

CABINET

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham. S60
2TH
Date: Wednesday, 22 September 2010

Room: Council Chamber
Time: 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To consider questions from Members of the Public.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th September, 2010 (copy supplied separately)
5. Scrutiny Review - Breastfeeding for Rotherham - A Healthy Future (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 13)
 - Chief Executive to report.
6. Proposed Emergency Planning Shared Services with Sheffield City Council (report herewith) (Pages 14 - 23)
 - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
7. Rotherham Green Space Strategy (report herewith) (Pages 24 - 37)
 - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
8. Exclusion of the Press and Public.
The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular individual (including the Council)):-
9. Draft Rotherham Local Investment Plan 2011-14 (report herewith) (Pages 38 - 58)
 - Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services to report.

10. Local Investment Plan and Strategic Sites Update (report herewith) (Pages 59 - 73)
 - Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services to report.
11. Discretionary Rate Relief Review (report herewith) (Pages 74 - 76)
 - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
12. Discretionary Rate Relief Review (report herewith) (Pages 77 - 85)
 - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
13. New Discretionary Rate Relief Applications (report herewith) (Pages 86 - 88)
 - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
14. Rationalisation of Property Assets - Depot Review (report herewith) (Pages 89 - 94)
 - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
15. Magna Trust Loan Request (report herewith) (Pages 95 - 97)
 - Strategic Director of Finance to report.

Extra Item:-

16. Proposed Closure of Goodwin Crescent Children's Home (report herewith) (Pages 98 - 101)
 - Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services to report.

(Exempt under Paragraph 4 of the Act – information relating to labour relations matters)

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| ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS |
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|-----------|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Meeting: | Cabinet |
| 2. | Date: | 22 September 2010 |
| 3. | Title: | Breastfeeding Scrutiny Review Recommendations |
| 4. | Directorate: | Chief Executive's |

5. Summary

The Breastfeeding Scrutiny Review was reported to cabinet on 28 April 2010. Following this report, the recommendations have been considered by SLT and relevant officers from RMBC and NHS Rotherham and a commentary provided as to the recommended actions required to ensure appropriate implementation, to be considered by Cabinet.

Appendix A details the recommendations and commentary for approval.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- **Note the recommendations made by Scrutiny; and**
- **Approve each recommendation based on the commentary and agree the action required to take forward**

7. Proposals and details

Breastfeeding is an important public health issue, with proven short, medium and long term benefits for both mother and child. However, despite a great deal of effort from the healthcare community and children's centres, Rotherham's breastfeeding rates remain low – particularly in less advantaged areas. The review recommendations therefore identify what measures should be put in place in order to encourage more women to initiate and sustain breastfeeding.

The key recommendations include:

- For all public council buildings to sign up to the Breastfeeding Friendly accreditation developed by NHS Rotherham and publicise this on the council website and through other council literature
- Further develop the existing joint breastfeeding policy to include all council buildings
- Raise awareness of the breastfeeding friendly accreditation to all council staff, particularly front-line staff such as receptionists, through a staff briefing and training by NHS Rotherham
- Ensure all refurbished and new builds incorporate a quiet area for mothers to breastfeed
- Support partners to sign up to the accreditation and promote this via the council website

Since the scrutiny review took place, there has been considerable progress made with the breastfeeding agenda in Rotherham. A number of the recommendations have already been implemented and/or completed. The commentary provided therefore makes suggestions for re-wording of some of the actions to reflect this progress and ensure the recommendations remain relevant.

To ensure the breastfeeding agenda continues to progress, the recommendations set out in **Appendix A** need to be underpinned by clear governance arrangements for both NHS Rotherham and RMBC, including:

- RMBC Children's Centre representative to continue to lead on the UNICEF accreditation work for Rotherham; including audits, policy development and Breastfeeding Friendly Rotherham
- The breast pump loan scheme to continue to be developed through RMBC
- Children's Centre's to continue with the peer support service and undertake evaluation of this, funding has been secured through NHS Rotherham to part fund the continuation of the peer support work for 2011/12
- As part of the budget setting process future funding to be explored to secure the continuation of the service post 2012

Cabinet are being asked to consider and approve the recommendations, based on the commentary provided. The relevant recommendations will then be compiled into an action plan and monitored on a 6 monthly basis through the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel.

8. Finance

There is no identified funding available for delivering these recommendations; recommendations will have to be delivered within existing resources.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

Ensuring a space is allocated for mothers who wish to breastfeed in a quieter area and ensuring members of staff who work in RMBC buildings have received awareness training will become especially important once the Equality Act is published, making it illegal to turn away a mother wishing to breastfeed.

However, what is feasible at this time needs to be considered in light of the move to the new building which already includes plans to have a designated breastfeeding room. Therefore it may not be cost effective to put into place any expensive alterations.

10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Both the Rotherham Community Strategy and the Women's Strategy contain objectives to encourage more women to breastfeed. A joint breastfeeding policy with NHS Rotherham, the Rotherham Foundation Trust and Children's Centres has now been developed. The review makes recommendations to develop this policy further to include RMBC libraries and other public buildings.

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Scrutiny Review: Breastfeeding for Rotherham: A Healthy Future

Strategic Leadership Team's Commentary on Scrutiny Review: Breastfeeding for Rotherham – A Healthy Future (Appendix A)

12 Contact

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Strategic Leadership Team's Commentary on Scrutiny Review: Breastfeeding for Rotherham – A Healthy Future

| Scrutiny recommendation | Proposed action/ comment | Target date | Link to Themes/ Strategies | Impact Analysis | | SLT recommendation to Cabinet |
|---|--|---------------|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| 8.1 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | | | | | | |
| 8.1.1 Publicise the Council's support for breastfeeding on the home page of the Council website and also on web pages and literature relating to libraries, leisure facilities, customer service centres etc. | <p>Because of the style of the council homepage, this could not be publicised on here, but could be on all relevant pages i.e. CYPS, children's centres, libraries, leisure facilities.</p> <p>Once buildings have achieved accreditation, a sticker to be placed in the window/entrance to promote they are BF friendly</p> <p>Relevant literature, such as library leaflets, leisure facility leaflets etc to be updated with BF Friendly logo when produced</p> | On-going | All linked to Alive theme/ Public Health Strategy/ NHSR Breastfeeding Policy | To raise awareness across council and partners and advertise our support to the public | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.1.2 Provide breastfeeding mothers with a private area to breastfeed, if requested. This need not be a dedicated breastfeeding room. Any designated feeding area should NOT be in the toilet area, although baby changing facilities should also be available elsewhere in the building. | <p>The area need not be a room – a quiet screened corner of a public area would be sufficient.</p> <p>Audit all RMBC buildings to assess what can be provided.</p> | December 2011 | | <p>The audit needs to be completed to assess what is possible in each building.</p> <p>This is also linked to raising staff awareness, which will be an important element of BF friendly in all buildings</p> | There may be cost implications for providing a separate area (with a screen if necessary) in some buildings | For audits to be completed and consideration given as to what can be provided within existing resources |

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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| 8.1.3 Pilot breastfeeding friendly council buildings at all libraries – ideally with a launch during National Breastfeeding week, 21 to 27 June 2010. Evaluate the lessons learned from the pilot by October 2010. | <p>Recommendation completed, all libraries participated in BF Friendly Week</p> <p>all libraries will work towards BF Rotherham accreditation</p> | On-going action | Libraries Strategy | <p>NHSR experiencing capacity issues that may reduce the rate at which libraries can be accredited unless others help with this task</p> <p>Potential to include this assessment with another so that facilities management staff are able to complete them. NHS offered to train RMBC staff to do this.</p> | <p>There has been no cost to libraries for achieving the accreditation, however, if we wish to continue to use NHSR to undertake the assessments there will be a charge for this.</p> <p>Option to do this in-house makes this more feasible</p> | Approved - NHSR to train RMBC staff to complete audits |
| 8.1.4 Audit all council buildings that are open to the public against the 'Breastfeeding Friendly Rotherham' criteria. | <p>Prior to assessing against the BF Rotherham criteria, a self assessment of all public buildings to be undertaken by building managers.</p> <p>NHSR will support on this by providing a basic criteria for what is required.</p> <p>All RMBC buildings to be included in this – not just public</p> | Self-assessment checklist (audit) of all public buildings to be complete by March 2011 | Facilities Services | <p>Assessing against the BF Rotherham criteria should not be undertaken until a self assessment is complete and it is clear which buildings are included in the scope and what is possible in each</p> <p>NHSR to train RMBC officers to undertake assessments</p> | No cost implication | Approved |
| 8.1.5 Develop a phased programme to apply for accreditation to NHS Rotherham's 'Breastfeeding Friendly | The Equality Act will become law in autumn 2010, which will make it illegal to discriminate against a woman for breastfeeding. | December 2011 for all buildings to have accreditation | | Need to be fully up to speed with the equality act – to avoid non compliance | No identified cost implication | Approved |

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| Rotherham Award' for all buildings that are open to the public | Awareness raising via a staff briefing should therefore be priority even before accreditation has been awarded to buildings | Front-line staff to be fully aware of Act by autumn 2010 | | | | |
| 8.1.6 Distribute NHS Rotherham's directory of breastfeeding friendly places via Children's Centres, libraries, customer service centres, tourist information centre etc. and arrange for it to be downloadable from the Council website. | The directory is an on-line resource only, currently available through the RMBC website/Family Information Service. To include details of this in staff briefing so all staff are aware of it and know where to find it | Already available | | Informs the public which buildings have BF friendly accreditation | Printing costs if hard copies of this are to made available to distribute | Approved to remain as on-line resource |
| 8.1.7 Provide publicity for commercial businesses that hold the Breastfeeding Friendly Rotherham Award, via the Council website. | Links to 8.1.6 – all accredited businesses will be added to the directory, available on the website | On-going communication | | No associated risk | No cost implications if done via website | Approved |
| 8.1.8 Widen the existing joint Breastfeeding Policy to cover all council buildings as well as children's centres | NHSR BR lead to support with this | April 2011 | Links to existing NHSR BF policy and children's centre appendix | | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.1.9 Make existing staff aware of the Breastfeeding policy via a compulsory e-learning module, notified to staff via team briefings, by March 2011. | Awareness raising to be done via an electronic staff briefing circulated to all staff (An e-learning module is not seen as appropriate for this) NHSR to provide the content for this | December 2010 | | If staff are not made aware of BF Friendly, there may be issues as a result of certain situations and non-compliance with the Act | No cost implications for issuing a briefing to all staff | Approved |

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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| 8.1.10 Draft simple guidance for staff to ensure a consistent approach to breastfeeding women – both employees and visitors to council buildings. | Suggestion to merge 8.1.9 and 8.1.10 – provide a briefing to all staff raising awareness NHSR to provide details for the briefing | December 2010 | | Awareness raising | No cost for circulating staff briefing | Approved |
| 8.1.11 Provide front line staff with more in-depth breastfeeding friendly training (covering both policy and guidance) from Children Centres' staff by September 2011. | NHSR have offered to provide this but only at a cost. Alternatively peer support officers could do this, but would also need to be paid. | Dependent on capacity for training – to be agreed | | This should be seen as essential for implementing breastfeeding friendly in council buildings – staff need to be aware how to handle certain situations and understand the council policy Available resources and capacity needs to be considered | NHSR have limited resources available to deliver this | Approved |
| 8.1.12 Include Breastfeeding policy in induction training for Members and officers. | A one-page briefing, along with the policy could be included in materials given to all members and new staff and put onto the intranet for staff to view. | On-going | | | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.1.13 Review and strengthen the Council's planning policy and guidance so that the needs of breastfeeding mothers are considered. | Planning implications of Equality Act also need to be considered | | Planning policy | | No cost implications | Approved |

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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| 8.1.14 Ensure all refurbished or new-build council buildings incorporate a quiet area for those women who would prefer to breastfeed privately. | To be added to the brief for all new and refurbished buildings | On-going | Planning policy | Not all existing buildings may be able to provide adequate space for a quiet screened area, to look at on an individual basis and provide as is appropriate | There may be a cost implication to put in place screened areas, could be built into the plans for the building | Approved – to look at each building as necessary |
| 8.1.15 Design the planned parenting room in the new Civic Offices so that it meets the needs of nursing mothers and those wishing to express breast milk. | Plans for the new building include a designated breastfeeding room, which is lockable and provides drinking water for mothers. | Completion of the new build | | | Already built into the plans | Approved |
| 8.1.16 Encourage children's centres and all council-run providers of foundation stage education to remove toy feeding bottles from 'home corners' and children's books with a bottle-feeding bias, via a letter from the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services, asking for a response to the suggestion | Suggestion to reword to 'consider removing' toys etc To liaise with children's services to provide details of where letters should be sent | Letter to be sent October 2010 – for a response by end November 2010 | | Having bottle feeding bias in books and toys promotes this as the norm to young children and parents, especially younger mums. | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.1.17 Raise the issue of how best to promote breastfeeding through schools via the summer meeting of the PSHE Co-ordinators' group. Consider piloting the primary school resource that is currently | <i>Suggest this should read as follows:</i> Raise the issue of breastfeeding promotion through the Secondary Schools' PSHE Co-ordinators Group. Report the outcome of this to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel | Ongoing | Healthy Schools | Healthy schools have limited resources at present | No identified cost implications | Approved |

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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| available. Report the outcome of this to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel | Promotion of breast feeding to be included on agenda for Secondary PSHE Co-ordinators' meeting in 2010/2011 academic year Rotherham Healthy Schools represented on 'Breast Feeding and Childhood Obesity' Steering Group' led by NHSR Promote breast feeding in Healthy Schools newsletter, including signposting to resources Continue to liaise with colleagues from NHSR regarding promotion of breastfeeding | | | | | |
| 8.2 Rotherham Partnership – Alive Theme | | | | | | |
| 8.2.1 Develop a Rotherham Breastfeeding Manifesto (to make the Borough of Rotherham breastfeeding-friendly) by bringing together all relevant agencies with the shared aim of boosting breastfeeding rates. Produce the Manifesto by April 2011. | Already a Manifesto in place and individuals are encouraged to sign up to this. However, organisations are being encouraged to sign up to BF Friendly Rotherham, the NHSR developed accreditation To also include in the refreshed Public Health Strategy | On-going action | Public Health Strategy | To boost breastfeeding rates by promoting across the partnership | No identified cost implications | Approved |
| 8.2.2 Become a member of the Breastfeeding Friendly [sic] Coalition. | This should be reworded to 'encourage individuals to sign-up to the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition' | On-going action | | To promote commitment to BF Friendly | No identified cost implication | Approved |
| 8.2.3 Publicise the Breastfeeding Friendly Rotherham Award through Rotherham News, with a specific focus on | Rotherham News is no longer in print Suggestion to merge with 8.1.1 | On-going | | | | Approved to publicise via websites and literature |

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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| successful accreditation of public and private sector facilities and businesses. | | | | | | |
| <p>8.2.4 Encourage public sector employers to lead by example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing information to employees on the opportunities to breastfeed or express milk on returning to work • holding post-maternity leave return to work interviews with staff, • wherever possible, supporting employees to continue breastfeeding or giving breast milk on return to work. | <p>Recommended changes to these actions, as suggested by HR:</p> <p>Encourage public sector employers to lead by example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using existing appropriate communication methods (eg intranet pages) to make available information to employees on the opportunities to breastfeed or express milk on returning to work • Ensure current maternity provisions provide opportunities for keeping in touch days and facilitate discussions on arrangements for return to work which could include breastfeeding/expressing milk • wherever possible, supporting employees to continue breastfeeding or giving breast milk on return to work (e.g. by allowing unpaid expressing/breastfeeding breaks in addition to the lunch break). <p>Suggestion also to review current practice and provide an update report back to ASH panel. No need to review this annually as long as practice continues.</p> | April 2011 | | To ensure appropriate opportunities are available for staff returning from maternity leave | No cost implications | Approved |

| Scrutiny recommendation | Proposed action/ comment | Target date | Link to Themes/ Strategies | Impact Analysis | | SLT recommendation to Cabinet |
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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| 8.2.5 Explore the possibility of sponsorship of breast pump hygiene kits through members of the Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce by December 2010. | Already in place Children's Centre's to take responsibility for evaluating this scheme | On-going | | Scheme is currently working well; an evaluation will inform whether or not the scheme continues | Scheme is self funded | Approved |
| 8.2.6 Consider the development of a breastfeeding awareness campaign aimed at men, as part of the next revision of the parenting strategy. | This has already been done through a dad's magazine as part of the Be a Star campaign by NHSR. There is no additional funding available at present. Suggestion that this is not an Alive Board role – to be picked up via CYPS | | | To raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding to dad's | No funding through NHSR available to promote this further | Approved |
| 8.3 NHS Rotherham | | | | | | |
| 8.3.1 Report the evaluation of the current peer support pilot and any development plans to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel | NHSR to do provide this report to ASH | To be agreed | | To evaluate the effectiveness of the peer support work and raise awareness of what they can offer in Rotherham | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.3.2 Commission from Rotherham Community Health Services, the continuing employment of the six antenatal and postnatal support workers, after existing contracts end | These posts no longer exist. The NHSR funding has been reallocated to a contract with RFT to employ Maternity Health Support Workers, providing support for anti/post-natal services | On-going | breastfeeding performance indicators | Supports target to increase breastfeeding rates | NHSR funded | Approved |

| Scrutiny recommendation | Proposed action/ comment | Target date | Link to Themes/ Strategies | Impact Analysis | | SLT recommendation to Cabinet |
|--|--|--------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| in 2011. | | | | | | |
| 8.3.3 Promote Breastfeeding Friendly Rotherham via the Rotherham Show in September 2010. | A range of health initiatives were promoted during the show | On-going promotion | | | No cost implications | Approved |
| 8.3.4 Report evaluation of 'Be a Star' campaign to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel. | Evaluation of Be a Star is scheduled and will be done externally | To be agreed | | Evaluate effectiveness of the campaign and whether breastfeeding rates have gone up as a result | No cost implication | Approved |
| 8.3.5 Encourage midwives to register women with their local children's centre before they have their babies. | Suggestion to change to: 'encourage better links between Health Visitors, Family Support Workers and children's centres' This is now happening through Family Outreach Workers | On-going | | To advise of support available through children's centres for new mothers | No cost implication | Approved |
| 8.3.6 Encourage closer working between health professionals and peer supporters by asking health professionals to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give mothers and their families information about peer support for breastfeeding; • Ask women if they would like a peer supporter to contact them to discuss their feeding choices; • Refer women experiencing difficulties or in need of support • Involve peer supporters in antenatal | Peer Supporters at RFT are now contacting all women within 24 hours of birth. The NHR evaluation of this will be dependant on funding. A 24 hour help line is also available for all breastfeeding mums | On-going | | Without evaluating this service there will be no evidence that this is effective at increasing breastfeeding rates at birth | Cost to NHR to undertake evaluation | RMBC/NHR/VAR need to explore future funding for the longer term |

| Scrutiny recommendation | Proposed action/ comment | Target date | Link to Themes/ Strategies | Impact Analysis | | SLT recommendation to Cabinet |
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| | | | | Benefit/ Risk | Cost implication <i>Impact on revenue/capital budget, MTFS</i> | |
| groups. | | | | | | |
| 8.4 Monitoring | | | | | | |
| 8.4.1 Monitor progress against the review's recommendations on a six-monthly basis, via the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel, inviting members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel also | ASH panel to lead on this action | First progress report March 2011 (every 6 months thereafter) | | To ensure all actions are being put into place and concerns are raised when this is not possible | No cost implication for reporting | Approved |

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| ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET |
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| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Meeting: | Cabinet |
| 2. | Date: | 22nd September, 2010 |
| 3. | Title: | Proposed Emergency Planning Shared Service with Sheffield City Council |
| 4. | Directorate: | Environment and Development Services |

5. Summary

Proposed shared service provision with Sheffield City Council for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

The proposals laid out in this report have been agreed with the Sheffield City Council's Executive Management Team (EMT) and also their Leadership Team (EMT and Cabinet Members). It is proposed that a final report be placed before their Cabinet on Wednesday 22 September 2010.

6. Recommendations:

- **Cabinet agrees that Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council develop and implement a shared service for Emergency Planning.**
- **That the Director of Asset Management implements the proposals and reports the progress to Cabinet on a six weekly basis until implementation is subsequently achieved.**
- **That the potential savings and improvements are noted.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

As Cabinet will be aware, Emergency planning is the general term for the work that the Government, local authorities, the emergency services, health services and partners all do in preparing plans and procedures for dealing with and recovering from any emergency or major incident that has an impact on the emergency services or the community.

Under the **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** local authorities and other Category 1 responders such as the emergency services and NHS bodies have a statutory duty to:

- **Assess the risk** of emergencies or major incidents occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- Put in place **robust emergency plans and recovery arrangements**.
- Put in place arrangements to make **information available to the public** about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency or major incident.
- **Share information and co-operation** with other local responders to enhance co-ordination, co-operation and efficiency.
- Put in place **Business Continuity Management arrangements**. Local authorities must: 'maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to perform their functions in the event of an emergency or major incident, as far as is reasonably practicable'.
- Provide **advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations** about Business Continuity Management (*local authorities only from May 2006*).

In March 2007 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was awarded Beacon status for the provision of this service with a rating of 'outstanding'.

In November 2009 the council was approached by the Deputy Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council to explore arrangements for a Shared Service and if agreed this council's Emergency and Safety Manager would manage the service.

This project involves Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council joining together to form a shared Emergency Planning Team which delivers an equal service to the residents of both Rotherham and Sheffield. This project is therefore, fundamentally, about the transformation from the current state where authorities have separate emergency planning functions and arrangements – to a future state where there is a shared service in place.

The principal driver of this initiative will be to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services to the Rotherham and Sheffield communities and is not primarily driven by budget savings. However under this option Rotherham MBC budget requirement would reduce.

In December 2009 the manager of Sheffield Emergency Planning Team retired and at the request of Sheffield City Council, Rotherham MBC's Director of Asset Management put in place arrangements whereby Rotherham's Emergency and Safety Manager would act as interim manager of Sheffield's activities and carry out a review which has ultimately developed into this report.

7.2 Statement of Objective (*Expected outcome*)

The main objective and expectancy of the shared service will be to:

- Assist Sheffield City Council to improve its performance and resilience hence improve its emergency response capability for the benefit of the Sheffield community.
- Enhance the status of Rotherham MBC and the provision of services to the Rotherham community as a whole.
- Assist in the development of overall preparedness by creating stronger management links with South Yorkshire Emergency Services and Category 1 and 2 emergency responders generally and in doing so:
 - Strengthen the purpose and capability of the Local Resilience Forum (*South Yorkshire Group*) and the Regional Resilience Forum.
 - Enable stronger and higher performing relationships to be developed with Government Regional Office, Central Government, adjacent local authorities and Government agencies.
 - Give greater influence to local, regional and national policy.
- Provide a significant budget savings for Rotherham MBC.

It is expected that the overall service and performance will be of greater benefit to the Rotherham and Sheffield communities than two stand alone services.

7.3 Benefits

The main key benefits associated from a shared service proposal for Rotherham MBC would be:

- **Greater influence** locally, regionally and nationally.
- **Increased resources and cost saving for Rotherham MBC.** Subject to the relative contribution of each authority being confirmed, it is predicted that Rotherham MBC could invest less in this service (compared to previous

years) and achieve at least the existing level of performance. In addition the council will have a greater level of shared resource to apply to a given individual emergency situation.

- Close cross border working and joint response to incidents.

7.4 Organisation (*Range of options*)

There is a spectrum of potential ways of organising the combined service and these have been identified as follows:

- Rotherham MBC assumes all responsibility and authority for the combined services accountable to a joint committee or similar arrangement.
- A joint Member Committee consisting of two Cabinet Members from each council be formed and the relevant Rotherham MBC Director (Director of Asset Management) being the first in line to report to the committee, the second in line being the Director of Modern Governance, Sheffield City Council.
- Current political reporting structures remain the same with Rotherham MBC assuming the Chief Officer and Operational Management and service delivery responsibility.
- Rotherham MBC runs the operational aspects of the service for both authorities with the Head of Combined Operation reporting to Rotherham and Sheffield Chief Officers and Political Governance arrangements.
- Rotherham MBC provides an ongoing series of rolling consultancies at Sheffield City Council's request.

7.5 Response Capacity and Preparedness (*Performance matching*)

Sheffield City Council have decided to increase their investment in Emergency Planning and Business Continuity related services. This will then yield an increase in performance in a number of areas:

- To create a more formal arrangement for initial emergency response including the establishment of Forward Liaison Officers to match current Rotherham MBC practice.
- To increase the size of the Emergency Planning organisation to that comparable to other core cities whilst at the same time being able to take advantage of the synergies generated through the partnership with Rotherham MBC.
- Sheffield City Council are implementing a plan of capability and response improvements which are being overseen by the Rotherham Emergency and Safety Manager and these include the creation of an improved Operations Room and the integration of it with ICT again similar to Rotherham MBC practice.

- The creation of secondary, Directorate Control Rooms and training of key officers.

In short, to match Sheffield City Council with Rotherham MBC practices to bring about improvements and synergies of both authorities.

Business Continuity – There are many opportunities to develop Sheffield City Council's external Business Continuity ability by developing a programme of engagement with business, industry and the voluntary sectors.

7.6 Political Environment (Governance)

To ensure equal representation of both councils a joint committee approach will have to be agreed and formulated. The following proposal is recommend:

- Two Cabinet Members from each authority with a rotating chair, Rotherham MBC being the first.
- That the Director of Asset Management, Rotherham MBC be the Chief Officer designated to advise the committee in the first, third and fifth year of the shared service being in place and the Director of Modern Governance, Sheffield City Council designated on the second and fourth year.

7.7 Proposed Team Structure

The new structure, which encompasses all the existing staff from both Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council, is shown at **Appendix 1**. No additional staff have been added.

7.8 Further Activities

Once the principal of a shared service has been formally approved by both councils then a range of activities will have to be undertaken and these are listed below:

- Securing the agreement of both authorities to the specifics of the new arrangement which will include the budget as defined at paragraph 8 over a fixed minimum period of five years.
- Agreeing senior representation at national, regional and local multi-agency meetings which, in principle, has been agreed as Rotherham MBC leading on the first, third and fifth year with Sheffield leading on the second and fourth.
- Finding suitable accommodation for both Emergency Planning Teams and this Council's Health and Safety Team.
- Addressing the human resources implications of the transformation – including negotiations with trade union representatives. This is linked to defining the legal option (below).

- Addressing legal implications of the new arrangement, including governance, insurance (*each insures itself as now*) and procurement. In terms of legal liabilities each to undertake to not sue the other, agreement to be annexed to the completed business case.
- Arranging back office support for finance, HR, legal, performance, programme management, ICT and procurement.
- Agreement of a robust business plan.

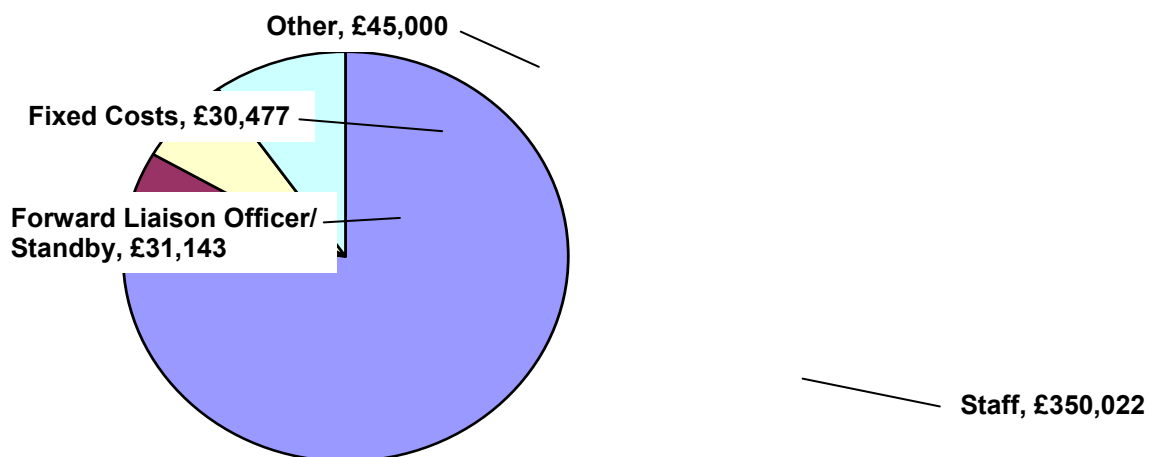
These issues will be addressed during the project phase; October 2010 to January 2011 once the shared service proposal has been formally agreed by both councils. The project will be lead by the Emergency and Safety Manager, Rotherham MBC.

8. Finance

The total cost of the shared service will be **£456,642** each year divided between Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council.

The contribution of both authorities is based on the relative populations of both areas. This means that Sheffield City Council would pay approximately **68%** of the cost and therefore would have to contribute approximately **£309,583** to this service each year. Accordingly Rotherham MBC would pay **32%** with a contribution of **£147,059** thereby making a saving of approximately **£100k** to previous budget allocations for Rotherham's Emergency Planning function.

A breakdown of these costs are illustrated below:



Technical notes:

- **Staffing** – Assumed grades take into account existing staff in both Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council. Only 95% of the cost of the Emergency and Safety Manager is allocated to the shared service. This is to reflect the health and safety element of this role within Rotherham MBC.

- **Forward Liaison Officer standby arrangements** – This covers having a duty Forward Liaison Officer on call for each authority at the existing rate of £26.24 per shift (9 shifts a week), £236 a week. The total of £31,143 includes the on costs of 26.8% (National Insurance and Super Annuation etc).
- **Fixed costs** – All ICT known costs.
- **Other** – Contribution to the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Secretariat, Strategic Co-ordinating Group Incident Management System (Vector Command), routine running costs, training, stationery, equipment and publications etc.

The funding of the shared service, if agreed, will be underpinned by a five-year legal contractual agreement between Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council.

It is envisaged that the service shall have its own cost code centre managed by the principal manager (Head of Operations) and for the accountable Director to report to Member Committee.

9. Risk and Uncertainties

As with any major change to service delivery there are of course initial risks and these, together with proposed treatment, is set out below:

| Risk 1 | Impact: HIGH | Likelihood: LOW |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| <p>Description: There is a risk that new Elected Members in either Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council or Sheffield City Council, may wish to disband the shared service arrangement before these arrangements have come to fruition. This would result in the project costs associated with these arrangements being wasted. In addition it would also result in a deterioration of the team’s relationship amongst internal and external stakeholders.</p> | | |
| <p>Mitigation Plans: Five year minimum term contractual agreement to be in place between the two authorities. This will ensure the stability of the arrangement in, at least, the medium term.</p> <p>Proactive engagement with all Members throughout the process.</p> | | |
| Risk 2 | Impact: MEDIUM | Likelihood: MEDIUM |
| <p>Description: Dissatisfaction with the shared service arrangement, with the risk that staff in the Emergency Planning Teams of Rotherham MBC and/or Sheffield City Council may choose to leave – resulting in a loss of talent, knowledge and experience.</p> | | |
| <p>Mitigation Plans: Careful management and involvement of existing staff to help create a sense of ownership over the whole project. However, beyond this, the risk will have to be accepted.</p> | | |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Risk 3 | Impact: HIGH | Likelihood: MEDIUM |
| Description: Future budget pressures and the risk that one party may wish to reduce their contribution to the shared service arrangement. This would result in uneven funding and a shortfall in the service budget. | | |
| Mitigation Plans: Five year minimum term contractual agreement. | | |
| Risk 4 | Impact: LOW | Likelihood: MEDIUM |
| Description: Misapprehension over the purpose of the shared service and the risk that the media may portray the service as Sheffield “handing over” emergency planning to Rotherham MBC – rather than two areas working together to provide a better service. This could result in significant reputational damage for Sheffield City Council. | | |
| Mitigation Plans: Communications teams from both authorities to be engaged early in the process to ensure proactive and positive media engagement. | | |
| Risk 5 | Impact: HIGH | Likelihood: LOW |
| Description: The risk of individual officers “reverting to previous roles” in the event of an incident happening in both Rotherham and Sheffield. This would result in poor performance for both Rotherham and Sheffield residents. | | |
| Mitigation Plans: The shared service will have clear systems and processes in place to ensure that this does not occur. An annual plan will set out how the resources of the shared service will be allocated – this will be subject to the approval of members and senior managers from both authorities. | | |
| Risk 6 | Impact: MEDIUM | Likelihood: MEDIUM |
| Description: Realisation of benefits. There is a risk that the benefits noted above are not realised. This may be, for example, because key stakeholders continue to interact with both teams as if there has been no transformation. | | |
| Mitigation Plans: Measurable benefits of the project to be included in the annual plan of the shared service. As soon as the shared service is approved, an extensive period of consultation with key stakeholder will begin (with the support of communications professionals). | | |
| Risk 7 | Impact: HIGH | Likelihood: MEDIUM |
| Description: The charges and costs associated with ICT and accommodation provision which will be dependant on where the team is located when becoming a shared service. | | |
| Mitigation Plans: The associated costs be met equally by each council when identified during the project phase (October 2010-January 2011). | | |

Future risks that a shared service with Sheffield City Council will present that are not currently applicable to Rotherham MBC are as follows:

- Planning for the Olympic Games and World Cup.
- Work associated with the Core Cities planning.
- Increased public events planning.
- Increased requirement for dam inundation planning for high risk dams (Sheffield has 9 of the top national 100 with none in Rotherham).
- City centre Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) planning.
- Additional number of dignitary visits.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

It is explicitly recognised that the key driver behind a shared service arrangement is the desire to achieve an excellent cost effective service that will benefit the communities of Rotherham and Sheffield.

To achieve this are the following principal service delivery objectives and performance indicators:

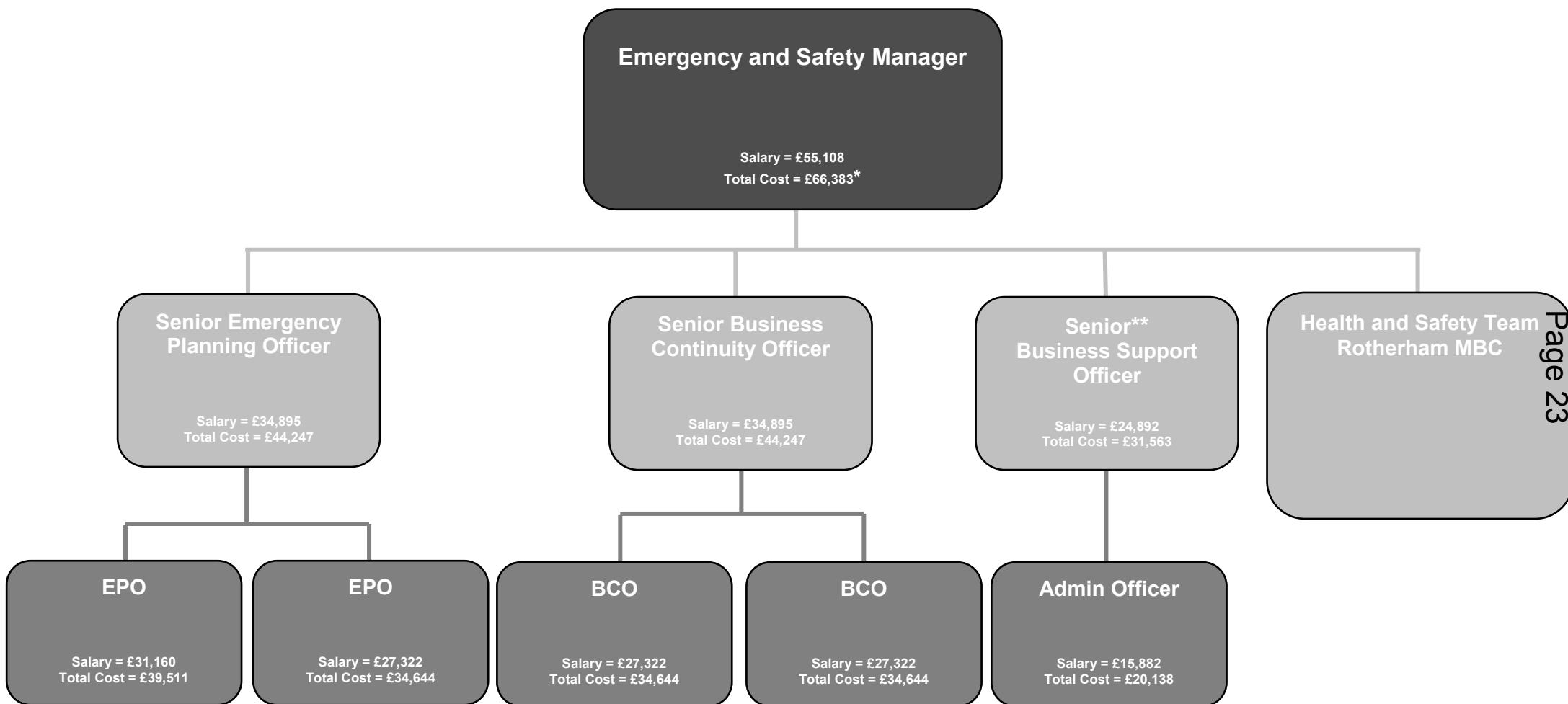
- **Community Strategy and Corporate Plan (2005-2010)** detailing the vision and direction, together with a programme of work for the council over the five years 2005 to 2010. Asset Management and ultimately Emergency and Safety Team policies, strategies and plans link into these documents.
- **Asset Management Service Plan for 2009/2012** integrating the emergency themes and objectives from the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan, setting out the overall contribution that the Asset Management Service, within Environment and Development Service will make to achieving the council's vision.
- **Emergency and Safety Team Action Plan 2010/2011** produced on an annual basis to reflect the evolving priorities of the team in order to contribute to the strategic objectives detailed in the Asset Management Service Plan.
- **Performance Management.** The Emergency and Safety Team's performance is regularly and closely monitored through the achievement of both local and national performance indicators together with meeting the criteria laid out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and regular National Capability Surveys.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005.

Contact Name: *Alan Matthews, Emergency and Safety Manager, alan.matthews@rotherham.gov.uk and Ian Smith, Director of Asset Management, ian-EDS.smith@rotherham.gov.uk*

Emergency Planning Shared Service Structure Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council



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* 95% Paid by Shared Service owing to Health and Safety responsibility

** Currently Assistant Emergency Planning Officer, Rotherham MBC (will be salary protected for 3 years)

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| ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS |
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| | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| | Meeting: | Cabinet |
| | Date: | 22nd September, 2010 |
| | Title: | Rotherham Green Space Strategy – Final Version |
| | Programme Area: | Environment and Development Services |

5. Summary

Following consultation on the draft Green Space Strategy document, a final version has been prepared and is submitted for approval and adoption. The Strategy sets out recommended standards for Green Space provision and related activities, and how these might be achieved.

6. Recommendations

- **That Green Space Strategy be recommended to Council for approval.**
- **That, subject to adoption of the Strategy, Officers be instructed to develop and pursue an action plan for its implementation, initially covering the period 2010 – 2015.**

7. Proposals and Details

The consultation draft of the Green Spaces Strategy was approved by Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services on 16th February 2009. A programme of consultation then started in June 2009, and continued to March 2010. On 15th June 2010 a further report was taken to Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport detailing the outcome of consultation and proposed responses. These included minor revisions to the Strategy text for clarification, and a very small number of changes to the scope and content of the Strategy. Cabinet Member approved these changes and agreed that responses be fed back to consultees.

A summary of the Strategy is attached as Appendix 1, and a full version has also been made available in the Members Room. The Strategy is based upon the following vision for Rotherham:-

“a place where people’s lives are improved by having access to a network of safe, well-used Green Spaces offering a wide range of recreational and learning opportunities in high quality, sustainable environments”.

Four strategic aims are proposed, as follows:-

- To increase the proportion of the people living within easy walking distance of Green Spaces meeting defined quality standards
- To increase the number of people who regularly visit Green Spaces
- To increase the proportion of the population who are satisfied with Green Space provision in Rotherham
- To increase the number of people participating as volunteers within Green Spaces.

The strategy also embraces the principles of sustainable development, fairness and community involvement. These aims and principles led to eight specific objectives:-

- 1 Provide sufficient accessible Green Space to meet current and future demand efficiently and sustainably
- 2 Make Rotherham a safer, healthier and more attractive place to live and visit by ensuring Green Spaces are secure, clean and well designed, managed and maintained
- 3 Target existing resources and secure new funding to improve priority Green Spaces and to manage and maintain them to high standards
- 4 Bring together different providers of Green Spaces and other partners to work towards agreed standards and priorities for Green Space provision
- 5 Actively involve communities in the development and management of Green Spaces to ensure that local needs are respected and valued
- 6 Raise people’s awareness of Green Spaces by making sites and activities within them accessible and attractive to all groups and individuals, thereby increasing use and satisfaction and contributing to community cohesion
- 7 Improve the environmental sustainability of Rotherham through biodiversity, landscape protection, reducing surface water runoff and other measures
- 8 Exploit opportunities to link Green Spaces to develop a green network across the borough

The Strategy Report contains 33 recommendations. Amongst the most important of these are the following:-

- Introduce accessibility standards in new planning policy aimed at ensuring that all new homes are within 280 metres of a Local Green Space and 840 metres of a Borough or Neighbourhood Green Space

- Consider change of use at low value sites in areas with plentiful supply of Green Spaces; work has already started on developing a method for this
- Introduce quality standards for design, maintenance and management of sites
- Establish a prioritised programme of site improvement
- Review and simplify the ownership of Council Green Spaces by different departments
- Explore the creation of properly resourced Community Trusts or similar bodies as an alternative way of managing and maintaining Green Spaces
- Ensure all capital investment is matched by appropriate revenue budgets
- Introduce planning policy or guidance to help achieve proposed standards of Green Space provision, for example through Section 106 agreements
- Establish a Panel representing principal providers of Green Spaces to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of Green Space Strategy
- Create new opportunities for volunteering in Green Spaces
- Protect and enhance existing green links and create new links between existing Green Spaces

8. Finance

This report has no immediate financial implications. However, longer term costs relate to delivering and sustaining improvements in Green Space provision. The Strategy is based on the principle of achieving improvement by maximising inward investment, and using available Council funding in an efficient and targeted way.

It is proposed that the Council works in partnership to access all available external funding and developer contributions, but it is also expected that bids to the Council's Capital Programme will also be a feature of efforts to secure funding to support the strategic development of Green Space sites. The implementation of the Strategy could also generate income to the Capital Programme through the sale of sites of limited strategic value.

Reprioritisation of maintenance programmes and savings from the cessation or reduction of service at some sites, based on informed decisions relating to the strategic value of sites, will be necessary to support the increased costs that will result from providing and sustaining higher standards of provision and priority sites.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Without significant capital and revenue investment it is unlikely that the proposed standards can be achieved. Delivery of strategic improvements will be heavily dependant on the development of effective partnerships and the availability of external funding opportunities and developer contributions. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure success in these areas, it is not possible to predict at this stage the availability of either. Future local demand for Green Space provision and the impact of development activities are difficult to predict in the long term and as such the strategy will need to review Green Space audit data periodically in order to take account of changing circumstances.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Green Spaces Strategy will have extensive policy and performance implications.

- Rotherham Achieving: It contributes to regeneration by supporting inward investment bids, improving and promoting Rotherham's image, and by helping to create neighbourhoods of quality, choice and aspiration.
- Rotherham Alive: It aims to increase active use thereby contributing to improved health
- Rotherham Proud: It aims to increase community involvement and volunteering in Green Space development and management
- Fairness: It seeks to reduce inequalities by setting borough-wide standards for Green Spaces provision.
- Sustainable Development: It recognises the importance of Green Spaces for biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix 1 - Rotherham Green Space Strategy Summary

Other papers:

- Rotherham Green Spaces Strategy – Final Version (copy in Members Room)
- Report to Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services, 16th February 2009
- Report to Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport, 15th June 2010

Extensive consultation has taken place with internal and external stakeholders, as detailed in the report to Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport (15th June 2010) . Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Contact Name : *Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager – ext 22430.
philip.gill@rotherham.gov.uk*

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ROTHERHAM GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

Summary

June 2010

Rotherham's Green Spaces

Rotherham has a wealth of green spaces for the enjoyment and health of local people. They are also important places for wildlife, and can help to make Rotherham an attractive place to live and invest in.

The Council has done much in recent years to improve green spaces. For example, it has worked with parks' friends groups across the borough to draw up masterplans for the improvement of some of our larger green spaces, and good progress has been made in delivering the improvements in these plans. It has secured £4.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and BIG Lottery towards an exciting £8.5 million scheme to restore Clifton Park in the town centre, due for completion within the next few months. Rangers have been introduced into town parks in response to public requests for a greater staff presence. Improved management and maintenance of Rotherham's country parks has resulted in all three achieving the nationally recognised 'Green Flag' award. However, there are still challenges including changing demand for parks and open spaces, limited resources and the need to provide land for new housing.

The Green Spaces Strategy allows us to take stock of the parks and open spaces we have across the borough, and to think about what we need to do to them to meet the needs of local people, businesses and the environment. It is not just about the green spaces provided by Rotherham Borough Council, but all sites over half an acre (0.2 hectares) that the public can access. This summary outlines the main points contained in the Strategy.

Our Vision and Aims for Green Spaces

We believe that green spaces should play a full role in supporting Rotherham's Community Strategy priorities of Learning, Achieving, Alive, Safe and Proud, as well as the themes of Fairness and Sustainability. The following vision is proposed to guide the way we develop our green spaces.

“Rotherham: a place where people's lives are improved by having access to a network of safe, well-used Green Spaces offering a wide range of recreational and learning opportunities in high quality, sustainable environments”.

Four strategic aims are proposed to help us to achieve our vision:-

- 1: To increase the number of people living within easy walking distance of good quality green spaces.
- 2: To increase the number of people who regularly visit green spaces.
- 3: To increase the number of people who are satisfied with green spaces in Rotherham.

4: To increase the number of people participating as volunteers within green spaces.

We also believe that consideration must be given to the following themes throughout the Strategy:-

Sustainability: We want to make sure that any improvements are long-lasting, and that they protect our environment.

Fairness: Green spaces should be enjoyed by people across the borough equally, regardless of age, sex, ability and ethnicity.

Community involvement: Local people should be able to understand and influence the way that green spaces are developed and managed.

What do we need to do?

We have looked for evidence that will help us to decide how we can improve green space provision in Rotherham. This evidence has included

- the views of local residents and users of green spaces.
- a survey of more than 400 of Rotherham's main green spaces to record their type (e.g. park, sports field, natural site), quality, size and value.
- national and local strategies and policies.
- comparison with other local authority areas.

Consequently, we have the following eight objectives that we believe we need to pursue to help us achieve our vision for green spaces in Rotherham:

Objective 1: Provide enough green spaces in the right places to meet the needs of local people now and in the future

We found that:

- National organisations say people need to be able to reach green spaces on foot.
- Local people say that they prefer to use green spaces that are easy to get to, with most journeys to green spaces made on foot and taking less than 15 minutes.
- Rotherham has a large amount of accessible green space per person compared with some other districts.
- Local people say they are mainly happy with the amount of green space in Rotherham.
- Some parts of Rotherham have more green space per person than others, and the amounts of different types of green space varies also.
- Land is needed for housing and other development, but this must be balanced against the need for open space and recreation.

Recommendations

1a. All new homes should be within five minutes walking distance of a local green space providing space for informal recreation, and fifteen minutes walk of a larger green space providing a wider range of facilities and services. Where new green space is required, 16 square metres per person is proposed. This can be achieved through new policies within the Local Development Framework which will guide how planning applications are dealt with in future. They should also prevent development that would mean that people can no longer get to green spaces within these distances from their homes.

1b. Identify areas where people are not served by green spaces within walking distance of their homes, and look for ways to deal with this. This might include providing new green spaces, or improving access to existing green spaces.

1c. Where there is limited variety of green space types decide whether anything needs to be done to change the character and function of some sites. This might involve local consultation to find out if people want change to increase the range of green space types in the area.

1d. Protect green spaces that could meet future demand for playing pitches. Sites which are large and level enough for playing pitches should be safeguarded if they are in areas where current supply is inadequate to meet future demand.

1e. Consider whether less valuable green spaces in areas with plentiful supply could be used in a different way. Savings resulting from such changes could be used to help pay for improvements at more valuable green spaces. However, this should only happen where the loss of open space is outweighed by improvements to other sites in the area and after careful consideration of local factors.

Objective 2: Make sure that green spaces are safe, clean and well designed, managed and maintained

We found that:

- National organisations say that green spaces should be safe, attractive and welcoming.
- Local satisfaction with design, appearance and maintenance of green spaces is below the national average, and disrepair and lack of facilities are amongst the main reasons people give for not visiting them.
- Safety and security are amongst local people's top priorities, and can be addressed through joint working with Safer Neighbourhood Teams, staff presence on site, CCTV, revised by-laws and new control orders, and careful site design; the Council has already provided additional funding in this area.
- Other priorities for improvement include toilets, park rangers, better maintenance, litter removal, play facilities, shelter, cafes and more events.
- Quality standards do not currently exist, but are needed to guide site improvement.

- The national Green Flag Award Scheme provides quality standards to aim for when improving green spaces.
- It is easier to achieve high standards when all aspects of site operation, maintenance and development are brought under a single manager, although most green spaces in Rotherham are not currently managed in this way.

Recommendations:

2a. Green spaces should be graded depending on their size and function. This will help us to decide how to use our resources most effectively to benefit local people. The proposed grades of green space are shown in the box below.

Proposed Green Space Grades

| Grade and main function | Typical size | Typical characteristics |
|--|----------------------|---|
| Local Green Spaces Regular use mainly by pedestrian users, includes preferred routes to school, shops, work etc | 0.2 hectare and more | Appropriately maintained site providing safe and clean areas for walking, informal recreation and play, sitting out areas |
| Neighbourhood Green Spaces Weekend, early morning, after school and evening visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips | 3 hectares and more | Well maintained landscape with a variety of features and facilities providing a range of activities, e.g. outdoor sports, children's play and informal recreation pursuits. Regular staff (ranger) visits and occasional events |
| Borough Green Spaces Weekend and other occasional visits mainly by car or public transport | 25 hectares and more | Large sites with intrinsic special interest, e.g. heritage, landscape, wildlife, children's activities, sports. Good level of visitor facilities. Appropriate on-site staff levels to manage site and visitor numbers. Several events each year |

2b. Agree which green spaces are priorities for improvement. Things to consider include:-

- Sites which have been judged to be potentially valuable to local people, but which are currently of poor quality.
- Sites where local consultation has already resulted in a masterplan that can be used to attract funding.
- Availability of external funding targeting a specific theme, for example children's play, or a geographical area or community.
- Emergencies or other issues of concern, for example dealing with the effects of flooding
The resulting improvement programme should be reviewed regularly to take into account changing circumstances.

2c. Introduce quality standards for design, management and maintenance.

Proposed quality standards have been developed and are outlined in the box below. Further details are shown in the full version of the Strategy document. Standards are

based on consultation, site surveys and national guidelines such as Green Flag Award criteria. They are meant as minimum standards; at Neighbourhood and Borough Green Spaces, masterplans can help to identify special requirements appropriate to each site.

Proposed Green Space Quality Standards

| Local | Neighbourhood | Borough |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Image, facilities, activities and information</i> | | |
| Welcoming | Welcoming | Welcoming |
| Safe and Clean | Safe and Clean | Safe and Clean |
| | Seating | Seating |
| | Dog and litter bins | Dog and litter bins |
| | Children's play area | Children's play area |
| | Sign/notice board | Sign/notice board |
| | Directional signs | Brown road signs |
| | Formal community involvement | Formal community involvement |
| | At least 3 activities/ facilities | At least 5 activities/ facilities |
| | At least 1 event per year | At least 3 events per year |
| | | Toilets |
| | | Catering |
| <i>Management and development</i> | | |
| Maintenance statement including objectives and main processes | Management Plan to Green Flag standard | Management Plan to Green Flag standard |
| At least one site inspection every two weeks | At least one site inspection every day | Staff based on site during normal facility opening hours |
| | Masterplan showing site improvement proposals | Masterplan showing site improvement proposals |
| <i>Conservation, biodiversity, landscape and heritage</i> | | |
| Best practice followed for conservation | Best practice followed for conservation | Best practice followed for conservation |
| | Assessment of biodiversity value in management plan | Assessment of biodiversity value in management plan |
| | Masterplan considers landscape and heritage | Masterplan considers landscape and heritage |
| <i>Access</i> | | |
| Restrict access by unauthorised vehicles | Restrict access by unauthorised vehicles | Restrict access by unauthorised vehicles |
| DDA compliant improvements | DDA compliant improvements | DDA compliant improvements |
| | Car park or suitable on-street parking | Car park |
| | Cycle storage | Cycle storage |
| | Signed footpaths on site | Signed footpaths on site |
| | | Public transport information on site and directional signs to bus stop etc. |
| | | Link to strategic public rights of way network as approp. |

2d. Continue to enter selected green spaces annually for Green Flag awards. This provides a means of assessing local parks against national standards.

2e. Review and simplify the ownership of Council green spaces. Bringing together more important parks and recreation grounds within a single department could help to deliver consistent standards, backed up by specialist knowledge and resources.

2f. Bring together grounds maintenance and management of major recreational green spaces. This can help to make management more accountable and responsive to customers, and allow staff and budgets to be used more flexibly to meet changing needs. The current grounds maintenance contract is due to finish in November 2009, providing an opportunity to review how the service might best be delivered, and to create a more joined-up approach to the management of this important work.

2g. Increase staff presence in green spaces. This could be achieved by expanding ranger teams, changing existing work patterns, and by training other staff such as grounds maintenance staff to monitor sites during their regular visits and report safety and security issues.

2h. Revise green space by-laws and create new control orders. Orders should be introduced where they would provide a more effective means to deal with common problems. The by-laws should be revised so that they are relevant to today's needs.

2i. Ensure that all green space improvements consider safety and security. This might involve the Police's 'Secured by Design' scheme where appropriate to ensure best practice is followed.

Objective 3: Make better use of our existing resources and find new funding to improve the most valuable green spaces

We found that:

- Lack of investment over recent decades has led to worn out facilities that can put people off using green spaces.
- The Council has a successful track history of getting external funding for green space improvement, and has provided match funding where necessary.
- Total revenue budgets for green spaces in Rotherham have fallen to low levels compared to other metropolitan districts, and this could make it difficult to maintain improvements in good condition.
- Parks income can help us to pay for higher quality services, and therefore needs to be maximised and re-invested in green spaces.
- Opportunities exist to obtain funding from housing developers through planning agreements. However, in the past this has not been sufficient to cover the long term cost to the Council of maintaining new open spaces to acceptable standards.

Recommendations

3a. Develop a green space investment programme. This should be based on priorities identified through this Strategy, and will help to support the case for bids to the Council's capital programme and to external funding bodies.

3b. Ensure all capital investment is matched by appropriate revenue budgets. This will help to ensure that we can keep improved sites and facilities in good condition.

3c. Explore opportunities for increased income generation. These must not spoil the character of green spaces, and might include investment in new or improved customer services. Any resulting income must supplement rather than replace existing budgets.

3d. Introduce planning policy to help achieve agreed standards of green space provision in new developments. This should include a green space contribution from developers, in line with the following principles:-

- New green spaces should only be provided where they are needed to ensure that homes will be within agreed walking distances of them.
- Where new homes are served by existing green spaces, then there should be a financial contribution, based on the number of homes being developed, to enhance those green spaces in line with proposed quality standards.
- Contributions should also include an amount equivalent to the cost of maintaining new green space or improvements to existing green space for a period of thirty years.

Objective 4: Different organisations who provide green spaces and related services to work together to improve them

We found that:

- Green spaces just outside the borough are likely to be used by people living in Rotherham and need to be taken into account in the implementation of this Strategy.
- There are several organisations that are responsible for the ownership, management and maintenance of accessible green spaces leading to inconsistent standards.
- Achievement of many of the aims of this Strategy requires a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach by different green space providers.
- Opportunities to access external funding can be improved through partnership working and community involvement.

Recommendations

4a. Establish a Green Spaces Panel. This should include all relevant Council departments and their partners (e.g. Rotherham 2010), and others who provide accessible green space. The main aims of this body would be to:-

- co-ordinate actions within the Green Space Strategy
- discuss best practice
- review standards and priorities
- jointly monitor progress

4b. Consult with neighbouring local authorities. The aim of this should be to ensure that developments in one area can take account of what is happening over the border.

4c. Promote partnership working. Organisations such as Groundwork Trusts, funding bodies, NHS Trusts, and Safer Neighbourhood Teams can help green space providers to improve green spaces and increase the numbers of people using them.

Objective 5: Help communities to get involved in the development and management of green spaces to meet local needs

We found that:

- Green spaces are an ideal environment for volunteer activity, and there are significant opportunities to expand this.
- Opportunities to access external funding can be improved through partnership working and community involvement.

Recommendations

5a. Create new opportunities for volunteering. Existing volunteer development plans should be expanded to cover all principal green spaces, in partnership with Voluntary Action Rotherham and other volunteering organisations. These plans should be inclusive, catering for people of different abilities, ages and social backgrounds.

5b. Maintain support for Friends Groups. The Council and other green space providers should work in partnership with representative groups, for example to improve sites and increase public events and activities in green spaces. Existing friends groups can also advise new groups to help them become successfully established.

5c. Explore the creation of properly resourced Community Trusts or similar bodies as an alternative way to manage and maintain green spaces where sufficient local interest and capacity is present.

Objective 6: Promote people's enjoyment of green spaces by making them accessible and attractive to all

We found that:

- Green spaces across Rotherham attract a high number of visits, are the most visited cultural facility for adults and one of the top four activities for young people.
- Local people need more complete and up-to-date information about green space sites and activities within them.
- Some people use green spaces only occasionally or not at all, and marketing should target them to encourage greater use.
- More information needs to be gathered about how people use green spaces.

Recommendations

6a. Regularly obtain and analyse information about green space users and non-users. This could include questionnaires, people counters and feedback from events.

6b. Introduce a Green Spaces Marketing plan. This would use evidence from surveys to: find ways of increasing usage and satisfaction; raise awareness of the benefits of green space; and ensure equality of access for all. The plan would need to be regularly reviewed to ensure it achieves its aims.

6c. Provide clear, helpful information about green spaces. This should include printed and web-based information, and notice-boards at larger sites. This information should be monitored to ensure that it is effective in reaching all sections of the community.

Objective 7: Improve Rotherham's environment by looking after places that support wildlife, protecting the landscape, and other measures

We found that:

- Nationally, green spaces are receiving a lot of attention because of the way that they can make the environment more sustainable.
- A separate Local Wildlife Site System identifies green spaces in Rotherham that are important for biodiversity, but further work is needed to assess their landscape and wider environmental value.

Recommendations

7a. Use the Local Wildlife Site System. This will help biodiversity importance to be taken into account when considering developments that would change the character of existing green spaces, and also to minimise damage to wildlife habitats.

7b. Refer to a borough landscape character assessment. Green spaces are important in giving different parts of Rotherham their distinctive quality. A landscape character assessment would make it easier to identify and protect green spaces of high landscape value.

7c. Consider and protect the wider environmental value of green spaces. A system should be developed that takes into account climatic, drainage and other environmental effects of developments affecting green spaces. Again, this will help to protect more valuable sites.

Objective 8: Link green spaces to develop a green network across the borough**We found that:**

- The value of green spaces can be enhanced by linking them together to provide recreational walking and cycling routes, wildlife corridors, and high quality landscape belts.
- Further work needs to be done to identify where opportunities exist to link green spaces.

Recommendations

8a. Protect and improve existing green links. This will include green spaces that are easily accessible from main routes identified in Rotherham's Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and those that connect with one or more neighbouring green spaces to form a linear feature.

8b. Create new green links between existing green spaces. This may be difficult to achieve where a green space is surrounded on all sides by built up areas. However, opportunities can arise when new developments take place. The possibility of creating or extending green links should be considered at an early stage in discussions between the Planning Service and developers about proposed schemes.

8c. Review Green Space by-laws on cycling and horse riding where this would encourage use of green links without conflicting with other users.

What happens next?

The Council will prepare and consult on an action plan for green spaces in Rotherham based on this strategy.

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