review benefits of a penalty for refusing a property** (27th April) **Complete** ➢ **Make recommendations for individual properties/complexes wrongly designated as Sheltered/Aged Persons** (8th June) **Complete.** **Away day with Key Choices 30th July. Complete.** ➢ **Pending Cabinet report from RMBC.**	**Inefficiencies within the current policies and procedures Remove improving overall performance.**
6	**Carry out a full review of alternative methods for securing void properties in conjunction with our partners and customers**	**30th April 2009**	**Adrian Cheetham** **Andrew Chambers**	**100%**	➢ **Procure new contract** (Feb 2009) **Complete** ➢ **Develop grilling criteria** (March 2009) **Complete** ➢ **Implement shared procedure for grilling** (30th April) **Complete**	**Audit Commission recommendation complete**

7	Introduce voids monitoring that allows each individual task to be measured in days and identifies who is accountable	30th April 2009	Chris Gaynor	98%	➢ **Produce spreadsheet with all tasks identified (keep term 1A & Terms & Lets running concurrently until new system deliver the required outcomes)** (1 Sept 08) **Complete** ➢ **To get the voids sequence to match the tasks identified on the spreadsheet** (February 2009) **Complete** ➢ **Produce reports from Anite that give managers information on tasks that their staff are accountable for** (30th April) 95% **- Still slight issue**	**Monitoring by an accountable officer, of individual properties enabling performance management.** **Trend of under performance identified early and addressed to ensure monthly targets are achieved.** **remove inefficient manual analysis required by spreadsheet**
8	Implement OPTITIME technology to manage the work scheduling for the voids operatives based on Standard Minute Values.	1st Oct 2009	Andy Chambers	100%	➢ **Introduce OPTITIME system for voids operational management by** (1st September 09) ➢ **Run a pilot to test the system managed diary system for voids** (1 August 09) ➢ **Assess the benefits of the system being paper based or hand held appliances for all operatives** (1st September 09) ➢ **Implement IT based Operative diary system. Not practical, Complete**	**Improved "Keys with Contractor" performance, productivity and Void turn around times through improved efficiencies** **reduce number of Operational staff required to work on voids through improved efficiencies**
9	Review the reasons for tenants accepting void properties	1st April 2010	Chris Gaynor	80%	➢ **Adapt the Houseproud Survey to capture acceptance reasons** (1st April 2010)	

10	Review an "Incentive to stay" procedure to reduce the number of Terminations received	1st April 2010	Chris Gaynor	0%	➢ Ensure all staff conduct "exit interview" including offering customers "opportunities to stay" when receiving a termination (1st Dec) ➢ Carry out analysis of reason for termination and action as appropriate (1st Jan) ➢ Revise the Void Procedures to include "Incentives to Stay" (1st Feb) ➢ Train staff and implement "Incentive to stay" procedure (1st March)`	Problem solving approach to try and keep customers in their own homes, rather than moving due to issues that could easily be rectified Understanding reasons for termination will enable us to sustain tenancies Reduce the number of tenancies that terminate increasing efficiency and performance. Identify reasons for tenancies terminating allowing the service to be tailored accordingly.
11	Review decorating Grant (£25 per room) Risk: KLOE 3	31st November 2009	Chris Gaynor	60%	➢ Benchmark and review options available within budget (30th November)	Improved service that removed inconstancy and improves efficacies
13	Amend the sign-up procedure to capture vulnerable/diversity information	31st February 2010	Chris Gaynor	80%	➢ Work with 2010 Tenancy Support officers to identify vulnerable criteria (29th June) **Complete** ➢ Produce pro-forma for identifying vulnerability during the sign up and at the Housproud visit (29th July) **Complete** ➢ Produce referral document when vulnerability is identified (31st November) ➢ Implement new procedures (31st December)	Increase the number of sustainable tenancies Reduce failed tenancies Increase efficiencies within 2010

14	Introduce a risk assessment process prior to the start of a tenancy including the identification of vulnerable applicants and their support needs at the point of application	31st October 2009	Chris Gaynor Sandra Wardle	100%	➢ Agree a joint process with the Key)Choices Team and support agencies(29th July) ➢ Produce a Housing Application booklet to be completed when customers are applying to join the Housing register (capturing tenancy risk/vulnerability)(29th July) ➢ Train all front line staff in completing and processing the Housing Application Booklet (31st October)	Increase the number of sustainable tenancies Reduce failed tenancies Increase efficiencies within 2010 All applications are input with the applicant present and vulnerability is identified at this point.
15	Review the process of backdating tenancy commencement dates against legislation and the cost of allocating 1 rent free week	31st October 2010	Adrian Cheetham Simon Bell	0%	➢ Establish a working group inclusive of IT, Rents, ANIM, Key Choices and Empty Homes (1st February 2010) ➢ Risk assess current process (1st March 2010) ➢ Make recommendations identifying efficiencies (31st July 2010) ➢ Make recommendations to Cabinet (if required) (31st October 2010)	Confidence that processes are in line with legislation and inefficiencies identified are removed
16	Review all new procedures covering the points below: • Process documents updated • Marketing of new procedure • Training for new procedure • VFM - Cost/savings of new procedure		31st December 2009	0%	➢ Performance reporting – 31st October 2009 ➢ Impact Teams – 30th November 2009 ➢ Fond Farewell - 30 September 2009 & 31st December 2009 ➢ Viewings & sign up within EH team - 30th September 2009 & 31st December 2009 ➢ Streamlined CBL process – 31st December 2009 ➢ Security Contract - 30 September 2009 & 31st December 2009 ➢ Agile working for ERT - 30 September 2009 & 31st December 2009 ➢	All new processes to have been reviewed and evidence supplied to PSI team for VFM, efficiency or high level of service provided to customers.

Empty Property Strategy

2010
ROTHERHAM LTD
TURNING HOUSES INTO HOMES

CHARTER MARK
CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Customer
Approved
Easy Read

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Contents

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this Empty Property Strategy 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

It represents our corporate commitment to take a structured approach and place local people, our employees, our partners, and the community at large at the heart of all that we do.

Our strategies are evidence that we are serious about bringing positive change within the organisation, and proof that we know more needs to be done through actions listed in the Action Plans.

We know that to succeed we need to work with local people and with local organisations to demonstrate that we are working for our communities, and we look forward to working with customers in delivering the commitments made in this strategy.

Colin Earl
Interim Chief Executive

1.0   Introduction

This Empty Property Strategy describes the future vision and the key actions required to achieve excellence in the management of Rotherham's empty Council dwellings.

This strategy is built on the fundamental premise that all partners involved in taking it forward have equal status and contribution to make to its delivery.

The Strategy provides a framework for this joint working to deliver one service that understands its ambitions and delivers against key targets set out in this document.

The strategic Action Plan sets out the key targets for improving the service and arrangements for monitoring progress (section 8 Performance Management). We will report publicly on performance in our annual report.

This strategy will identify the links to the strategic documents below, ensuring all actions are corporately agreed to complement the organisation's goals as set out in the:

- Delivery Plan
- Investment Plan
- Repairs and Maintenance strategy

It is recognised that there will always be a number of empty dwellings across the Borough in order to allow the Housing System to function effectively and to facilitate both residential mobility and the improvement or redevelopment of the housing stock. However, 2010 Rotherham Ltd recognises that empty property turnover rates and the number of long-term properties need to be kept to a minimum. Long-term empty properties tend to attract anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping, vandalism and drug taking and other related issues that affect the health and wellbeing of a neighbourhood. In addition, where there is a disproportionate number of such properties, they can be an indicator of failing communities and can deter further inward investment and become counter-productive to any efforts to make an area prosperous and sustainable.

2010 Rotherham Ltd recognises that the approach it takes to dealing with empty properties must be set within a wider partnership framework. Although empty properties can be a symptom of decline, dealing with them in isolation will not be sufficient to turn around the sustainability of the areas they affect. In order to stimulate and maintain demand for council properties and to rebuild sustainable communities, 2010 Rotherham Ltd recognises the need to work as a wider partnership of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and other partners. Consequently this strategy needs to be linked and considered in conjunction with the following key documents:-

- Rotherham Housing Strategy
- Local Area Agreements
- Homelessness Strategy

Purpose of the Strategy

To reduce the number of long-term empty properties (ie void more than 6 months) that are having a detrimental effect upon the communities in which they are situated.

To set out mechanisms that will prevent tenancies failing and in particular those tenancies that fail during the first 6 months.

To maintain and improve the empty property turnover rates.

To continue to identify the ongoing situation with regard to the number, distribution and type of void council property throughout the borough, and to establish any trends which exist as to the reasons for these voids.

To continue to devise solutions that will address the reasons why properties become void.

To set out an action plan with targets and milestones to deliver the strategy up to 2010.

2.0 Strategic Objectives

- To continue to reduce the number of long term empty properties (void more than 6 months) that are having a detrimental effect upon the communities in which they are situated throughout Rotherham.

- To continue to identify and continually monitor the scale and distribution of vacant properties in relation to the total Council Housing stock within Rotherham.

- To develop an understanding of changes in the nature and extent of void properties throughout Rotherham as an ongoing process.

- To continue to monitor and review the existence of long term voids and identify any emerging 'hot spots' or high concentrations of void properties within Rotherham.

- To establish, within the identified areas of high concentrations of void properties, the prime reasons for their existence and their prolonged empty status, specifically with regard to the implications of the stock condition and any associated problems such as crime, vandalism, etc.

- To raise awareness of the issues surrounding void properties.

3.0   Equalities and Diversity

The Board of 2010 Rotherham Ltd recognises its responsibility to challenge both direct and indirect discrimination, and to promote community cohesion.

In the Delivery Plan it states that in terms of Equalities and Diversity
 "We have worked with the Council to attain level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, and are implementing a comprehensive training programme for staff, Board members and community representatives."

Whilst the improvements to date that both 2010 Rotherham Ltd and RMBC have undertaken on Equalities and Diversity are self assessed at working at level 2/3 of the Local Government Standard and in some areas of good practice level 4. Further work, however, is required to ensure that full progression to level 3 is achieved. For the organisation to achieve level 3, it will have to prove it has set and worked towards equalities targets across its service delivery as well as having identified areas of weakness and tailored specific services to meet the needs of minority groups ensuring inclusiveness.

Training on Equalities and Diversity is undertaken by every employee on an annual basis. It is tailored to meet the needs of the trainee, for example Managers are trained and updated on relevant legislation to ensure compliance. This has previously been delivered by a number of external training organisations but is now undertaken in house by the Equalities and Diversity Manager to ensure consistency across the organisation.

All new or revised Policy and Procedures within 2010 Rotherham Ltd require an Equalities Impact Assessment to have been completed before they can be formally agreed. Policies relating to void property management that have undergone an Equalities Impact Assessments are:

- Allocation Policy
- Key Choices (Choice Based Letting) Procedures
- Tenants Recharge Procedures

Performance management of Equalities and Diversity was introduced initially in 2007 and is to be rolled out across the organisation in 2008. This is to ensure that 2010 Rotherham Ltd identifies any discriminatory practice which results in barriers to groups accessing the service, and endeavours to improve performance by setting targets for identified areas of weakness. This is monitored at a corporate level. Monitoring of void property management for Equalities and Diversity will be introduced from April 2008. The Housing Register will be compared against Rotherham's census data to identify any disproportionate representation by any groups, (covering age, ethnicity, disability and gender). Refusal rates are also to be monitored by those four strands of diversity. Customer satisfaction monitoring will also include faith and sexual orientation and Transgender status. This is planned for September 2008.

All of this work, ongoing and planned, will ensure that there is a robust approach taken within 2010 Rotherham Ltd to deliver an inclusive and fair service. All service developments are subject to consultation via the Voids Service Improvement Group. The group is made up of tenant and Rotherfed members. This gives customers the opportunity to impact positively on the organisation and contribute to delivering the Mission and Vision for Rotherham.

4.0 Sustainable Communities and Tenancy Management

Neighbourhoods with a number of void council properties create a poor impression and can affect the community by reducing their sense of worth. This will be compounded if the void properties are long term vacant. The social impact can be reduced community cohesion because of anti social behaviour (ASB) impacting negatively on the lives of the residents. This is a drain on resources within 2010 Rotherham Ltd and partner agencies when addressing the acts of ASB. Whilst partner agencies involved in enforcement action can be clearly identified, agencies addressing individuals affected by ASB, for example the Primary Care Trust, where health has deteriorated, are not captured, but the resources of the service will be affected by the impact of ASB.

Actions have already been taken to improve the standard of void properties whilst they are vacant. These are:-

- Introduced Void garden management procedures November 2007
- Minimum lettable standard agreed
- Weekly visits by Neighbourhood based staff to monitor vacant council dwellings

From June 2007 the Consolidated Voids Team has provided clear accountability for void property management, reducing the number of long term voids from 111 to 57, while the total number of voids across Rotherham is 320, this is 1.45% of the Council Housing stock (as of January 2008).

The benefits of reducing the number of long term voids and the total number of voids in Rotherham to improve sustainability are identified below:-
- Reduced ASB
- Improved community cohesion
- Reduce negative impact on health
- Increased rental income
- Improved numbers of sustainable tenancies
- Reduced direct and indirect cost of managing void properties
- Increased sense of worth for communities and improved reputation of the area
- Improved reputation of neighbourhoods with a previously high number of long term void proper

Reducing Homelessness
Close working with the Neighbourhood Teams to identify and support "at risk" tenancies such as those suffering from hate crimes or domestic violence will help reduce the number of failing tenancies. The Introduction of two Tenancy Support Officers via the Safer Estates Team will also assist in reducing the number of failing tenancies. Vulnerable tenants will be identified during the sign up process and referred direct to the Tenancy Support Officers.

Neighbourhood Walkabouts that identify privately owned vacant properties that are in a poor state of repair or of an unkempt appearance, will be referred directly to the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team who will formally address the negative environmental impact and take appropriate legal action to address the problem.

Forging links with local schools and youth groups within identified areas will allow 2010 Rotherham Ltd to actively work to alert young people to the potential dangers within void properties and the surrounding area and the effect of ASB. This is essential as it engages a sense of ownership by children and youths within the targeted area.

The quality of the service provided by 2010 Rotherham Ltd is monitored monthly by a team of tenant inspectors.   This will ensure that the service is developing in a way that is led by tenants and will deliver improvements that will reduce the number of tenancies lasting less than 12 months. The number of new void properties will then decrease, which will support communities and individual neighbourhoods to improving sustainability.

5.0　Environmental Management

The built environment has a major impact on the wellbeing of individuals. A poor environment can impact on health, education, employment, crime etc, so it is important that this is recognised and addressed as part of the Void Property Strategy.

Whilst the Decent Homes programme in Rotherham will go a long way to improving the built environment, there is still further work to be undertaken.

Fuel poverty is a real issue for families and individuals on low income or housing benefit in Rotherham. It is estimated that fuel poverty affects 13% of current Council tenancies and is a key area to be developed to support new tenancies. The points below show how 2010 Rotherham Ltd is seeking to reduce potential fuel poverty for new tenants:-

- Supply Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for all void properties
- Add the EPC rating to the property advert via Key Choices
- Use the above information to inform future programmed maintenance plans for estates/property types that require energy efficiency investment such as cavity wall or loft, insulation
- Provide every void property with a minimum of four energy efficient light bulbs

Continued partnership working with Home Energy Advice Team is expected to identify elements of work that can be undertaken to improve the energy efficiency of properties as part of the void maintenance work. This will result in reduced energy costs for new tenancies. The Affordable Warmth Strategy identifies that this is a positive development and will be used to monitor progress.

There are two direct environmental impacts associated with the Voids Team. These are, fuel used in operational transport and the materials removed from, and introduced to, void properties.

A review of the transport needs within the Voids Team is planned for 2008 with a brief to reduce the number of vehicles required. The review will consider the In House Service Providers transport needs and renegotiated Service Level Agreement with Translink.

The majority of waste materials removed from void properties are not recycled by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. All precious metals recovered from void properties are recorded and recycled centrally. Closer working with 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Environmental Improvement Manager will identify further opportunities to improve the amount of material waste removed from void properties that can be recycled.

Closer working with RBT and suppliers is required to ensure that all products used in bringing a property to the lettable standard (kitchens, bathrooms etc) have been purchased with the environmental impact having been considered.

Environmental management as stated in the Investment Plan for 2010 Rotherham Ltd (page 45), is being developed both internally and externally to reduce identified negative environmental impacts caused by actions relating to service delivery.

6.0   Partnership Working

The partners involved in delivering the void service are both cross directorate within 2010 Rotherham Ltd and RMBC. The partners associated with void management and delivery, are identified below:

Process	Provider
Allocation	
Housing Advice	RMBC & 2010 Rotherham Ltd
Application input	RMBC & 2010 Rotherham Ltd
Change of circs/application update	RMBC & 2010 Rotherham Ltd
Placing a bid, phone, internet Neighbourhood Office, text	RMBC, 2010 Rotherham Ltd and RBT
Management transfer	RMBC & 2010 Rotherham Ltd
Short list produced	RMBC
Verification of applications – med priority & Sheltered Team	2010 Rotherham Ltd – Med Pri & Sheltered Team
Offer/viewing – agree repairs	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Signup	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Complete repairs	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Houseproud visit	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Termination	
Termination request	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Pre term visit – identify repairs	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Advert produced	RMBC & 2010 Rotherham Ltd
Property advertised	RMBC
Hand keys in – void work ordered	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Gas & Electric checks	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Pre let standard achieved	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Viewing	2010 Rotherham Ltd
Post let work completed	2010 Rotherham Ltd

The partners are managed within their programme area or directorate, and each has individual targets that they aspire to achieve, both quantitative and qualitative. Whilst individually all partners are developing service improvements, there is presently not an overall coherent service improvement programme. This is an area of weakness that is recognised and work is underway to harmonise the elements of the void management process. The appointment of a Voids Controller within 2010 Rotherham will assist in addressing the issue in the short to medium term, as part of the job description states "*the post holder will also be responsible for building stronger working relationships with internal and external stakeholders*" and for the long term future, a one service approach will be considered to allow maximum efficiencies to be realised.

For the service to develop post 2010, partnerships with RSLs and/or other private sector landlords should be considered as a desirable objective. For this reason, it is fundamental that all service providers work to harmonise the service delivery and be collectively managed by one Programme area. As 2010 Rotherham Ltd is established as a successfully performing 2 star housing management organisation, it would be reasonable to expect for it to lead on this, as it would be able to provide a full housing management function to RSLs and/or private sector landlords without undergoing a major strategic restructure.

For this to progress RMBC and 2010 Rotherham Ltd will be required to review what services are provided by Neighbourhoods and 2010 Rotherham Ltd, with a medium to long term view of what improvements can be achieved by harmonising the management structure of these services.

7.0   Value for Money

In 20006/7 benchmarking was undertaken by Housemark. The results compared 2010 Rotherham Ltd performance and cost against the ALMO comparator group, as well as some high level national comparisons.

The tables below identify 2010 Rotherham Ltd as having the second lowest overhead per property, the second lowest costs on office accommodation and mid table costs for void property management.

Total Overhead Cost per Property

Premises (Office Accommodation) Cost per Property

**Empty Property Management
Pay Cost per Property**
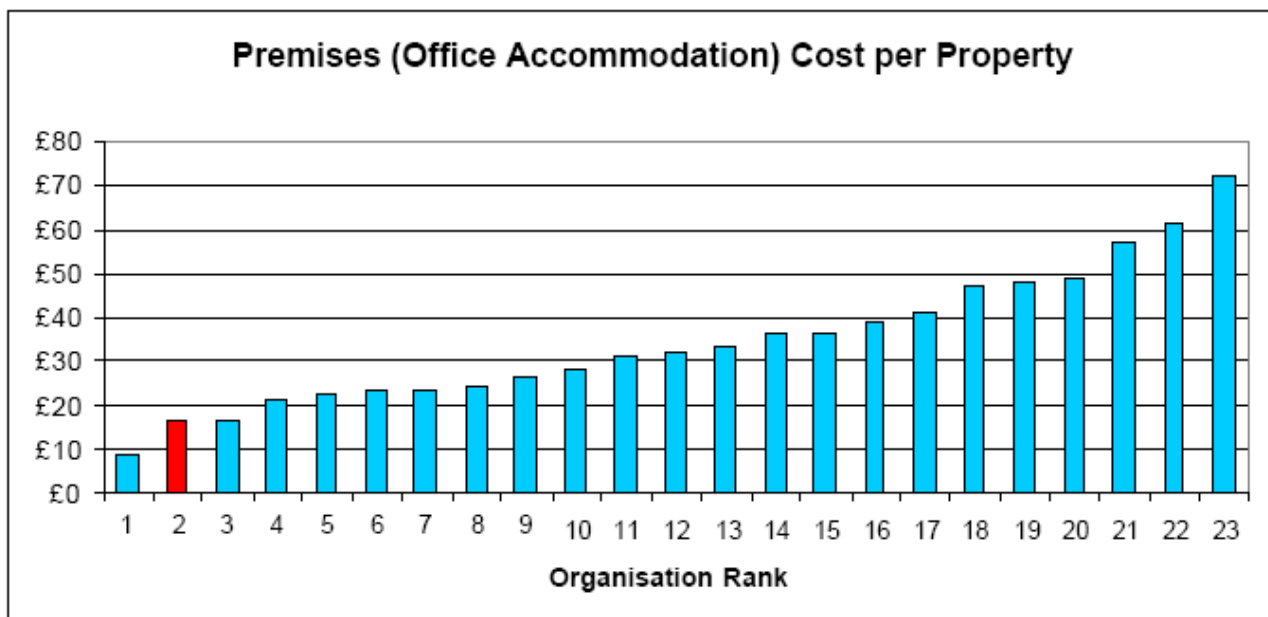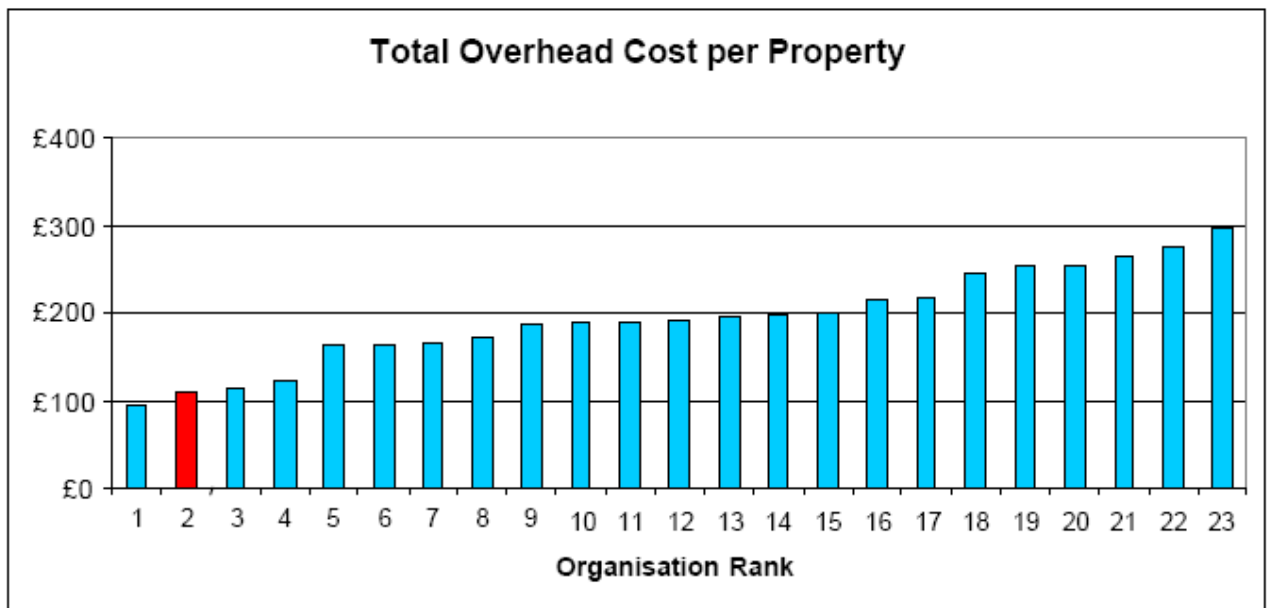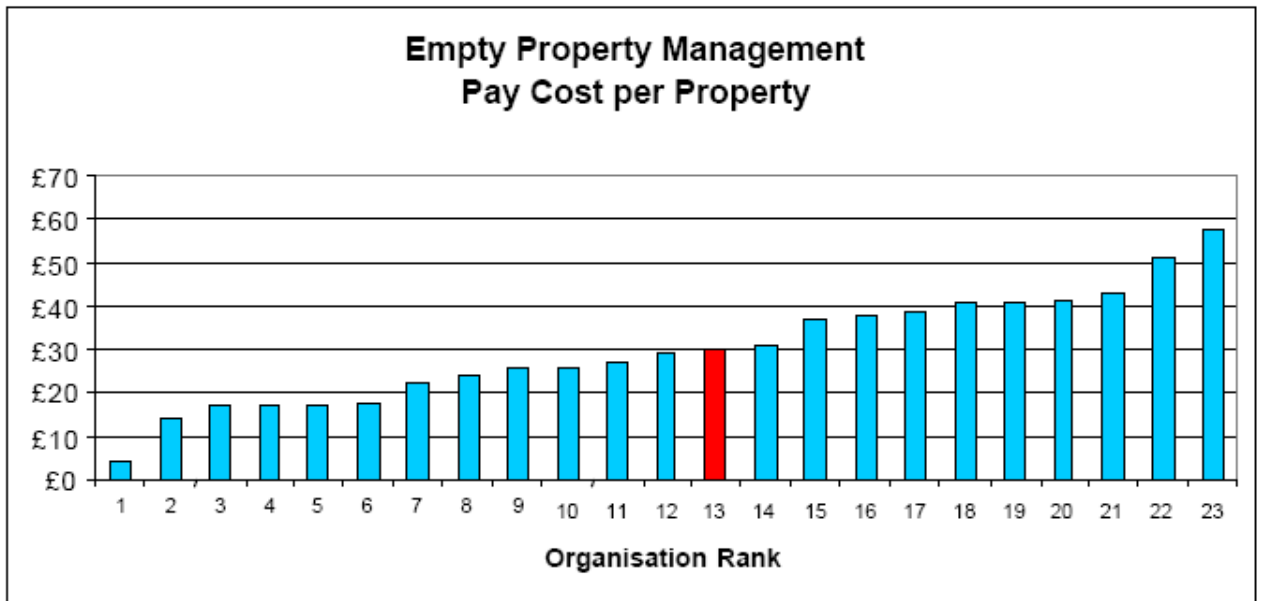
The block for your organisation is highlighted in red

The chart below shows the average relet time for 2006/07

Average Re-let Time (Weeks)
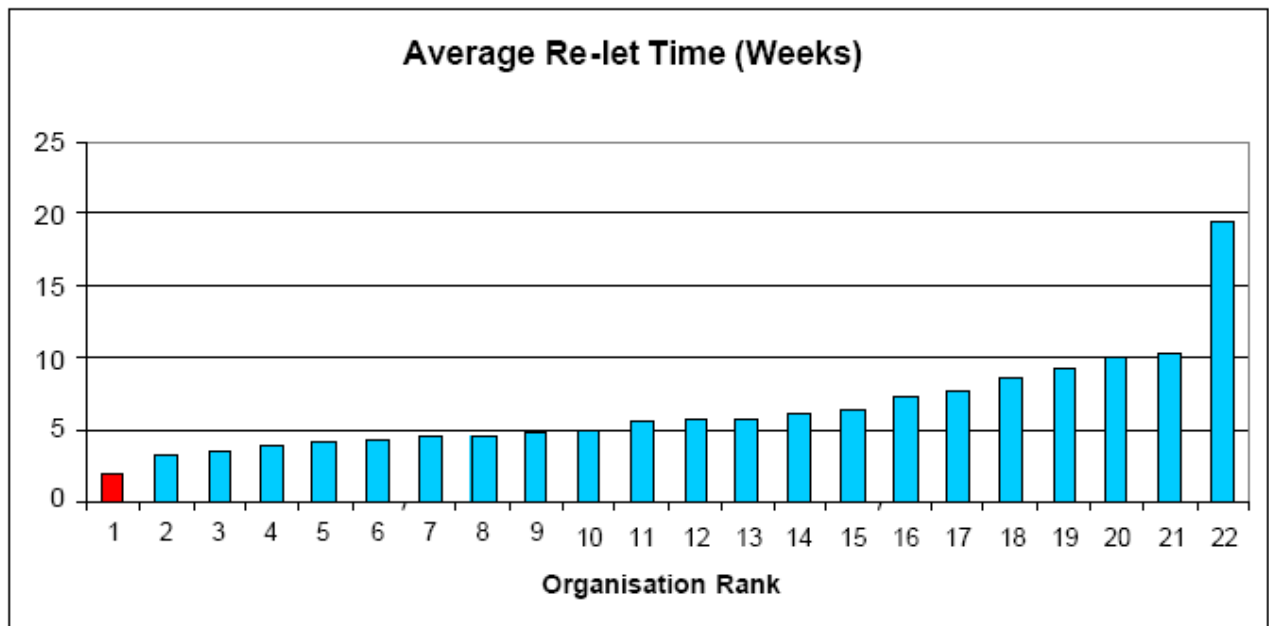
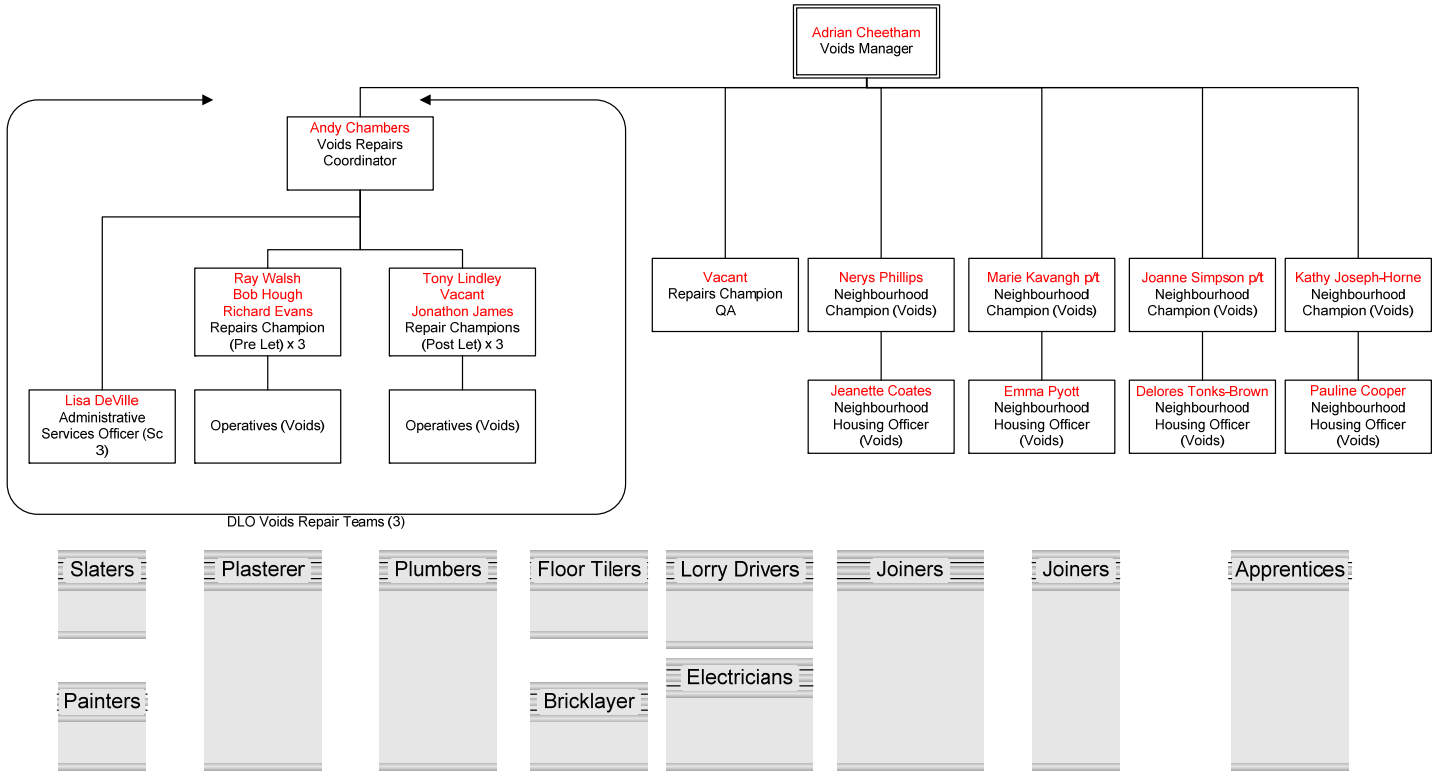The block for your organisation is highlighted in red

The above charts clearly demonstrate that the service provided by 2010 Rotherham Ltd is Value for Money in comparison to other national service providers.
It is noted that current performance (January 2008) is at just below 6 weeks, this is due to specific issues identified in relation to Decent Homes work.

A full review of the Voids Service was undertaken in 2007 and identified organisational efficiency savings by restructuring the void management activity into one consolidated team. This reduced duplication and increased specialised knowledge. The consolidated team includes the Void Repairs Team as well as the Void Allocation Team (*see structure chart next page).*

Neighbourhood Management

| Voids Team | October 2007 | |

Adrian Cheetham
Voids Manager

Andy Chambers
Voids Repairs
Coordinator

Ray Walsh
Bob Hough
Richard Evans
Repairs Champion
(Pre Let) x 3

Tony Lindley
Vacant
Jonathon James
Repair Champions
(Post Let) x 3

Lisa DeVille
Administrative
Services Officer (Sc
3)

Operatives (Voids)

Operatives (Voids)

DLO Voids Repair Teams (3)

Vacant
Repairs Champion
QA

Nerys Phillips
Neighbourhood
Champion (Voids)

Marie Kavangh p/t
Neighbourhood
Champion (Voids)

Joanne Simpson p/t
Neighbourhood
Champion (Voids)

Kathy Joseph-Horne
Neighbourhood
Champion (Voids)

Jeanette Coates
Neighbourhood
Housing Officer
(Voids)

Emma Pyott
Neighbourhood
Housing Officer
(Voids)

Delores Tonks-Brown
Neighbourhood
Housing Officer
(Voids)

Pauline Cooper
Neighbourhood
Housing Officer
(Voids)

Slaters

Painters

Plasterer

Plumbers

Floor Tilers

Bricklayer

Lorry Drivers

Electricians

Joiners

Joiners

Apprentices

The one team approach gives a consistent service to customers whether that is internal partners or external stakeholders. The cost of delivering the voids service was identified through activity based costing in 2007. The Activity based costing exercise is to be repeated in 2008 to identify the level of savings made against those expected.

Anticipated efficiencies achieved by the Voids Repairs Team are expected to reduce the average cost from £1450 to below £1250 for each void property from April 2008. In 2008/09, this will give an additional £280k to be reinvested in reducing the number of voids in Rotherham, and then as a cashable efficiency for 2009/10. Procedures are in place to ensure the harmonisation of the Decent Homes work and void property repairs. This is to ensure all possible efficiencies are achieved and the specifications are equitable.

8.0   Performance Management

Historically in Rotherham, performance indicators for void properties have been based solely on national performance indicators for re let times. Whilst this has driven continual improvements the service has not been as customer focused as it could have been. The Void Service Review identified a number of key areas that customers identified for improvements. The main one being consistency of service, hence the Consolidated Voids Team. Seven overarching recommendations were made with a total of 51 actions to be delivered over the next two years. The resulting Action Plan is monitored via the one to one process between the Voids Manager and the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Management.

Through the above process and the Performance Management Framework within 2010 Rotherham Ltd, it has highlighted the need for local performance indicators to identify specific areas of the service that are performing well and those that require improvement.

The performance indicators to be reported on formally in 2008/09 are:

- BV 212 – Time taken to relet a void property (National)
- BV 69 – Rent loss through voids (Local)
- HES 5 – The percentage of tenancies not lasting 12 months (Local)

The additional local performance indicators to be monitored in addition are:

- The time the keys are with the Voids Repair Team
- The time from shortlist completion to tenancy sign up
- The average cost of non capital repairs to void properties

- The number of Houseproud visits completed as a percentage
- Customer satisfaction by diversity strand
- Access to the Allocation system by minority groups
- The percentage of the Council Housing stock that is void

The above performance indicators that are reported on formally will be part of 2010 Rotherham Ltd's monthly performance report that is published, and the local performance indicators that are to be monitored will be reported on at the monthly Corporate Performance Meeting. All the above performance indicators will be reported quarterly at the Performance Committee. We will also report publicly on performance in our annual report.

9.0   Strategic Empty Property Action Plan

Action	Community Theme(s)	Timescales and milestones	Accountable officer	Monitored by	Priority	Targeted outcome	Measures(s)
Monitor the Voids service by Diversity Strand	Alive Leaning Proud	Monitoring Equalities & Diversity of the Voids service April2008 Recording of satisfaction levels by diversity September 2008 Develop service as required from diversity Monitoring January 2009	Consolidated Voids Manager	Corporate Performance Meeting Performance Committee Void Service Plan	High	A tailored voids service that meets the needs of minority groups. Improved satisfaction levels of all diverse customers accessing the service. January 2009	2010 Rotherham will know it is meeting the needs of all customer accessing the voids service
Reduce the number of failing tenancies (not lasting 12 months)	Achieving Proud Safe	Introduce monitoring 2008 Continually improve performance	Consolidated Voids Manager Safer Estates Manager Neighbourhood Mangers	Corporate Performance Meeting Performance Committee	High	Reduced number of failing tenancies by 10%	Reduced number of failing tenancies, improved sustainability.
Reduce the number of vacant Council dwellings across Rotherham	Proud Achieving Safe	Introduce monitoring 2008 Continually improve performance	Consolidated Voids Manager Voids Repairs Coordinator	Corporate Performance Meeting Performance Committee Void Service Plan	Medium	Reduced number of vacant Council Dwellings by 10%	Reduced rent loss through voids. Increased number of affordable homes across Rotherham

Action	Community Theme(s)	Timescales and milestones	Accountable officer	Monitored by	Priority	Targeted outcome	Measures(s)
Reduce the percentage of Council tenants directly affected by fuel poverty	Proud Achieving Safe	Introduce EPC ratings for void properties 2008	Consolidated Voids Manager Voids Repairs Coordinator	Corporate Performance Meeting Void Service Plan	Medium	Reduced failed tenancies due to fuel poverty by 10%	Reduced number of failing tenancies, less council tenants affected by fuel poverty
Increase efficiency and service delivery by having a one service approach to Vacant Council dwelling Management.	Learning Achieving	Review the delivery of the allocation and letting process provided by all agencies January – June 2009	Void Manager	PDR 1-2-1	Medium / Low	One joined up service provider for Allocations & Lettings of Council Dwellings. Reduce costs and improve performance.	Improved customer satisfaction

10.0 How to get more Help and Information

To access our services you can:

- Visit our website at either:
  - www.2010rotherham.org   www.rotherham.gov.uk

- Telephone one of our offices on the numbers below

- Visit our council offices, where we will provide induction loops and text-talk facilities at all of our reception points

- Send a letter to any of our offices using the addresses below

Speak to your Neighbourhood Champion or Neighbourhood Housing Officer who manages your area. They can be found at your local Neighbourhood Office:

Monday	**8:45am to 4:30pm**
Tuesday	**8:45am to 4:30pm**
Wednesday	**9:00am to 6:00pm**
Thursday	**8:45am to 4:30pm**
Friday	**8:45am to 4:30pm**

Maltby Neighbourhood Office
Civic Centre, High Street, Maltby, Rotherham S66 8LE
Tel: (01709 812637
Fax: (01709) 815350

Dinnington Neighbourhood Office
New Street, Dinnington, Sheffield S25 2EX
Tel: (01909) 334430
Fax: (01909) 568582

Wath Neighbourhood Office
Town Hall, Church Street, Wath, Rotherham S63 7RE
Tel: (01709) 873678
Fax: (01709) 879568

Swinton Neighbourhood Office
Swinton Customer Service Centre
Station Street, Swinton, Mexborough S64 8PZ
Tel: (01709) 334628
Fax: (01709) 578079
Opening times: 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday

Rawmarsh Neighbourhood Office
Rawmarsh Hill, Parkgate, Rotherham S62 6DT
Tel: (01709) 336587
Fax: (01709) 525973

East Herringthorpe Neighbourhood Office
16/18 Ridgeway, East Herringthorpe, Rotherham S65 3PG
Tel: (01709) 336947
Fax: (01709) 852946

Greasbrough Neighbourhood Office
Munsbrough Rise, Greasbrough, Rotherham S61 4PU
Tel: (01709) 336917
Fax: (01709) 553458

Kimberworth Park Neighbourhood Office
St John's Green, Kimberworth Park, Rotherham S61 3JL
Tel: (01709) 336926
Fax: (01709) 515368

Town Centre and Aston Neighbourhood Offices
One Stop Shop
Civic Building, Walker Place, Rotherham S65 1HX
Tel: (01709) 382121
Fax (01709) 823420

11.0 Glossary

ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
Consolidated Voids Team	Joint Void Allocations and Repairs Team
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
Houseproud	New Home Service Standard
HES	Local performance indicator
IHSP	In-House Service Provider (Repairs)
Rotherfed	Rotherham's Federation of Tenants
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
RBT	Rotherham Brought Together (Strategic IT partner)
Safer Estates Team	Dedicated team to address issues of Anti Social Behaviour
Tenancy Support Officers	Dedicated member of staff to support failing tenancies
Translink	Strategic transport partner

The **Empty Property Strategy** sets out the how over the next 2 years, by effectively managing empty properties 2010 will reduce their negative impact on our estates and promote more sustainable communities. If you would like to speak to someone about it in another language please take it into your local housing office or ring The Voids Team on 822200 and we will arrange an interpreter for you.

خالی پڑی ہوئے مکانات (پراپرٹیوں) سے متعلقہ پالیسی - The Empty Property Strategy میں بتایا گیا ہے کہ کس طرح 2010 آئندہ 2 سالوں کے دوران خالی پڑی ہوئے مکانات (پراپرٹیوں) کا موثر طور پر انتظام کرکے ہماری اسٹیٹس پر پڑنے والے منفی اثر کو کم کرے گی اور زیادہ مستحکم کمیوٹیوں کو فروغ دے گی۔ اگر آپ اس کے متعلق کسی کے ساتھ کسی دوسری زبان میں بات کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو اس کو اپنے محکمہ مکانات کے دفتر(ہاوسنگ آفس) میں لے جائیں یا خالی پڑی ہوئے مکانات (پراپرٹیوں) سے متعلقہ ٹیم The Voids Team - کو 822200 01709 پر فون کریں اور ہم آپکے لئے ایک ترجمان کا انتظام کردیں گے۔

Stratégia Prázdnych obydlí poukazuje na to ako v nasledujúcich dvoch rokoch efektívnym spravovaním prázdnych obydlí 2010 obmedzí ich negatívny vplyv na našu komunitu, a ako bude podporovať sebestačnosť v komunite. Ak by ste mali záujem sa o tom porozprávať s niekým v inom jazyku, prosím prineste to do Vášho miestneho domového úradu, alebo telefonicky kontaktujte The Voids Team na 01709822200 a my Vám zaobstaráme prekladateľa.

توضح إستراتيجية الممتلكات الغير مأهولة The Empty Property Strategy كيف سيقوم 2010 خلال السنتين القادمتين، بالإدارة الفعالة للممتلكات الغير مأهولة لتقليل تأثيرها السلبي علي عقاراتنا وتروّج لمجتمعات أكثر إسقراراً. إذا ترغب بالتحدث إلي شخص ما حول الإستراتيجية بلغة أخرى ، فضلاً خذها إلى مكتبك السكني المحلي أو أتصل هاتفياً بفريق الممتلكات الغير مأهولة - The Voids Team علي 822200 01709 و سنرتب لك مترجم.

空置屋宇政策公佈 2010有限公司在未來兩年內，怎樣透過有效管理空置屋宇辦法，來減低對本身屋苑造成的負面影響，並促進社區復甦。凡有意採用其他語言方式查詢有關詳情者，請親臨當地的區域房屋服務辦事處或致電屋宇空置管理組822200聯絡，我們將會安排傳譯員向你解釋。

استراتژی خانه های مسکونی خالی - The Empty Property Strategy نشان میدهد که چگونه شرکت 2010 در 2 سال آینده، با مدیریتهای تاثیرپذیر در اداره خانه های خالی مسکونی در تاثیرات منفی آژنسهای مسکونی خود خواهد داشت تا اجتماعات مناسبتری را ترفیع دهد. اگر شما دوست دارید با شخصی در این زمینه به زبان مختلف دیگری صحبت کنید می توانید آن را به نزدیکترین اداره محلی هوزینگ ناحیه خود ارائه نماید یا با واحد وید The Voids Team با شماره 822200 01709 تماس حاصل فرماید تا ما بتوانیم برای شما یک مترجم فراهم کنیم.

La Stratégie des Propriétés Vides expose les façons dont 2010 réduira leur impact négatif sur nos cités en gérant effectivement des propriétés vides et promouvra des communautés plus viables pendant les deux prochaines années. Si vous désirez en parler à quelqu'un dans une autre langue veuillez l'apporter à votre bureau local de représentation de maison ou appeler 'The Voids Team' au 01709 822200 et nous arrangerons pour vous un interprète.

If you would like to speak to someone about this document or receive it in large print or Braille please contact the Voids Team on 01709 822200

Agenda Item 6

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	4th January 2010
3.	Title:	Allocation Policy and Local Lettings Policy Review
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

This report details progress since the last review of the Allocation Policy on 27th July 2009, and includes recommendations for amendments to both the Allocation Policy and Local Lettings Policies following the publication of the Governments Fair and Flexible consultation document and subsequent statutory guidance published on the 4th December 2009. (Appendix 1)

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member:

Agrees the amendments to the Allocation Policy as identified in Section 7.7

7.   Proposals and Detail

7.1 The New Housing Allocation Policy was launched on the 1st December 2008 and revised on 27th July 2009. (Minute No. 42).The Allocation Policy determines eligibility for council housing, it is also focussed on assisting people in urgent housing need with the introduction of the Priority Plus group and the General Plus group.

7.2 On 31st July 2009, Communities and Local Government issued a consultation paper regarding the Allocation of Social housing. The consultation paper was called "**Fair and flexible - Draft statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England**" – **Subsequent Statutory Guidance was published on the 4th December 2009**. (Appendix 1.) This guidance strengthens councils' freedom to prioritise specific local needs alongside those households who are in 'reasonable preference'. In some areas this will mean giving more priority to people who have been on waiting lists for a long time or more priority for people with strong local connections to rural areas. Elsewhere, there may be a greater need to attract workers with particular skills, or to support people in low paid work.

To ensure that we involved local residents in this debate we implemented a survey which captured the views of local communities. Over one thousand customers completed and returned a survey/ questionnaire; the results have been clearly analysis, and are reflected in proposed changes to the Allocation Policy and Local Lettings Policies. The proposed changes will meet the needs, demands and aspirations of local people, whilst also giving priority to those in the greatest housing need.

The proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy are to consider:

• Introducing a rural priority lettings policy
• Set aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants in employment and help people to live closer to their place of work
• Analyse waiting time regarding the lettings quotas in the General Band

7.3 The feedback from the consultation was that generally people (46%) disagreed that the Allocation Policy was fair, this is because customers have told us that they want more priority to be given to waiting time, and more priority to be given to those customers with a local connection.

7.4 There were 20 individual comments from customers who thought that customers in the General group with long waiting time should be given more priority, and 76% agreed that a percentage of rural housing should be set aside for people with a local connection, 64% wanted help to move home in another area to gain employment, 67% of people wanted help to move home within South Yorkshire.

7.5 Moreover, in order to dispel myths and misperceptions, Rotherham is looking to improve the provision of information on how housing in Rotherham is being allocated, and are looking at innovative ways such at "virtual property tours"

and "real time feedback" to enable customers to make informed choices available to them. The Fair and Flexible consultation told us that 69.50% of people found the Allocation Policy easy to understand, 37.7% of people told us that they looked for information about housing on the Key Choices website, 34.3% at the Property Shop, 21.20% in the Rotherham Advertiser's Key Choices Property page and 6.8% at their Local Neighbourhood office (10.4% of people were not looking to move)

7.6 Earlier this year there has been a Scrutiny Review of *"Choice based Lettings (CBL)"* which examined current CBL practices and how we can make *improvements to the service from a customer's perspective. There was also* a separate Scrutiny Review of the *"Void Process", which examined the process of turnaround of void properties.* These are separate from the Allocation Policy but are clearly linked to improving information. Progress made against the 24 recommendation was presented to Sustainable Scrutiny panel on 10th December 2009.

7.7 Proposed amendments to the Allocation Policy are:

7.7.1 More priority to be given to households with waiting time by increasing the quota in the General band from 10% to 20% and reducing the General Plus band from 40% to 30%

o The feedback from the **Fair and Flexible Consultation** was that generally people (46%) disagreed that the Allocation Policy was fair. The Housing Register has increased from **17,000** in December 2008 to 21,952 as at 10th November 2009. Of these there are **87 Priority Plus, 2001 Priority, 1631 General Plus and 18,233 General applications. Between 1st March 2009 and 30th November 2009, 1261 properties have been let to**;

Group	Reason	Number of properties let
Priority Plus	Applicants who need to move in an emergency and have been awarded this code by a panel of housing and none housing professionals including locally elected members	18
Priority	Applicants who have undergone an assessment and need to move urgently due to medical needs, homelessness, statutory overcrowding etc	697
General Plus	Applicants who need to move urgently but their circumstances are less urgent than those in the priority group such as homeless applicants who are not in priority need or those households sharing bedrooms	342
General	Applicants who want to move and have registered an application to safeguard for the future	214

7.7.2 Amend occupancy levels in section 2.2 – On rare occasions three individual adults can make a joint housing application to move, the eligibility rules must ensure that they are eligible for 3 bedroom flats or maisonettes and remove the eligibility for family houses (section 2.2). Joint applications must comply with the rules for joint tenancies. The occupancy levels for couples and single people need amending so that they are also eligible for 3 bedroom upper floor flats.

o The current Allocation Policy allows 3 individual adults with no children to access a 3 bedroom house. Although these cases are relatively rare, this occupancy levels should be amended to flats or maisonettes as 3 bedroom family houses should be retained for households with children. Joint applications from individual adults must comply with the rules regarding joint tenancies. (Section 3.1 Allocation Policy procedures) In addition the current Allocation Policy only allows couples with access to children or 3 individual adults access to 3 bedroom flats and demand from these groups are relatively low. It is therefore recommended that childless couples and single persons be also considered as eligible for 3 bedroom upper floor flats.

7.7.3 More information is included in section 2.4 regarding offering of properties to the advertised quotas -– The current Allocation Policy details in section 2.4 that if there are no requests received from the General Plus Band then the General Band will be offered the property. More clarity should be included regarding the Priority Band. e.g. *"If there are no requests from the advertised band or the applicant refuses the property the next band will be contacted. This means that if a property is advertised to the Priority band and there are no requests from this band the General Plus band will be considered. If a property is advertised to the General Plus band and there are no requests then the General Band will be considered."*

7.7.4 Clarification that Priority Plus awarded detailed in Section 2.5.7 of the Allocation Policy for households with multiple needs to only include those households assessed as having two reasonable preference grounds detailed in section 2.2.1 of the Allocation Policy procedures.- The current Allocation Policy Procedures clearly details in Section 2.2.1 those households who are considered as having a reasonable preference. However the Allocation Policy in section 2.5.7 does not make this clear as it states that Multiple Needs include households who have 2 Priority Needs – This should be reworded and changed to 2 reasonable preferences.

7.7.5 Include households under occupying without and assessed need willing to downsize in the Priority Plus group - The current Allocation Policy **Section 2.5.7** places those households who wish to move and are under occupied into the Priority Group. In order to facilitate a quicker move for the existing tenant more priority should be awarded. The Priority Plus award will still be considered by Housing Assessment panel and an assessment will still be required for households who require a bungalow.

7.7.6 Increase housing options for disabled people to ensure the needs of disabled people are adequately met by offering all adapted properties in date turn order irrespective of age - Following the inspection carried out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) between 23rd June and 2nd July 2009, it was identified that we needed to increase housing options for disabled people. This is also set out in the Safeguarding Adults and PDSI Inspection Action Plan.

The current Allocation Policy in respect of non sheltered **ADAPTED bungalows** where Rothercare is a condition of the tenancy gives priority to disabled people over the age of 60. This means that younger disabled people are only considered if there are no over 60's in the shortlist. In real terms this could mean that someone younger than 60 years old with a physical disability that is in need of an adapted bungalow could be waiting years to be accommodated, and someone over the age of 60 with a physical disability could only have to wait weeks. It is therefore recommended that as long as the household has been accessed as needing the property attributes which include the adaptations and Rothercare then the property should be offered to the household who has been assessed and who has been waiting the longest time irrespective of age.

7.7.7 Proposed changes to the Local Lettings Policies are:

- o **Set aside 50% of vacancies in rural areas detailed in appendix 2a for applicants with a local connection to that area**. - The results of the Fair and Flexible consultation told us that 76% of households agreed that a percentage of rural housing should be set aside for people with a local connection. Properties in rural areas are extremely high demand as they rarely become available for re-letting. Often families within villages wish to remain within the community for family support but when a property becomes vacant they find they are competing in the choice based letting process with other applicants with no local connection. The guidance relating to local connection is detailed in appendix 2a.

- o **That a local letting policy to help applicants into employment is adopted in specific areas of the borough.** The list of areas is detailed in the Local Lettings Policies in appendix 2c. The advert will clearly state that a Local Lettings Policy applies and give preference households who are currently in employment (the area where the applicant is employed is not taken into account and is only relevant if a rural letting policy is applied). This will be adopted only in the specific areas listed in appendix 2c and will not be applied to more than 10% percent of voids in Rotherham.

  *Support for people in work or seeking work - Section 167 (2E) of the 1996 Housing Act enables authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall into a reasonable preferences category. This is the statutory basis for Local lettings Policies. The Fair and Flexible consultation told us that 64% of customers wanted help to move home in another area to gain employment. This can be achieved by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment and will also contribute to

dealing with concentrations of deprivation and will help in creating more mixed communities.

RMBC has implemented a number of initiatives to support people seeking work, including our new Employment Solutions Team. In the last 6 months they have helped 316 people, successfully assisted 37 people back to work, 16 into education, and 57 for benefits that they are entitled to but not claiming, 114 job searches and 173 CVs completed. In addition a proportion of vacancies can be set aside to help people retain/gain employment or training. The housing application asks for information on employment status, this can be utilised to give preference in certain areas to create more balanced communities.

o **To Include in the Local Lettings Policy in respect of Management Difficulties:** "*where a conviction for an offence of anti social behaviour or where of illegal drug use played a major part in their conviction in the last 12 months.. i.e stolen goods to pay for drug addiction was more than 12 months and they MUST have also demonstrated good behaviour in the Community for the last 12 months.*

*It has become apparent that more clarity is required regarding the local letting criteria for properties with local lettings policies due to housing management difficulties. Currently the criterion excludes applicants with an offending background if their convictions are less than 12 months old. Officers within 2010 Rotherham Ltd have requested that an additional criterion is included to capture offenders in prison where they have not demonstrated good behaviour in the Community in the last12 months.

***Local Lettings Policies** were implemented in December 2008 and these have been reviewed every six month - led by 2010 Rotherham Ltd in consultation with Elected Members, Safer Neighbourhood teams and Community groups through the Area Assembly Coordinating groups. Consultation has also been undertaken with residents. As 1st July 2009 there are 20,968 properties in the Council's stock and 2,096 properties with Local Lettings Policies which is 9.9% of the Councils stock. The latest review in December 2009 has identified an additional 538 properties, and no properties have been removed. This brings the total of properties with a local letting policy to 2634 which is 12.56 % of the Council's stock.

Any recommendations for additions have been justified by supporting evidence, and where there has been significant improvement in sustainability such as reduced abandoned properties, evictions and reported crime it is proposed that the Local lettings Policy be removed. The proposed changes for period 1/01/2010 to 1/7/10 are detailed in **Appendix 2**

8. **Finance**

8.1 By focusing on meeting urgent housing need will reduce time periods in the Priority and Priority Plus Group which in turn will reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation. This will enable a cost saving to

the Council as it is likely to allow a reduction in the temporary units of accommodation currently needed for homelessness families.

8.2   By applying Local Lettings Polices to a limited part of the local authorities stock will create sustainable communities, which may lead to fewer voids. However there is a slight risk that void properties may take longer to let as some policies are quite restrictive. This will lead to a financial impact on rent loss through voids.

9.   Risks and Uncertainties

9.1   The current demand for social rented housing is high which translates to pressures on the housing register. We have also seen an increase in households in urgent housing need who are affected financially by the economic downturn. The existing quotas seem to be adequate in meeting the needs of households in urgent housing need. However these will need to be monitored in the next six months to establish whether the advertising quotas need to be altered to reflect local need.

9.2 Any change to the Allocation Policy must ensure that the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach groups are addressed, and the Council's statutory obligations are met. The Allocation Policy must be delivered in a transparent way to ensure it is fair, and seen to be fair.

10.   Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

10.1   The Allocation Policy is delivered at a local level and via the Key Choices Property Shop and Neighbourhood Offices, which supports the Council's commitment to providing greater accessibility to services, meeting social needs by helping to ensure a better quality of life, improving fair access and choice, protecting, keeping safe vulnerable people and specifically addresses the diversity agenda, by tailoring services to the needs of hard to reach groups.

Working to improve services for Rotherham people and to ensure more effective links to the Rotherham 'Proud' theme.

Rotherham people, businesses and pride in the borough are at the heart of our vision. Rotherham will have a positive external image and its people will be renowned for their welcome, friendliness and commitment to the values of social justice. Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. Achievements and diversity will be celebrated. Rotherham will be a caring place, where the most vulnerable are supported. It will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest and there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision making. The means to do this will be clear, well known and accessible.

The Allocation Policy can demonstrate a contribution to five Key Lines of Assessment within the CSCI 'New Outcomes Framework for Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care'. In particular there is a significant contribution to improved quality of life [KLA 2] through the development of more information;

more joined up work to ensure minimum delays; better service consistency between agencies. The changes will lead to shorter waiting times for services and better interventions leading to the increased awareness of housing options and the prevention of homelessness.

11.Background Papers and Consultation

The proposed changes have been informed by the consultation process in respect of the Fair and Flexible publication where 1173 households participated and told us their views about their local priorities. Legal Services have also been consulted on the proposed changes.

In monitoring the Allocation Policy we have used the Housing Assessment Panel as a mechanism to consider any changes, where possible, to seek views of others to ensure any improvements are effective and are at the heart of customer's needs and aspirations.

The review of the Local lettings Policies, which has been led by 2010 Rotherham Ltd, has involved consultation with elected members, customers, legal services, partners and staff.

- "Fair and flexible - Draft statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England – Consultation results
- Fair and Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (December 2009)
- The Allocation Policy (Revised July 2009)
- Local Lettings Policies (Revised July 2009)
- The Homelessness Act 2002.
- Housing Act 1996, Parts VI and VII
- The Code Of Guidance in Allocation [CLG 2007]
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Safeguarding Adults and PDSI Inspection Action Plan

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Communities
and Local Government

Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England

Communities
and Local Government

Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England

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Foreword

Building more homes that people can afford to rent or buy is one of the highest priorities for the Government. We are investing to build the 112,000 new affordable homes over two years that we set out in the Government's plan, Building Britain's Future, in June.

As well as building more homes, we must enable local areas to respond to housing pressures in different ways. I want local councils to be more able to reflect the needs, demands and aspirations of their area in the way that they allocate housing. And I want the management of council waiting lists in every area to be better understood and seen as fairer.

By issuing this new guidance, the government sets out more clearly the freedoms and flexibilities that local authorities should use when developing allocations policies in their area.

I am reaffirming the Government's commitment to giving priority to those in the greatest housing need, through the reasonable preference categories.

Nevertheless, this guidance concerns greater scope for councils to meet local needs and priorities through their allocation policies. It strengthens councils' freedom to give greater weighting to specific local needs alongside those households who have 'reasonable preference'. In some areas this will mean giving more priority to people who have been on waiting lists for a long time or more priority for people with strong local or family connections. Elsewhere, there may be a greater need to support people in low paid work. Councils should work closely with the housing associations in their area to meet local priorities.

The system for allocating housing is complex and poorly understood. The demands and pressures on housing in an area are rarely well explained to local people. This helps give rise to the perception that the system is inflexible and unfair and the mistaken view that much public housing goes to those who have no legitimate right to it.

I want to see such myths and misunderstandings challenged. It is part of a council's responsibility to do so. Greater understanding will only come if councils do more to inform their communities about who is getting housing and do more to consult tenants and residents on their policies. This new guidance makes clear the responsibilities councils have to do exactly this when deciding how they allocate their housing.

This guidance is an important part of the Government's commitment to meet housing need across the country and we recognise that need is different in different places.

The Rt Hon John Healey MP
Minister for Housing and Planning

Summary

1.   This statutory guidance covers a number of issues:

(i) It sets out the Government's strategic view of the objectives and outcomes which local authorities must and those they should seek to achieve in their allocation policies. These are:

- providing support for those in greatest housing need, including **people** who have experienced homelessness

- ensuring allocation policies comply with equality legislation

- promoting greater choice for prospective and existing tenants

- creating more mixed and sustainable communities

- promoting greater mobility for existing tenants

- making better use of the housing stock

- supporting people in work or seeking work

- delivering policies which are fair and considered to be fair

(ii) It sets out the importance of local authorities' responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) to involve, inform and consult with local people; and it draws attention to the main legislative provisions governing the allocation of social housing, including the requirement to provide for 'reasonable preference'.

(iii) It emphasises the importance of communicating facts about allocations (including regular updates on how properties have been allocated), to tackle false perceptions which may arise about the way social housing is allocated.

(iv) It highlights the implications of the House of Lords judgment in the case of *R (on application of Ahmad) v Newham LBC*[1], which, among other things, removes the requirement to provide for cumulative preference to be taken into account in prioritising applicants.

(v) It reinforces the flexibilities local authorities have within the allocation legislation to meet local pressures by:

- adopting local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories

- taking into account other factors in prioritising applicants, including waiting time and local connection

- operating local lettings policies

(vi) It emphasises the importance of close working between authorities and registered social landlords.

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[1]   [2009] UKHL 14

Scope of the guidance

2.   This is statutory guidance provided under s.169 of the Housing Act 1996 (the 1996 Act). It applies to local authorities in England. Local authorities are required to have regard to this guidance in exercising their functions under Part 6 of the 1996 Act. In so far as this guidance comments on the law it can only reflect the Department's understanding of the law at the time of issue. Local authorities will still need to keep up to date on any developments in the law in these areas.

3.   This guidance replaces the following parts of the *Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation* which was issued in November 2002[2] (the 2002 code):

   * chapters 1, 2 and 6

   * paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12 , paragraph 5.18 and paragraphs 5.23 to 5.32 of chapter 5

   * annexes 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 9 and 12

4.   This guidance also replaces the following paragraphs of the *Code of Guidance on Choice Based Lettings* which was issued in August 2008[3] (the 2008 code):

   * 4.1 to 4.49

   * 4.68 to 4.71

   * 4.79 and 4.80

5.   *Circular 04/2009: Housing Allocations – Members of the Armed Forces* remains in effect.

6.   This guidance is specifically for local authority Members and staff. It is also of direct relevance to registered social landlords[4] (referred to as RSLs). On a local authority's request, RSLs have a duty under s.170 of the 1996 Act to co-operate with local authorities to such extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's allocation scheme.

7.   For local authorities, developing their allocation scheme and carrying out their allocation functions often requires joint planning and operational co-operation between local authorities and other bodies. These are likely to include social services departments, health authorities, the probation service, children's services, other referral agencies and voluntary sector organisations, although this list is not exhaustive. This guidance will be of interest to these organisations as well.

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[2]   *Allocation of Accommodation: Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities*, ODPM, November 2002
[3]   *Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings: Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities*, CLG, August 2008
[4]   Subject to Parliamentary approval, from 1 April 2010 RSLs will cease to exist in England. Any references to RSLs will after that date be understood as references to private registered providers.

8. We believe that local authorities will welcome the additional flexibilities which this guidance promotes and would encourage them to review their existing policies as soon as possible and to revise them, where appropriate, in the light of this guidance.

9. The Audit Commission will consider, through its agreed programmes of monitoring and inspection, which will be reflected in comprehensive area assessments, how well local authorities allocate social housing and therefore their response to this guidance.

Introduction

10.   Social rented housing is an asset of great significance to the country, to local communities, to families and to individual people. It provides an essential part of the welfare safety net that supports many of the most vulnerable in our society. It provides a firm foundation, with the security and stability that can help people to overcome disadvantage and to build successful lives for themselves and their families. And it can help to create prosperous, healthy local communities, as part of a balanced housing market.

11.   In any circumstances, the way that social housing is allocated would be a matter of real importance. That importance is greatly increased by the pressure of demand that we currently face in all parts of England. Almost every local authority has experienced significant growth in applications for social housing over the past five or six years. In *Building Britain's Future*, we set out ambitious plans to invest a further £1.5bn in building thousands of new affordable homes over this year and the next. In total we are committing more than £7.5bn over these years (2009/2011) to deliver 112,000 affordable homes, including 63,000 homes for social rent to be delivered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) over the next two years. However, despite this ambitious programme of affordable housing delivery we can expect continued excess of demand over supply to continue for the medium term.

12.   High levels of demand, often from families with pressing needs, mean decisions on the allocation of social housing need to be taken carefully. Because of the impact such decisions may have, people care deeply about how they are made. Whilst many local authorities are responding positively to this increased demand, we must ensure not only that decisions taken achieve the best overall outcomes for our communities: but also that they are made fairly, and in ways that can be explained and justified to all concerned.

13.   The Government takes the view that decisions on the allocation of social housing – having, as they do, profound impacts at national and at local level – should rightly be taken in a framework which balances national and local interests.

14.   It is important that local authorities continue to play a strong role in housing. They are best placed to assess housing need across the district, in light of demographic and economic change. Councils now have access to specific grant funding to build new council homes. We have also proposed a devolved system of accountability and funding for the existing stock. This would give more power to councils to plan long term, manage their assets and meet the housing needs of local people. They should also be working with partners to address such needs, including ensuring that the best use is made of existing housing stock. Local authorities also have responsibility for framing local allocation policies within the context set by legislation and taking into account the reality of their local circumstances. It is only at local

level that many of the key decisions can be taken, and balances can be struck between competing priorities. Many people find allocation policies complex and confusing. While the Government has a role to play in dispelling the myths which can arise around the allocation of social housing, the task of explaining local allocation policies to local people ultimately depends on effective communication and engagement by local authorities with their communities.

15. In recent years, many local authorities have felt constrained in their decisions on allocations and the way in which their allocation scheme is devised because of the way in which the legislation has been interpreted by the courts. A recent judgment by the House of Lords (see paragraph 58), which we strongly welcome, provides clarity on the allocation legislation and the extent of local authorities' discretion under the legislation. The Government's view is that this is an opportune time, as well as an important one, for local authorities to re-examine their allocation policies and to make changes which take full advantage of the scope for local decision-making.

Objectives and outcomes which allocation policies must achieve

16.   There are a number of objectives and outcomes which local authorities must achieve when framing their allocation schemes.

Support for those in greatest housing need

17.   We believe it is right that social housing – which brings with it the dual benefits of security of tenure and sub-market rents – should continue to provide a stable base for those who are likely to have more difficulty fending for themselves in the private market. For this reason, we remain of the view that, overall, priority for social housing should go to those in greatest housing need. The current statutory reasonable preference categories are set out in s.167(2) of the 1996 Act. These were rationalised in the Homelessness Act 2002 (and further refined by the Housing Act 2004) to ensure that they are squarely based on housing need. The reasonable preference categories are:

(a)   people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who do not have a priority need for accommodation

(b)   people who are owed a duty by any local authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any local authority under section 192(3)

(c)   people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions

(d)   people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability

(e)   people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the local authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

18.   This means that a scheme must be framed to give reasonable preference to applicants who fall within the categories set out in s.167(2), over those who do not. While local authorities must demonstrate that, overall, reasonable preference is given to applicants in all the reasonable preference categories, this does not mean that they must give equal weight to each of the reasonable preference categories. Local authorities may wish to take into account local pressures. So, for example, where overcrowding is a particularly serious problem, they may wish to give more priority to overcrowded households in their allocation scheme. Authorities might give effect to this

policy objective, for example, by assigning overcrowded households to a higher band, or by including a specific target in respect of overcrowded households in their annual lettings plan.

19.   In addition, s.167(2) gives local authorities the power to frame their allocation scheme so as to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs. While there is no requirement for an allocation scheme to be framed to provide for additional preference, all local authorities should consider, in the light of local circumstances, whether there is a need to give effect to this provision.

Providing settled homes for people who have experienced homelessness

20.   The Government places great emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and local authorities are generally responding very positively to this agenda. Through their housing options services, local authorities are increasingly helping people at risk of homelessness by intervening earlier to resolve their difficulties before they reach crisis point. This is reflected by the significant reduction in the number of households accepted as owed the main duty to secure accommodation under the homelessness legislation since acceptances peaked in 2003-04. Local authorities are increasingly harnessing the private rented sector to help meet housing needs and we are looking at how this work could be extended and made more effective. Nevertheless, there are people at risk of homelessness or living in temporary accommodation for whom an allocation of social housing continues to be the most appropriate option to meet their need for a settled home. It is right, therefore, that people who are homeless or placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation should continue to be entitled to reasonable preference for social housing.

Promoting greater equality and clearly meeting equalities duties

21.   In framing their allocation scheme, local authorities need to ensure that it is compatible with the requirements in the equality legislation. In particular, as well as the other duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination, local authorities are reminded that they are subject to a duty to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups, as well as a duty to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons, and between men and women. Local authorities are strongly recommended to carry out an equality impact assessment of any change to their allocation policies to ensure compliance with the local authority's legal equality duties; and to monitor lettings outcomes under the

allocation scheme and ensure that this information is made regularly and publicly available.

22. Local authorities should bear in mind that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the general public sector equality duty in the Equality Bill will mean that they will need, when carrying out their allocation function and reviewing and revising their allocation policies, to consider the impact of their decisions on people with the protected characteristics of age, race, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender reassignment. Local authorities should also be aware of the provision in the Equality Bill which will require all local authorities to give due regard to the desirability of tackling socio-economic inequalities, when making strategic decisions about how to exercise their functions. The Government believes that the way in which local authorities frame their allocation scheme will be significant in ensuring they discharge this duty.

Objectives and outcomes which the Government believes allocation policies should achieve

23. There are also a number of objectives and outcomes which local authorities should seek to achieve when framing their allocation schemes.

Greater choice and wider options for prospective and existing tenants

24. The Government believes that allocation policies for social housing should provide for applicants to be given more of a say and a greater choice over the accommodation which they are allocated. This is the best way to ensure sustainable tenancies and to build settled, viable and inclusive communities. Research carried out for Communities and Local Government into the longer term impact of choice based lettings[5] found that tenants who were offered a choice of accommodation were more likely to be satisfied with their home and remain in that home for a longer period. Satisfied tenants are more likely to meet their tenancy obligations and maintain the property in good condition.

25. It is also important that the allocation of social housing is set within a wider enhanced housing options approach, so that people receive joined-up advice and information about all the options open to them across sectors, including:

   • renting in the private sector

   • low cost home ownership options

   • mobility schemes which enable applicants to move out of the district

   • mutual exchange options for existing social tenants

   • home improvement schemes or adaptations services which enable applicants to remain in their existing accommodation and

   • supported/sheltered housing for older and disabled people

Creating more mixed and sustainable communities

26. The way in which social housing is allocated can be instrumental in helping to create safe, prosperous and cohesive communities in which people want to live and work, now and in the future. The research into the longer term

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[5] *Monitoring the Longer Term Impact of Choice Based Lettings*, Heriot-Watt University and BMRB, October 2006

impacts of CBL suggests that the policy is encouraging applicants to think more flexibly about their housing options. It found that, where applicants have the opportunity to see details about all available vacancies, they will consider moving to areas beyond their immediate locality and beyond areas which, under a traditional allocations system, they would have specified as their 'preferred area'.

27. Alongside CBL, making greater use of the existing flexibilities within the allocation legislation can help to tackle concentrations of deprivation, creating more mixed and sustainable communities. This might include:

   • setting local priorities alongside the reasonable preference categories, such as promoting job-related moves

   • setting aside a small proportion of lettings to enable existing tenants to move even where they do not have reasonable preference

   • using local lettings policies to achieve a wide variety of policy objectives, including dealing with concentrations of deprivation or creating mixed communities by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment, or to enable existing tenants to take up an offer of employment.

Greater mobility

28. Providing social housing tenants with greater opportunities to move within the social sector can help to promote social and economic mobility, as well as meeting individual tenants' specific needs and aspirations. It can also help make the best use of social housing stock.

29. One way of increasing the opportunities for mobility between local authority areas is to develop choice based lettings schemes on a regional or sub-regional basis and our aim is to expand choice based lettings so that people can move nationwide. However, even where local authorities do not participate in regional or sub-regional choice based lettings schemes, there are ways in which they can frame their allocation scheme to increase the opportunities for mobility across local authority boundaries. So, for example, authorities could use local lettings policies to allow for a small proportion of properties to be prioritised for essential workers (or people with skills in short supply) to attract them into the district; or they could develop arrangements with other authorities or RSLs to make a proportion of their lettings available for cross-boundary nominations.

Making better use of the housing stock

30. Making better use of the social housing stock could mean giving existing tenants who are under-occupying social housing appropriate priority to secure a transfer within an authority's allocation scheme and ensuring that

scarce accessible and adapted accommodation is prioritised for people with access needs. This might be coupled with personal support, incentives and financial payments to encourage people who under-occupy family-sized homes to downsize or vacate adapted homes they no longer need. Authorities may want to consider other approaches such as 'chain lets' – an approach under which a large property released by an under-occupying household can be reserved for existing overcrowded social rented tenants, where the resulting vacancy is then used to house another household with priority under the allocation scheme. For overcrowded households waiting for an allocation of larger accommodation, authorities can assist in mitigating the impacts through a range of measures. Improvements can be made to existing properties in order to improve liveability: additional toilets or wash basins, partitions or space saving furniture can all contribute to alleviating the pressures of overcrowding.

Policies which are fair and considered to be fair

31.   There are widespread perceptions that the current allocation system is unfair and favours certain groups (such as the unemployed or migrants). An Ipsos MORI survey carried out for Communities and Local Government in 2008 showed that less than a quarter (23%) of the public agreed that the way social housing is allocated is fair. One in three (32%) did not agree that it is fair. Just under a half (45%) said they did not know if it is fair or were unwilling to give an opinion and opted for 'neither agree nor disagree'[6]. While these perceptions may not always be founded on fact, we recognise that they are strongly felt.

32.   It is important that local authorities engage fully with their local community in developing their allocation priorities and drawing up their allocation scheme; and in providing regular, accurate, and generalised information on how housing is being allocated, working actively to dispel any myths and misperceptions which may arise. Policies which are easily understood and sensitive to local needs and local priorities are more likely to achieve acceptance across the wider community and to be, not just fair, but seen to be fair.[7]

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[6]   Communities and Local Government (2009) *Attitudes to housing: Findings from Ipsos MORI Public Affairs Monitor Omnibus Survey (England)*.

[7]   An Ipsos MORI survey for Inside Housing shows that people consider the most important factors for prioritising social housing (where demand is greater than supply) as: how long someone has been on the waiting list (23%); whether they are currently living in inadequate accommodation (22%); how long someone has lived in the local area (15%); and being a key worker (e.g. nurse or teacher) (14%). Inside Housing, 6 June 2008, pp 22–25.

Support for people in work or seeking work

33. Local authorities should consider how they can use their allocation policies to support those who are in work or who are seeking work. This could involve using local lettings policies to ensure that particular properties are allocated to essential workers or to those who have skills which are in short supply, regardless of whether they are currently resident in the authority's district. Alternatively, authorities may choose to give some preference within their scheme to existing tenants who are willing to move to take up employment or training opportunities – where, for example, the authority has identified a need to address skills shortages and worklessness, perhaps as part of their skills strategy.

Involving, consulting and raising awareness with local communities

34. For many people, the frustration engendered by long waiting times for social housing, the complexity and lack of transparency of many allocation policies, and poorly trained or supported front line housing officers, can contribute to false perceptions of unfairness or generate myths about 'queue jumping' by other groups. These myths and false perceptions need to be countered through effective, transparent communication.

35. Local authorities need to do more to help people locally understand how social housing is allocated[8]. The public are more likely to accept that allocation policies are fair if they have a clear understanding of what those policies are and what the justification for those policies is. Clarity about why social housing is prioritised for certain groups is key. To give a specific example, if an authority provided information about the amount of housing they have which is, not only accessible, but capable of being made accessible, and explained why priority for this accommodation is given to those with access needs, it is likely that people would view it as a fair and sensible use of that stock.

36. That is why it is important to engage fully with the whole community in developing allocation policies. It is also why it is important to provide feedback on properties let through choice based lettings[9], and wider statistics about who is actually accessing social housing. Simple banding schemes play a role here too, since they can be more easily explained to applicants. Front line staff need to be properly trained and supported so that they provide accurate and consistent messages about how social housing is allocated, and elected members need to take a leading role in explaining to local people how social housing is being allocated and managed in their district – and what their local authority is doing to help increase availability of social housing.

The requirement to have an allocation scheme

37. Local authorities must have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation; and they must allocate in accordance with that scheme (s.167 of the 1996 Act).

38. The requirement to have an allocation scheme applies to all local authorities, regardless of whether or not they retain ownership of the housing stock

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[8] The Ipsos Mori survey reports that 8% of the general public said they know a lot about the way social housing is allocated, 48% know a little and 41% said they know nothing, with 3% giving a 'don't know' response.
[9] Further guidance on feedback in the context of choice based lettings is provided at paragraphs 5.14–5.18 of the 2008 code.

and whether or not they contract out the delivery of any of their allocation functions. Authorities are prohibited from contracting out certain allocation functions, including adopting and altering the allocation scheme, which includes the principles on which the scheme is framed. 'Procedure' includes all aspects of the allocation process, including the people, or descriptions of people, by whom decisions are taken. It is essential that the scheme reflects all the local authority's policies and procedures, including information on whether the decisions are taken by elected members or officers acting under delegated powers.

Involving and consulting about the allocation scheme

39.   Part 6 of the 1996 Act imposes certain requirements on local authorities when consulting on changes to their allocation scheme, or before they adopt a new scheme. Authorities are required to consult with RSLs with which they have nomination arrangements (s.167(7)); while anyone likely to be affected by an alteration to the allocation scheme which reflects a major change of policy must be notified of it (s.168(3)).

40.   Under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) an authority is under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Under s.3A of the Local Government Act 1999, where an authority considers it appropriate for representatives of local persons to be involved in the exercise of any of its functions by being provided with information, consulted or involved in another way, it must take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that such representatives are involved in the exercise of the function in that way. Statutory guidance published by the Government in July 2008[10] sets out the issues which local authorities should consider under the 'duty to involve'.

41.   Engaging with and involving local communities in the development of allocation policies will contribute to:

• better awareness among local people of the facts around social housing, including a clearer understanding of the amount of housing available

• reduced opportunities for the circulation of misunderstandings and myths about the ways in which social housing is allocated

• local allocation policies which better reflect local pressures and priorities

• a greater sense among local people that housing is allocated fairly

• stronger community cohesion

[10] *Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities*, July 2008

42. Some local authorities currently make significant efforts to engage with local communities in the development of allocation policies, using techniques such as questionnaires and surveys aimed at residents or those on the waiting list, citizens' panels and focus groups. There is scope for all authorities to develop their approaches further, drawing on good practice from within the housing sector and more broadly.[11]

43. Anyone who is affected by or interested in the way social housing is allocated should be included when consulting on changes to an authority's allocation scheme. It will be important to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary and community sector, as well as applicants and the general public. Consultation gives people the opportunity to have their views heard but it also gives local authorities the opportunity to engage the community, to raise awareness about the pressures on social housing, and to ensure that people have a better understanding of why certain groups are prioritised for social housing.

44. However, authorities should also engage with and involve the wider community before they produce their allocation scheme so that people are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the allocation priorities. Only in this way can authorities ensure that the allocation scheme properly reflects local priorities and issues. An important aspect of engagement will be managing expectations. Providing clear information about allocations, including which households must be given priority under the allocation legislation and what social housing is available in the district, may be helpful here; as also ensuring that any consultation on allocation priorities is set firmly within the context of the local authority's overarching strategic priorities.

45. It will be important to take action to ensure that all groups within the area are engaged. Voluntary and community organisations can be useful here as they often have strong links with their particular communities or client groups. Authorities will need to give particular thought to how to engage those who can often be marginalised but for whom social housing may be particularly relevant (such as substance misusers, gypsies and travellers and ex-offenders). Again, the voluntary and community sector may be in touch with hard to reach groups and can help ensure that they are involved in the consultation process. For this reason, it is particularly important that third sector organisations are involved at an early stage in the consultation process.

46. Where local authorities involve individuals or groups in developing their allocation priorities or consult them on their allocation scheme, they should consider how they can feed back the outcomes of such involvement or consultation. In doing so they should make clear how the input to consultation and involvement has contributed to the published allocation scheme.

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[11] *The Duty to Involve: Making it Work* published by the Community Development Foundation (2009) provides advice and examples of effective engagement.

Information about allocations

47.   It is important that applicants and the wider community understand what social housing is available in their district, how social housing is allocated, and who is getting that social housing. Accordingly local authorities are encouraged to make appropriate information about allocations widely available in a way which is easy to access and to understand[12]. This is in addition to the duty in s.168 to make the full allocation scheme available for inspection and a summary of the scheme available free of charge. However, to ensure that local people have access to as much information as possible, authorities should publish their full allocation scheme on their website as well as in hard copy.

48.   Local authorities must ensure that advice and information is available free of charge to everyone in their district about the right to apply for an allocation of accommodation (s.166(1)). This includes general information about the procedures for making an application; as well as information about how applicants are prioritised under the allocation scheme.

49.   If applicants are to view the system as fair, they need to know how their application will be treated under the allocation scheme, what their rights and expectations are under the scheme, and they need reassurance that the scheme is being complied with and applied consistently across all applicants. So, for example, applicants have the right to be informed of certain decisions in relation to their application[13] and the right to a review of such decisions (s.167(4A)(d)). It is important that applicants have clear information about these rights as well as the procedure upon review. Applicants should also be provided with information about any other relevant complaints procedures which are available to them.

50.   However, information about allocations should go beyond publication of the allocation scheme itself or information about how to apply for an allocation. Most applicants will want to know how long they are likely to have to wait to be allocated accommodation which meets their needs and aspirations (this is in line with their rights under s.167(4A)). Authorities can help applicants assess whether particular accommodation is likely to be available and how long they are likely to wait for it, by making available general information about the profile of their stock (amount, type, size, location and accessibility); together with information about how often property of that type/size/ location becomes available and estimated waiting times. Information should be kept up-to-date and published on a regular basis. It should be widely available as it may be of interest to people who may be considering applying for social housing as well as those who are already on the waiting list.

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[12] Chapter 5 of the 2008 code provides detailed guidance on how to ensure that information is provided in a way which is accessible and that advice, assistance and support are available to those who need them in order to apply for social housing.
[13] Applicants have the right to be informed of any decision and the grounds for it, relating to their eligibility (160A(9)) and to be informed of a decision not to give them preference on grounds of unacceptable behaviour (167(4A(b))). Applicants also have the right on request to be informed of any decision about the facts of their case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate accommodation to them (s.167(4A)(c)).

51.   It is important that local authorities go wider than simply informing applicants, and consider how they can share information about allocation policies and outcomes with the wider community. Where tensions are associated with housing allocations, communication may need to be part of a wider community cohesion strategy.

52.   Key individuals and organisations need information and training to ensure that they understand how the allocation system works and that they provide consistent messages both to applicants and to the wider public. Training needs to be ongoing, recognising that allocation policies change over time and that council staff and other personnel move on. When communicating messages about why certain groups have access to social housing, it is important to work together with the statutory bodies or community organisations which support those groups and individuals. So, for example, local authorities should work together with local drug action teams and crime and disorder reduction partnerships to explain why providing a stable base for substance misusers or ex-offenders can reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Monitoring and evaluation

53.   Monitoring and evaluation systems should be put in place and lettings outcomes published so that people can see that the allocation scheme is being complied with and is fair, and that the authority is meeting its duties under the equality legislation (see paragraph 21). Local authorities should give people the opportunity to feedback comments about how the allocation scheme is working. This might include periodically carrying out surveys of people on the waiting list to find out about their experience over time, or people who have bid for social housing through a choice based lettings scheme (both successfully and unsuccessfully).

Framing an allocation scheme

54.   An authority's allocation priorities should be developed in the context of the authority's other housing functions. Consideration should be given to the wider objectives of meeting the district's housing needs, as set out in the strategic housing market assessment. The allocation scheme should also be compatible with the local authority's housing strategy and the relevant regional housing strategy. Furthermore, since the allocation of accommodation under Part 6 of the 1996 Act is one of the ways in which the main homelessness duty can be discharged, allocation policies and procedures should also be consistent with the local authority's homelessness strategy.

55.   It is also important that the allocation scheme is compatible with and flows from the authority's sustainable community strategy[14] which sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local area.

56.   It is strongly recommended that local authorities put in place allocation schemes which, not only meet the requirements in the legislation to ensure that reasonable preference for an allocation goes to those in the reasonable preference categories, but also:

- reflect the Government's objectives, and
- take into account the particular needs and priorities of the local area

57.   We recognise that getting the balance right will be challenging, particularly given the constraints within which local authorities operate in terms of the supply of and demand for social housing. Nevertheless, we believe that there is considerable flexibility within the existing statutory framework, particularly following the recent decision in *Ahmad*.

R (on application of Ahmad) v. London Borough of Newham

58.   In March 2009 the House of Lords gave judgment in the case of *R (on application of Ahmad) v. Newham LBC*[15] *("Ahmad")*. The case has significant implications for the way local authorities frame their allocation scheme. In particular the House of Lords found:

- there is no requirement for local authorities to frame their allocation scheme to provide for cumulative preference, i.e. affording greater priority to applicants who fall into more than one reasonable preference category.

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[14] S.4 of the Local Government Act 2000
[15] [2009] UKHL 14

- an allocation scheme which allows for priority to be determined between applicants in the reasonable preference categories on the basis of waiting time (alone) is not unlawful or irrational

- an allocation scheme is not unlawful if it allows for a small percentage of lets to be allocated to existing social housing tenants who wish to transfer and who do not fall within any of the reasonable preference categories

- where a local authority's allocation scheme complies with the requirements of section 167 and any other statutory requirements, the courts should be very slow to interfere on the ground that it is irrational

59. Through their judgment in the *Ahmad* case, the House of Lords have recognised the complexity of allocation policy and the need for local decision-making.

60. The following paragraphs consider the factors which local authorities should consider in developing their allocation priorities and the different **tools and** mechanisms available to them to allow for greater flexibility within their allocation scheme and **to adapt their scheme to respond to local needs.**

Removal of the requirement to provide for 'cumulative preference'

61. The House of Lords decision in *Ahmad* reverses a line of Court of Appeal authority that has held that allocation schemes were required to provide for cumulative preference. This means that it is no longer necessary to distinguish between degrees of housing need, or to provide that those applicants who fall within more than one reasonable preference category are given greater priority for an allocation than those who have reasonable preference on a single, non-urgent basis (indeed there is no requirement for any system of determining priority between those in the reasonable preference groups). In the light of the decision in *Ahmad*, what is important is that an allocation scheme makes an appropriate distinction between those applicants in the reasonable preference categories and those who are not. It is no longer necessary to make a detailed prioritisation of applicants within the reasonable preference categories (instead it is open to local authorities to determine between applicants in the reasonable preference categories by waiting time alone (see paragraph 65).

62. Removing the requirement to provide for cumulative preference gives scope for local authorities to develop simpler, more transparent, systems of applicant prioritisation which are easier for applicants to understand and for housing staff to operate.

Determining priorities between households with a similar level of need

63.   For practical purposes, allocation schemes will need to have some mechanism for determining priorities between applicants with a similar level of need, for example between applicants who are in the same band.

64.   Section 167 (2A) provides that authorities may frame their allocation scheme to take into account certain factors for the purposes of determining relative priorities between applicants in the reasonable (or additional) preference categories. Examples of factors which may be taken into account are given in the legislation: local connection[16], financial resources and behaviour. However, these examples are not exclusive and authorities may take into account other factors instead or as well as these.

Waiting time

65.   The simplest way of determining priorities between those with a similar level of need would be to take into account the length of time which applicants have been waiting for an allocation (in the case of new applicants this will normally be the date of their original application or date into band, and in the case of transferring tenants, the date they applied to transfer).

66.   Waiting time has the benefits of being simple, transparent, and easy to understand. It also accords with the view held by some sections of the public about how social housing should be prioritised. Of course, we recognise that waiting time will already play a role in most allocation schemes. However, authorities may wish to consider the scope for giving more weight to it in the light of *Ahmad*, where this is seen locally as the fairest means of distinguishing between otherwise similar applicants.

Behaviour

67.   This would allow local authorities to take account of good as well as bad behaviour. So, for example, authorities could provide for greater priority to be given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have been model tenants or whose actions have directly benefited other residents on their estate or the community more generally. Bad behaviour would include unacceptable behaviour which was not serious enough to justify a decision to treat the applicant as ineligible, or to give him no preference for an allocation, but which could be taken into account in assessing the level of priority which was deserved relative to other applicants. An example could be minor rent arrears or low level anti-social behaviour.

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[16] For these purposes, local connection is defined in accordance with s.199 of the 1996 Act.

Local connection

68. Some local authorities may wish to give more priority to 'local connection', ensuring that, wherever possible, social housing goes to those people who live or work in the district, or to those who have close family associations with it or have other special circumstances. While local authorities cannot exclude people who do not have a local connection from applying for social housing, there is nothing to prevent them from framing their allocation scheme to include local connection as a policy priority, provided that overall the scheme continues to meet the reasonable preference requirements in s.167.

69. An allocation scheme which attaches particular weight to local connection could disadvantage individual applicants. One example might be someone who has been placed out of the district they would normally live in for a period of time, while being looked after by children's services – although each case would need to be considered on its merits (care leavers might be able to establish a local connection through family association or special circumstances). Local authorities may wish to provide for circumstances such as these by setting aside a proportion of lettings (e.g. by including a specific target in their lettings plan, or by means of an appropriate local lettings policy) to help meet the housing needs of such applicants where they meet the reasonable preference criteria.

Banding schemes

70. An appropriate method of applicant prioritisation could be a system that groups applicants into a number of 'bands' that reflect different levels of housing need or relative priorities within a housing authority's allocation scheme. Such systems are commonly referred to as 'banding schemes.

71. The House of Lords in *Ahmad* recognised that simple banding schemes could have a number of advantages over more nuanced systems. They are clear, relatively simple to administer and highly transparent. Whereas banding schemes, which involve a large number of bands based on degrees of housing need, are likely to be more expensive and time consuming to operate, more based on value judgement, more open to argument, and more opaque. The House of Lords also considered that more complex banding systems may need to be monitored more closely to take account of the fact that applicants' circumstances are liable to change over time.

72. In addition to the benefits identified in *Ahmad*, simpler banding schemes may also make it easier for authorities to work together to put in place sub-regional and regional choice based lettings schemes.

73. Authorities should bear in mind that a banding scheme must be consistent with and give effect to the principles in the authority's allocation scheme for determining priorities for an allocation. The greater the number and

complexity of these principles, the more complex the banding scheme will normally need to be.

Points based approaches

74. Many local authorities have adopted a points-based approach to the prioritisation of applicants. Points-based systems can be complex and consequently lacking in transparency and difficult for applicants to understand. Local authorities that wish to continue with a points-based system should consider whether there is any scope to simplify it.

Including local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories

75. Section 167(6) of the Housing Act 1996 makes it clear that, subject to the reasonable preference requirements, it is for local authorities to decide on what principles their allocation scheme is to be framed.

76. An allocation scheme may provide for other factors than those set out in s.167(2) to be taken into account in determining which applicants are to be given preference under a scheme, provided they do not dominate the scheme and that overall the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to people in the reasonable preference categories. This means that an allocation scheme may include other policy priorities, such as promoting job-related mobility, prioritising under-occupiers, or providing move-on accommodation for people leaving supported housing, provided that:

    • they do not dominate the scheme and

    • overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not

77. The House of Lords in *Ahmad* accepted that local authorities are entitled to allocate to people who do not fall within the reasonable preference groups. For example, Newham's very favourable treatment of under-occupiers was not unlawful, notwithstanding the fact that they were unlikely to fall within any of the reasonable preference groups. It was accepted that account could be taken of wider housing management considerations (as well as the needs of those in the reasonable preference categories), and the judgment made the point that encouraging people in larger homes to transfer to smaller ones could be to the advantage of those in housing need because it produces an overall increase in the accommodation available.

78. Lettings outcomes should be evaluated over time to ensure that the authority is able to meet the priorities and principles set out in its allocation scheme and the reasonable preference requirements in s.167(2). Robust monitoring systems are essential here.

Existing tenants seeking a move

79.   Part 6 of the 1996 Act extends to existing tenants of local authorities and RSLs who apply to transfer within the social rented sector. This means existing tenants applying for a transfer must be treated on the same basis as other applicants in accordance with the reasonable preference requirements in s.167. However, the House of Lords in *Ahmad* recognised that there could be good housing management reasons for enabling existing tenants to move, even where they do not have reasonable preference – provided that overall those in the reasonable preference categories continued to receive some preference. This is because such moves are broadly stock neutral (every transfer creates another void which can be used to meet housing needs). The House of Lords also recognised that people who are allowed to move to properties or locations which they prefer are likely to be happier and, as a result, better tenants.

80.   In the light of *Ahmad* we consider that authorities have the scope to provide within their allocation scheme for existing tenants to transfer to similar sized accommodation where they can demonstrate good reason for seeking a move, for example, where they want to move to take up an offer of employment. The extent to which there is scope to allow existing tenants to move within the stock will depend on the particular circumstances in the district, taking into account the demand from other applicants in greater housing need and the effect which this could have on lost revenue from increased void periods. In *Ahmad*, the court considered that setting aside a small proportion of lettings for transferring tenants was not unreasonable.

Quotas, targets and lettings plans

81.   An authority may want to set targets for the proportion of properties which it expects to allocate to the various groups within the allocation scheme as part of an annual lettings plan. So, for example, this might set a target for the proportion of large family-sized accommodation to be allocated to overcrowded households, or for the proportion of lettings to be given to transferring tenants.

82.   Authorities should avoid setting rigid quotas which cannot be amended in the light of changing circumstances. However, they may wish to set broad targets which should be published alongside the authority's allocation scheme. Targets should be published as part of an annual lettings plan and monitored, and lettings outcomes against the targets should be published. Published targets, together with information about lettings outcomes, help make the allocation process more transparent.

83.   In setting targets, authorities should take into account:

   • the size and composition of the waiting list

- the profile of their stock and the vacancies which are likely to become available.

Local lettings policies

84. Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Act enables local authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s.167. This is the statutory basis for so-called 'local lettings policies'. This could mean setting aside houses on a particular estate, or certain types of property across the stock, for applicants who meet specified criteria.

85. A study carried out by Heriot Watt University[17] for Communities and Local Government in 2008, based in two regions, found that about half of responding authorities (23 out of 52) operated local lettings policies. This would suggest that local authorities may not be making as much use as they could of the flexibilities which the allocation legislation allows them.

86. Local lettings policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of policy objectives. So for example, they may be used to:

- deal with concentrations of deprivation or create more mixed communities by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment or to enable existing tenants to take up an offer of employment

- attract essential workers into the district by giving them priority for a small number of properties even though they may not fall within any of the reasonable preference categories

- deal sensitively with lettings in rural villages and on s106 exception sites by giving priority to those with a local connection to the parish

- ensure that properties which are particularly suited to being made accessible (e.g. ground floor flats) are prioritised for those with access needs

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[17] *Exploring local authority policy and practice on allocations* (Hal Pawson and Anwen Jones) (CLG 2009).

- set aside a proportion of properties to help meet the housing needs of people whose employment requires them to be mobile, such as members of the Armed Forces[18]

88.   Where a number of local authorities have agreed a common allocation policy or common prioritisation criteria, as part of a sub-regional CBL scheme, local lettings policies can be useful as a means of incorporating local priorities.

89.   Before adopting a local lettings policy, authorities should consult with those who are likely to be affected by it. So for example, where a local lettings policy is to apply to a particular estate, they should consult with tenants and residents on that estate. RSLs should also be consulted in relation to and, where appropriate (e.g. where stock they own is included in a relevant estate) involved in developing local lettings policies.

90.   The proportion of stock or lettings which may be made available through a local lettings policy to people who are not in the reasonable preference categories will depend on the particular circumstances and factors at play in the district. Authorities will need to take into account factors such as: the size and composition of the waiting list (i.e. the proportion of applicants in the reasonable preference categories); the stock profile; and the number and type/size of vacancies which are available overall.

91.   In the interests of transparency, local lettings policies should be published. Since they will often be time limited, it may not be practicable for the detailed policies to be included in the allocation scheme. One way to get around this would be for the allocation scheme to include a general statement about the intention to implement local lettings policies and to set out the detail in a separate published document or documents which could be revoked or revised as appropriate. Authorities should include an explanation of the local lettings policy which should be evidence-based wherever possible. Where it is intended that the policy is time limited, it should include an appropriate exit strategy.

92.   Local lettings policies should also be monitored as to their effectiveness and reviewed regularly so that they can be revised or revoked where they are no longer appropriate or necessary.

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[18] For further information on the Government's commitment to ensure that Service personnel are not disadvantaged when accessing public services, authorities are referred to *The Nation's Commitment to the Armed Forces Community: Consistent and Enduring Support*, Cm7674, published 16 July 2009

Partnership working with RSLs

93. It is important that local authorities take a strong strategic approach to meeting housing needs in their district. To do this, they will need to develop close working partnerships – both at the strategic and operational level – with RSLs, given their key role in the supply and management of social housing, to ensure that:

    • best use is made of the available social housing in the district and

    • applicants are offered the widest choice of accommodation

94. This will be important for all local authorities but for those who have transferred their stock it will be crucial.

95. RSLs should be involved at an early stage in developing allocation priorities and must be consulted on the allocation scheme. RSLs which manage a large number of properties in the district are likely to be well informed about the general housing needs of the area; while specialist RSLs may have significant knowledge of the needs of minority or marginalised groups. Allocation policies which are framed to take account of local needs and priorities are more likely to gain the support of RSLs.

96. RSLs have a duty under s.170 of the 1996 Act to co-operate with local authorities – where the authority requests it – to such extent as is reasonable in the circumstances – in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's allocation scheme. This is reflected in the Tenant Services Authority's (TSA) draft allocation standard (issued for consultation on 12 November) which requires 'registered providers' to co-operate with local authorities' strategic function and their duties to meet identified housing needs, including meeting obligations in nomination agreements.

97. Local authorities should ensure that they have nomination agreements in place with RSLs in their district and these should be updated regularly to ensure that they reflect changing housing markets[19]. Nomination agreements should set out the proportion of lettings that will be made available which should reflect the existing housing market circumstances; any criteria which the RSLs have adopted, following consultation with the housing authority, for accepting or rejecting nominees; and how any disputes about suitability and eligibility will be resolved. The TSA's draft allocation standard requires registered providers to clearly set out, and give reasons for, the criteria they use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for allocations, mobility or mutual exchange schemes. When negotiating nominations agreements, local authorities should try to ensure that the criteria for rejecting nominees are kept to a minimum. This will be particularly important where the housing authority has transferred its housing stock.

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[19] *Effective Co-operation in Tackling Homelessness: Nomination Agreements and Exclusions*, published by CLG in November 2004 and available on the CLG website, identifies good practice in co-operation between housing authorities and RSLs in relation to nomination agreements and exclusions.

Robust monitoring arrangements should be put in place to measure the effectiveness of the nomination agreement.

98.   Authorities should also agree information sharing protocols with RSLs in their district, covering issues such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and support needs. Information sharing between local authorities and RSLs is particularly important and failure to get this right could undermine the nomination process or the success of a joint choice based lettings scheme; while effective information sharing should help ensure that tenancies have the best chance of being sustained. The former Housing Corporation issued a national standard protocol for sharing information about applicants which authorities may wish to follow[20]. Amongst other things, it provides helpful advice on data protection issues.

99.   Local authorities are strongly encouraged to consider – together with RSLs in their district – the scope for developing common approaches to the allocation of social housing. This could include the adoption of a common housing register and a common allocation policy, and local lettings policies which cover RSLs as well as local authority stock. Providing a single point of access to social housing and one set of rules, should help make the process of applying for social housing simpler and more transparent for applicants, and can reduce wasteful duplication of effort by social landlords and applicants. This may help remove some of the confusion and frustration which applicants currently experience. The TSA made clear in *Building a new regulatory framework – a discussion paper* (June 2009), that it views agreement locally between social landlords and local authorities on how accommodation should be allocated as desirable and important for fairness and transparency within local areas.

100.   Common housing registers and common allocation policies are particularly relevant in the context of choice based lettings. Developing common approaches requires trust between the partners which can be built by partnerships agreeing clear accountable governance structures and cost sharing arrangements and by delivering a high quality service which is viewed by applicants and by all partner landlords as an improvement on those delivered by local authorities and RSLs on their own[21].

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[20] *Access to Housing: Information Sharing Protocol*, Campbell Tickell for the Housing Corporation, November 2007.
[21] Further guidance on partnership working with both RSLs and private landlords is provided in chapter 6 of the 2008 code.

Rural Housing Local Letting Policy - *A Rural village is a p*opulation less than 3,500; few or no facilities; surrounded by open countryside. There are 35 rural villages in Rotherham, some with populations as small as 100. However, not all villages have any council stock. In the villages listed below with Council Stock 50% of new vacancies will be offered to persons on the housing register with a local connection. The applicant will have a Local Connection if:

- o Their only or principle home is within the boundaries of the locality covered by the rural housing letting policy and has been for the last 12 months.

- o The applicant (not a member of their household) is in **permanent paid work** in the locality covered by the rural housing letting policy

- o They have a son, daughter, brother, sister, mother or father, who is over 18 and lives in the locality covered by the rural housing letting policy and has done so for at least five years before the date of application.

The localities covered by the rural housing letting policy are:

Rural Villages	Approx Pop	Council Stock
Brookhouse / Slade Hooton / Carr	251	2 X HOUSES SLADE HOOTON
Laughton en le Morthen	951	NO STOCK
Firbeck / Stone	326	5 X HOUSES FIRBECK
Letwell / Gildingwells	221	4 X HOUSES GILDINGWELLS
Woodsetts	1792	47 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Thorpe Salvin	437	9 X HOUSES
Harthill	1688	136 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Woodall	171	NO STOCK
Todwick	1259	15 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Hardwick	102	NO STOCK
Ulley	164	10 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Upper Whiston / Morthen / Guilthwaite	198	NO STOCK
Scholes	339	NO STOCK
Harley / Barrow / Spittal Houses / Hood Hill	864	38 MIXTURE OF TYPES HARLEY
Wentworth	362	11 BUNGALOWS
Hoober	173	NO STOCK
Nether Haugh	104	NO STOCK
Hooten Roberts	154	4 X BUNGALOWS
Hooten Levitt	121	4X BUNG AND 1 HOUSE
Brampton en le Morthen / Brampton Common	112	NO STOCK
Treeton	2769	230 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Springvale	324	NO STOCK
Dalton Magna	525	NO STOCK
Ravenfield	280	144 MIXTURE OF TYPES
Laughton Common	1058	8 BUNGALOWS
Total	14745	**668**

Appendix 2 - Review of the current Local Lettings Policies – JANUARY 2010

2010 Rotherham Ltd manages all of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Housing Stock.

The number of properties at close of business 1st December 2009 was approximately 20,968.

For period 1st January 2010 to 30th June 2010, the Local Lettings Policies will cover 2634 properties which is 12.56 % of the Council's stock.

The additions have been justified by supporting evidence, and where there has been significant improvement in sustainability such as reduced abandonment's /evictions and reported crime the Local lettings Policy has been removed.

Where age restrictions apply they are subject to a declining age threshold so eventually age restrictions will disappear allowing the area to develop into a properly balanced community. The age threshold will be reviewed every 6 months by 2010 Rotherham Ltd and any changes will be made in consultation with Elected Members, Safer Neighbourhood teams and Community groups through the Area Assembly Coordinating groups.

Where there are Housing Management Difficulties evidence will is supported by the number of abandoned tenancies, estate management difficulties and crime statistic from the Community Information Unit (CIU) .

The Local Lettings Policies will be reviewed before JUNE 2010

Rotherham North

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Rotherham North	**Wingfield** 1-24 Swale Road, 1-25 and 8-20 Loy Close, 22-46 Orchard Flatts Crescent,	• Do not have convictions of anti social behaviour where the conviction/offence is less than 12 months ago. • Do not have a police record of anti social behaviour, where the last offence is less than 12 months ago. • Has not been prosecuted for an offence where illegal drug use played a major part in the conviction. i.e stolen goods to pay for drug addiction.	Housing Management Difficulties Reduce ASB and increase sustainability High levels of anti social behaviour or crime statistics which have been supplied as evidence by Safer Neighbourhood teams, Crime Involvement Unit or Joint Action Groups.
Rotherham North	**Rockingham** 1-48 Plowmans Way, 18-48 Goodwin Road, 13-27, 29A, 31A, 33A and 35A Ochre Dike Walk 25-39 Whitehall Way, 291-359 and 433-443 Town Lane,	• Do not have a drug or alcohol problem and is not in a treatment programme, where the drug and alcohol problem is associated with anti social behaviour. (Consideration will be given to individuals who have a drug or alcohol problem and are actively engaging in a rehabilitation treatment programme) • Have not signed and agreed an Anti Social Behaviour Contract (ABC) within the last 12 months • Individuals or a family member of the household are a former tenant of Rotherham Borough Council, who have no former tenants arrears or history of breaching their former (if former tenant arrears applies then the applicant or household member must signed an agreement to undertake a repayment plan and have been making regular weekly payments for 13 weeks.	
Rotherham North	**Masbrough** 1-46 Robert Street		

**Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Rotherham South**

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Rotherham South		**No Changes**	**No Changes**

Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Wentworth North

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Wentworth North	**Manor Farm** Dawsons Croft No's 18, 18A, 20, 20A, 30, 30A, 32, 32A, 33, 33A, 34, 34A, 35, 35A, 36, 36A,	• Do not have convictions of anti social behaviour where the conviction/offence is less than 12 months ago. • Do not have a police record of anti social behaviour, where the last offence is less than 12 months ago. • Has not been prosecuted for an offence where illegal drug use played a major part in the conviction. i.e stolen goods to pay for drug addiction.	Please do not let to anyone with a history of ASB or Drugs into these properties, notice has been served on 35, and 34 for ASB and growing cannabis. There have also been warning letters at 36A for cannabis use and foil found in property that could have been used for harder drugs such as heroin.
Wentworth North	Wilde Avenue No's 5, 5a, 6, 6a, 7, 7a, 8, 8a	• Do not have a drug or alcohol problem and is not in a treatment programme, where the drug and alcohol problem is associated with anti social behaviour. (Consideration will be given to individuals who have a drug or alcohol problem and are actively engaging in a rehabilitation treatment programme) • Have not signed and agreed an Anti Social Behaviour Contract (ABC) within the last 12 months • Individuals or a family member of the household are a former tenant of Rotherham Borough Council, who have	Please do not let to anyone with a history of ASB or Drugs in these properties, notice has been served on 7 Wild for Growing cannabis, and 7a is an introductory tenant and within a week has received her first warning letter for ASB for stealing from a local shop to support her drug habit.

		no former tenants arrears or history of breaching their former (if former tenant arrears applies then the applicant or household member must signed an agreement to undertake a repayment plan and have been making regular weekly payments for 13 weeks.	
Wentworth North	**Brampton** 11 Brierlow Close	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Lettings policy sensitive towards existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation priority to people over 40 with no children under 12 years as accommodations situated above elderly persons community centre.

Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Wentworth South

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Wentworth South	**Herringthorpe** 1-8 Barratt Corner, Herringthorpe	• Do not have convictions of anti social behaviour where the conviction/offence is less than 12 months ago. • Do not have a police record of anti social behaviour, where the last offence is less than 12 months ago.	Housing Management Difficulties Reduce ASB and increase sustainability High levels of anti social behaviour or crime statistics which have been supplied as evidence by Safer Neighbourhood teams, Crime Involvement Unit or Joint Action Groups.
Wentworth South	**Thrybergh** St Leonards Avenue No's 15A, 15B, 17A, 17B, 19A, 21A, 21B, 23A, 25A, 25B, 27A, 27B, 29A, 29B, 31A, 31B, 33A, 33B, 35A, 35B, 37A, 37B, 39A, 41A, 41B	• Has not been prosecuted for an offence where illegal drug use played a major part in the conviction. i.e stolen goods to pay for drug addiction. • Do not have a drug or alcohol problem and is not in a treatment programme, where the drug and alcohol problem is associated with anti social behaviour. (Consideration will be given to individuals who have a drug or alcohol problem and are actively engaging in a rehabilitation treatment programme)	Recommendations required because of a significant increase in substance abuse abandoned, plus terminations
Wentworth South	**Dalton** Meadow Close No's 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59	• Have not signed and agreed an Anti	

		Social Behaviour Contract (ABC) within the last 12 months • Individuals or a family member of the household are a former tenant of Rotherham Borough Council, who have no former tenants arrears or history of breaching their former (if former tenant arrears applies then the applicant or household member must signed an agreement to undertake a repayment plan and have been making regular weekly payments for 13 weeks.	
Wentworth South	**Herringthorpe** 1-8 Barratt Corner, Herringthorpe	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Persons over the age of 40. Neighbouring residents are predominantly older people. Housing Management Difficulties A problem household already in this area have already contributed to the fear of crime in this area and leave residents feeling vulnerable. High levels of drug dealing activity from this property. ASB unit and South Yorkshire Police involved.

Wentworth South	**Thrybergh** 22 Leverton Way 1 Staple Green **Ravenfield** 7 Longfield Drive **Rawmarsh** 26 Greenfields	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Lettings policy sensitive towards existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation priority to people over 40 with no children under 12 years as accommodations situated above elderly persons community centre.

Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Rother Valley South

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
RVS	**North Anston** 23 Capern Road	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Lettings policy sensitive towards existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation priority to people over 40 with no children under 12 years as accommodations situated above elderly persons community centre.

Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Rother Valley West

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Rother Valley West	**Brinsworth** Pike Road Flats No's 1 - 41, 43 - 59, 61-71, 73 - 83, 20-26, 28-34, 36 - 42, 44-50, and 52-62	Do not have convictions of anti social behaviour where the conviction/offence is less than 12 months ago. • Do not have a police record of anti social behaviour, where the last offence is less than 12 months ago. • Has not been prosecuted for an offence where illegal drug use played a major part in the conviction. i.e stolen goods to pay for drug addiction. • Do not have a drug or alcohol problem and is not in a treatment programme,	The housing in this road consists of blocks of flats, sharing communal access and landings. The area is one of the NAG priorities, and suffers from youth nuisance, under age drinking and crime. We request that the following LL Criteria be applied to this area to prevent a detioration in the area, and an increase in crime and the fear of crime as the SNT and partners work to alleviate the problems which already exist.

		where the drug and alcohol problem is associated with anti social behaviour. (Consideration will be given to individuals who have a drug or alcohol problem and are actively engaging in a rehabilitation treatment programme) • Have not signed and agreed an Anti Social Behaviour Contract (ABC) within the last 12 months • Individuals or a family member of the household are a former tenant of Rotherham Borough Council, who have no former tenants arrears or history of breaching their former (if former tenant arrears applies then the applicant or household member must signed an agreement to undertake a repayment plan and have been making regular weekly payments for 13 weeks.	
Rother Valley West	**Catcliffe** 9 Tristford Close **Aughton** 7 Windy Ridge **Aston** 42 Hepworth Drive **Thurcroft** 10 Arbour Drive 15 Rotherwood Crescent	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Lettings policy sensitive towards existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation priority to people over 40 with no children under 12 years as accommodations situated above elderly persons community centre.

**Review of the current Local Lettings Policies (additional areas)
Wentworth Valley**

Area	Properties covered	Local Letting Criteria	Rational
Wentworth Valley	**Wickersley** 18 Ash Grove 111 Flanderwell Lane	**Age Restriction** • Persons on a decreasing age range ie over 50 then over 40 etc	**Age Restriction** Lettings policy sensitive towards existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation priority to people over 40 with no children under 12 years as accommodations situated above elderly persons community centre.

Appendix 2C – Employment - Local Lettings

The housing application asks for information on employment status, this can be utilised to give preference in certain areas to create more balanced communities. The list of areas is detailed below. The advert will clearly state that a Local lettings Policy applies and give preference households who are currently in employment. This will be adopted only in the specific areas listed and will not be applied to more than 10% percent of voids in Rotherham. In total **63 properties** which is 0.3 % of the Council's stock will be given preference to households currently in employment. **Note that the area where the applicant is employed is irrelevant unless an employment connection is applied as a result of a rural local letting policy.**

Rotherham North	**Kimberworth Park** 2-30 St John's Green 236, 240 & 244 Kimberworth Park Road 2-32 Simmonite Road	Preference will be given to people in work.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS		

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	4th January 2010
3.	Title:	Workforce Strategy
4.	Programme Area:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

The Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Strategy sets out 6 main objectives which have been informed nationally and regionally. These actions will support our Strategic and Year Ahead commitments along with the implementation of personalisation across Rotherham in preparation for the development and implementation of an Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy (InLAWS). Neighbourhoods and Adult Services recent Care Quality Commission inspection recommended that our workforce strategy and training plan had a clear action plan that detailed how key milestones would be met. This Strategy reflects these recommendations and its action plan clearly sets out the journey that will transform the service.

An InLAWS approach will provide us with:

- smooth pathways for customers
- effective workforce planning across organisational and professional boundaries
- change which delivers efficiencies
- whole system career pathways – interchangeable between organisations
- strong, strategic and active leadership
- motivated and trained workforce facilitators - both in HR and frontline services
- good knowledge sharing systems
- synchronised planning cycles
- thinking and acting in 'whole-systems' - involving stakeholders, staff and partners

6. Recommendations

- **Cabinet Member endorse the workforce strategy and the InLAWS approach**
- **The Strategy is presented to Cabinet for Health and Social Care and Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods for endorsement**
- **The Strategy is presented to Adults Board for Joint Endorsement**

7. Proposals and Details

Working in consultation with Health, Voluntary and the Independent Sector, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care and Skills for Care (SfC) aims to modernise adult health social care in England, and create a local area, integrated workforce for health and social care for the 21st Century. There are currently 1.25 million people employed in Social Care across the Country, and the workforce development Strategy will assist Rotherham in identifying a universal workforce, across all sectors, so that more integrated services and closer working arrangements deliver efficiency gains and better outcomes for our customers.

A specific element of national policy that will affect how Neighbourhoods and Adult Services transform its entire workforce is the drive for personalisation. Through a shift in emphasis within local government to deliver joint local services within the Borough we aim to place choice and control firmly in the hands of our customer through a preventative and personalized approach.

Regionally, key organisations are working together to integrate services within communities (known as universal services) in line with national policy. The Governments approach to more integrated local area working is not new, but for the first time, it has set out mechanisms to achieve true integrated working through the Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy (InLAWS) and has set a timeframe for implementation to be March 2011. The framework requires Local Authorities to join with Health, Housing, Independent, Private and Voluntary sector organizations to work together to minimize duplication and deliver a more efficient, streamlined and joined up service to customers.

In Rotherham, our approach will be to implement Personalisation and InLAWS as one programme of change through our Workforce Strategy where services will fit to people – not people to services.

For Rotherham to continue to deliver new ways of working in response to what our customer want and aspire to, the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Strategy will support the implementation of personalisation. This will be done through the personalisation steering group, workforce sub group and the personalisation overarching milestone plan which is based on the ADASS 'putting people first' milestone plan and by working with staff, Customers and Partners. Personalisation impacts on how we work within neighbourhoods, within communities of interest, within social care and with the Borough as a whole. To prepare staff for this transformation, this Strategy will drive forward a number of critical actions:-

Objective 1: Developing strong leadership and accountability - so that leading change is placed in the hands of frontline workers and becomes part of everyone's role.

Objective 2 – Recruitment and Retention - to address issues of sustainable employment not only for core workers across the Directorate, but for Paid Carers and Personal Assistants and to ensure our workforce is representative of the community it serves.

Objective 3 - Workforce re-modeling and commissioning - identifying, analyzing and developing a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves.

Objective 4 - Workforce Development – based on customer needs and aspirations we will remove duplication of roles and responsibilities across partner organizations through joint multi-agency collaboration to produce an integrated local area workforce strategy (InLAWS) for Rotherham.

Objective 5 - Joint and integrated working – creating universal services which are integrated, crossing professional boundaries and which go beyond traditional housing, health and social care into community/neighbourhood service delivery.

Objective 6 – Regulation – retaining standards across all integrated services to ensure customers are safeguarded and standards are maintained in line with specific agency performance and inspection regimes.

InLAWS is a concept that offers huge promise to mount such an assessment. Breaking that down; 'integrated' indicates the intent to include the whole social care workforce and all employers; 'local area' to place the task firmly in the context of Local Strategic Partnerships and the joint commissioning agenda; and 'workforce strategies' to recognise the number of dimensions related to the JSNA (and that the remit is different to regular organisational workforce planning).

Rotherham has an ambitious vision that identifies its priorities for developing preventative personalised services for its customers across the Borough. Neighbourhoods and Adult Services has strong leadership from senior managers and politicians, and are working effectively with wider council departments and partner agencies to improve support to individuals, communities and neighbourhoods. Rotherham is effectively addressing the personalisation agenda and is aware of the direction of travel. *CQC Inspection Feedback 2009.*

Rotherham achieved the Gold Standard for Investor in People under a new 'Your Choices', framework which is a more robust assessment against 185 indicators. During this re-inspection, Neighbourhoods and Adult Services reduced its 17 non compliances down to just one, as it sailed through the Customer Service Excellence Inspection for a third year.

This year Neighbourhoods and Adult Services have been through four rigorous inspections for Personal Dignity and Respect (Performing Well), Quality of Life (Performing Adequately), Choice and Control (Performing Well) along with Promising Prospects for Leadership assessed against the Directorate's capacity to continue to improve.

The commitment of Neighbourhoods and Adult Service staff is clearly visible through improvements in services, in performance and in customer satisfaction. This has been a passionate and challenging journey for every member of staff since the creation of the new Directorate. 84% of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff currently state they are happy at work compared to 27% in 2006, with a 75% improvement against the overall survey, confirming that staff remain committed in

their role, are driving improvements and leading change, and feel they are valued employees within Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate.

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services achievements over the last year are testament to the Core Values which are reflected through every member of staff within the Directorate:-

- customer is paramount
- honesty and integrity
- teamwork
- performance and quality
- financial management
- clear sense of direction
- clear approach to change management

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services are proud that they are the only Directorate in the Council to improve each year under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 'Harder Test' regime, and this is testament to the improvements made over the last few years around placing customers at the heart of service delivery.

8. Finance

The Area Based Grant – Social Care Workforce (Adults) provides funding to invest in the development of social care workers in Rotherham. The grant allocation for Rotherham for 2009/10 is £666,000. 50% of the available monies will be spent on Council employees and 50% on independent sector employees.

As part of implementing personalisation and InLAWS, there will be a selection of training that is delivered jointly with Partners and in these instances, financing of the courses will be shared, reducing the impact on the Directorate budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Audit Commission recently warned that only one in four English councils are in possession of adequate – let alone effective – workforce plans. This is worrying and does not bode well for wider labour market workforce strategies in social care. The current skills shortage is in danger of becoming structural, influenced by such factors as the rise in self-directed models of service challenging both our capacity and capability to respond to government policy and exacerbated by the struggle to attract younger recruits.

The response lies in a holistic assessment of community needs that includes a detailed local labour market appraisal. Any skills gaps in adult social care – whether in direct employment, contracted independent sector organisations, self-employment or simply in the community – will thus be clearly identified and an effective response put in place. This will provide the best platform to deal with the wider issues, which without the right workforce, would be overwhelmingly difficult to address.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Numerous policy drivers are impacting on integrated workforce development. The Department of Health Operating Framework for 2008/9 moves the NHS towards transforming NHS organisations to enable communities to have greater autonomy in determining their own priorities. The new Local Area Agreements (June 2008) require health and social care to agree priorities for local people that improves their health and well-being. The Government's policy, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, focuses on personalising and shaping individual care; ADASS 'Putting people first' which deems effective workforce planning across health and social care as critical to achieve these policy expectations.

Progress made against the Strategy Action Plan and performance indicators below, will be monitored by the NAS Workforce Development/Collaborative Group which is Chaired by the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships. Progress will also be reported on a six monthly basis to the Adults Board.

RAG Status	Indicator
1	Number of staff trained in safeguarding (SAS)
2	% of staff directly employed that left during the year (SAS)
3	% of adult services directly employed posts vacant (SAS)
4	% of adult services working days/shifts lost to sickness absence during the year (SAS)
5	% of staff in post at 30 September where ethnicity not stated (SAS)
6	% of services gross expenditure on staffing which was spent on training the Council's directly employed staff during the year (SAS)
7	% of training grants spent on Council staff / independent sector
8	% of progress with InLAWS strategy action plan (KPI's)
9	% of staff who say that they enjoy their jobs
10	% of staff who are trained to meet National Minimum Standard
11	% of staff who understand the vision for social care
12	% of PDR's completed

Employee-centred Performance Management

As part of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services overall performance management system, we adopted a single performance planning and monitoring system to ensure that all staff are effectively managing change and meeting objectives set out in both team and individual PDR's. The system supports the Corporate Golden Thread approach and clearly maps out our single system of supporting an equality of access for staff and our Investor in People culture. Supervision of social workers is undertaken as part of a system that ensures that case files and outcomes are monitored as part of overall performance management and quality assurance.

Contact Name: Kathleen Amies, Service Development Officer. Ext 2668

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ADULT SERVICES

Workforce Development Strategy 2009-2011

October 2009

FOREWORD/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rotherham has an ambitious vision that identifies its priorities for developing preventative personalized services for its customers across the Borough. Neighbourhoods and Adult Services has strong leadership from senior managers and politicians, and are working effectively with wider council departments and partner agencies to improve support to individuals, communities and neighbourhoods. Rotherham is effectively addressing the personalisation agenda and is aware of the direction of travel. *CQC Inspection Feedback 2009.*

Rotherham achieved the Gold Standard for Investor in People under a new 'Your Choices, framework which is a more robust assessment against 185 indicators, and Neighbourhoods and Adult Services reduced its 17 non compliances down to just one, as it sailed through the Customer Service Excellence Inspection for a third year.

This year Neighbourhoods and Adult Services have been through four rigorous inspections for Personal Dignity and Respect (Performing Well), Quality of Life (Performing Adequately), Choice and Control (Performing Well) along Promising Prospects for Leadership assessed against the Directorate's capacity to continue to improve.

The commitment of Neighbourhoods and Adult Service staff is clearly visible through improvements in services, in performance and in customer satisfaction. This has been a passionate and challenging journey for every member of staff since the creation of the new Directorate. 84% of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff currently state they are happy at work compared to 27% in 2006, with a 75% improvement against the overall survey, confirming that staff remain committed in their role, are driving improvements and leading change, and feel they are valued employees within Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate.

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services achievements over the last year are testament to the Core Values which are reflected through every member of staff within the Directorate:-

- customer is paramount,
- honesty and integrity
- teamwork
- performance and quality
- financial management
- clear sense of direction
- clear approach to change management

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services are proud that they are the only Directorate in the Council to improve each year under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 'Harder Test' regime, and this is testament to the improvements made over the last few years around placing customers at the heart of service delivery.

For Rotherham to continue deliver new ways of working in response to what our customer want and aspire to, the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Strategy will support the implementation of personalisation by working with staff, Customers and Partners. Personalisation impacts on how we work within neighbourhoods, within communities of interest, within social care and with the Borough as a whole. To prepare staff for this transformation, this Strategy will drive forward a number of critical actions:-

Objective 1: Developing Strong leadership and accountability - so that leading change is placed in the hands of frontline workers and becomes part of everyone's role.

Objective 2 – Recruitment and Retention - to address issues of sustainable employment not only for core workers but for Carers and Personal Assistants and to ensure our workforce is representative of the community it serves.

Objective 3 - Workforce re-modeling and commissioning - identifying, analyzing and developing a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves.

Objective 4 - Workforce Development – based on customer needs and aspirations which will remove duplication of roles and responsibilities across partner organizations through joint multi-agency collaboration to produce an integrated local area workforce strategy (InLAWS) for Rotherham.

Objective 5 - Joint and integrated working – creating universal services which are integrated, crossing professional boundaries and which go beyond traditional health and social care into community/neighbourhood service delivery.

Objective 6 – Regulation – retaining standards across all integrated services to ensure customers are safeguarded and standards are maintained in line with specific agency performance and inspection regimes.

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff are our strongest and most valuable asset in delivering visible change and improvements on the frontline. We are in a strong position to work with partners to implement the strategic change that is needed to introduce personalization - a whole new way of working which will bring together more integrated ground level services with Health, Police, Housing and Independent and Voluntary sector agencies, through shared Corporate Strategies, Multi-agency Worker Groups, Directorate Service and Team Plans, through to individual performance and development reviews, to deliver more efficient, effective and personalised services to every household across Rotherham.

TOM CRAY
Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

OUR WORKFORCE ACHIEVEMENTS 2008-2009

The last 12 months have been extremely successful for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services particularly in the recognition we have received for placing customers and staff at the heart of what we do:-

- **Winning the Rotherham Business Award for Customer Service**
  Impact – Neighbourhoods and Adult Services are reshaping local authority reputation as being leaders in the field of customer services.

- **Being one of only 8 Councils to achieve the Gold Standard for Investors in People**
  Impact – the Council's investment in leading, empowering, developing the workforce is reflected through staff commitment to developing themselves and the organisation to deliver better services for the customer.

- **Being one of the first Councils in the country to achieve the Governments Customer Service Excellence Standard and the first for Adult Social Care.**
  Impact – Neighbourhoods and Adult Services being externally recognised as putting the customer at the heart of the service through effective engagement and consultation.

- **Achieving 73% improvement against our Employee Engagement Survey with 84% of staff stating they enjoy their job, and with over 80% of Directorate responses being higher than the Corporate average.**
  Impact – our staff are proud to work for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services and are passionate about what they do.

- **Achieving Excellent Rating in our recent Care Quality Commission Annual Assessment.**
  Impact – Neighbourhoods and Adult Services formally recognised by inspectors and the Government as delivering excellent services which customers confirm through feedback – staff being acknowledged that they are doing an excellent job.

- **A '4 out of 4 strategic housing score for CPA'**
  Impact – making Neighbourhoods and Adult Services the only Directorate in the Council to improve each year under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 'Harder Test' regime and one of 51 Councils nationally to be rated 4 out of 4 for Performance and Housing.

- **Overall crime has reduced by 12.8%.over the last 12 months and CQC rated Safeguarding Service as a Good Service in the 2009 Inspection.**
  Impact – work to make Rotherham's communities safer are being realised through improvements in crime and by strengthening support services to prevent domestic violence and adult abuse through multi-agency working.

National, Regional and Local Context

A specific element of national policy that will affect how Neighbourhoods and Adult Services transform its entire workforce is the drive for personalisation. Through a shift in emphasis within local government to deliver joint local services within Rotherham's neighbourhoods we will, through a preventative and personalized approach, place choice and control firmly in the hands of our customer.

Regionally, key organisations are working together to integrate services within communities (known as universal services) in line with national policy. The Governments approach to more integrated local area working is not new, but for the first time, it has set out mechanisms to achieve true integrated working through the Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy (InLAWS) and has set a timeframe for implementation to be March 2011. The framework requires Local Authorities to join with Health, Housing, Independent, Private and Voluntary sector organizations to work together to minimize duplication and deliver a more efficient, streamlined and joined up service to customers.

In Rotherham, our approach will be to implement Personalisation and InLAWS as one programme of change with the ultimate aim of making sure that people can live at home, enjoy their lives, meet their needs, their dreams and have choices about how they live. Services will fit to people – not people to services. Personalisation is about choice and dignity, InLAWS is about integrating the services customers choose to deliver better value for money and a service which is more personalised to the customers needs. It is everything we do and everything we believe in and our vision is that:-
.
- Customers will have choice and control in their lives,
- Services will develop new ways of working,
- Services will become totally focused on customers and the outcomes
- they desire,
- Personalisation will improve the quality of life for the individual, their community and their neighbourhood, and
- Prevention will become the most important focus of our relationship with customers.

Personalisation is part of the Rotherham's strategic planning framework which can be evidenced from the revisions of the Rotherham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for commissioning activity, Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Personalisation Plan illustrates the progress that has been made so far and the change management actions that are underway. This has been shaped by a programme of visioning and leadership events.

Our Workforce Strategy Commitments

The Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Strategy has 6 main objectives which have been informed nationally and regionally to support our Strategic and Year Ahead commitments and to implement personalisation across Rotherham in preparation for the development and implementation of an Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy. Neighbourhoods and Adult Services recent Care Quality Commission inspection recommended that our workforce strategy and training plan had a clear plan that detailed how key milestones would be met. This Strategy reflects these recommendations and its action plan clearly sets out the journey that will transform the service.

Objective 1: Strong leadership and accountability

Workforce development needs to be part of everyone's day job which Neighbourhoods and Adult Service leaders must drive. Rotherham's recent Investor in People review recommended that our Directorate strengthen its approach to managing change through effective visible leadership and positive promotion. Leaders and champions are needed within the Directorate at all levels, rather than belonging to one group at Directorate Management Team or Member level.

Action	For who	By whom	Achieved Through	Impact
Coaching, Mentoring and Change Management	Directors/ Members	Corporate Management Team / Strategic HR	- Corporate Plan - Corporate Management Team - Members Training Group - Service Plan - Leadership Sessions - Communication Plan	Morale or workforce through inspirational leadership - EOS / IIP
Leading from the Front	Front line teams / Members	Directorate Management Team	- Leadership sessions - Team Plans - Team Meetings - Back to Floor Exercises - Workforce QA Framework	Visible leadership, 'bottom up' communication
Management into Leadership	Future leaders/Members	Leeds Met University	- Training Plan - Team Plans - PDR's	Talent management and retention
Chartered Management Institute	M1/ M2 / M3 Managers	Park Lane College	- Training Plan - Team Plans - PDR's	Mandatory management qualifications

Action	For who	By whom	Achieved Through	Impact
Policy and Practice Workshops	Targeted groups of managers / Members		- Training Plan - Team Plans - PDR's	Ideas for change and innovation in new ways of working
Leading an Empowered Organisation (LEO) Programme	Managers who currently or envisage manage integrated teams / Members	Partnership with NHS Rotherham	- Training Plan - Team Plans - PDR's	Integration with health
Post Qualifying Framework	Social Workers	Sheffield Hallam University supported by In-House team	- Training Plan - Team Plan - PDR / Supervision	Continuous professional development / able to competently asses other care workers.
'Becoming a Better People Manager'	All Managers	In house teams	- Team Plans - Training Plan - PDR's - Supervision	Compliance with managerial responsibilities
Skills for Care Management Induction Standards	Social Care Managers, Team Leaders and Principal Social Workers.	In house teams	- Personalisation Plan - Training Plan - PDR/ Supervision - Team Plans	Roll out of person centred planning

Objective 2 – Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention are significant issues in parts of the region and in some sectors of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services workforce. Our Employee Opinion Survey recommended improvement be made to ensure staff pay and reward were fair in line with their role. The strategy proposes taking both a regional and local approach to assist in addressing issues of recruitment and retention, particularly in the light of the current recession.

Recruitment / Retention issues	Local/ Regional Approach	Action	Achieved Through	Impact
Professional Officers	Local	Establish key worker roles as more specialised, dealing with social care assessments and reviews / EHOS's CPD embedded to raise knowledge base of current legislation and change in line with	- Team Plans - Training Plan - PDR's - Supervision - InLAWS Worker Group - Personalisation Group	- Retention through investment and value of expertise. - Transfer of skills from 'experts' to frontline workers. - Talent pool expanded in both skills, knowledge

		prevent agenda. Post-qualifying training to be undertaken to enable officers to become the experts and competently assess other workers in policy and practice.		• Investor in People embedded through coaching and mentoring (current gap)
New Types of Worker Roles	Local	New profiles and competence framework to detail knowledge skills and attitude as key components to successful employment, with attitudes being mandatory and knowledge and skills being negotiable elements which can be addressed through continued training and development. Pay and rewards benchmarked under Single Status to ensure fair pay and reward against new roles.	• Strategic HR • InLAWS Worker Group • Employee Opinion Survey • Investor in People Review	• Establishment of streamlined frontline roles, generic in service delivery, removing inefficiencies between universal services with officers gaining skills that can be used across all sectors. • Recruitment pool expanded through attitude, with support to raise skills and knowledge in-house. • Employee opinion improved around fair pay and reward.
Personal Assistants and Carers	Regional	Identification of all Personal Assistants and Carers in the system and Training Plan created to ensure they meet National Minimum Standards.	• Training Plan • InLAWS Worker Group • Direct Payments Team • Carers Forum	• Role of Personal Assistants and Carers inclusive as future workforce. • Recruitment pool expanded across universal services. • Safeguarding of customers established through competency training.

Recruitment / Retention issues	Local/ Regional Approach	Action	Achieved Through	Impact
BME, Gender and Young People	Local	• Identify gaps in gender, ethnicity and age across service. • Approach distinct customer groups existing for BME and Young People to raise profile of roles. • Investigate local employment market for possible recruitment in system. • Positive recruitment drives encouraging bme, male and young people into roles through new competency framework.	• NMDS Workforce Profile • InLAWS Worker Group • Strategic BME Worker Groups • Borough Groups of Interests	• Diverse workforce to reflect diverse community needs. • Effective business continuity through sustainable workforce.

Objective 3 - Workforce re-modeling and commissioning:

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services workforce information currently reveals that we have 1,995 employers work for the Directorate, with 1,614 of these being employed directly in the social care field. These figures do not include the number of people who use services who directly employ their own staff.

Of the 1,995 strong workforce, 85% are female and 15% are male, with BME representing 3.4% of the workforce, with a turnover rate of 9.6% and a sickness absence rate of 15.12 days. We have approximately 6.6% who are recorded as disabled, and an age range which indicates that Housing and Neighbourhood Services have the highest percentage of 16-25 and 25-39 year olds working in their Service. Commissioning and Partnerships have the highest number of 40-49 year olds working in their service closely followed by Assessment and Care Management. With Health and Wellbeing and Independent Living having the most 50+ employees in their Service.

Initially, the information tells us that immediate work is required to address the ratio between men and women in the organization particularly in Assessment and Care Management, Health and Wellbeing and Independent Living; secondly we need to increase the age range to support business continuity in specific service areas such as Independent Living and Health and Wellbeing; and finally, work is required to reduce our sickness absence which is the highest in the council and of particular concern in Health and Wellbeing. Our Partners, RBT, manage the performance of these indicators and have actions in place across the Council to address gaps. Our Human Resource Manager will stretch our targets to ensure we meet our Directorate gaps in preparation for the change in service.

Objective 4 - Workforce Development

The implementation of PPF will require the development of new roles in the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services workforce and shifts in the balance of different roles to ensure the availability of the right people with the right skills to undertake the roles and tasks which people want. For personalisation and its impact to be totally understood we need to be open and transparent with the existing workforce about the change, and how this will affect their roles now and in the future.

The clear links for our Directorate's workforce re-modelling and commissioning will be driven through three actions:-

a)   Identifying a fit with the organisations vision
b)   Raising Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of the workforce
c)   Identify and celebrate staff and customers living the change
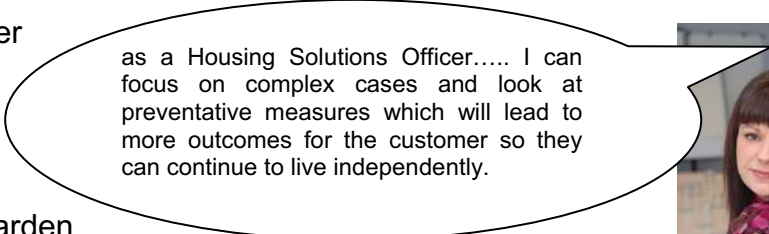
a)   Identifying a fit with the organisations vision

For Neighbourhoods and Adult Services employees to feel that what they are doing supports the Corporate Vision is fundamental. To embed change, our staff need to know why and how their role will change and what they will be doing differently. This will enable individuals to effectively track their professional and personal development and make sure they are part of the change and not on the periphery. To commence the journey we need to identify:-
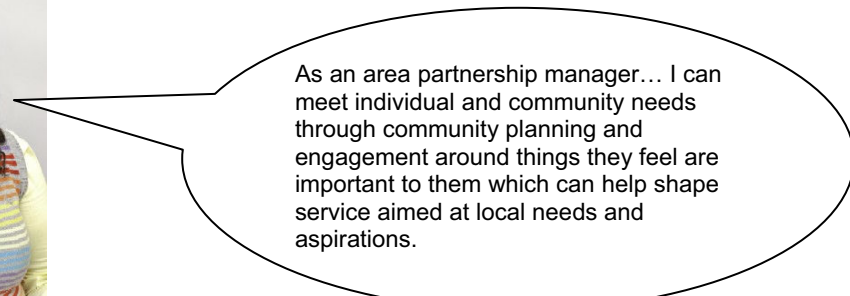
WiiFm?

Personalisation of services - "what's in it for me"?
- …as a social worker
- …as a home care provider
- …as a broker
- …as a care worker
- …as a team manager
- …as a deputy manager
- …as a neighbourhood warden
- …as an area partnership manager
- …as a housing solutions officer
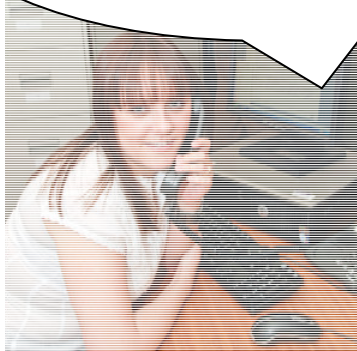
as a Housing Solutions Officer….. I can focus on complex cases and look at preventative measures which will lead to more outcomes for the customer so they can continue to live independently.

As an area partnership manager… I can meet individual and community needs through community planning and engagement around things they feel are important to them which can help shape service aimed at local needs and aspirations.
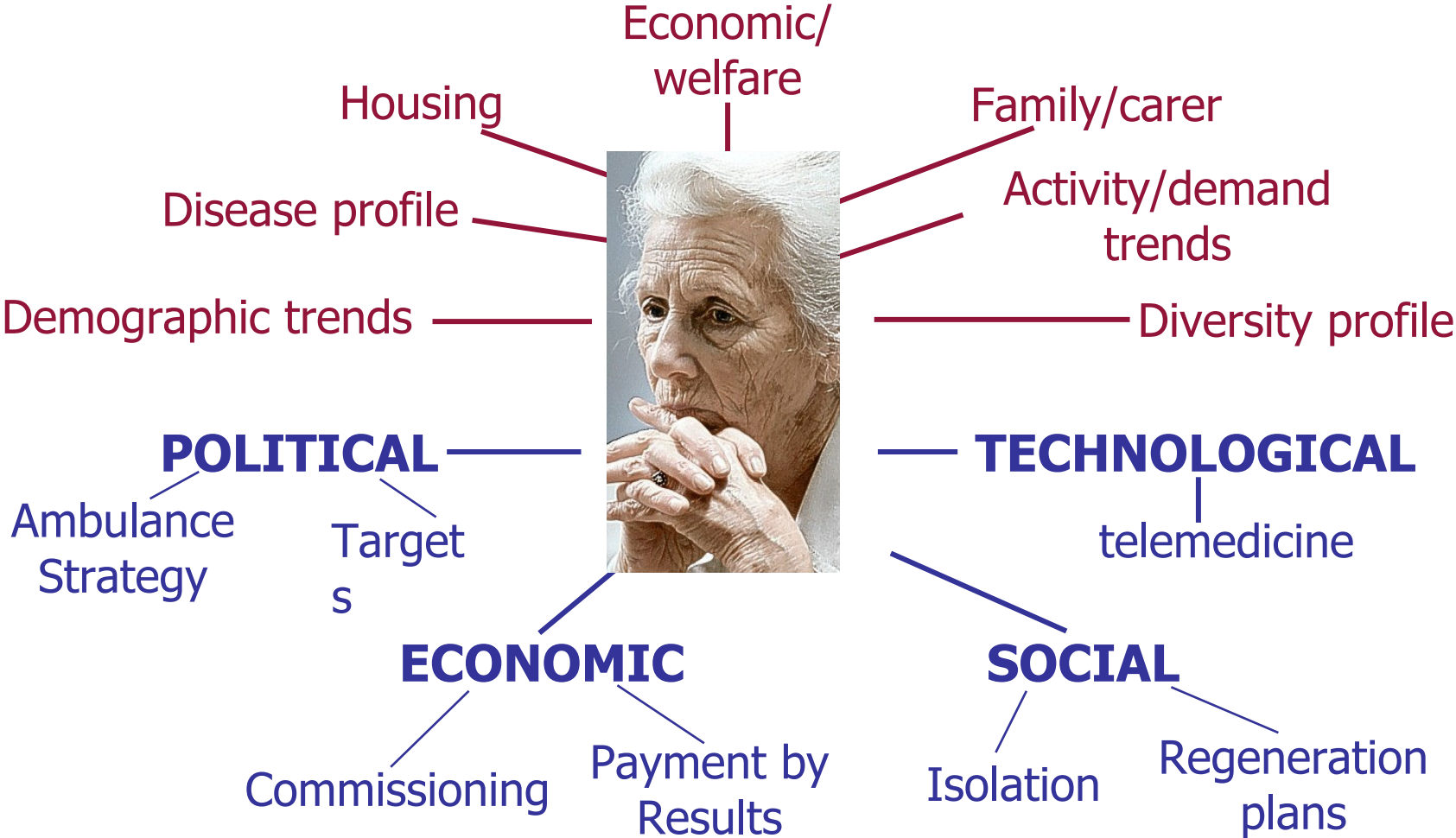
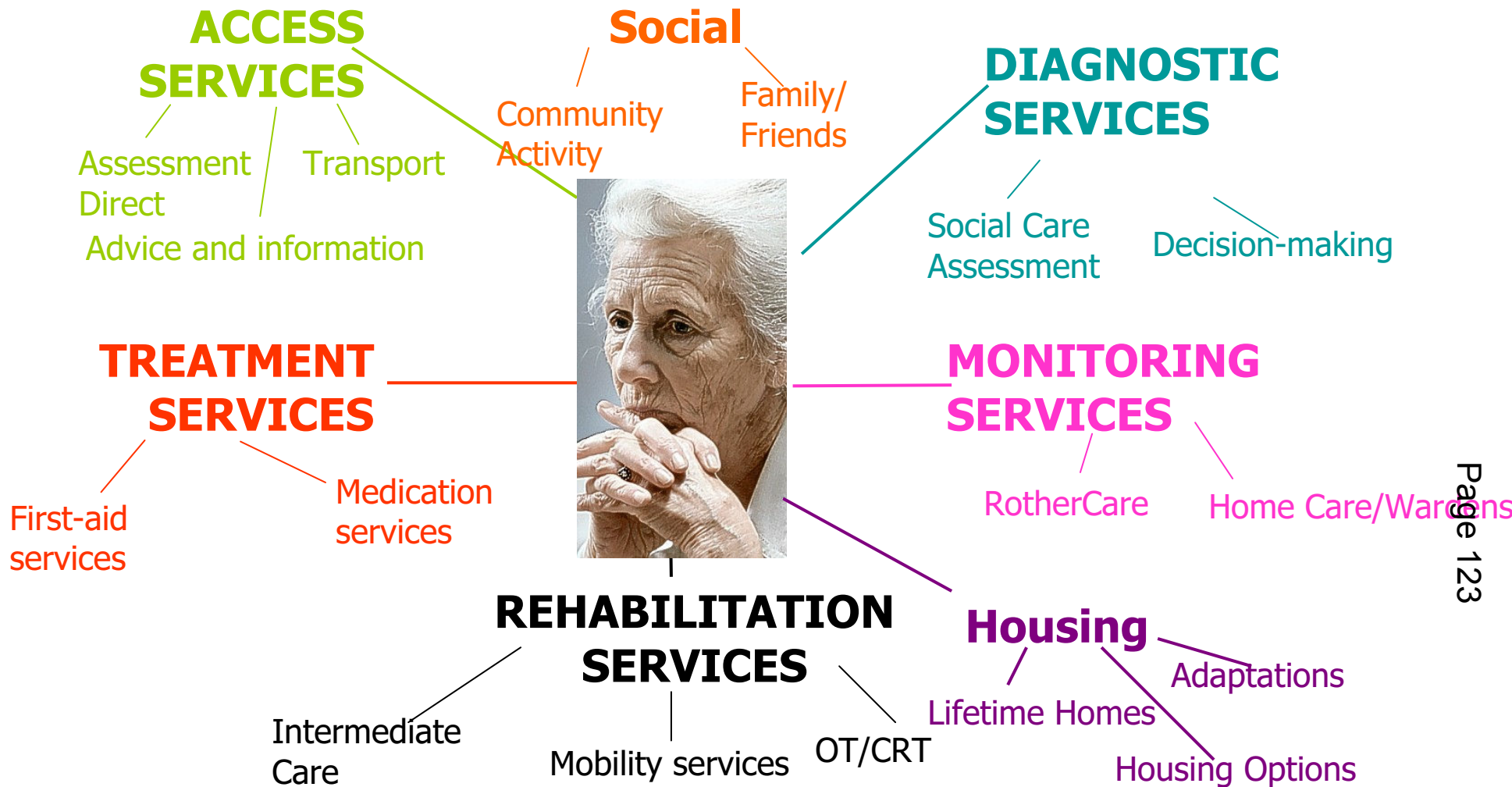**b)** **Raising Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of the workforce**

For Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff to adapt to new ways of working, we have identified three pathways which highlight areas of **knowledge** required to provide background information on strategies, policies and strategic plans; **skills** which individuals will need to develop in order that they are fluent in the changes in practices; and **attitudes** or individuals which will be driven and challenged by managers who can advise and lead staff throughout the change process. We will utilise the Rotherham JSNA to map our current and future health and social care requirements, which will describe the service and not the profession or organisation that deliver them.

Case Study - To give an example of the mapping process we have used Mary who is 80 years old customer of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services who lives in Brinsworth. She has had a hip replacement and has Congestive Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). She lives at home alone with day support from social services and a community health worker. She can get confused, often calling 999 for an ambulance about twice a month for various reasons - a fall, losing medication at night, breathing problems. She is kept in hospital overnight but is let home the next day.

Through an analysis, we identify what political, environmental, social and technological changes need to be reviewed along with a more in-depth identification of frontline services, so that we can begin to merge services and deliver them in a more cost effective, and universal way. A way which supports Marys individual and personal needs and which enables her to continue living independently. Areas of duplication of care will be highlighted and alternative ways to support Mary identified. Through the use of key future care requirements identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, personalised services can continue to be adapted so that we are responding to the personal needs of our community, both in the medium and longer term. As Rotherham continues working towards it's PREVENT agenda, more frontline services will merge and be delivered in a universal way.

CASE STUDY – MARY FROM BRINSWORTH, ROTHERHAM

Economic/
welfare

Housing

Family/carer

Disease profile

Activity/demand
trends

Demographic trends

Diversity profile

POLITICAL

TECHNOLOGICAL

Ambulance
Strategy

Targets

telemedicine

ECONOMIC

SOCIAL

Commissioning

Payment by
Results

Isolation

Regeneration
plans

ACCESS SERVICES
- Assessment Direct
- Transport
- Advice and information

Social
- Community Activity
- Family/ Friends

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES
- Social Care Assessment
- Decision-making

TREATMENT SERVICES
- First-aid services
- Medication services

MONITORING SERVICES
- RotherCare
- Home Care/Wardens

REHABILITATION SERVICES
- Intermediate Care
- Mobility services
- OT/CRT

Housing
- Lifetime Homes
- Adaptations
- Housing Options

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Knowledge which needs to be imparted to Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff to give them a broader understanding of the elements attributed to personalisation can be transferred through a number of routes, some of which include briefings, team meetings, e-learning, roadshows, specialist workshops (training plan) etc which will be determined through a Personalisation Training Plan.

Skills that Neighbourhoods and Adult Services staff will be required to develop, and which will form part of new competencies against new roles and responsibilities can again be gained through a number of routes, which will be determined against demand and budget availability through a Personalisation Training Plan and contributions from partner organisations.

Attitudes are informed through managers into the workforce, and as leaders, our Directorate attitudes to a personalised service need to be highly visible. Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Managers and Leaders will raise their knowledge and skills base so they are able to advise and empower employees and challenge attitudes that oppose the established culture, and support our Investor in People action to improve staff awareness of improvements that have been made by managers and staff to the way the organisation develops its people.

As part of embedding an effective attitude, the competency framework linked to a person centred approach will be utilised which will require managers across our service to adopt and promote these seven principles with employees:-

Principle 1	Ensure individuals are able to make informed choices to manage their self care needs
Principle 2	Communicate effectively to enable individuals to assess their needs, and develop and gain confidence to self care
Principle 3	Support and enable individuals to access appropriate information to manage their self care needs
Principle 4	Support and enable individuals to develop skills in self care
Principle 5	Support and enable individuals to use technology to support self care
Principle 6	Advise individuals how to access support networks and participate in the planning, development and evaluation of services
Principle 7	Support and enable risk management and risk taking to maximise independence and choice

c) **Identify and celebrate staff and customers living the change**

Throughout the development of the service, individuals personal success and the outcomes these deliver for customers will need to be mapped and celebrated so that the journey of transformation can be evidenced and realised through the eyes of employees. This will also support recommendations from our **Investor in People Review** around providing staff with a wider awareness of improvements that have been made by staff to the way the organisation develops its people

The results from Neighbourhoods and Adult Services **Employee Opinion Survey** provides us with encouragement about the way staff and managers have responded to the massive challenges we have faced in the last 18 months. Here are just a few of the great headlines from this survey:

Headline Results

- **78% of our results are higher than the Council average** with Learning and Development (5%), Communications (6%) and Customer Service (9%) being the biggest positive difference.
- **75% of our results have improved since 2006** with Management (4%), Learning and Development (7%) and Customer Service (4%).
- **Strongest areas** within our Directorate have come from you understanding your role in the council, managers trusting you to take responsibility for your own work, and having a clear understanding of what's expected of you as an employee.
- **Weakest areas** identified from the survey relate to consulting you when undertaking change, communication between departments, you feeling your pay is fair; and getting feedback on your ideas and suggestions.

Neighbourhoods and Adult Services already map the journeys of customers and publish these through a 'You said, We did' initiative. The same will be applied to our staff, with real life experiences in all fields of the workforce. The initiative will identify a number of key workers whose roles will change in the first wave of implementation to showcase to the workforce, and include personal testimonials around how change affected them and the 'so what' – what has changed as a result of this on the customer and service, and ultimately, employee personal views around their new role and how satisfied or happy they are.

Further work to address development areas identified in the Employee Opinion Survey will be to raise the profile of the Council's Employee Suggestion Scheme within the Directorate and to encourage use of the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Anonymous Burning Issues (staff discussion forum) initiative which has been designed to include feedback from mobile workers as well as those who have access to the intranet.

Objective 5 - Joint and integrated working

The personalisation agenda requires change across a much wider range of services than just neighbourhoods and adult social care. Workforce strategies to implement it need to be very broadly defined and targeted, cross professional and agency boundaries and go well beyond the traditional local authority workforce. The strategy includes recommendations to strengthen inter-agency working, develop shared programmes of work with other sectors such as health and housing and get the strategy adopted by key regional bodies. Most important is recognising the role of users and carers as key partners in the delivery of the strategy and finding a mechanism to ensure they are actively engaged in its development and implementation. To commence effective workforce planning and to implement an Integrated

Local Area Workforce Strategy for Rotherham, we have adopted a four stage review process:-

We will **<u>analyse</u>** neighbourhoods and adult services and partner workforce data from which to make an informed change plan to support the change in service. By identifying the numbers of staff, job roles, work patterns, grades etc as well as workforce characteristics such as length of service and stability, gender, ethnicity and disability, skills and qualification profile, we can start to map out the current workforce profile of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services and Partners. From this we will then be able to forecast the future workforce based on the personalized service and look at potential recruitment and re-training and re-deployment of employees within the universal workforce system.

Having identified the gaps and surpluses, we are in a position to **<u>plan</u>** out an effective transformational workforce action plan with staff and customers that will help us travel from the present to this future scenario. This is a long term plan rather than an annual plan as it is not possible to get where we want to go in a short time. It will complement and support the long term plans for the service and put into practice the corporate values and objectives of our Directorate.

The Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Action Plan will then be integrated into Service and Team Planning, for officers to implement change in their own areas. By asking teams to practice core values through adopting a clear change management process and working as a team, individuals **<u>do</u>** the work and manage the change themselves, rather than having it done to them.

The Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Development Group will monitor and **<u>review</u>** progress, reporting by exception to the monthly Performance Directorate Management Team meeting. This will be followed up with a six monthly update to Members on progress made towards the Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy for Rotherham.

Objective 6 - Regulation

Regulation of services is critical if we are to retain standards and quality. This applies to all services, whether health, housing, independent or voluntary sector organisations. In relation to Health and Social Care, our regulatory body comes in the form of Care Quality Commission who regularly inspects services. With regard to Housing, Police and other statutory partners, regulation comes in the form of inspection from the Audit Commission or the Police Standards. What is unique is that despite a number of regulatory bodies, we all have common aims which we are measured against, and it will be these commonalities that we work with via Safer Rotherham Partnership, Adults Board, and through other multi-agency groups currently in place in the Borough.

Current gaps in relation to personalisation which will need to be plugged early into the transformation relate to Carers and Personal Assistants who are not subject to regulation. Particular concerns are around how these workers are recruited or trained to a high quality that would not put service users at unnecessary risk without compromising the ability of people to decide who they want to employ.

The Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Strategy recommends developing a local framework for the support and quality assurance of Carers and Personal Assistants through consultation and engagement with these sectors, and to encourage training to meet regulatory requirements where possible. Where direct payments or individual budgets are used to pay for these workers, it is also suggested that a clause be included as part of the administration of the budget to ensure that National Minimum Data Set information is gathered and that the Customer budgets for training of individuals where necessary is supported through the Adult Social Care Training Budget. Together with a talent management structure which will look to retain care workers who can progress into mainstream care services following cessation of personal care, we will present these ideas to the regional Skills for Care Group to agree regional protocols across Yorkshire and the Humber before implementation.

RESOURCES

- **Service Development Team**
  This team develops the workforce through the Investor in People agenda. The team work with managers and staff in a number of ways which includes, induction, communications, performance and development, management effectiveness, reward and recognition and the Employee Opinion Survey. The team produce an annual report each year to staff detailing progress against all Investor in People initiatives.

- **Learning and Development Team**
  This team meets the needs of the service along with compliance against national standards. The team provide training courses, practice learning as well as commissioning of external training and contribute to the Annual Report to staff on investment and training undertaken and its impact on staff and the Customer.

- **Personalisation Sub-Group**
  This Group will share responsibility for delivering the actions within the Strategy Action Plan.

- **Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Workforce Development Group / Collaborative Workforce Group**
  M3 Managers from across the Service who currently make up the NAS Workforce Group will deliver against the actions set out in the Workforce Strategy and second officers to undertake task and finish work periodically. This team will look to merge with Partners by January 2010 when representation has been identified from Health, Voluntary and Independent Sector Workforce teams. This group will be chaired by the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Progress made against the Strategy Action Plan and performance indicators below, will be monitored by the NAS Workforce Development/Collaborative Group which is Chaired by the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships. Progress will also be reported on a six monthly basis to the Adults Board.

RAG Status	Indicator
1	Number of staff trained in safeguarding (SAS)
2	% of staff directly employed that left during the year (SAS)
3	% of adult services directly employed posts vacant (SAS)
4	% of adult services working days/shifts lost to sickness absence during the year (SAS)
5	% of staff in post at 30 September where ethnicity not stated (SAS)
6	% of services gross expenditure on staffing which was spent on training the Council's directly employed staff during the year (SAS)
7	% of training grants spent on Council staff / independent sector
8	% of progress with InLAWS strategy action plan (KPI's)
9	% of staff who say that they enjoy their jobs
10	% of staff who are trained to meet National Minimum Standard
11	% of staff who understand the vision for social care
12	% of PDR's completed

Employee-centred Performance Management

As part of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services overall performance management system, we adopted a single performance planning and monitoring system to ensure that all staff are effectively managing change and meeting objectives set out in both team and individual PDR's. The system supports the Corporate Golden Thread approach and clearly maps out our single system of supporting an equality of access for staff and our Investor in People culture. Supervision of social work will continue to ensure that case files and outcomes are monitored as part of overall performance management and quality assurance.

SERVICE PLANNING GOLDEN THREAD

DIRECTORATE **SERVICE PLANNING**
CULTURE

⇕

Corporate Plan/Community Strategy **Year Ahead / Social Care Outcomes Framework/ Safeguarding Duty /** **Personalisation Strategy**

⇕

TEAM PLANNING
DELIVERY

Workforce Strategy / Employee Opinion Survey / Investors in People / Safeguarding **Policy and Procedure** **Personalisation Focus Group Actions**

⇕

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Annual PDR **Monthly 1-2-1 Sessions (Supervision)** **Team Meetings** **Performance Clinics** **6th Month PDR Review** **Safeguarding Practices**

EFFICIENCY SAVINGS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The Government announced the second generation of its efficiency programme in the Comprehensive Spending Review, 2007. This replaced the previous 'Gershon' agenda with a new target for public sector services to deliver annual cash reinvesting efficiency savings of 3%. Councils will be measured on their performance by National Indicator 179 and through the new Use of Resources assessment which is a key component of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which place particular emphasis on workforce planning and a return on investment.

The Area Based Grant – Social Care Workforce (Adults) provides funding to invest in the development of social care workers in Rotherham. The grant allocation for Rotherham for 2009/10 is £666,000. 50% of the available monies will be spent on Council employees and 50% on independent sector employees. The budget is monitored by a Senior Accountant in consultation with the Learning and Development Manager. Year end accounts are publicised to the workforce and a year end return is submitted to Chief Officers. As part of implementing personalisation and InLAWS, there will be a selection of training that is

delivered jointly with Partners and in these instances, financing of the courses will be shared, reducing the impact on the Directorate budget.

The Directorate has a 5 step framework for identifying and achieving efficiency savings, and the transformation of the service will be based on customer needs which are responded to in the most value for money way through:-

➢   A programme of base budget reviews.
➢   EFQM assessments.
➢   Delivering a programme of efficiency reviews and improvement plans.
➢   Reporting progress on efficiency actions.
➢   Involving residents in shaping decisions for re-investing savings

CONSULTATION

We have an excellent track record of engaging with staff and customers in developing our strategies.   During October/November we consulted with staff through the Workforce Development Change Group.   Our Partners including Health, Voluntary and Independent Sector have been consulted and all feedback has been included to re-shape this document.

To further market the Strategy and embed the vision with staff, its contents have been used to develop a dedicated intranet page for staff to review progress and post comments or suggestions as it travels along its transformational journey.

Further comments can be submitted to NAS-Communications@rotherham.gov.uk

Workforce Development Strategy
Action Plan
2009-2011

Personalisation / InLAWS – Rotherham Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy Checklist for delivering the Future Workforce

Blue - Complete   **Green – on target**   **Red –** off target/not achieved

	Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)				
Ref./	**Action**	**Lead Manager/ Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
1	Becoming a Better People Manager delivering Corporate Values to Managers to stabilise equality of service. (Nov 09) Delivers against Objective 1/6	Kath Amies • Team Plans • PDR • Training Plan	G	• No of Managers booked onto sessions (Sept 09) • Evaluation informing direction of sessions (Oct 09). • Improvement in Employee Opinion Survey around visible leadership question (June 2012)	• Co-ordinate timetable for BABPM sessions. • Ensure all managers attend refresher sessions on core subjects. • Record attendance through HY Yourself training system.
2	Staff engagement/ communication mechanisms in place to ensure two way flow of information. (Jan 2010) Delivers against Objective 3/4	Personalisation Group / InLAWS Group • Comms Plans • Team Plans • Training Plan	G	• Quality Assurance programme testing dissemination of information within all Teams across NAS (Jan 2010) Improvement in Investor in People around information / communication during change. (June 2011)	• Identify the different streams of knowledge which needs to be imparted to workforce. • Detail which forms of communication will suit the types of knowledge. • Timetable engagement/ communications and publish with workforce.

Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)					
Ref.	Action	Lead Manager/ Golden Thread	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure	Milestone
3	Management development established and timetabled to raise leadership capabilities. (Jan 2010) Delivers against Objective 1/6	L&D Team / All Managers • Team Plans • PDR • Training Plan	G	• No. of Managers registered (Dec 09) • Improvement in Employee Opinion Survey around visible leadership question (June 2012)	• Analyse which managers across service have yet to complete CMI Level 3 or 4 management training and schedule in over next 12 months. • Identify M2 managers and above for suitability for MIL courses to aid development. • Co-ordinate LEO sessions for Managers working in social care in first phase and remainder in future phases. • Introduce back to the floor initiatives whereby each manager undertakes a quarterly exercise. • Co-ordinate mandatory booking of managers onto training. • PDR manager competency PDR reviews QA checks. • No. of CMI completions through HR report .

Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)					
Ref.	Action	Lead Manager/ Golden Thread	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure	Milestone
4	Personal Assistants and Carers skills set identified and included on NAS Training Schedule to safeguard customers and establish flexible worker pool for future service demands. (Mar 2010) Delivers against Objective 2/4/6	Personalisation Group • Direct Payments Team Plan • Carers Strategy Action Plan • Training Plan • Service Plan	G	• No. of Carers and PA's registered on NMS (Mar 2010) • No. of Carers or PA's moving onto mainstream care roles following cessation of person-centred care. (March 2011)	• Identify the skills, knowledge and attitude set required for PA's and Carers based on minimum care standard and person-centred care plan approach. • Create talent management structure to enable workers to access mainstream care roles. • Establish mechanisms as part of Direct Payments for registering on NMDS • Develop on-line resources for customers to access training or for advice and guidance from home.
5	New personalisation competency framework including new skills, knowledge and attitude in place for managers and staff to establish new performance measures for individuals. (Mar 2010) Delivers against Objective 2/4/6	Odette Stringwell/ Nigel Mitchell • Staff Profiles • PDR's • Team Plans • Training Plan • Service Plan	G	• QA of PDR raised competency levels. (April 2010) • Staff social care / personalisation survey (March 2010)	• Establish core worker group to review current role competencies and adapt to reflect personalisation approach to services. • Consult with Unions around adoption. • Consult with workers on changes. • Launch new core competencies and ensure new starter roles reflect changes as part of recruitment process.

Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/ Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
6	WiiFm (What's in it for me) initiative introduced to roles across the service to embed culture change and enable staff to visibly see how change will affect their roles. (March 2010) Delivers against Objective 2/4	Service Development Team • Comms Plan • PDR's • Team Plans • Service Plan	G	• Staff social care / personalisation survey (March 2010)	• Identify all roles within Directorate and create sets of what's in it for me statements. • Embed the culture of WiiFm so that staff can see their impact and the cultural change. • Launch as advertising campaign internally to promote personalisation through posters on stairwells, noticeboards, kitchens. • Identify key WiiFm roles for staff testimonies to map the journey and publish in AsOne on regular basis. • Evaluate staff understanding of the vision of social care through staff survey.

Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
7	Skills Training Plan in place and delivered to equip staff with skills required to deliver personalisation agenda. (Sept 2010) Delivers against Objective 4/6	Nigel Mitchell / All Managers • PDR's • Team Plans • Training Plan • Comms Plan	G	• QA of PDR's competency reviews (Apr 2010) • Training requirements 2010/12 (April 2010) • Testimonies captured (Apr 2010) • Staff social care / personalisation survey (Sept 2010)	• Identify skills gaps with managers on all affected staff. • Map out suitable learning routes in line with funding resources. • Co-ordinate delivery of skills training across workforce and capture system for evaluation. • Capture staff testimonies on change and its impact on them and the service. • Create and capture staff understanding of the vision of social care.
8	Direct Payment / Individualised Budget Customers as new Employees training delivered on a timetable basis to support them to manage their budgets and employees effectively. (Sept 2010) Delivers against Objective 2/4/6	Nigel Mitchell / Direct Payments Team • Team Plans • Training Plan • Comms Plan • Service Plan	G	• No. of PA's registered on training course. (Sept 2010) • Customer Satisfaction with Direct Payments and support (via updated service standard) (Sept 2010)	• Establish an effective training course, delivered in a number of formats, to support new customer employees with Personal Assistants. • Develop on-line resources (including Skills for Life) for customers to access training or for advice and guidance from home. • Evaluation of courses gained and fed back to inform change.

Personalisation Action Plan – Implementation of Actions 1-9 (September 2010)					
Ref.	Action	Lead Manager / Golden Thread	Task Status (R, A, G,)	Measure	Milestone
9	New skills set for social work discussed and reviewed with local Universities and colleges to affect future courses and possible future recruits to service through Ambassador and Student placements. (Dec 2010) Delivers against Objective 2/6	Nigel Mitchell / Personalisation Group / InLAWS Group • Team Plans • Training Plan • Service Plan • Comms Plan	G	• No. of social care courses reflecting personalisation approach advertised to students. (May 2011) • No. of Young, BME, Mature Students registered on courses (Sept 2011)	• Meet with health and social care leads at local educational establishments. • Work through the new skills set and shift towards more personalised profiles. • Measure the effectiveness of change through number of young, bme, adult learners registered on new courses

Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy – Implementation of Actions 10-15 (June 2011)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
10	Collaborative Working Group including Independent and Voluntary Sector representation with agreed resources established and workforce profiling established. (March 2010) Delivers against Objective 1/5	InLAWS Group • Persoalisation Plan • ADASS /InLAWS – Putting People First Strategy	G	• Adult Board commitment (Nov 09) • Health and Partner Resources engaged and timetable of meetings confirmed (Jan 2010).	• Agree a clear vision across all partners to promote choice, empowerment, health and wellbeing. (Jan 2010) • Agree launch date of InLAWS in Rotherham and set timescales for delivery against actions in plan. (Feb 2010) • Establish Collaborative Sub Worker Groups to collate data required to progress InLAWS in relation to: Organisation Development, Human Resources, Commissioning/ Customer Focus. (Mar 2010)
11	Effective communication links opened and established to engage with all Partners. (April 2010) Delivers against Objective 4/5	InLAWS Group • Comms Plan	G	• No. of Partners signed up for InLAWS • Web shared system for InLAWS in place (April 2010)	• Identify all key stakeholders and make contact for involvement. • Establish engagement options and communication techniques throughout InLAWS project plan. • Publish engagement and co-ordinate events through web-based shared resource.

Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy – Implementation of Actions 10-15 (June 2011)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
12	Analyse the gaps in the Social Care market in Rotherham to meet the needs and aspirations of local people that are identified in the JSNA. (June 2010) Delivers against Objective 3/5	InLAWS Group • Persoalisation Plan • JSNA • Commissioning Strategy • EDS Employment Strategy • Partner-wide Workforce Strategy and Data Systems • Nhood Charters and Area Plans	G		IDENTIFY • Rotherham's current and future population health and social care needs. • Employment condition – whole system (who are our competing employers outside the system, e.g. factories, supermarkets, hotel & leisure. • Where does the workforce duplicate locally (role of community matrons, care managers, care co-ordinators, single assessment process (SAP). • What services are out there now that are not integrated. • Potential future forces/technological change Potential problems unique to this system, such as rural area, high older population of the workforce, lack of transport, highly mobile younger workforce.

Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy – Implementation of Actions 10-15 (June 2011)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/ Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
13	New types of worker roles identified and roles defined to deliver personalisation and InLAWS. (Dec 2010) Delivers against Objective 3/5/6	InLAWS Group • Persoalisation Plan • Training Plan • Financial Plan • Comms Plan	G		IDENTIFY • New types of worker roles and those within new Integrated services • Potential workforce in the system • Barriers to recruitment in the system • Core competencies needed to deliver new roles. • Training available in our whole system and who delivers the training, who can access it and what additional training will be required across the system. • Impact and efficiency of formal and informal training for individual and for the service? • Ongoing training needs the workforce and the link into funding future joint training programmes across partner services.

Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy – Implementation of Actions 10-15 (June 2011)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager / Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
14	Options for implementation of change through workforce recommendations presented to Board (March 2011) Delivers against Objective 3/4/6	InLAWS Group • Draft InLAWS for Rotherham • Personalisation Plan • Service Plan • Corporate Plan	G	• Service models based on user and carer requirements • Clear career pathways for key worker roles which incorporate recruitment initiatives for sustainability of service e.g. young apprenticeships, talent management, unemployment pool of experience etc. • A clear training plan across the whole system available to all including all workforce regardless of employer. • Alternatives to 'formal' training clearly identified and arrangements in place to facilitate these.	• Framework for the knowledge and skills to deliver services agreed with local providers resulting in service integration / streamline services with no duplication

Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy – Implementation of Actions 10-15 (June 2011)					
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead Manager/ Golden Thread**	**Task Status (R, A, G,)**	**Measure**	**Milestone**
15	Clear arrangements across the whole system to project manage change, monitor and review the workforce. (June 2011) Delivers against Objective 1/6	InLAWS Group • InLAWS for Rotherham • Personalisation Plan • Service Plan • Corporate Plan • Team Plans • Training Plan • PDR • Supervision	G		• Establish project team to implement change. • Establish a system to regularly monitor and review workforce knowledge, skills and competencies to complete the cycle. • Employee engagement survey across all sectors. • Performance and Development Reviews. • National Minimum Data Set for Rotherham.

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