

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

**Venue: Bailey House,
Rawmarsh Road,
Rotherham S60 1TD**

Date: Thursday, 3rd June, 2010

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and the press.
6. Communications

FOR PRESENTATION

7. The Year Ahead
- presentation by Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods
8. The Year Ahead
- presentation by The Mayor, Councillor McNeely, Chair

FOR DISCUSSION

9. Review of Council Activities around Climate Change (Pages 1 - 5)
10. Update on 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Void Turnaround Performance (Pages 6 - 11)

FOR INFORMATION

11. Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods (Pages 12 - 34)
- minutes of meetings held on 1st, 15th and 31st March, 6th and 19th April, 2010

MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

12. Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel (Pages 35 - 36)
- Minutes of meeting held on 22nd April, 2010
13. Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee (Pages 37 - 69)
- minutes of meeting held on 26th February, 12th and 26th March and 16th and 30th April, 2010

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Thursday, 15th July, 2010**

Membership:-

Chairman – The Mayor (Councillor McNeely)

Vice-Chairman – Councillor P. A. Russell

Councillors:-Atkin, Blair, Cutts, Ellis, Gamble, Havenhand, Hodgkiss, Nightingale and Walker

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
2.	Date:	3RD JUNE 2010
3.	Title:	Review of Council Activities around Climate Change
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive

5. Summary

In April the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel held an inquiry into council activity to combat climate change. The report of the inquiry is appended as Appendix A to this report.

6. Recommendations:

- **That Members discuss the possible actions arising from the Inquiry, contained in Appendix A, and agree which they would wish to follow up.**
- **That Members add any additional recommendations which they would wish to see taken up.**

7. Proposals & Details

The April meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel consisted of a series of presentations giving evidence about activities which the authority is undertaking to combat climate change. The presentations were on:

- An Overview of Climate Change Work
- Sustainable Schools and Education
- Eco-Fleet Management
- Energy and water
- Sustainable Procurement
- Sustainable Communities

Copies of these presentations are available for any Members who missed the meeting in April. Questions & ideas raised at the meeting were noted and are attached here as Appendix A.

8. Finance

There are no financial implications associated with the production of the review itself, this is financed from the Scrutiny Budget. However, the recommendations of the review may have financial implications subject to the consideration of Cabinet, other scrutiny panels and the Member Development Panel.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are no risks or uncertainties involved in undertaking the review, but may exist in the content of the recommendations arising out of the review.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The council is a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration, a local government initiative declaring a commitment to addressing Climate Change. Following on from this the Council in conjunction with the Rotherham Partnership has jointly developed a Strategy and action plan to take this work forward. The current work of the panel aims to support this work.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 22nd April 2010

Presentation 1: David Rhodes – Climate Change Overview

- What has been the impact in the region of switching to smokeless fuel?
 - Lifestyle changes have seen the region switch to gas as the primary fuel for central heating etc.
 - Importance of recognising that there has been a huge rise in consumption of different fuels which negates the switch to smokeless fuels
 - Smokeless fuels were designed primarily to improve air quality
- What are the effects on global climate change brought about by increased livestock and in particular methane emissions as a result of intensive breeding?
 - Studies into methane emissions ongoing and still not conclusive
 - The greater issue pertains to the volume of food now required to maintain the huge livestock population. The production, distribution and transportation of this food requires water and fossil fuels in large quantities that could be diverted to human consumption
- Water is going to run out before any of the fossil fuels (c.50 years), why can't we as a region switch to desalination?

Presentation 2: Sue Budby – Sustainable Schools and Education

- To what extent does RMBC treat climate change as an economic opportunity to build upon?
 - Are we incorporating learning more into our schools to build new industries in the region for the future?
- Further details on the schools vegetable patch program, how it is progressing and is it set to be extended across the region were requested.
- The current work was strongly praised and it was suggested that an application to feature in Permaculture magazine be made.

Presentation 3: Craig Simpson – Eco Fleet Management

- RMBC has several new RCV's in the fleet that conform to Euro 5 diesel engine ratings
 - Emissions from these vehicles have been significantly reduced and as such they perform well

- New technologies around the features of the RCV's (lifting the bins into the hopper) have meant that engine use has dropped further reducing fuel consumption and thus emissions.
- There has been extensive research and trial of electric vehicles to explore how they can best serve RMBC
 - Trials 2 years ago were promising but limited mileage prevented the vans from being useful
 - New vans will be trialled this year with much greater ranges that will allow them to perform the tasks and functions required of them
 - Cost is still an issue – 1 electric van costs the equivalent of 3 diesel Transit vans so resources will still dictate RMBC's switch over to an electric fleet
 - The possibility of becoming part of the nation quick charge network for electric vehicles was raised – Paul Smith to be approached about including the facilities in the new council building
- A question was raised around the timings of waste collections in the borough and whether alternatives could be explored eg. Late night collections
 - This also raised the question of whether collections are currently adding to traffic issues on the roads and how this affects the fuel consumption of both fleet vehicles and the public
- School buses were discussed with many querying why RMBC was not pursuing this idea further

Presentation 4: David Rhodes – Energy & Water

- David discussed the importance of Display Energy Certificates (DEC's) and his current work to ensure that council buildings are legally compliant and displaying these certificates
 - It was noted that resource limitations meant that these checks were mainly being carried out by liaising with building managers rather than physical checks
 - It was noted that DEC's are a legal requirement and therefore must be completed
- The possibility of installing water meters in all council properties including domestic ones was discussed as a drive to improve water efficiency within the region.
 - It was argued that water meters are unfair to those with limited incomes – the counter argument noted that only inefficient use of water would penalise tenants
- The work around installing Solar PV panels on all RMBC school roofs was highlighted for the fact that this project is at present no longer going ahead. This is due to impracticalities on behalf of the company offering to do this work.

- The prospect for utilising school roofs to generate energy via PV panels will remain open and work will be done to check the feasibility of this idea
- More work on street lighting was raised, in particular the possibility of PIR's on lights to ensure that their energy consumption was minimal
- Work around a timed switch off overnight was raised. Would this be possible throughout or simply in parts of the borough.

Presentation 5: Sarah McCall - Sustainable Procurement

- Clarification on RMBC's Green Electricity purchasing was required;
- It is no longer beneficial to either RMBC or green electricity research to purchase green tariff energy as national policy now provides funding
- RMBC now purchase 'cleaner' CHP power from gas fired power stations – gas fired power stations burn fuel more efficiently and therefore release fewer pollutants than coal fired stations. It should be noted that CHP still releases significant quantities of CO₂ into the atmosphere
- RMBC's status as a Fair Trade organisation was questioned – are we doing enough on all fronts?
- Considerable work is currently being done in association with the Third Sector in the borough to ensure that barriers to sustainable procurement practices are overcome
 - It was suggested that contact be made with the Rotherfed organisation to explore how current work could benefit Rotherfed and vice versa

Presentation 6: Dawn Price – Sustainable Communities

- There was a general consensus that more should be done to highlight and share the eco activity work that is taking place in the borough. There was also concern that the message is not getting out to the public due to the language/jargon used when discussing climate change e.g. a Councillor spoke of members of the community believing that the Greenhouse Gas effect has nothing to do with them as they don't have Greenhouses.
- *There should be a push to raise public awareness of what is happening and what they can get involved in within the borough and in the region*
- *It was noted that there is some excellent work taking place in the borough at present that could be rolled out on a wider scale with projects replicated in various communities*

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
2.	Date	3rd June 2010
3.	Title	Update on 2010 Rotherham Ltd Void Turnaround Performance
4.	Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

A scrutiny review was carried out in 2009, to address Member concerns over the time taken to re-let empty ('void') Council properties. A report was provided to Cabinet Member and to Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in November and December 2009 respectively, that described progress against each of the recommendations of the review. Four of the seven actions were not complete at that point, and it was agreed that an update report would be provided to Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Panel during April 2010. (This report was deferred from the 22nd April meeting).

Additionally, concerns had been raised by Members regarding reported performance on void turnaround times, and whether the figures provided by 2010 Rotherham Ltd included all Council properties awaiting refurbishment works. Detailed work has been carried out by RMBC's Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Performance Team and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Empty Homes and Performance teams, and a new calculation methodology is proposed from 1st April 2010 onwards. Section 7.4 of this report explains these changes.

6. Recommendations

That Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel:

- **Agrees that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review have now been addressed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd.**
- **Notes that the methodology used by 2010 Rotherham Ltd to calculate void turnaround times will change from 1st April 2010.**

7. Background

7.1 Overview

Scrutiny reviews were carried out of void turnaround times and the Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) process during 2009. The aim of the scrutiny review into void turnaround times was 'to consider the current process for re-letting void properties and make recommendations for improvements in order to minimise the length of time that houses are empty and provide a more effective service for tenants'.

The review report made seven recommendations, and progress was reported back to Cabinet Member and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel during November and December 2009, at which point three of the seven recommendations were complete, and the other four were on target for completion. It was agreed that a further progress report would be provided in April 2010. A summary of progress is provided at section 7.2.

At the time of the scrutiny review of void turnaround times, two other key work streams related to the management of empty homes were identified. Firstly it was agreed that RMBC and 2010 Rotherham Ltd should work together to take a more robust and joined-up approach to dealing with long-term empty properties in Rotherham, in both the public and private sectors. This work is ongoing and a brief update is provided at section 7.3.

Secondly, Members raised concerns regarding how 2010 Rotherham Ltd was reporting performance against BVPI 212 – average time to re-let properties. The apparently high levels of performance (18.25 days for quarter 2 of 2009/10) did not concur with general perceptions that Council properties were often empty for several weeks. Extensive work was carried out by NAS performance and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Empty Homes and Performance Teams, and a new reporting framework has been agreed. This is summarised under section 7.4.

7.2 Progress against the recommendations of the scrutiny review

Recommendation 1: That improvements are made to the CBL process in line with the recommendations of the current scrutiny review.

Progress has been reported separately by RMBC's Housing Choices Manager.

Recommendation 2: That the verification process is made more efficient by screening out ineligible bids at an earlier stage.

Reported as complete in November 2009.

Recommendation 3: That clear criteria are published about the circumstances in which decorating vouchers will be issued to new tenants and that the allowance of £25 per room is reviewed.

Reported as 'on target' in November 2009. Update: 2010 Rotherham Ltd has reviewed and clarified the process and clear information is made available to tenants via the website (a decision was taken to retain the decorating allowance at £25) – complete.

Recommendation 4: That in line with good practice demonstrated by high-performing ALMOs, consideration is given to a reward scheme to encourage tenants to leave properties in good condition.

Reported as 'on target' in November 2009. Update: The "Fond Farewell" scheme has been up and running since October 2009 and is to be evaluated during April 2010, as there will be six months of data to review. If it is identified that the scheme is saving money, over and above that paid out, then consideration will be given to extending the scheme. If the costs are exceeding the savings, then the scheme will be ceased.

Recommendation 5: That information is provided to Elected Members on a regular basis on the void properties in their ward including reasons why a property is empty and when it is expected to be re-let.

Reported as complete in November 2009, and 2010 Rotherham Ltd continues to provide regular briefings to Members on empty properties in their areas.

Recommendation 6: That more detailed information is provided when reporting on voids to give a clearer picture of why properties are empty and the financial implications.

Reported as complete in November 2009, and empty properties are monitored via a joint RMBC / 2010 Rotherham Ltd working group, please see 7.3 below.

Recommendation 7: That action taken towards the recommendations of 2010 Rotherham Ltd's empty homes service review 'every day counts' (April 2009) be monitored and reported back to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in due course.

Reported as 'on target' in November 2009. At that point, four of the 16 actions had not been completed. Two of these (review of decoration allowance and review of all new procedures) have now been completed.

Of the two remaining actions;

- Review 'incentives to stay' in order to reduce the number of tenancy terminations received - with the main reason for terminating a tenancy being "death", coupled with a low rate of failed tenancies, this procedure would have a very limited impact. The proposal could also work against RMBC's drive to address under-occupancy and as such will not be taken any further.
- Review the process of backdating tenancy commencement dates – this is due to be completed by October 2010 and clear sub-actions have been agreed. Completion will be monitored via regular liaison meetings between RMBC's Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, Landlord Relations Manager and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Interim Chief Executive and Senior Management Team.

7.3 Update on long-term empty properties

It was agreed that RMBC and 2010 Rotherham Ltd would work together to reduce long-term empty properties within the borough, both in the Council's stock and in the private sector. Working groups were established and monthly meetings are held, led by RMBC's Neighbourhood Investment Service.

A database of all properties that have been empty for over 16 weeks has been created and is being monitored and updated weekly. A number of appropriate actions have been identified for relevant teams, in order to reduce the number of empty properties. A target was set to reduce the number of properties empty for longer than 16 weeks, from 116 in November 2009 to 75 by the end of March 2010. As at 31st March 2010, the figure stood at 76 which demonstrates excellent progress, and a further target has been set to reduce the number to 25 by March 2011.

A number of other positive outcomes have been achieved as a result of this partnership working, and RMBC's Neighbourhood Investment Service is confident that with the continued support of relevant teams, the work being undertaken will continue to see a considerable reduction in the overall long term void figure.

7.4 Update on calculation methodology for void turnaround performance figures

As a result of concerns raised by Members, RMBC carried out a series of reality checks and produced a report to 2010 Rotherham Ltd that identified that performance as reported did not include voids requiring Decent Homes and other major works. RMBC's Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods reported to the ALMO Board in December, and 2010 Rotherham Ltd conducted an internal review of processes. As a result of this review, it was agreed that the overall 'turnaround' figure should include all void properties.

This is being brought to the attention of Cabinet Member and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel at this stage, because as a result of the new methodology performance will appear to drop in 2010/11, compared to previously reported figures. Sub-indicators and targets will be developed, so that in addition to the headline figure, it will be possible to monitor separately performance on routine, 'simple' voids, and on more complex voids for example involving Decent Homes works. 2010 Rotherham Ltd is in the process of producing a detailed report setting out the new methodology, and once approved by RMBC (Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods and NAS Performance Lead) this will be implemented from 1st April 2010 onwards.

Since these issues have been highlighted, 2010 Rotherham Ltd has put a significant amount of additional resources into reducing the overall number of empty Council-owned properties, and as at 1st April 2011, 248 properties stood empty, compared with 386 at the end of September 2009. Of these 248, 50 properties are not available for letting for the following reasons: 19 are pending a Neighbourhood Investment Service (NIS) decision, 21 are non-traditional properties undergoing major refurbishment works and ten are warden flats requiring further assessment before being let. The net figure is therefore 198 empty Council homes, which represents a great achievement that can be attributable to the deployment of additional resources, and excellent partnership working between RMBC's Neighbourhood Investment Service and 2010 Rotherham Ltd. 2010 Rotherham Ltd's focus will be to sustain and improve upon this performance in 2010/11 and future years.

This is a standing agenda item at fortnightly liaison meetings between RMBC's Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, Landlord Relations Manager and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Interim Chief Executive and Senior Management Team. Performance will be monitored closely via these meetings to ensure continuous improvement of performance on both routine and major voids. Quarterly performance reports will continue to be provided to Cabinet Member by the NAS Service Performance Team.

8. Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Delays to re-letting properties result in the following financial impacts:

- Rent loss through voids (measured by local performance indicator 69)
- The cost of securing empty properties
- Costs associated with antisocial behaviour and vandalism
- Additional temporary accommodation costs as fewer properties are available to house homeless people on the housing register

9. Risks and uncertainties

The risks associated with delays to re-letting empty homes include the following:

- Continuing pressures on the housing register
- Negative perceptions of the neighbourhood
- Effect on RMBC's and 2010 Rotherham Ltd's reputation – we should be making the best possible use of the social housing we already have, as well as building new Council houses
- Increased costs (see section 8 above)
- Failure to achieve performance targets and therefore potential implications for the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The void turnaround performance indicator (BV 212) is a critical indicator for the Council and 2010 Rotherham Ltd, as it directly affects our ability to meet the needs of customers on the housing register, has implications for the *use of resources* judgment within the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment, and empty homes can cause blight in neighbourhoods. There are implications for the 'safe' and 'proud' themes within Rotherham's Local Area Agreement.

Management of void turnaround times is one of 2010 Rotherham Ltd's core services. High performance in this area is crucial to achieving the standards set by the Audit Commission and the Tenant Services Authority.

Rotherham's new emerging housing strategy emphasises the importance of making the best use of our existing social rented homes, which includes ensuring high performance on void turnaround times.

11. Background papers and consultation

Background papers

- Scrutiny review report of void turnaround times
- Progress report to Cabinet Member on 30th November 2009 and to Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 10th December 2009

Consultation

- Officers within RMBC and 2010 Rotherham Ltd have been consulted on the content of this report.

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CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
Monday, 1st March, 2010

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Goultly and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

J141. FEES AND CHARGES 2010/11 - HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the proposed 2010/11 fees and charges for Housing and Neighbourhood Services' activities including Animal Health, Food, Health and Safety, Houses in Multiple Occupation, Pest Control, Pollution Control, Stray Dogs and Weights and Measures.

The proposed level of fee and charges reflected both corporate guidance regarding any required increase (1%) and also nationally prescribed fee levels e.g. Pollution Control Regulation. The Weights and Measures fees were set following national LACORS guidance which proposed a radical review of fees in 2010/11 to reflect the delivery of the verification service provided. The Water fees were set in accordance with the charges set by the Health Protection Agency.

The report and associated appendices set out in detail the schedule of proposed 2010/11 fees and charges in particular:-

- Animal Health – approximate 1% increase
- Food, Health and Safety – proposed 1% increase for all chargeable services provided by the Team. The fees for the water samples, however, were set to cover the fees charged by the Health Protection Agency. The fee for next year had not been received to date and therefore the amount charged would need to cover their proposed fees
- Houses in Multiple Occupation – minimum licence of £500
- Pest Control - proposed increase of 2%
- Stray Dog Fees – proposed 1% increase

The Bereavement Services Partnership had commenced on 1st August, 2009. The fees charged by Dignity Funerals Ltd. for the bereavement services it provided were reviewed in April each year. The review was currently in progress including the benchmarking of the proposed fees against those charged by comparable authorities within the region and a comparison against the national average.

Resolved:- That the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11, as set out in the report, be agreed with effect from 1st April, 2010.

J142. UNDER OCCUPATION POLICY

Further to Minute No. J88(3) of 30th November, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report proposing the

introduction of Under Occupancy and Housing Assistance incentives to encourage tenants that were under occupying large Council houses to downsize.

Currently there were 142 households in Rotherham that were under occupying 4 bedroom houses and 5,025 under occupying 3 bedroom houses. Of those, 2,538 households had applied via the Housing Register for a transfer to a smaller home. Since December, 2008, only 18 under occupied households living in family houses had actually transferred to a flat or bungalow. This was because overall the demand for accommodation was extremely high and most certainly outweighed supply. In total there were 7,981 single applicants on the Housing Register wanting to move to smaller accommodation.

Currently, there were no financial incentives offered, however, the Allocation Policy did award Priority status to households who wished to downsize to a flat or bungalow. Since December, 2008, 120 households had been awarded Priority status to enable them to transfer.

Implementation of an enhanced Under Occupancy Policy to encourage downsizing could include:-

- Better provision of information to tenants about the availability of suitable housing and the process of securing it could help encourage people in under occupancy situations to secure smaller properties
- Amend the Allocation Policy to allow under occupiers of 4 bedroom houses to downsize to 2 bedroom houses and permit more than 2 refusals
- Suggestions from customers and Elected Members including:-
 - o Work with internal and partner agencies
 - o Undertake chain lettings
 - o In cases of secure tenants, when a successor was a family member other than a spouse, award of Priority Plus status to offer suitable alternative smaller accommodation
 - o 2 tenancies for 1
 - o Local Lettings Policy giving preference to Council tenants who were under occupiers, with a proven record of "Good Tenant", move to RSL and Council New Building
 - o Promote positive features of sheltered housing

The implementation of a cash incentive scheme to encourage downsizing, a Mutual Exchange incentive or direct payment of expenses and removal costs were not supported at the present time but may be reconsidered dependent upon the success of the other options.

Resolved:- (1) That the inclusion of an Under Occupation Policy, as identified in Section 7.5 of the report submitted, be approved.

(2) That the effectiveness of the Policy and the need to offer incentives be reviewed in 12 months.

(3) That the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services explore the possibility of identifying a dedicated resource to work on the issue of under occupancy.

J143. AREA ASSEMBLIES DEVOLVED BUDGET PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted an update on the proposals from the Rotherham South Area Assembly Co-ordinating Group for projects identified to be funded through Housing Market Renewal funding.

The Co-ordinating Group proposed to provide 2 town centre bikes for the Town Team plus training and safety equipment for 4 officers at a cost of £1,500 from their HMR underspend.

The proposals supported the corporate objective of devolved decision making in the Borough through Area Assemblies and the delivery of local projects and actions which met Corporate Objectives and community priorities as identified in the Area Plans of the Area Assemblies.

Resolved:- That the project proposals to be funded from Housing Market Renewal be approved.

J144. 2010 ROTHERHAM LTD IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services presented the first quarterly monitoring report for the 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Improvement Plan which covered Quarter 3 (October-December, 2009).

Of the 62 actions within the Improvement Plan:-

- 12 actions had been completed in or ahead of time
- 33 actions were progressing in line with timescales
- 10 actions were progressing but with some concern for timescale
- 7 actions were behind schedule.

In general, the main reason for failure against the targets appeared to have been unrealistic dates set by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. All actions showing as red were expected to be reported as green (progressing in line with timescales) or completed by the end of March, 2010.

Resolved:- (1) That Appendix 2 be approved as the final version of the Improvement Plan.

(2) That the content of the Quarter 3 progress report (Appendix 1) and the remedial actions being taken by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. to complete the 7 'off target' indicators be noted.

(3) That evidence checks be made by RMBC officers during February and March, 2010.

J145. UPDATE ON THE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY SINGLE CONVERSATION AND REVISED HOUSING STRATEGY

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted an update on the Homes and Communities Agency Single Conversation and Revised Housing Strategy.

The focus of the Single Conversation was around comprehensive place shaping, including the full range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community facilities. It was important that the process was not seen primarily as a housing issue but rather an issue of how improvements, infrastructure and housing could contribute to and compliment aspirations to improve wider quality of life issues. Councils were required to develop a Local Investment Plan which would form the basis of a funding agreement between the HCA and the local authorities.

The report set out the rationale and progress on re-writing the Rotherham Housing Strategy which would enhance its status as a key component to the Single Conversation. Although the Strategy had been adopted in 2008, it was at a time of peak housing markets when the main concerns had been to close the widening affordability gap and make the most of allocations available from the funds now brought together under the HCA umbrella. A Strategy needed to both reflect the new economic realities and to address the emerging challenge of climate change.

It had become clear that the HCA favoured a single lead officer and point of contact at each authority whom was able to articulate the Council's vision and to create a 'pen portrait' of the authority at the first workshop. To this end, the Sustainable Communities Manager in Neighbourhood Investment Services had been tasked with the role.

In collaboration with neighbouring authorities, a South Yorkshire Forward Strategy and Investment Plan 2010/14 was being developed by Transform South Yorkshire on behalf of the 4 authorities. This would serve as a sub-regional platform for supporting the local authorities in their respective Conversations. Rotherham's revised Housing Strategy was to be structured to align with the sub-regional statement emphasising Rotherham's unique attributes within the wider city region.

The report also set out the key milestones in the Single Conversation process including the revised Housing Strategy.

Resolved:- (1) That the key dates associated with the Single Conversation be noted.

(2) That the importance of revising the existing Housing Strategy to enhance its status as a key component of the Single Conversation be

recognised.

(3) That the report be referred to the Cabinet and the Local Strategic Partnership Board to ensure that Members and Chief Officers comprehend the strategic and corporate significance of the Single Conversation.

(4) That the proposed officer lead and governance structures for the Single Conversation be supported.

J146. 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.

J147. NON-TRADITIONAL PROPERTIES INVESTMENT

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the investment programme which had been initiated to address the urgent structural investment needs of non-traditional properties and ensure that they met the Decent Homes standard by the completion deadline set by the Government.

Whilst the majority of the properties could receive Decent Homes Works without the need for preceding structural works, Airey and Unity properties required structural investment works before Decent Homes works could be undertaken. Any Decent Homes works completed in advance of structural works would result in abortive costs and further disruption to residents as work would have to be undone later as part of the structural works programme.

There were 153 Airey and 34 Unity properties approved for investment. To date, structural and Decent Homes works had been completed to 22 Airey properties within investment to a further 92 Airey properties currently underway. The completion of works to the remaining 39 Airey and 34 Unity properties within the 2010/11 financial year would be critical to ensure that the properties met the Decent Homes Standard by the target deadline.

The capital cost of both structural and Decent Homes works to the remaining non-traditional properties had been established, comparative to the resources currently available to support investment within the proposed 2010/11 Housing Investment Programme.

The report identified a capital funding shortfall in the Housing Investment Programme for 2010/11 to fund the works and set out the case for utilising Housing Revenue Account capital receipts to support the proposed

investment programme.

Resolved:- (1) That the request to use pooled Housing Revenue Account capital receipts for investment in non-traditional housing to the sum of £2,615,000 be supported.

(2) That the matter be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

J148. 2010 ROTHERHAM LTD SEVERANCE PACKAGES/DOWNSIZING

This matter was withdrawn as it was to be considered at Cabinet.

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
15th March, 2010

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Goulty and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

J149. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS 3RD QUARTER (APRIL TO DECEMBER) PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2009/10

Dave Richmond, Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, presented the submitted report which outlined the Key Performance Indicator results and efficiency projections for the third quarter of 2009/10.

At the end of the December, 16 (89%) Key Performance Indicators were currently on track to achieve their year end targets, this compared to 83% in the second quarter and 75% at the end of last year. There were 2 Indicators that were rated 'off' target, and were shown as a red triangle alert on Appendix A. Of the Indicators solely owned by the Directorate, 100% were on target. For 2010 Rotherham Ltd., 7 (78%) Key Performance Indicators were on track to achieve their year end targets which compared to 67% in quarter 2 and 50% at the end of last year. The Indicators off target at the end of the third quarter were:-

2010 Rotherham Ltd.

- BV211a Programmed/Responsive Repairs
- LPI185 Repairs Appointments Made and Kept

The following Indicators had made exceptional performance:-

- NI155 Affordable Homes - in the third quarter there had been an additional 27 homes made available in the Borough, bringing the year's total to 142 at the end of December. There had also been a favourable outcome in respect of successful bids to build new affordable Council homes (77 over the next 2 years) with a start on site in Dalton by the end of March, 2010
- NI156 Temporary Accommodation – in the third quarter there had been a reduction down to 18 households in temporary accommodation from a second quarter outturn of 36. Performance at the end of this period exceeded the target set for the end of December of 31

Due to the level of void properties at the end of December, 2009, the cumulative rent loss was £745,000 with the current projection for the year of £1.087M. 2010 Rotherham had set an internal target to reduce the number of void properties down to 200 from a year start position of 386. The Empty Homes Repairs Team had been set a target of 47 properties per week to be made available and the Allocations Team set a target of arranging 12 viewings per day. For the remaining 3 months of the current financial year, 10 operatives had been moved to the Empty Homes Repairs Team.

There had been a review of 2010 Rotherham's performance in relation to void management due to concerns raised by Elected Members. Upon receipt of a report produced by the NAS Service Performance Team, the Board of 2010 and Senior Management Team had commissioned an independent review of performance reporting. 2010 had agreed that, although there were some valid exclusions, a significant number of properties that required more complex works should have been counted in the void turnaround figures. Performance would now be calculated differently as from 1st April, 2010.

Discussions ensued on voids, targets set and rent loss.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted and the work ongoing on Decent Homes and Voids supported.

(2) That the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services and the Finance Manager discuss the current rate of improvement with regard to void management and the resultant rent loss.

**J150. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET
MONITORING TO 31ST JANUARY 2010**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Mike Shaw, Finance Manager, which detailed the income, expenditure and net position for the Neighbourhoods Department within the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate compared to the profiled budgets for the period ending 31st January, 2010. It also included the projected year end outturn position which currently showed a forecasted overspend of £655,000 (15.7%) by the end of March, 2010.

The following key pressures were highlighted:-

Independent Support Service (Wardens)	£617,000 overspend
Safer Neighbourhoods	£93,000 overspend
Business Regulation	£91,000 underspend
Neighbourhood Partnerships	£29,000 overspend
Housing Access	£21,000 overspend
Housing Choices	£15,000 underspend
Neighbourhood Investments	£1,000 overspend

It was also noted that to date, Neighbourhoods had spent £36,000 on agency staff.

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

J151. 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.

J152. NOS. 34 -36 BECKNOLL ROAD, BRAMPTON BIERLOW

In accordance with Minute No. 304 of 21st March, 2007 and J138 of 15th February, 2010, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above properties in need of substantial investment which exceeded the current threshold of £20,000.

The report set out the options that had been considered with regard to the properties and recommended that the properties be retained and investment undertaken to enable the properties to be re-let and meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Consultation had taken place with local Ward Members, 1 of whom supported retention and investment provided that there sufficient budgetary resources could be identified and that works to bring the properties up to a Decent Homes and lettable standard could be initiated immediately upon an investment decision being made.

Resolved:- That the properties be retained and completion of works approved to bring the properties up to Decent Homes standard to facilitate re-letting.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

J153. NOS. 9 -11 GODRIC GREEN, BRINSWORTH

In accordance with Minute Nos. 304 of 21st March, 2007 and J138 of 15th February, 2010, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above properties in need of substantial investment which exceeded the current threshold of £20,000.

The report set out the options that had been considered with regard to the properties and recommended that the properties be retained and investment undertaken to enable the properties to be re-let and meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Consultation had taken place with Ward Members.

Resolved:- That the properties be retained and completion of works approved to bring the properties up to Decent Homes standard to facilitate re-letting.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

J154. INTRODUCTORY TENANCY REVIEW PANEL

It was noted that an Appeals Panel had been held on 3rd March, 2010, comprising Councillors Atkin (in the Chair), Lakin and Walker, to review a decision to terminate an Introductory Tenancy.

The Panel had confirmed the decision made on 26th January, 2010.

Resolved:- That the Panel's decision be noted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 2 of the Act - information likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

J155. SCOPE OF EXTERNALISED REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AND ASSOCIATED IMPACTS ON SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 128 of 1st February, 2010, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report proposing the size and scope of the externalised contracts. It also emphasised the potential implications for the Council in terms of impact on Service Level Agreements by the downsizing of the In House Service provider and externalising the Service.

Resolved:- (1) That inclusion of additional capital works in the external contracts be approved so that the overall value was £24.6M and enabling guarantees to be provided to bidders of at least £22.6M, subject to sufficient central Government funds being made available to the Council.

(2) That the potential financial implications for the Council and RBT of reductions to Service Level Agreements resulting from externalisation be noted.

(3) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet in respect of the implications to the Council and RBT of externalisation to secure permission to proceed in light of the implications.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)/consultations relating to labour relations)

J156. PROPOSED HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (HIP) 2010/11

Mike Shaw, Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods, submitted a report setting out details of the proposed Housing Investment Programme for 2010/11 and the resources to support the Programme.

The Programme was split between schemes managed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. and those managed by the Council. It was proposed that the Programme managed by 2010 should total £23M and the Council Programme £18.415M.

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

(2) That a HIP Programme of £41.415M be approved.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

J157. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (HIP) 2009/10

Consideration was given to a report which set out details of the progress on the 2009/10 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and Non HIP Capital Schemes for the period to 15th February 2009.

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

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
31st March, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillor Kaye (Policy Advisor).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gouly.

J158. DOG CONTROL ORDERS - REVIEW OF STRAY DOG ARRANGEMENTS

In accordance with Minute No. 50 of 9th September, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a review of the Stray Dog arrangements within Housing and Neighbourhood Services together with four options for the future based on projected costs of service provision as well as a benchmark of services within the sub-region.

The projected year end figures for the number of dogs seized by the Council in 2009/10 fell by 11% as well as a decrease in complaints by 13.5%. There had been an increase of 5% in the projected numbers of dogs received out of hours up to 10.00 p.m. and taken to the contracted kennels.

It was reported that in comparison with neighbouring authorities, Rotherham provided the most comprehensive stray dog out of hours service in South Yorkshire. Doncaster provided a reception facility at its contracted kennels, Barnsley did not provide any service and Sheffield owned and operated its own stray and re-homing kennels as a business which operated outside office hours due to very large demand.

In 2008/09 there was an increase to the Stray dog budget of £10,000 per year to cover the changes in Legislation. This funded 7 additional spaces at the main contracted kennels and an out of hours transit kennel arrangement. However, due to the Council's approach to all dogs "seized" being received out of hours, there had been an increase in customer demand on the owner of the animal sanctuary where the transit kennel facility was sited. Re-negotiation had taken place with regard to the arrangements for on-site customer service and which had resulted in the introduction of part year service fees for 2009/10 and increased annual leasing cost.

Due to increasing costs which were not sustainable in the budget as well as decreasing demand for the service, 4 assessed options were set out in the report:-

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Option 1 | Continue with current provision in 2010/11 |
| Option 2 | Removal of all out of hours stray dog services |
| Option 3 | Adjust the service to provide a reception facility at the Council's contracted kennels. It was pointed out that this option was affordable and reflected the current demands for the service. |

Option 4 Stray dog collection service out of hours by a private kennelling company

Details of the financial issues and projections for the four options, together with the risks and uncertainties, were set out in the submitted report.

Resolved: - (1) That the ongoing cost of maintaining an out-of-hours service for a relatively small number of dogs be recognised.

(2) That Option 3 be implemented to amend the arrangements for the out of hours service to a "drop off" out of hours service until 10.00 p.m. 7 days per week.

(3) That the situation continue to be monitored and reviewed and a further report be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods in 12 months time.

J159. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF 2010 ROTHERHAM LTD

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that the 2010 Rotherham Ltd. Board Chair had resigned in December, 2009. The Board had agreed in February, 2010, that an independent chair should be appointed and remuneration offered. Consideration was therefore given to the appointment of an independent Chair for the Board. It was pointed out that the proposal was being driven by the desire to make governance arrangements as effective and fit for purpose as possible.

It was also reported that a task and finish group, consisting of Board members and senior officers of 2010, was considering additional changes and a further report would be submitted once the detailed proposals had been developed and approved by the new Board Chair and Board. These further proposals included:-

- to review the size of the Board (with a view to reducing the number of members)
- to consider remuneration for all Board members
- to develop a clear scheme of delegation detailing the powers of the Board, Committees and Chairs (of the Boards and Committees) to complement the scheme agreed by the Council and the ALMO in 2008.

Those present referred to the current situation of the ALMO and to potential future changes in the short, medium and longer term.

Consideration was therefore given to:-

- the job description and person specification
- recruitment process
- amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association, particularly in relation to Article 33

- required skills and management ability, together with anticipated workload, level of remuneration, contract terms and conditions

Resolved:- (1) That approval be given for the ALMO to appoint an independent Chair for the Board of 2010 Rotherham Ltd. in accordance with Article 33 of the Articles of Association, amended as follows:-

“The Chairman of the Board shall be an independent person appointed by a panel comprised of: the Member of the company (or their nominated representative); three ordinary members of the Board, one from each sector: customer, council and independent representatives; and the chief executive officer. Initially, the term of office shall be for two years or to the end of the Management Agreement in force at the time of appointment (whichever is the shorter period) at which time the appointment shall be reviewed.”

(2) That remuneration of £9,000 per annum be approved for the position of Chair.

(3) That the leaseholder position remain vacant pending the outcome of (5) below.

(4) That the required changes to the Articles of Association be approved to enable (1-3) above to be implemented.

(5) That the proposal to review the make-up of the Board be noted and a report be submitted to a future meeting.

J160. EMPTY PROPERTY UPDATE

In accordance with Minute No. J112 of 4th January, 2010, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report identifying specific actions that the Council, and its partners, were undertaking to reduce both public and private sector long term voids. The report also included a draft Empty Residential Property Policy which identified a systematic approach being used to address empty properties Borough-wide.

It was reported that a recent review of current statistics for the number of empty properties in the Borough, mid-year outturn (2009/10), had shown a reduction to 3,881(3.53%) from 4,273 (3.88%). This included an amount of short term empty properties (less than 6 months) which were deemed vital to allow the housing market to function effectively and to facilitate both residential mobility and the improvement or redevelopment of the housing stock.

It had been identified that there were site specific locations where high levels of deprivation, crime and private sector landlords affected the Council's ability to bring private sector properties back into use easily.

Reference was also made to the influence of demographic changes.

Work taking place included:-

- Focussed activity cross-tenure around long term empty properties and had identified site specific target areas of the Borough.
- Public and private sector empty properties were being addressed strategically by partners and an Empty Property Steering Group, co-ordinated by NIS, had been formed. This would allow the Council to focus action on areas where both private sector and Council-owned long term voids were an issue and task specific areas of the service
- Local Indicator BVP164 retained in order to monitor long term empties in the private sector and successfully utilised non-statutory initiatives that had contributed towards achieving Government targets
- Community Protection Unit's statutory enforcement powers utilised to educate and advise owners of opportunities to bring private sector properties back into use
- Close working with 2010 Rotherham Ltd. to reduce long term voids in the Council's stock – concentration on properties vacant for over 16 weeks
- Agreed plan of action between 2010 and NIS relating to 116 long term voids. So far 27 had been brought back into use since November, 2009, and the overall target set to reduce the level of long term voids to 75 by the end of March, 2010
- Overall target to reduce all Council-owned voids from over 440 at its peak to 200 by the end of March – 2010 currently on target
- Community Protection Unit led on the production of a draft Empty Residential Property Policy which provided a systematic approach and took into account the recent Public Sector Empty Property Strategy currently managed by 2010

The Cabinet Member reinforced the priority and urgency of the work around this issue.

Resolved:- That the progress to date and joint approach being used in addressing both public and private sector long term empty properties be noted.

J161. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

J162. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2010/11

The Finance Manager submitted a report detailing the proposed HRA

Revenue budgets for 2010/11.

The report set out details in respect of:-

- Revenue Management fee
- Repairs and maintenance
- Negative subsidy to Government
- Rent income
- Non-dwelling rents
- Charges for services and facilities
- Rent rates and taxes
- Depreciation
- Cost of capital
- Draft HRA budget 2010/11

It was confirmed that these proposals had been discussed with 2010 Ltd. and RMBC officers.

Resolved:- That the revenue budget proposed increases, as detailed in the report now submitted, be approved.

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
Tuesday, 6th April, 2010

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair).

J163. 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.

J164. NEW COUNCIL HOUSES

The Non-Contentious Team Manager, Legal and Democratic Services, reported that the Homes and Communities Agency had awarded the Authority additional granting funding for the construction of a further 50 new Council homes bringing the total number to be delivered in the Borough to 127. The additional funding allocation included 29 new homes proposed on Council land at Rotherview Road, Canklow.

In order to achieve the very tight timetable for delivery set by the HCA, the Council had been working with its selected RSL partner for the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough, Chevin Housing Association, to administer the grant submission. It was proposed to commission Chevin and its development arm, Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd., which is responsible for the delivery of the affordable housing development programme of Chevin and its 7 other RSL partners, to project manage the construction of the 29 new homes at Rotherview Road, Canklow.

The overall value of the services to be provided by Chevin and Synergy would be capped at £150,000, below the threshold for procurement under the EU rules. The Cabinet Member was requested to exempt the contract for the provision of project management services from the requirements of Standing Order 48.1 (requirement to invite 3-6 tenders for contracts with an estimated value of £50,000 or more) to enable the HCA's timetable to be met.

The Strategic Director of Finance and the Finance Manager for Neighbourhoods had been consulted and concurred with the recommendation.

Resolved:- (1) That (in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements)), and subject to the Mayor's agreement, approval be given to the exempting of the contract for the provision of project management services, in connection with the construction of 29 Council houses at Rotherview Road, Cankow, Standing Order 48.1 (requirement to invite 3-6 tenders for contracts with an

estimated value of £50,000 or more) and the contract awarded to Chevin Housing Association Ltd. and its development arm, Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd.

(2) That the overall contract price be capped at £150,000.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

J165. 21 NEW BUILD DWELLINGS AT ALBANY ROAD, KILNHURST

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that, due to the very late allocation of grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, procurement of works involving the design and construction of 21 new Council homes at Albany Road, Kilnhurst, had been made under the Yorbuild framework agreement on a 'rotation' basis. The HCA stipulate that construction must begin on site in July, 2010, with the total finance being expended by March, 2011. The overall project timescales are extremely short in order to meet the grant conditions.

Resolved:- That (in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements)), and subject to the Mayor's agreement, approval be given to the tender submitted by Wildgoose Construction Ltd. dated 22nd March, 2010, in the sum of £2,150,000.00 be accepted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
Monday, 19th April, 2010

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Goult and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

J166. UPDATE ON 2010 ROTHERHAM LTD. VOID TURNAROUND PERFORMANCE

Further to Minute No. 89(3) of 30th November, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the detailed work that had been carried out by the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Performance Team and 2010 Rotherham Ltd.'s Empty Homes and Performance Teams. A new calculation methodology was also proposed from 1st April, 2010.

Progress against the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review was as follows:-

Recommendation 1 - That improvements are made to the CBL process in line with the recommendations of the current Scrutiny Review
Progress had been reported separately by Housing Choices Manager

Recommendation 2 -That the verification process is made more efficient by screening out ineligible bids at an earlier stage
Reported as complete in November, 2009

Recommendation 3 – That clear criteria are published about the circumstances in which decorating vouchers will be issued to new tenants and that the allowance of £25 per room is reviewed
2010 Rotherham Ltd. had reviewed and clarified the process and clear information was made available to tenants via the website. Complete.

Recommendation 4 – That in line with good practice demonstrated by high performing ALMOs consideration is given to a reward scheme to encourage tenants to leave properties in good condition
The “Fond Farewell” scheme had been up and running since October, 2009, and to be evaluated during April, 2010. It was identified that the scheme was saving money over and above that paid out, then consideration would be given to extending the scheme.

Recommendation 5 – That information is provided to Elected Members on a regular basis on the void properties in their Ward including reasons why a property is empty and when it is expected to be re-let
2010 Rotherham Ltd. continued to provide regular briefings to Members on empty properties in their areas.

Recommendation 6 – That more detailed information is provided when reporting on voids to give a clearer picture of why properties are empty

and the financial implications

Empty properties were monitored via joint RMBC/2010 Rotherham Ltd. Working Group.

Recommendation 7 – That action taken towards the recommendations of 2010 Rotherham Ltd.'s Empty Homes Service Review 'Every Day Counts' be monitored and reported back to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in due course

A further 2 of the 16 actions had now been completed (14 in total) – review of decoration allowance and review of all new procedures.

The joint Empty Properties Working Group had compiled a database of all properties that had been empty for over 16 weeks which was monitored and updated on a weekly basis. A target was set to reduce the number of properties empty for longer than 16 weeks from 116 in November, 2009 to 75 by the end of March, 2010. As at 31st March, 2010, the figure stood at 76 with a further target set of 25 by March, 2011.

As a result of concerns raised by Members, the Council had carried out a series of reality checks and reported to 2010 that performance did not include voids requiring Decent Homes and other major works. 2010 had conducted an internal review of processes and agreed that the overall "turnaround" figure should include all void properties.

As a result of the new methodology to be used, performance will appear to drop in 2010/11 compared to previously reported figures. Sub-indicators and targets would be developed so that it would be possible to monitor separately performance on route 'simple' voids and on more complex voids. 2010 was to produce a detailed report setting out the new methodology and, once approved, would be implemented as from 1st April, 2010.

2010 had put a significant amount of additional resources into reducing the overall number of empty Council-owned properties and as at 1st April, 2010, 248 properties stood empty compared with 386 at the end of September, 2009. Of the 248, 50 were not available for letting due to Neighbourhood Invest Service decision (19), non-traditional properties undergoing major refurbishment works (21) and Warden flats requiring further assessment before being let (10).

Resolved:- (1) That it be noted that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review have now been addressed by 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

(2) That it be noted that the methodology used by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. to calculate void turnaround times would change as from 1st April, 2010.

J167. DIFFICULT TO LET BUNGALOWS

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the impact of the challenges in letting properties that no longer met the

requirements and needs of the customers in Rotherham. The report also identified difficult to let bungalows across the Rotherham area which had been void for over 5 months (during 2009/10) on average and impacted in income and performance.

It was proposed that the Allocation Policy be amended in order to increase accessibility by a wider range of customers and reduce impact on rent lost. It would give preference to customers who were assessed to benefit from early intervention to access aged persons or sheltered accommodation but, where there was no demand, allow other applicants who met the age criteria and were willing to pay associated charges assigned to the property such as Rothercare or Sheltered charge, be offered the properties.

Currently sheltered properties could only be accessed by applicants aged over 55 years of age and had been assessed to be in priority need due to their health or social circumstances. A Tenancy Agreement for sheltered properties included visiting Warden and Rothercare facilities and, therefore, applicants accessing such types of tenancies had to demonstrate requirements for such support service.

By not amending the Allocation Policy would mean a continuing impact on voids as well as frustration for applicants who were unable to access such accommodation. The following amendments were proposed:-

Amendment to the Allocation Policy for Allocating Sheltered Accommodation

The age limit be reduced from 55 to 50 for sheltered accommodation with the following preference order:-

- Over 50 with an assessed need for the Sheltered Warden Service with Priority Plus status (this would include Council tenants who were under occupied)
- Over 50 with an assessed need for the Sheltered Warden Service
- Over 50 who had lesser need and had been assessed for Rothercare but were willing to pay the associated property charges
- Over 50 who had no medical assessed need but were willing to pay the associated property charges

Amendment to the Allocation Policy for Allocating Accommodation with Rothercare

Properties with Rothercare be let in the following preference order:-

- An applicant with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation with Rothercare facility with Priority Plus status (this would include Council tenants who were under occupied)
- An assessed need for ground floor with Rothercare facility in the Priority Group
- Applicants over the age of 60 in the General Groups who had no medical assessed need but were willing to pay the associated Rothercare property charges

Amendment to Local Lettings Polices

- Further to the Policy amendment to allow "Aged Persons" accommodation to be allocated to all disabled people assessed as needing a bungalow irrespective of age (Minute No. 120 of 18th January, 2010 refers), 50% of each complex to be solely advertised to older applicants over the age of 60.
- The remaining 50% to be advertised to any age group with an assessed need
- All sheltered complexes and other bungalow complexes with the Rothercare facility have a Local Lettings Policy excluding applicants with any management difficulties

A number of schemes had been identified as typical examples illustrating the impact on void periods.

Resolved:- (1) That the amendments to the Allocation Policy set out in report submitted be approved.

(2) That Local Lettings Policies for all bungalow complexes be approved.

J168. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

J169. SHELTERED LEVEL ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS 2010/11

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted proposals for the spending of the 2010/11 Regional Housing Board allocation for sheltered housing modifications.

It was proposed that the 2010/11 RHB allocation of £480,000 be committed to create level access to 127 properties at the following sheltered schemes:-

Francis Howlett (Whiston)
Vale Road (Thrybergh)
Elizabeth Parkin (Ravenfield)

Resolved:- That the 2010/11 budget spend proposal be approved.

J170. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 31ST MARCH, 2010

Consideration was given to a report detailing the income, expenditure and

5J CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS - 19/04/10

net position for the Neighbourhoods Department within the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate compared to the profiled budgets for the period ending 31st January, 2010. It also included the projected year end outturn position which currently showed a forecasted overspend of £610,000 (14.6%) by the end of March, 2010.

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

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - (information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

J171. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING TO 31ST MARCH, 2010

The Finance Manager presented the submitted report which detailed the projected outturn for the Housing Revenue Account by the end of March 2010. It was currently projected to outturn with a surplus of £2.408M.

It was noted that the costs of pension and severance relating to the downsizing of the workforce at 2010 Rotherham Ltd. which may fall on the HRA were not included in the forecast outturn.

Resolved:- That the report be noted and received.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 22nd April, 2010

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Blair, Nightingale, P. A. Russell and Walker. together with Derek Corkell (RotherFed).

Councillor Smith was also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Havenhand, Hodgkiss and Lakin, Alex Armitage, Bernadette Bartholomew and Jack Carr.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

88. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting.

89. COMMUNICATIONS

(1) Councillor Fred Wright

The Chair reported that this would have been Councillor Wright's last meeting before his retirement as a Borough Councillor. He had been the first Chairman of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee and had helped the Scrutiny process to proceed.

In his absence, the Panel thanked Councillor Wright for all hard work on Scrutiny's behalf.

(2) Panel Members and Co-optees

The Chair thanked all Panel Members for their attendance during the 2009/10 Municipal Year and also to the Co-optees who had played a big part in the Panel's work.

(3) The Chair also thanked all the staff members who have contributed to the work of the panel during the year.

90. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March, 2010, were agreed.

91. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITIES

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation, introduced the Scrutiny Review of Climate Change activities. It was a huge area which, in light of the recent events in Iceland, was very pertinent at the present time. Officers present gave a number of presentations on the following issues:-

Background to Climate Change
Schools
Energy/Water
Transport

These were followed by workshops on:-

Spending
Sustainable Construction
Engaging Communities.

92. SUMMARY AND REVIEW

The wide ranging discussions and ideas which arose from the presentations and workshops would be written up and presented to the June meeting of the Panel along with recommendations for future action.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
26th February, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Swift.

145. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

146. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

147. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY

Further to Minute No. 67(3) of the meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 28th January, 2010, Ben Knight, Scrutiny Officer, presented the submitted report advising of the progress made to date by the Members' Working Group to develop and introduce a detailed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Scrutiny Protocol agreeing mutual roles and practical arrangements for scrutiny.

The Committee was asked to consider and agree the protocol prior to its circulation to members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for endorsement.

The draft protocol, supported by the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel, was submitted.

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

- timely for a review of the crime and disorder agenda
- need to liaise with partners regarding sensitivity of reports discussed in working groups and the making public of review reports
- Councillor Call for Action

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

(2) That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Scrutiny Protocol be supported.

(3) That the protocol be submitted to the next meeting of the Safer Rotherham Partnership for approval.

12D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 26/02/10

(4) That the development of a protocol for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in respect of South Yorkshire be supported.

(5) That the report and protocol be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

148. REGIONAL SCRUTINY NETWORK EVENT

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Bronwen Moss, Scrutiny Adviser, presented the submitted report informing of the work undertaken by Scrutiny Services in Rotherham and the LGYH to re-establish a Regional Scrutiny Network across the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Further to a number of sub-regional meetings with officers across the region, an officer/member event was held in Huddersfield in December, 2009 to promote and discuss the way forward for members within the region to undertake joint scrutiny projects as appropriate.

There were two key outcomes from the regional event:-

- establish a member led scrutiny network (with terms of reference) as a communication forum and an opportunity to share good practice
- consensus reached by delegates to produce a draft protocol for the working arrangements of a Regional Scrutiny Panel undertaking joint working

The event was attended by 44 delegates and details showing the representation from across the region was submitted.

Also submitted was the draft protocol setting out the proposed scrutiny arrangements for the proposed regional scrutiny panel. The protocol was produced using the key principles of other sub-regional protocols developed for Health Scrutiny and Yorkshire South Tourism. Such protocols had already been endorsed by a number of Councils participating in developing regional scrutiny.

Terms of reference for the network were currently being developed.

The protocol and terms of reference would be circulated to all 22 regional Councils for consultation and comment. A final draft would be discussed at a further regional event planned after the May, 2010 elections.

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

- disestablishment of Regional Assembly
- accountability of Regional Development Agency by MPs Select Committee

- potential links between the Select Committee, chaired by Eric Illsley, M.P., and the regional scrutiny role
- potential duplication of work by Select Committee and regional scrutiny
- rationale behind the regional network and how it would fit in to the sub-regional/regional structures (structure flow chart to be provided)
- two workshops were held at the event these were Identifying topics for Regional Scrutiny and Engaging with Elected Members. Topics proposed that were considered suitable for regional scrutiny were :-
 - Children's services
 - flooding
 - integrated transport
 - integrated regional strategy
- resourcing and estimated costs of the initiative
- recognition of councillors' responsibility
- potential implications should the proposals proceed
- a structure was needed to enable councillors working on projects at national level to feed back in at regional level
- scrutinising budgets of Regional Development Agency

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

(2) That the draft protocol be supported.

(3) That consideration of representation to attend the next regional event be deferred until after the local elections.

(4) That a flow chart of the regional structure be provided to the Committee.

149. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members reported as follows:-

- joint review to be undertaken on the Image of Rotherham by the Regeneration and Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panels
- Councillor Jack had attended a Rotherham NHS conference regarding adding quality/adding value

- feedback from Cabinet on e-petitions had been positive

150. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
12th March, 2010**

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack and Swift.

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

151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

152. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

153. REVIEW OF LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report indicating that it was good practice to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance annually.

The report proposed changes to the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance to bring it up to date with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's "Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Service Organisations" which was launched in June, 2009.

The report set out the amendments to CIPFA/SOLACE guidance "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework" resulting from the Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Public Service Organisations covering the following standards:-

1. - Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
2. - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
3. - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
4. - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
5. - Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

- 6 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

The proposed revised Local Code of Corporate Governance 2010 was appended to the report.

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

- aim to make the financial strategy as user friendly as possible
- responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer
- training for members on financial matters

Resolved:- (1) That the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the Code would be used to help test the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements in order to inform the production of the Annual Governance Statement.

154. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DEBT RECOVERY

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report updating progress on the action plan resulting from the scrutiny review of debt recovery arrangements. Overall, positive progress was being made.

Two of the recommendations related to the provision of improved information to the public about debt recovery and the support available to help residents in debt.

A revised 'Advice in Rotherham' leaflet had been drafted and was appended to the report.

Three significant recommendations required detailed work and had been targeted for completion by 31st March, 2010 and were progressing according to the timescale. They were:-

- Recommendation 7 : The Council considers for those individuals who repeatedly fall into debt or are on the verge of having their debt passed to bailiffs, that a more proactive approach via home visits or phone calls might be more successful in recovering debt
- Recommendation 9 : The Council considers examining the business case of an in-house bailiff service where there

could be clearer lines of accountability, performance monitoring and charges to clients

- Recommendation 13 :The Council has one debt collection service for council tax, sundry debts and 2010 rents

Specific progress on each recommendation contained within the action plan was appended to the report.

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

- 'amalgamation' of advice bureaus
- textual amendments to the leaflet
- loan shark scheme
- sharing of information and raising awareness of loan shark scheme initiative and help/advice available to anyone in debt
- private landlords
- potential for one debt collection service

Resolved:- (1) That the positive progress being made on the implementation of recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of debt recovery be noted.

(2) That, subject to the textual amendments now raised, support be given to the production of the leaflet.

(3) That the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel take ownership of this issue.

155. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/10

Julie Slatter, Head of Policy and Performance, in presenting the submitted report, gave a presentation which covered:-

- Focus of Presentation
- Performance/Improvement
- Areas of Good Performance
- Areas for Concern
- Local Area Agreement

- Children's Services
- CAA Update
- Performance Clinics
- Priorities for Quarter 4

The submitted report focused on the new national indicator set and key local indicators.

The report addressed the main areas of performance across the Council and examined issues relating to the Corporate Plan and Local Area Assessment (LAA).

The position at the end of Quarter 3 was that, of the Corporate Plan indicators that could be rated, 68.09% (32 of the 47 indicators) had achieved their target and improved or maintained their best score.

The performance against LAA targets, as at Quarter 3, was that, of those that could be rated, 47.83% were on target. However the direction of travel overall had dropped.

The report covered:-

- Corporate Plan performance
- LA 2008-11 performance
- Direction of Travel
- Performance Clinics
- Corporate Health
- Awards

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

- outcomes from the information
- geographical breakdown of the statistics
- training for members on information available on line and its accessibility
- Ofsted inspections
- Chlamydia
- teenage conceptions comparisons within South Yorkshire
- implications of poor inspection results

- restructuring of social work
- ownership of indicators NI163 and N164 – proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least level 2 or higher and level 3 or higher respectively
- NI032 : repeat incidents of domestic violence
- award winning advertisement regarding domestic violence
- clarification of the report format regarding colours and symbols
- NI132 : timeliness of social care assessments
- NI99 : children in care reaching level 4 in English at key stage 2
- NI100 : looked after children reaching level 4 in English at key stage 2
- serious case reviews

Resolved:- (1) That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to both overall performance and to the requirements of the Audit Commission's CAA framework be noted.

(2) That the performance clinics to be conducted in Quarter 4 be noted.

(3) That the areas of concern now raised be referred to the appropriate scrutiny panels for consideration.

156. PAYMENT OF INVOICES WITHIN THIRTY DAYS - FORMER BVPI8

Further to Minute No. 106 of the meeting of this Committee held on 4th December, 2009, Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, presented the submitted report which detailed BVPI8 and how it measured the payment of undisputed invoices within thirty days.

The Council had agreed the following average annual target for performance of BVPI8 with RBT:-

2009/10	97.5%
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Outturn performance for recent years had achieved:-

2006/07	91%
2007/08	94%
2008/09	92%

Recent performance for the new financial year had achieved:-

April	95.65%
May	96.44%
June	93.47%
July	94.37%
August	93.78%
September	92.46%
October	92.00%
November	95.58%
December	95.49%
January	93.71%
February	97.69%

Year to date performance currently stood at 94.62%.

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

- penalties for poorly performing directorates and companies
- performance clinic

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

157. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Further to Minute No. 110 of the meeting of this Committee held on 4th December, 2009, Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, presented the submitted report, together with the strategy action plan which was mapped to the following nine themes:-

Theme 1 : Supporting the Local Economy

Theme 2 : Voluntary and Community Sector

Theme 3 : Equality and Diversity

Theme 4 : Fairtrade and Trade Justice

Theme 5 : Environmentally Friendly Procurement

Theme 6 : Legal Procurement

Theme 7 : e-Procurement

20D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 12/03/10

Theme 8 : Achieving Value For Money

Theme 9 : Building Capacity

The action plan detailed the current position against each action assigned to each of the above themes.

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

- working with the Voluntary Community Sector
- Fairtrade and trade justice : use of fair trade products

Resolved:- That the current position in respect of the Strategy Action Plan be noted.

158. PROCUREMENT LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, presented the submitted report setting out details of the indicators, targets and performance for quarter two of the current financial year.

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

- three were status green
- five were status amber with performance on target
- three were status red with performance below target
- three were to report in quarter four
- one would report from April, 2010
- two had no targets and were reported for information only

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

- definition of the 'S' postcode
- clarification of position regarding LPI3 : % of spend on electricity to continue to be procured from green sources

Resolved:- That the current performance against the indicators be noted.

159. RBT QUARTER 3 - PERFORMANCE

Mark Gannon, Transformation and Strategic Partnerships Manager, presented the submitted report summarising the performance of RBT against contractual measures and key service delivery issues for the third quarter of the current financial year across the areas of Customer Access, Human Resources and Payroll, ICT, Procurement and Revenues and Benefits. Also submitted were the customer satisfaction results relating to the Maltby Leisure and Service Centre.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and particular reference was made to the following issues:-

- Aston Joint Service Centre : security arrangements for receipt of monies
- VOIP
- Business Continuity Planning
- Tell Us Once site visits

Resolved:- That RBT's performance against contractual measures be noted.

160. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings held on 19th and 26th February, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

161. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Austen reported that the latest meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel had been equalities themed and the Panel considered:-

- Connecting Communities
- Community Cohesion (Hate Crime) performance update
- a presentation on Equalities and Diversity performance in Neighbourhoods and Adult Services
- a presentation on The Equality Framework for Local Government – Achievement of Excellent Level

The Panel had requested:-

- progress on analysis of complaints received from an equalities and diversity perspective
- member training on equalities and inclusion of equalities and diversity in the reporting template

(b) Councillor Jack reported:

- the breastfeeding review was expected to be submitted to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel on 1st April, 2010
- the assisted technology review was ongoing
- the review regarding diabetes was due to take place before the end of the month
- the latest meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel had considered:-
 - health screening programmes in Rotherham
 - Ministry of Food evaluation
- she had visited the new Community Health Centre
- concerns regarding funding for the Rotherham Women's Council Services

(c) Councillor McNeely reported:

- that a half day review was to take place in April relating to the Local Authority's response to climate change
- consideration was to be given to approaching the Rotherham Older Person's Forum about a representative being co-opted onto the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in the new municipal year

It was also felt that scrutiny panels should consider inviting members of the Forum to their meetings when relevant matters to the elderly were being discussed.

162. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
26th March, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Boyes, Jack, License, McNeely and G. A. Russell.

Also in attendance was Councillor Kaye for Item 165 below (Proposed Transfer of Bar Park)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilding, J. Hamilton and Swift.

163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

164. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

165. UPDATE ON PROPOSED TRANSFER OF BAR PARK, THORPE HESLEY

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Kaye (Ward Member) and Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager.

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of this Committee held on 24th July, 2009, Phil Gill presented the submitted report updating on the situation regarding the proposed transfer of Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley from Sheffield to Rotherham.

The report covered:-

- estimated legal and other professional costs of Sheffield City Council
- estimated legal and other professional costs of Rotherham MBC
- Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport deliberations
- funding position

Councillor Kaye outlined the position regarding the Friends of Bar Park Group, their attempts to secure grant monies and frustrations that the Park had not yet been transferred.

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

- Cabinet Member position

- funding position
- management arrangements
- budgetary situation
- officer meetings with Sheffield City Council
- Sheffield City Council costs and clarification of fees element
- boundary change implications of this and other areas in the borough
- costs to make the site good due to lack of maintenance
- area assembly support
- possibility of establishing a community trust
- barriers to securing grant monies
- guidelines covering impact of such changes to boundaries
- potential review of similar areas within South Yorkshire affected by boundary changes

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

(2) That Phil Gill investigate the following points raised and report accordingly to the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport:-

(a) clarification of Sheffield City Council's costs/fees etc., and further discussions with them regarding revising said costs downwards

(b) survey of park and updating estimates to make good any liabilities

(c) potential for establishing a community trust – discussion with Friends of Bar Park about their willingness/ability as a group, or another local group, to take responsibility for the site (including insurance and maintenance)

(d) review of 2010/11 service budgets to try to identify possible funding to cover the transfer costs

(3) That arrangements be made for a sub-regional review of shared assets covering such cross border pockets of land within the four local authorities and a further report be submitted in June, 2010.

Carole Haywood, Partnership Manager, presented the submitted report which set out the renegotiation of Local Area Agreement indicator targets which formed part of the completed refresh element of the annual review and was now pending approval from Central Government.

The performance picture was very mixed with a significant number of indicators on target and performing well. However a substantial number also appeared unlikely to reach the target set for 2011. The review focused on those areas.

As the more detailed analysis revealed performance to be varied, this was compounded by the number of indicators where the Council was unable to assess accurately the current position, or project future performance. Examples of good and weak performance existed across all of the five themes. There was a concentration of 'red' rated indicators under Alive, although several of these were closely linked. There were also a significant number of indicators where current performance was unclear, particularly under Proud and Safe, although in some cases data was imminent, which would help to address this. The report set out in detail the current performance for each of the themes.

There was up to £2 million of Local Area Agreement Reward Grant available under the terms of the current Local Area Agreement 2008-11. The way in which Reward Grant was calculated had changed and was significantly more complicated than in the previous round. The Rotherham Partnership Team was working currently with colleagues at the Council to estimate the level of Reward Grant the Partnership would be likely to secure under different performance scenarios. Although it had been delayed, the Government was set to release a 'Reward Grant calculator' in April, 2010 which should assist with this and make clearer the full financial implications. Although the detailed work referred to had not yet been undertaken the sense was that on current performance we would be unlikely to secure very much of the available £2 million.

Details of performance on the indicators were submitted as an appendix.

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

- awareness of Breathing Space
- recommendations from the Breastfeeding scrutiny review
- NI056 'Obesity in primary school age children in year 6' : need to develop more effective way of measurement rather than BMI
- Obesity scrutiny review findings
- NI120a All age all cause mortality rate – males

- concerns regarding reduced school lunchtimes and effect on activity
- concerns regarding Government's rationale for leisure activity that counts
- ongoing review on the image of Rotherham
- need for an assessment of what we need from the Partnership
- need for clarification of roles and relationship of the Safe Theme board and Safer Rotherham Partnership
- NI135 ' Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service or advice and information'
- 2008 Place Survey
- elected member involvement in Partnership performance clinics
- need to liaise with ward councillors and area assembly chairs, area partnership managers and parish councils to help ascertain what is happening in local areas
- NI136 'People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)'

Resolved:- (1) That the review process be noted.

(2) That the revised LAA targets, agreed with Government Office as part of the review process, be endorsed.

(3) That Carole Haywood and Cath Saltis liaise regarding the presentation of future reports.

(4) That a mechanism be devised to:-

(a) invite partners to scrutiny

(b) refer relevant indicators to respective scrutiny panels

(5) That Andy Buck and Brian James be invited to a future meeting of this Committee to discuss health issues.

167.

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Rachel O'Neil, Customer Access Client Manager, presented the submitted report detailing the final position on the implementation of the recommendations from the scrutiny review of corporate complaints undertaken in May, 2008.

The report covered:-

- performance and response rates across directorates
- formal definition of a complaint
- expertise for officers with complaint handling roles
- improving intelligence from information received by customers

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

- website accessibility
- navigation of the website
- VOIP
- "you said – we did" principle : feedback to the customer on what we did not do was just as important

Resolved:- (1) That the actions taken to implement the recommendations from the scrutiny review of corporate complaints be noted.

(2) That future reports be submitted annually.

168. MINUTES

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, arising from the minutes regarding VOIP, the Committee felt that it should be a requirement that, wherever possible, staff should be on a 'hunt' group and the viability of this be looked into.

169. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Jack reported she had attended the following events-

- health event in York
- event in Sheffield regarding the reconfiguration of the Northern General and Royal Hallamshire hospitals
- South Yorkshire Trading Standards event last Friday regarding tobacco issues and links to quit smoking

- Mind the Gap event on Tuesday regarding immigrant health

(b) Councillor Austen reported that the devolved budget review was ongoing and the corporate parenting review would be submitted to the next meeting.

(c) Councillor Boyes reported that meetings had been held and were scheduled regarding the review of the image of Rotherham.

(d) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- Young Carers' Strategy
- School Meals Research
- CYPS Performance Indicators – Quarter 3

170. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item to enable arrangements to be made.)

171. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY ANNUAL CONFERENCE - LONDON - 30TH JUNE, 2010

Resolved:- That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or substitutes, be authorised to attend the above.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
Friday, 16th April, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Swift.

Also in attendance was Councillor Burton for Item 177 below (Scrutiny Review – Breastfeeding for Rotherham : A Health Future)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyes and License.

172. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

173. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

174. 500 BABIES

Julie Slatter, Head of Policy and Performance, gave a presentation on the imagined prospects of 500 notional babies born in Rotherham if nothing changed (250 living in the 10 most deprived areas and 250 living in the 10 least deprived areas).

The presentation covered:-

- Rotherham in 2010
- Rotherham has:
 - 7 area assemblies
 - 21 wards
 - 166 Super Output Areas (SOAs)
- Most and least deprived SOA's
- Impact of inequality on life chances
- Demographics
- Home and family
- Education
- Crime experiences
- Work

- Health
- Later years
- Summary of inequalities
- Are we making a difference?
- Corporate priorities?
- Possible priorities
- Next steps?

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

- criteria for deprivation
- likelihood of living in council rented home
- likelihood of earning above £30,000
- differences made utilising funding regimes
- early years as a priority needed stressing
- impact on shared services
- impact of locality teams on deprivation in areas
- information held locally but not covered in presentation regarding for example :-
 - drugs
 - prostitution
 - child abuse
 - alcohol
 - long term disability
- need to present statistics at area assemblies
- need to break down the relevant information for discussion at respective scrutiny panels with an open invitation to all members of the Council
- need to link emerging corporate priorities with the work programme

Resolved:- (1) That the presentation be welcomed and endorsed.

(2) That Cath Saltis and Julie Slatter liaise regarding spreading the message.

(3) That the information be disseminated and referred to respective scrutiny panels.

(4) That Miles Crompton report to a future meeting of this Committee on information that is held locally.

175. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Rob Houghton, Governance and Risk Manager, presented the submitted report which showed the Council's most significant risks and a summary of how they were being managed.

The reporting format had two key features:-

- An 'at a glance' picture showing the pattern of risk assessments for corporate priorities or projects both before and after risk management actions
- A more detailed summary of the risk register that reflected the current risk assessments for each corporate priority or project as at 31st December, 2009

Changes to the previous style of presenting information and the significant changes to the register since the previous report were outlined.

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

- evidence to support that the new power of wellbeing for parish councils, Councillor Call for Action and new scrutiny functions were being implemented
- evaluation of the closure of Chesterhill
- discussions with directorates regarding risk levels
- direction of travel and timescale implications
- comparisons with numbers of risks in similar organisations
- role of the Corporate Improvement Board
- possibility of bringing risk champions to the Committee to discuss performance

Resolved:- (1) That the updated Corporate Risk Register be noted.

4D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 16/04/10

(2) That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of scrutiny panels liaise with scrutiny advisers to identify any specific risks that needed consideration at the respective scrutiny panel.

176. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL REVIEW OF CORPORATE PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Austen presented a report which set out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into corporate parenting arrangements undertaken by the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel. The Sub-Panel supported a comprehensive presentation on the review outlining the process, findings and draft recommendations. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference, findings and recommendations.

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

- need to keep children informed and up to date
- timeliness of the review
- scrutiny arrangements
- creation of the Corporate Parenting Board to replace the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
- suggested alternative titles for the Corporate Parenting Board
- corporate parenting as part of the induction process

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That further consideration be given to the title of the proposed board.

(3) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration for response within two months.

177. SCRUTINY REVIEW - BREASTFEEDING FOR ROTHERHAM : A HEALTHY FUTURE

Councillor Burton presented the submitted report which set out the findings and recommendations of the joint Adult Services and Health and Children and Young People's Services scrutiny panel review into the social and community aspects of breastfeeding in Rotherham. The report was endorsed by the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 1st April, 2010. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference, findings and recommendations.

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

- linking to the Rotherham 500 Babies work
- facilities for breastfeeding in public
- breastfeeding friendly Council buildings
- promotion of breastfeeding
- awareness of the working group, dealing with the new Council building, regarding provision of facilities
- importance of Rotherham as a breastfeeding friendly area
- need to promote and disseminate the health benefits of breastfeeding
- need for mothers to have an informed choice

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration for response within two months.

(3) That, with regard to (2) above, Cabinet be requested to refer the health aspects to NHS Rotherham for consideration.

(4) That Cath Saltis clarify with Paul Smith the issues now raised regarding the new Council building.

178. PLANNING DAY/WORK PROGRAMME

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, referred to emerging issues and the need for a planning session to consider the work programme.

Resolved:- That a half day planning session be held in the Eric Manns Building on Tuesday, 18th May, 2010 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

179. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

6D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 16/04/10

180. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Whelbourn reported :-

- Acting Chief Superintendent Richard Tweed was attending the next meeting of this Committee. Members needed to consider issues to raise
- Recent issues regarding direct payments and the need to re-visit the previous review of direct payments

(b) Councillor Jack reported that the Rotherham Women's Counselling Service was in receipt of funding from NHS Rotherham

(c) Councillor Swift reported:-

- a meeting had taken place with the Chief Executive regarding the review of the image of Rotherham
- the review of PE and sport in schools was completed and the draft report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee

(d) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9th April, 2010 had considered:-

- Young People's Mental Health Services
- Personal, Social and Health Education : Scrutiny Review
- Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013
- Children and Young People's Services Improvement Notice and Action Plan
- GCSE Examination Results Key Stage 4
- Machinery of Government

(e) Cath Saltis reported that Cabinet, at its meeting on 7th April, 2010 recommended to Council "That the Head of Scrutiny Services and Member Support be designated as the Council's "Scrutiny Officer" under Section 21ZA of the Local Government Act, 2000."

181. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
30th April, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Boyes, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell and Swift.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Hamilton and P. A. Russell.

182. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

183. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

184. POLICING IN ROTHERHAM

The Chairman welcomed temporary Chief Superintendent Richard Tweed, South Yorkshire Police and Steve Parry, Safer Rotherham Partnership Co-ordinator, who gave a presentation on policing in Rotherham.

The presentation covered:-

- last year's performance against previous year
- new priorities
- challenges
- priority setting
- priorities 2010/11
- performance

Also submitted were:-

- recorded crime statistics by class in Rotherham for the single months of March, 2009 and March, 2010 and also for the periods April, 2008 to March, 2009 and April, 2009 to March, 2010
- Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Performance Suite March, 2010 (provisional year end)

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

- background context including average number of incidents per day

and the number of police officers in Rotherham

- perception, particularly of women, that the town centre was not a safe place
- perception, in rural areas, of groups of youths hanging around and that no action was taken against off road motorcycle nuisance
- 'operation coverage'
- public sector budget constraints
- need for consistency of approach to elected members attending meetings of safer neighbourhood teams (SNT's) and neighbourhood action groups (NAGs)
- acknowledgement that elected members were also key to the success of the process
- role of victim support officers and provision of feedback information to victims even when the designated police officer was not on duty
- improved situations on the ground due to working in partnership
- importance of communication
- provision of sessions on how the Council works

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and Richard and Steve be thanked for the informative and interesting presentation.

(2) That the view that elected members should attend SNT meetings and be part of the process be cascaded to facilitate a consistent approach to welcoming elected members at SNT meetings.

(3) That training sessions on how the Council works be made available, as appropriate, to newly recruited police officers and officers attending SNT meetings.

185.**ECONOMIC DOWNTURN - ONE YEAR LATER**

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report which detailed how, in February, 2009, the Local Strategic Partnership approved its strategy and action plan for responding to the economic downturn.

This report referred to a document entitled 'Economic Downturn: One Year Later', which identified how the Council and its partners had responded to the downturn and the positive outcomes from the work done and investment made.

Proposals were, therefore, included for publicising the document.

The report showed that the impact of the downturn appeared to stabilise during the second half of 2009, after major redundancy announcements and a large increase in the number of people claiming jobseekers' allowance during late 2008 and early 2009 and highlighted the significant prevention work done by partners including:-

- Providing a wide range of support to people finding themselves unemployed, helping 85% of people to find new jobs or training within 1 year.
- Providing loans to 340 families to secure private sector rented accommodation and saving over £2 m in homelessness costs to use on other services.
- Providing 300 furnished properties to residents who might not otherwise have been able to afford to take up a tenancy.
- Making £200,000 available through the Rothersave Credit Union to assist residents in greatest financial need, including mortgage arrears.

The report also summarised the impact of the additional investment of £174,000 made by the Council (£121,000) and NHS Rotherham (£53,000) in voluntary sector advice services between February, 2009 and March, 2010. Citizen's Advice Bureau statistics showed that the investment enabled Rotherham to help a greater proportion of its residents than other districts.

This has been a significant success story, with an extra 5,000 residents helped in 2009/10.

It was proposed to place the document on the Council's credit crunch website and on partners' sites. It was proposed to draft an article for inclusion in Rotherham News and to send a press article to relevant agencies.

The document had been sent to the Audit Commission, for consideration as part of the 2010 comprehensive area assessment.

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

- publicity arrangements
- ongoing commitment next year
- advice centre leaflets

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

4D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 30/04/10

(2) That advice centre leaflets be provided for ward members to utilise.

186. REVIEW OF PE AND SPORT IN SCHOOLS

Councillor Boyes presented the submitted report which set out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of P.E. and sport in school.

The review was received by the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 9th April, 2010. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference and recommendations.

The report covered:-

- overview of policy framework
 - o national level
 - o local level
 - o structure for sport and physical activity in Rotherham
 - o local performance in P.E. and sport
 - o Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) data for Rotherham schools
- factors that hinder 100% P.E. and sport provision
 - o limitation of PESSYP statistics
 - o curriculum timetabling
 - o skilled P.E. teachers
 - o children disengaged from P.E. and sport
 - o extended school services
- services linking to the provision of P.E. and sport
 - o healthy schools programme
 - o P.E., sport and buildings schools for the future
 - o funding and resources

The Chairman welcomed Peter Harper (Partnership Development Manager, Wickersley School Sport Partnership) and Matt Wainwright (Partnership Development Manager, Rawmarsh School) and a discussion and question and answer session ensued.

The following issues were covered:-

- glossary details
- reasoning behind schools not offering a minimum of two hours P.E. and sport per week
- clarification of NI 57

- deletion of recommendation 16 in the review document
- progress made since the review
- impact of the structuring of lessons in secondary school
- transport issues such as mini bus provision, training staff to drive mini buses, costs etc.
- P.E. time not to be used for catch up initiatives
- accessibility issues for unaccompanied under sixteens to gymnasium facilities
- sports action groups
- need to appreciate that exercise covers more than sport on a field
- participation levels in TAKE 10
- walk to school initiative
- Playground to Podium initiative
- school governor awareness of issues affecting provision of P.E. and sport in schools

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and response within two months.

(3) That the Committee's thanks to all concerned with the review be placed on record.

187. UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

The Chairman welcomed Carrie Warr, Director of External Relations at the University of Sheffield, who outlined briefly hopes that the University could work in partnership with the Council and referred to early discussions that had taken place with officers and the Leader.

Carrie explained the work of her team in the neighbourhood and desire to do something in Rotherham. She also outlined available monies that could be tapped into and bids that were being worked on. Reference was also made to the outreach work conducted in schools.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and prospective joint working

6D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 30/04/10

be welcomed.

(2) That a further report be submitted on the way forward.

(3) That Carrie provide a list of schools participating in the University's outreach programme.

188. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

189. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor McNeely reported that the latest meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel had considered the scrutiny review of climate change activities. Each of the subject matters would be looked at individually.

(b) Councillor Boyes reported that there had been further meetings of the town centre review group and assessment of the evidence taken was ongoing.

She also reported that, prior to the latest meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, members had taken a tour of the town centre developments. Particular reference was made to the need for (i) the opening up of space and removal of hoardings in All Saints Minster Square and (ii) better signage to indicate to the public that the Imperial Building was open and occupied.

(c) Councillor Austen reported:-

- positive response to debt recovery review and updated position on review recommendations
- corporate parenting review had been submitted to Cabinet on 28th April, 2010

(d) Councillor Jack reported that the joint meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel and LinkRotherham had taken place yesterday to consider the draft quality of accounts for Rdash and the Rotherham Foundation Trust.

(e) Cath Saltis reported that the session on the role of co-optees had been well attended and the co-optee positions would be considered at the Committee's away session on 18th May, 2010.

190. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.

191. COUNCILLOR GEORGINA BOYES

The Chairman reported that, as Councillor Boyes was not seeking re-election, this was her last meeting of the Committee.

Members of the Committee placed on record their thanks to Georgina for her services to Scrutiny and to the Council over the last twenty two years and wished her all the very best for her new life in Belgium.