

## **CABINET**

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate  
Street, Rotherham. S60  
2TH**

**Date: Wednesday, 20 October 2010**

**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 22nd September , 2010 (copy supplied separately)
5. April to August 2010 Financial and Performance Report on Major External Funding Programmes and Projects (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 21)
  - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
6. Publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan Development Plan Document (report herewith) (Pages 22 - 26)
  - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
7. Six Month Review of the Council's Website (report herewith) (Pages 27 - 34)
  - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
8. Annual Customer Feedback Report 2009/10 (report herewith) (Pages 35 - 50)
  - Strategic Director of Finance to report.
9. Information Flow to South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA) (report herewith) (Pages 51 - 74)
  - Chief Executive to report.
10. Minutes of a meeting of the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group held on 17th September, 2010 (copy herewith) (Pages 75 - 83)
  - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.

11. 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)):-
12. Waste PFI – Post Procurement Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA2) (report herewith) (Pages 84 - 98)
  - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
13. Waste PFI Procurement – Call for Final Tenders (report herewith) (Pages 99 - 111)
  - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.
14. Waste Treatment and Disposal – Project Management Procurement Update (report herewith) (Pages 112 - 120)
  - Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO CABINET</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>April to August 2010 Financial and Performance Report on Major External Funding Programmes and Projects</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Financial Services &amp; Chief Executives</b>

## **5. Summary**

This report provides an overview of the performance and achievements of the Council's major external funding programmes and projects for the period April to August 2010 and also against the targets set for the financial year 2010-2011.

The priorities for each regime, together with the context of each project / programme's contribution to addressing those priorities have previously been provided as an appendix to the report in December 2007.

## **6. Recommendations**

**That Cabinet:**

- **notes the content of the report**
- **considers the progress and actions underway to address areas where the expected outcomes for the major external funding programmes and projects are not in line with the targets set.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background

Progress reports have been provided since April 2007 to update SLT and Cabinet on the financial performance and achievements of the externally funded programmes and projects in Rotherham. This progress report is the first for 2010/2011 financial year, and covers the period of April to August 2010.

The new Coalition Government has come into power since the last report and in its first 100 days of office has announced substantial reductions in both the revenue and capital grants (both unringfenced and ringfenced) previously made available to the Council. The impact of these grant reductions continues to be assessed. Where this has been finalised the report makes reference.

The major externally funded schemes considered in this report are:-

- Big Lottery Fund (BLF, or BIG)
- Department for Education (previously DCSF) Play Pathfinder
- European Union ERDF and ESF
- Future Jobs Fund (FJF)
- Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRP)
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – Transitional Funding (NRF TF)
- Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)
- Regional Housing Programme (RHP)
- Yorkshire Forward Single Pot (SRIP)

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) Reward Grant of £5.9m awarded to RMBC in recognition of meeting targets for improvement between 2006 and 2009 has also been cut by 50% to approximately £2.8m (split 50:50 revenue and capital). The reduced programme is now commencing and will run over two years. Funding has been allocated in support of the following themes:

- Town Centre – Guest and Chrimes site
- Volunteering & Employment Support
- Anti Social Behaviour & Crime – Enforcement
- Anti Social Behaviour – Area Assemblies
- Employment – Supply Chain
- Employment – NEETs
- Safeguarding Children & Young People and the
- Imagination Library.

The majority of the funds are managed as programmes by RMBC and have well established and robust quarterly reporting mechanisms with the relevant Government departments. It should be noted that Big Lottery Fund, Department for Education Play Pathfinder, EU funding and the Future Jobs Fund are managed in Rotherham as individual projects not programmes, but the objectives of these funding regimes, together with the projects' contributions towards achieving those objectives, are included for completeness.

Details of the financial performance and achievements to date on these funding regimes follow.

## 7.2 Summary of progress and performance to date – Key headlines

Appendix 1 provides a financial and performance summary (including a RAG Status) for funding regimes and individual projects currently being delivered across the Borough. The main issues to be highlighted from this summary are:

- **Big Lottery Fund, Children's Play Programme** - This has been a very successful programme. The final spend will be completed over the few months before the programme closes.
- **Department of Education Play Pathfinder** – All Play Pathfinder revenue programmes have had their funding cut by 50%. A bid has been made to BLF Reaching Spaces to address this shortfall. Without it, the Councils ability to sustain the Rotherham Adventure Playground could be hindered
- **European Union ESF & ERDF** – The 14-16 & 16-19 NEETs projects continue to perform well, and are to be combined into one 14-19 contract at the request of the Skills Funding Agency. The three ERDF projects are all subject to contract variations which will re-align spend with performance targets.
- **Future Jobs Fund** – The Programme has been extended by six months, resulting in participants being in job placements until September 2012. This should ensure that all spend and outputs targets are met.
- **HMRP** – The Government has announced a 16% cut to this year's allocation to the Pathfinder programme and a revised investment plan has been prepared to balance spending to the final funding allocation.
- **Regional Housing Programme** – The future of the Regional Housing Board is unclear and will be confirmed by Government through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in October. The 2010-11 funding allocation had been received prior to the change of Government, and no clawback of funding has yet been announced.
- **Yorkshire Forward Single Pot** – Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for Yorkshire and the Humber, and the Government has announced that RDAs are to be abolished. The newly announced Regional Growth Fund is to finance capital projects over the next two years, but current Yorkshire Forward projects that have not yet commenced have been postponed indefinitely and are not likely to progress further.

Further detail of the performance and achievements for each funding stream is summarised below. The appendices accompanying this report provide a variance analysis of the financial performance for each funding stream as well as details of future years' funding available to the Council. Any project exhibiting greater than a 10% variance is described individually below.

## 7.3 Big Lottery Fund (BLF, or BIG) Children's Play Programme

The spend target for BLF is £6k and this has been achieved. Expenditure is on target for programme completion.

**Appendix 2** provides a summary of the Rotherham Play projects.

## 7.4 Department for Education (DfE) Play Pathfinder

The spend target for DfE is £9k and this has been achieved. Following the change in Government, the DfE has reduced all Play Pathfinder revenue budgets by 50%. This has had an impact on this programme making sustainability harder to achieve for the Rotherham Adventure Playground. An application to BLF Reaching Spaces has been made to address this funding shortfall.

Appendix 3 provides a summary of performance.

## **7.5 EU Funding – European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

### ESF projects:

#### ***14-16 NEETs (CYPS lead)***

The spend target for the ESF 14-16 NEETs project is £173k with actual spend being £138k. This is a notional under spend of £35k as the funding is paid on a profile and unit cost basis rather than actual spend each quarter.

Work is underway to combine both ESF contracts into one 14-19 contract at the request of the Skills Funding Agency. The expected end date of the combined contract is 31st December 2011. The project is progressing well, with 465 young people accessing projects or activities (88% of contract outputs) of which 428 will achieve an accredited qualification by August 2010 (86% of contract outputs).

#### ***16-19 NEETs (CYPS lead)***

The spend target for the ESF 16-19 NEETs project is £345k. The project has spent £185k, an underspend of £160k. Again, this is a notional under spend as the funding is paid on a profile and unit cost basis rather than actual spend.

The lower than expected spending, however, has contributed to the under-performance on expected output profiles. To help address this, additional volume contracts with 3 service providers have been put in place to enable them to deliver to more learners. Overall, the project is still on profile.

### ERDF projects:

#### ***Technical Assistance (CEX lead)***

The second claim which reports activity by all partners in South Yorkshire (the four South Yorkshire local authorities, the Dearne Valley Eco-Vision through Sheffield City Region and South Yorkshire Forest) is in preparation, and Appendix 4 provides detail of actual expenditure to date this year for the three Rotherham projects.

There is a minor variance of £6k which relates to events and an audit that have yet to take place. These events support the development of partnerships that will ultimately generate ideas suitable for future ERDF applications and are spread evenly throughout the lifetime of the project. However, they are able to be delivered as required. Spend is expected to be recovered in future months.

#### ***Enterprising Neighbourhoods (EDS lead)***

The spend target is £332k, and an amount of £263k has been spent. The contract variation with Yorkshire Forward has not yet been signed off. Once this process is complete, new profiles will be established for the projects to bring the expenditure back into line with targets.

#### ***Rotherham Employability (EDS lead)***

The spend target is £163k, with £116k being spent. There have been delays created by YF / ERDF processes, which have in turn delayed subcontractors in achieving full employment of the project delivery teams during the first 3 months of delivery.

For this project, YF have contracted with RMBC on a consortium bid basis rather than a subcontracted delivery basis. This issue was raised during appraisal but was not seen as a problem by YF at that time. However a recent audit has now highlighted this issue to YF and a contract variation is to be completed to resolve this issue.

**Appendix 4** provides details of the five projects that are currently EU funded.

### **7.6 Future Jobs Fund (FJF)**

This is the third quarter of activity for this programme, and the current spend target is £946k with a total of £560k expenditure being achieved.

This is a significant underspend of £386k and relates to changes to the contract regarding the provision of upfront fees.

For Phase 2 (which commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010) the funding mechanism has been changed to avoid overpayments and the clawing back of unused fees. Now 20% of the total contracted number of starts for the first three months is paid at the start of the contract period, the second 20% is paid in the month after the job is filled with the remaining 60% being due in the second quarter.

To the end of August the Fund has been used to create and fill 366 jobs against a target to the end of September of 453. There has also been a 6 month extension to the Programme, with people able to be assisted into jobs until 31/03/12. Funding is paid on a unit cost basis and therefore target spend figures are notional.

**Appendix 5** provides a summary of performance.

### **7.7 Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRP)**

The current spend target for the HMRP Programme is £2.263m with actual spend being £1.968m, or £295k behind target due to a reprofiling of planned environmental works in Dalton, Eastwood and Meadowbank. The expenditure relating to these works will be shown in the next report.

The Government has announced a 16% funding cut on this year's allocation. Rotherham's share of the cuts has not yet been confirmed at regional level but is estimated to be between £522k (12%) and £696k (16%).

A revised investment plan has been prepared to balance spending to the forecast funding allocation. This 2011-14 funding programme will be submitted to the Homes & Communities Agency by the end of the summer and will total £50 million of housing and regeneration investment for a three year period. The funding allocation will be announced after the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in October.

It is unclear if the funding allocation to be announced in October will meet the investment proposal, following the government announcement of a 25% cut on public funding in future years.

**Appendix 6** illustrates financial performance of the Programme to date.

### **7.8 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – Transitional Funding (NRF-TF)**

The NRF TF is a flexible programme and any variance can be reprofiled throughout the year and also between years as needed. The spend target is £244k with the actual expenditure being £241k, which is a minor under spend of £3k. Within the Employment, Enterprise and Financial Inclusion (EEFI) Theme the Financial Inclusion Manager left the project and the elapsed time involved in recruiting a replacement has led to the need to reprofile this Theme's budget.

The Positive Opportunities for Young People (POYP) element of NRF-TF is managed by Voluntary Action Rotherham, and after a slow start is now moving forward quickly. There are eight projects active that focus upon encouraging young people to take part in sport, theatre, team and confidence building activities and drop in centres delivered in

partnership with schools and youth workers. The Proud Board of the LSP oversees performance and delivery of this element.

**Appendix 7** illustrates the financial performance of this programme to date.

### **7.9 Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)**

The Council received notification on the 5<sup>th</sup> July that the proposed school rebuilding programme for Rotherham, within the Building Schools for the Future programme, had been stopped. With regard to the Maltby Academy only, this scheme was put under review. This remains the case following a further Government announcement on the 9<sup>th</sup> August. The Council is now expecting an announcement regarding Maltby Academy following the Comprehensive Spending Review, which is due to be published on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October. An announcement is also expected on the proposed mechanism for future schools' capital funding in December.

The Leisure / Joint Service Centre PFI involves a partnership between the Council and DC Projects (Rotherham) Limited, and has seen £36m of capital investment in 4 new leisure facilities and a ground breaking Joint Service Centre with NHS Rotherham in Maltby:

- Rotherham Leisure Complex
- Aston-cum-Aughton Leisure Centre
- Wath-upon-Deerne Leisure Centre
- Maltby Joint Services Centre (JSC)
- Maltby Leisure Centre

All of these facilities are completed and open to the public: the contract for leisure facilities management will run for 33 years.

The grant received during the operational phase of both the Schools and Leisure PFI will remain static.

The Council is currently engaged in a joint Waste PFI procurement with Barnsley and Doncaster Councils to provide residual waste facilities for the 3 boroughs. The competitive dialogue process is continuing with 2 bidders with a view to issuing call for final tenders in October / November 2010. This is progressing well and key issues are being resolved. A SLT / Cabinet Report will be submitted in September / October 2010 providing an update on progress to date. The Project is timetabled to reach financial close in March 2011.

**Appendix 8** illustrates the financial profile of the leisure and schools PFI projects currently being delivered across the Borough.

### **7.10 Regional Housing Programme (RHP)**

The spend target is £710k with actual spend being £485k, this being an under spend of £225k. An additional £130k of spend has been delivered but not yet invoiced and the remaining £95k has been rolled forward and continues to be available to the programme. Expenditure is expected to be in line with the allocation by the end of March 2011. The future of the Regional Housing Board is unclear and will be confirmed by government through the CSR in October.

**Appendix 9** illustrates the financial performance of this programme to date.



### **7.11 Yorkshire Forward Single Pot (SRIP)**

Only four of the projects funded by SRIP have reported spend, achieving a total spend of £495k against a target of £490k which has resulted in a minor overspend of £5k.

As detailed within the report entitled 'Regeneration in Times of Austerity' presented to the September meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, improvements to the Railway Station will continue to completion, but funding has been stopped for the major initiatives relating to: High Street acquisitions; All Saints Public Realm; the Weirside Site; Lloyds Bank demolition; and Gateways Public Realm.

A detailed listing of Rotherham projects currently funded by SRIP is attached as Appendix 10.

## **8. Finance**

A substantial amount of external funds are used by RMBC in order to assist in delivery against the Council's priority areas. In addition, RMBC is the accountable body for a number of external funds and is therefore responsible for the proper use, monitoring and audit of these resources. As with most public funds, external funds are often subject to the "use it or lose it" regime; it is therefore imperative that RMBC maximises these additional resources and ensures the money is used wisely to meet our priorities and isn't left unused at the end of the particular period or programme.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The main risk associated with this report is that external funds allocated to RMBC and its partners are not fully used and therefore ultimately lost to the Borough. It is the purpose of this report to assist in alleviating this issue, through monitoring the major externally funded schemes and bringing to attention potential areas of underspend and under performance.

As will be apparent from the numerous amendments detailed within this report, the change in Government and its priorities has had an adverse effect on the amount of external funding available to RMBC with significant cuts to grants already being implemented. The Comprehensive Spending Review, due to be published on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, is expected to further affect the current extremely challenging budget position. This report will continue to advise of remedial action being taken and also of changes as they occur.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Externally funded programmes are used to assist in the implementation of delivering against the RMBC priority areas. It is vital that this additional resource is appropriately targeted and fully used. This report looks at the performance to date for the main externally funded programmes.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation with:

Economic Strategy Team, EDS

External Funding, CYPS

External Funding Team, Financial Services

Neighbourhood Investment Team, Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

Policy and External Affairs Team, Chief Executive's Office

### Contact Names:

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Funding Regime	Approved Budget (£)	Actual Spend (£)	Total Variance (£)	% Variance	Financial and Performance Summary	RAG Status
<b>BIG Lottery Fund</b>	5,558	5,558	0	0.0%	On target.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>DfE Play Pathfinder</b>	9,006	9,006	0	0.0%	On target.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>European Union ERDF / ESF &amp; LSC Co-financed</b>	1,060,747	743,398	317,349	29.9%	Please see a detailed explanation of the variance within the main body of the report.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>Future Jobs Fund</b>	945,750	560,200	385,550	40.8%	Delayed expenditure is to take place in Q2. This funding is paid on a unit cost basis and therefore target spend figures are notional.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>HMR Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder</b>	2,263,000	1,967,532	295,468	13.1%	Environmental works carried out in Q1 have not yet been invoiced. This expenditure will be claimed in Q2.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>NRF - Transitional Funding</b>	244,326	241,415	2,911	1.2%	On target.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>PFI Private Finance Initiatives</b>	2,008,326	2,008,326	0	0.0%	On target.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>Regional Housing Programme (RHP)</b>	710,000	485,000	225,000	31.7%	A further £130k expenditure has not yet been invoiced and the residual underspend of £95k remains available to the programme.	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>Yorkshire Forward Single Pot</b>	490,064	495,488	-5,424	-1.1%	Current and future funding unclear at present due to change in Government priorities, not performance issues.	<b>GREEN</b>
	<b>7,736,777</b>	<b>6,515,923</b>	<b>1,220,854</b>	<b>15.8%</b>		

Key to RAG Status:

<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>RED</b>	A funding regime or individual projects will not be in a position to deliver both the financial and performance targets. As a consequence significant grant funding will need to be returned and there could be reputational damage to Council with that funding body
<b>AMBER</b>	A funding regime or individual projects may not meet either the financial and performance targets resulting in the possibility of grant funding being returned to the funding body
<b>GREEN</b>	A funding regime or individual projects is/are on course to meet both financial and performance targets

## FUNDING REGIME: Big Lottery Fund - Children's Play Programme

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Rotherham Play - Fixed Children's Play Provision	Nick Barnes	58,054	0	0	0	Spend on target for September closure	0	0	0
Rotherham Play - Play Engagement Programme	Nick Barnes	65,998	5,558	5,558	0	Spend on target for September closure	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>124,052</b>	<b>5,558</b>	<b>5,558</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## FUNDING REGIME: Department for Education Play Pathfinder

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/2011				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Revenue Programme	Nick Barnes	72,345	9,006	9,006	0	DfE has cut the grant by 50% therefore the budget has been reset for the year.	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>72,345</b>	<b>9,006</b>	<b>9,006</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## FUNDING REGIME: European Union ESF and ERDF, also LSC Co-financed

Project Name	Lead officer	Target Annual Spend (£)	2010/2011			Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
			Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
<b>Chief Executive's</b>									
<b>ERDF - Priority 5</b>									
ERDF Technical Assistance	Ian Squires	350,967	47,818	41,346	6,472	Detail provided in main body of report.	0	0	0
<b>Children &amp; Young People's Services</b>									
<b>ESF Learning &amp; Skills Council (LSC) Co-financed</b>									
16-19 NEETs (Profiles based upon Calendar Years as per LSC contract)	Tricia Smith	829,324	344,806	184,874	159,932	Detail provided in main body of report.	494,164	0	0
ESF 14-16 NEETs (Profiles based upon grant year Nov 08- Sept 09 per LSC contract)	Tricia Smith	692,860	173,215	137,511	35,704	Detail provided in main body of report.	0	0	0
<b>Environment &amp; Development Services</b>									
<b>ERDF - Priority 3</b>									
Enterprising Neighbourhoods Project	Simeon Leach	1,327,660	331,906	263,491	68,415	Detail provided in main body of report.	1,094,103	0	0
							<b>Future Years</b>		
Project Name	Lead officer		2010/2011			Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14

		<b>Target Annual Spend (£)</b>	<b>Cumulative Approved Spend (£)</b>	<b>Actual spend to August 2010 (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>		<b>Target Spend (£)</b>	<b>Target Spend (£)</b>	<b>Target Spend (£)</b>
Rotherham Employability Project	Simeon Leach	1,032,398	163,002	116,176	46,826	Detail provided in main body of report.	983,839	578,839	0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4,233,209</b>	<b>1,060,747</b>	<b>743,398</b>	<b>317,349</b>		<b>2,572,106</b>	<b>578,839</b>	<b>0</b>



**FUNDING REGIME: Communities & Local Government - Future Jobs Fund**

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/2011				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual cumulative spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Future Jobs Fund	Simeon Leach	2,144,805	945,750	560,200	385,550	Detail provided in the body of the report.			
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,144,805</b>	<b>945,750</b>	<b>560,200</b>	<b>385,550</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## FUNDING REGIME: HMR Pathfinder

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder	Paul Walsh	4,354,000	2,263,000	1,967,532	295,468	Detail provided within the body of the report.	tbc	tbc	tbc
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4,354,000</b>	<b>2,263,000</b>	<b>1,967,532</b>	<b>295,468</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

For information: Annual Spend Target for the year would be £3,658,000 after applying spending cut of £696,000 (16% cut) - yet to be confirmed.

## FUNDING REGIME: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund - Transitional Funding (NRF TF)

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund - Transitional Funding	Ian Squires	1,730,870	244,326	241,415	2,911	The minor variance is a result of two issues. The Employment, Enterprise and Financial Inclusion Theme has reported a significant underspend due to a lengthy recruitment process for a replacement project manager and will require reprofiling to ensure achievement of targets. The eight projects within the Positive Opportunities for Young People Theme, which is overseen by the Proud Board of the LSP, are now delivering well and have exceeded their current forecast.	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>1,730,870</b>	<b>244,326</b>	<b>241,415</b>	<b>2,911</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## FUNDING REGIME: Private Finance Initiatives

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Schools PFI	Graham Sinclair	6,222,509	1,555,627	1,555,627	0		6,222,509	6,222,509	6,222,509
Leisure PFI	Steve Hallsworth	1,810,796	452,699	452,699	0		1,810,796	1,810,796	1,810,796
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>8,033,305</b>	<b>2,008,326</b>	<b>2,008,326</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>8,033,305</b>	<b>8,033,305</b>	<b>8,033,305</b>

Annual Spend Target shown is the amount of government grant received for each scheme.  
The grant received during the management phase of both the Schools and Leisure PFI will remain static.

## FUNDING REGIME: Regional Housing Programme

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
Regional Housing Programme	Paul Walsh	2,759,000	710,000	485,000	225,000	Detail provided within the body of the report.	tbc	tbc	tbc
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,759,000</b>	<b>710,000</b>	<b>485,000</b>	<b>225,000</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Total Spend target this year is £2,759,000 composed of £2,180,000 funding allocation +£579,000 funding received in 2009-10 committed but not spent.

## FUNDING REGIME: SRIP

Project Name	Lead officer	2010/11				Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	Future Years		
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual Spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		2011/12 Target Spend (£)	2012/13 Target Spend (£)	2013/14 Target Spend (£)
<b>EDS - Environment Directorate</b>									
<b>Theme 1: Enabling radical restructuring of the South Yorkshire economic base</b>									
M1 SEZ Technology Corridor Iconic Bridge	Mike Shires / Andy Newton	755,000	0	0	0	This is a Yorkshire Forward project and as such, RMBC have no influence over expenditure.	0	0	0
Rotherham Masterplan	Patrick Middleton	4,293,827	0	0	0	Projects put on hold by YF. Decisions to be made after spending review in October. Cannot commit to future years at present.	0	0	0
Westgate Chambers	Tim Devine	44,025	0	0	0	YF set new budget for the year. Not able to commit to future years at present.	0	0	0
Lloyds TSB	Tim Devine	9,365	0	0	0	YF set new budget for the year. Not able to commit to future years at present.	0	0	0
Brookfield Park	Karen Gallagher	59,848	0	0	0	2010/11 spend profiled in future quarters.	48,552	55,502	0
Renaissance Enabling	John Smales	210,000	105,000	103,970	1,030	On target. Contract ends September 30th, there will not be an extension.	0	0	0
							<b>Future Years</b>		

Project Name	Lead officer		2010/11			Reason for Variance / Action Required / Taken	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Annual Spend Target (£)	Cumulative Approved Spend (£)	Actual Spend to August 2010 (£)	Variance (£)		Target Spend (£)	Target Spend (£)	Target Spend (£)
Corporation Street Enabling	Patrick Middleton	1,734,674	0	0	0	Projects put on hold by YF. Decisions to be made after spending review in October. Not able to commit to future years at present.	0	0	0
Weirside	Mike Shires	3,347,615	0	0	0	Projects put on hold by YF. Decisions to be made after spending review in October. Not able to commit to future years at present.	0	0	0
Coalfields Site Dinnington	Yorkshire Forward	991,264	0	0	0	YF led project, no RMBC input on spend.	0	0	0
Townscape Heritage Initiative	Charles Hammersley	650,000	27,765	27,765	0	On target.	580,000	0	0
<b>Theme 5: Creating built and green sustainable environments in urban and rural areas</b>									
Public Realm Gateways	Andy Newton	1,500,000	144,052	144,052	0	On target.	0	0	0
<b>Children &amp; Young People's Services</b>									
<b>Theme 3: Achieving a major step change in South Yorkshire's Education, Training and Skills base</b>									
Inspire Rotherham	Adrian Hobson	1,220,000	213,247	219,701	-6,454	Slightly ahead of spend profile. Profile reduced by same amount in Q4.	200,000	0	0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>14,815,618</b>	<b>490,064</b>	<b>495,488</b>	<b>-5,424</b>		<b>828,552</b>	<b>55,502</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20th October, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Publication of BDR Joint Waste Plan (Development Plan Document)</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Forward Planning, Environment &amp; Development Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

The Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham (BDR) Joint Waste Plan has been developed by planning officers from the three authorities as part of the Local Development Framework, in order to provide policies to determine planning applications for waste management facilities. This includes facilities for the following waste types: Municipal, Commercial & Industrial, Construction & Demolition, Hazardous, and Agricultural.

The BDR Joint Waste Plan is a formal Development Plan Document which has already been subject to statutory public consultation and other stages of consultation with public and private bodies, to assist in its development. In addition to providing policies to inform the determination of planning applications, it also proposes to allocate four strategic sites of up to 5 hectares (12 acres), for the development of larger scale waste management centres and to encourage the co-location of similar facilities from the waste industry.

## **6. Recommendation**

**That Cabinet recommend to Full Council approval of the formal Publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan.**



## 7. Proposals and Details

### ***Background***

Waste management is a significant issue facing Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Councils. Approximately 1.3 million tonnes of waste are generated by households and businesses annually and this figure is increasing each year. A large proportion of BDR's municipal waste is currently sent to landfill sites but this cannot continue because:

- Landfill is generally harmful to the environment and human health because as it decays it releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
- Valuable resources such as plastics, metals and liquids, that could potentially be recycled, are being lost.
- The government has set challenging targets to increase recycling and send less waste to landfill. Severe financial penalties will be incurred by Councils if these targets are not achieved.
- More environmentally friendly waste management practices are emerging, such as waste minimisation, recycling, composting and energy recovery.

### ***Proposal***

(The BDR "Joint Waste Plan Pre-publication Consultation Document" is available on the internet at: <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/wastedpd> ).

As a Planning Authority, we are required to develop policies to help deliver sustainable waste management by providing sufficient opportunities for new waste management facilities: of the right type, in the right place, and at the right time: (Planning Policy Statement 10).

The Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham Joint Waste Plan has been developed by the three authorities working together to produce designated sites and policies to deal with planning applications for all types of waste management facilities. Central government encourages joint working in this matter, particularly where cross-boundary movement of waste occurs.

The BDR Joint Waste Plan provides criteria based policies for the determination of planning applications for all types of waste operations, including recycling, recovery, treatment and disposal.

It also proposes the designation of 4 sites for strategic waste management facilities at the following locations:

1. Sandall Stones Road, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster. – This site already has planning permission for waste facilities.
2. Hatfield Power Park, Stainforth, Doncaster. – This site already has planning permission for waste facilities.
3. Bolton Road, Manvers, Rotherham. – The site is proposed by the BDR Waste Management Departments for the siting of a Private Finance Initiative funded (PFI) municipal waste treatment plant. This will require a full planning application and be subject to planning permission from the Rotherham Council Planning Board.
4. Corus Engineering Steels, Aldwarke, Rotherham. – The total area of the Corus Steels Complex is around 150 hectares, and Corus have proposed an area of 5 hectares to the rear of the working plants, for a waste management facility. This will require a full planning application and be subject to planning permission from the Rotherham Council Planning Board.

The four sites have been chosen on the basis of their performance against a range of criteria, such as, proximity to urban areas, transport routes, deliverability and sustainability appraisal. These brownfield sites are located on industrial or employment land with access to the main transport network.

The BDR Joint Waste Plan also proposes to safeguard important existing facilities to protect them from being changed to other uses. The aim is to prevent the loss of waste management sites and to guard against the loss of treatment capacity in BDR, (e.g. Sterecycle Ltd at Templeborough which currently takes 70,000 tonnes of municipal waste from BDR).

### ***Previous Consultation***

As part of the process a range of options have been considered in the preparation of the BDR Joint Waste Plan. These initial options and subsequent versions of the Plan have been subject to various stages of consultation, both formal (written/statutory) and informal (events open to the public):

- **‘Issues and Options’ report** - (February - March 2008) which included a long list of 54 potential strategic sites and the accompanying sustainability appraisal scoping report.
- **‘Towards Publication’ report** - (November 2008 – January 2009) which set out emerging policy approaches and a reduced list of 35 potential strategic sites.
- **Public Events and Stakeholder/Waste Industry Workshops** – Several events held during 2009 and 2010, including public events at Manvers, Bolton-upon-Deane, Hatfield, Stainforth and Dalton near to the proposed strategic sites.

- **Consultation on the Pre-publication Joint Waste Plan** –(June – August 2010) which set out the final draft version of the Plan with its policies and four strategic sites identified. This also included events open to the public at venues near to the strategic sites.
- **Local concerns for Manvers and Hatfield:** Local residents, particularly from Bolton-upon Dearne and Hatfield, raised objections to allocating Manvers and Hatfield Power Park as strategic waste sites. The main concerns relate to traffic, air pollution, health, safety (i.e. accidents), visual impact (i.e. loss of views) and reduced property prices (the latter not being a planning matter). Many of these points have been raised and considered previously, and would be addressed in detail through the planning application process, with the Plan providing a framework for this. The approach for the BDR Joint Waste Plan is to identify strategic sites in order to comply with national policy and to maximise flexibility for investment within the sector. Therefore four strategic sites have been identified with reasonable chances of delivery.

#### ***Next stages:***

The next stage for this Development Plan Document, having been endorsed by the LDF Steering Group, is to seek approval from Cabinet and Full Council for its formal “Publication”. It will then be subject to a 6 week period of statutory consultation, during which it can be challenged on the grounds of its “soundness” as a Development Plan Document, i.e. that it is the most appropriate strategy, founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and it is deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored. Ultimately, it will be submitted to government to be examined for “soundness” by an Independent Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. If the Inspector’s Report is favourable, the BDR Joint Waste Plan will then be recommended to Full Council for formal adoption.

#### **8. Finance**

There are no direct financial implications from this report, although continuing to ensure the timely preparation of this DPD will accrue efficiency savings and improved receipts under Government grant incentives.

#### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

(a) The publication and subsequent submission of this document to the Secretary of State is intended to update the Council’s policies for waste management planning applications, which currently rely on the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). It will also provide strategic sites for the provision of waste management facilities during the timeframe of the Local Development Framework to 2026. It will attempt to avoid the uncertainty of waste planning applications in other areas, by promoting the potential for waste facilities at the strategic sites, subject to the policies in the BDR Joint Waste Plan.

The Waste Management Departments of Barnsley Doncaster & Rotherham (BDR), have a history of working together and are currently involved in a project to deal with the municipal waste from the three authorities. This proposes to use Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding, to procure the management of municipal waste by a commercial operator at the Bolton Road Site, Manvers, Wath-upon-Dearne. The BDR Joint Waste Plan will provide the framework for determining a waste planning application on this site, but if not adopted, any planning application would be determined in accordance with the UDP.

**(b)** The new Coalition Government has embarked upon a review of the current planning system and the regulations for determining planning applications may be subject to change. However, recent guidance to local planning authorities from the Coalition Government is that: *“The abolition of Regional Strategies will provide a clear signal of the importance attached to the development and application of local spatial plans, in the form of Local Development Framework Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents.”*

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The publication and subsequent adoption of the BDR Joint Waste Plan will contribute to the Council's cross-cutting theme of Sustainable Development by increasing the recycling and recovery rates for waste and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. This will ultimately reduce the amount of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere and reduce the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out at each stage of the development of the BDR Joint Waste Plan.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

BDR Joint Waste DPD Issues and Options (Mar 2008)  
BDR Issues and Options Consultation Report (June 2008)  
BDR Joint Waste DPD Towards the Publication (Oct 2008)  
BDR Further Consultation Report - Jan 2009 – Dec 2009  
BDR Joint Waste Plan – Pre-publication Consultation (June 2010)

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**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>6 Month Review of the Council's Website</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Financial Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The Council's refreshed website went live on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010 following a successful implementation project, led by the Transformation and Strategic Partnerships Team. This included the purchase and roll out of a new Content Management System providing a flexible, cost effective and engaging way for customers to access Council services online.

This report provides an update on the implementation of the refreshed website in its first six months between January and June 2010.

**6. Recommendations**

- **Cabinet are asked to note progress on the implementation of the refreshed website.**

## **7. Website Refresh**

The Council website is a significant customer access channel for the Council. In the first six months since the website was refreshed, an average of 59,000 unique visitors have visited the website and have viewed an average of almost 2.4 million website pages every month. It is therefore crucial to have a website that is capable of accommodating this level of activity and also providing an online experience that meets customer requirements.

In order to deliver on these requirements and address some issues with the previous website, the Council website was successfully refreshed in January 2010. Over 3,500 pieces of content have been reviewed for accuracy and relevance and rewritten where appropriate. Content has been migrated to an improved Content Management System; this is the software that powers the website and allows any authorised user to update and amend content. Additionally, the Council has launched a number of interactive features which allow citizens to engage with the Council in new and innovative ways.

### **7.1 Benefits of the new Content Management System**

The new Content Management System which underpins the refreshed website is a cost effective solution, which has provided a number of benefits for both customers and the Council over the past six months. These include:

- The provision of an improved 'Google' powered search function allowing citizens to find information more quickly and more accurately.
- The ability to develop online forms and online customer questionnaires quickly and cost effectively. Fifty additional forms have been developed since January enabling customers to transact with the Council at a time which suits them. Citizens are able to track the progress of their service request online. These forms were developed in-house at no charge. Using the previous website, these would have incurred significant expense in the region of £1,000 per form.
- The Content Management System is quick and easy to maintain. The system can be updated by PC or mobile phone, providing employees with the ability to work agilely and providing increased business continuity for the website during times which previously would have prevented officers updating the website, such as the floods in 2007.
- Employees responsible for website maintenance are extremely positive about the new content management system. It has saved officers significant time and effort by having a modern Content Management System.
- Improved stability and resilience has been achieved through external hosting of the website servers. This means that the servers are physically located away from Rotherham. The company hosting the website stores copies of the website in several different locations, providing additional

guarantees of uptime. There has been no unplanned system downtime since the Council website was refreshed whereas previously this was a regular occurrence.

## 7.2 Website Usage

A further benefit of the new website is the ability to collect detailed, accurate information about website usage. The old website had a very limited ability to collect usage information.

Table 1 shows the number of unique visitors to the website in the first six months of 2010. There is no comparative information for the same period last year prior to the refresh as the old website did not enable this particular data to be collected.

**Table 1: Council Website Unique Visitors January – June 2010**

Month	Unique Visitors
January	66,618
February	60,557
March	59,748
April	51,196
May	59,942
June	56,618

Table 2 shows the number of page views per month for the first six months of 2010 alongside the figures for the same period in 2009. This shows a significant increase in the number of monthly page views every month. The particularly high increase in May was due to the high number of visitors viewing election information.

**Table 2: Council Website Page Views January – June 2009 and 2010**

Month	2009	2010	Difference	% Increase
January	929,207	1,789,979	860,772	92.64
February	965,464	3,024,816	2,059,352	213.30
March	755,469	2,810,001	2,054,532	271.95
April	547,281	2,166,582	1,619,301	295.88
May	508,851	2,518,789	2,009,938	395.00
June	533,365	2,006,266	1,472,901	276.15

Customers using the refreshed website have been able to provide information, apply for services, report problems and provide feedback using a range of online forms. In addition to increases in the number of page views, there has also been an increase in the number of transactions completed online since the launch of the refreshed website. Table 3 shows figures for the most

popular online forms submitted between January and June 2010 and figures for the same period in 2009.

**Table 3: Online Forms Submitted January – June 2009 and 2010**

<b>Form Type</b>	<b>Online Forms Submitted (January – June 2009)</b>	<b>Online Forms Submitted (January – June 2010)</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Key Choices form – allowing customers to bid for council housing.	9,982	12,079	+21%
Street Pride form – allowing customers to report issues and request Street Pride services.	331	840	+153%
Council Tax Direct Debit form – allowing customers to set up a direct debit to pay their council tax bill.	596	763	+28%
Customer Comment form – allowing customers to give feedback to any Council department.	326	440	+35%

In total, between January and June 2010, there were 16,579 online forms submitted through the Council website, an overall increase of 11% on the same period in 2009.

Customers can also pay for goods and services using the Council website. There has been an overall increase of 20% in the number of payments being made online in 2010 against the same period in 2009 as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Number of Online Payments January – June 2009 and 2010**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
January	1,784	2,110	+18.3%
February	1,248	1,579	+26.5%
March	1,379	1,598	+15.9%
April	1,926	2,321	+20.5%
May	1,972	2,360	+19.6%
June	1,928	2,359	+22.4%



These website usage figures demonstrate that good progress is being made against the Council's Customer Access Strategy objective of increasing web transactions by 20% during 2010 -11. It is important to note that these significant improvements have been achieved without any major promotion of the new website, which was given a soft launch initially. There will be an increase in the proactive marketing of the new website over the remainder of 2010/11 which should drive up website usage even further. This will play an important role in reducing demands on more expensive customer access channels.

### **7.3 Independent External Reviews**

The Council website has been externally assessed by two independent bodies during 2010. Significant improvements in website performance have been identified in both assessments.

#### **7.3.1 SOCITM Better Connected**

The Council website is assessed on an annual basis by the Society of Information Technology Managers (SOCITM), an independent body who review and report on all local authority websites across the UK. The SOCITM report, titled Better Connected 2010, provides feedback on Local Authority website functionality and ease of use.

Historical performance by the Council website in this assessment has been disappointing, with the site being categorised as 'Satisfactory' in 2008/09 against the following categories:

- Poor
- Satisfactory
- Transactional
- Excellent

In 2009/10, the Better Connected assessment categories have been amended to the following:

- 1 star (equivalent to Poor category)
- 2 stars (equivalent to Satisfactory category)
- 3 stars (equivalent to Transactional category)
- 4 stars (equivalent to Excellent category)

The Council website has achieved an improved 3 star rating in the 2010 Better Connected assessment. In The SOCITM rating puts the Council website in the top quartile for all metropolitan boroughs websites according to the overall assessment of the site's usability. In addition, the Council's online library section on the refreshed website has been highlighted as an example of good practice.

### **7.3.2 Sitemorse**

Another independent company, Sitemorse, who benchmark local authority and private sector websites, also reviewed the Council website. Sitemorse specifically focus on the accessibility of local authority websites and produces a 'league table' based on their scoring.

In February 2010, Sitemorse assessed the Council website as the most improved local authority website and the site increased 301 places (to the top quartile) in the Sitemorse local authority league table immediately following the refresh. Work continues to ensure that this improvement continues.

### **7.4 Customer Registration**

By registering their customer details, the Content Management System allows the customer to be kept informed about their specific areas of interest.

At the end of June 2010, 981 users had registered with the website, and regular marketing emails are being sent to those customers. As registration numbers increase, this facility will allow the Council to target information to customers more quickly and cost effectively.

In order that significant benefits can be achieved from the registration facility, an intensive marketing campaign will begin during September 2010, starting with the Rotherham Show where there will be a stall where people will be encouraged to register on the site .

### **7.5 Customer Satisfaction Results**

Customers are able to provide comments on each website page and this facility is regularly used. Where customers have provided contact details, the Council's website editors make contact with customers to thank customers for their feedback and provide an update on the action they have taken.

Some of the customer comments which have been received are detailed below:

*"I just wanted to say....your website is probably one of the clearest council websites I've ever used – really easy to find what I needed and a cracking design – well done".*

*"I'm not sure you could improve, I haven't had any problems with it. Your old website would be a different story though!! The search engine is very good, it just works. Think you could use more pictures and photos".*

*"It's clean and clutter free, I like that".*

*"Really like the search, I found what I wanted straight away".*

*"I find map search to be very useful to find information".*

Initial customer feedback shows that the majority of customers are very positive about the website with 75% of customers happy with their overall website experience. The customer satisfaction survey will continue throughout 2010 to ensure we are capturing as much customer feedback as possible. Additionally, a customer usability group has been established to provide ongoing feedback and help improve the customer experience.

## 7.6 Website Forward Plan

A Website Forward Plan has been developed to ensure that the website continues to be improved and developed in terms of look and feel, functionality and transaction types available via the site. This is developed in conjunction with Directorates and the Head of Communications and Marketing to ensure that key communication messages and marketing campaigns are reflected on the website. The implementation of the Website Forward Plan is overseen by the Corporate Website Strategy Group chaired by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Commissioning.

## 8. Finance

The Jadu Content Management System has been funded by the ICT Capital programme. Initial set up costs were as follows:

Item	One Off Cost
Jadu CMS	£59,800
Hosting set up	£1,200
Google Search Engine	£2,495
<b>Total</b>	<b>£63,495</b>

Revenue charges relating to the previous version of the Council Website in 2008/09 were £83,395. This sum was made up of a combination of RBT support and maintenance charges and subscriptions to third party services, all of which were rendered unnecessary by the adoption of the new Jadu Content Management System.

These charges have been significantly reduced following the Transformation and Strategic Partnership Team's refresh of the website. Ongoing revenue charges are now as follows:

Item	Annual cost
Jadu CMS licence	£7,200
Hosting service	£9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,200</b>

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Delivery of an effective website as part of the Council's Customer Access Strategy is a critical element in ensuring the Council transforms its services for the benefit of citizens, businesses, members and staff in order to improve the customer experience, generate efficiencies and deliver customer service excellence. This will also form a key supporting access channel for consolidation of customer services.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Council's Customer Access Strategy aims to provide services to customers across a number of channels and seeks to increase the take up of the online channel. The performance of the Council website is therefore central to delivering this strategy.

The Customer Access Strategy will deliver key efficiency and value for money improvements and an effective website will be a significant contributor to this.

## **11. Background Papers**

- Customer Access Strategy 2008-2011

## **12. Contact(s)**

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 October 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Annual Customer Feedback Report 2009/10</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Financial Services Directorate</b>

**5. Summary**

This report outlines the results of the 'Tell Us Your Views' process for the financial year 2009/10. The 'Tell Us Your Views' process is the Council's corporate feedback process and incorporates compliments, comments, suggestions and complaints from customers.

The report also provides information on the key tasks to be addressed in 2010/2011.

**6. Recommendations**

**Cabinet are asked to:**

- **Note the contents of the report.**
- **Refer the report to Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee for their consideration.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background

'Tell Us Your Views' is the collective name for the corporate processes the Council has in place to deal with customer feedback. This includes compliments, comments, suggestions and complaints from our customers, excluding those related to Rotherham 2010 Ltd.

Customer feedback is monitored on a monthly basis across all Directorates and reported quarterly to the Corporate Complaints Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Commissioning. In addition, the Corporate Complaints Group constantly challenges performance relating to customer feedback through discussion and peer challenge.

### 7.2 Overview of Performance

#### COMPLAINTS

- 633 customers complained to the Council in 2009/2010 raising 911 individual complaints. This is an 8% increase from 2008/09 in the number of customers complaining to the Council and a 19% increase on the number of individual complaints. Significant increases in complaint volumes have been seen within RBT and CYPS.
- RBT have seen a large increase in the number of complaints relating to the Revenues and Benefits Service and plans are underway to re-engineer the service and subsequently improve service levels through enhanced performance management and monitoring.
- CYPS has seen an increase in social care complaints, with the greatest increase seen in the final quarter of the year. The service has experienced high staff turnover and this has led to some long term staff vacancies. This has increased work pressures on those staff remaining and this has meant speed of resolution has been impaired. Many of the complaints are about historic practice and all of these factors have contributed to this increase in complaints. Intensive work is ongoing which is addressing the speed of dealing with complaints, the quality of the stage one investigation and in tackling the behavioural shift which has impaired the quality of service delivery.

Tables 1a and 1b show the change in the number of individual complaints received and the number of people making complaints on last year across all Directorates.

**Table 1a: Individual Complaints**

**Table 1b: Number of Customers Complaining**

	2008/09	2009/10	% difference		2008/09	2009/10	% difference
CEX	5	3	-40	CEX	5	3	-40
CYPS	230	384	67	CYPS	117	139	19
EDS	128	137	7	EDS	128	137	7
Finance	3	2	-33	Finance	3	2	-33
NAS	323	267	-17	NAS	267	250	-6
RBT	74	118	59	RBT	70	102	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>8</b>

COMMENTS

The Council has improved the way that we report customer comments during 2009/10, ensuring that we are able to monitor all aspects of customer feedback. Logging customer comments as part of our customer feedback process allows the Council to identify those processes which are not deemed complaints, but which may give customers cause for concern and which as a Council we would want to address.

During 2009/10, 1054 comments were received in total across the Council; 25% of them related to schools, 7% related to waste collection and recycling and 7% related to the housing waiting list. The remainder related to a range of other varied services delivered across the Council. Just over 100 of these comments were received from MPs.

The Council has continued to make improvements to the 'Tell Us Your Views' process. Examples are:

- Conducting a follow up interview with all children and young people who make a complaint.
- Implementing a Joint Agency complaints procedure across some partner agencies (NHS Rotherham, RDASH) and across internal Directorates which results in a co-ordinated response to complaints where more than one area is involved.
- Actively encouraging customers to suggest changes that we can make to improve our processes. We ask customers if they could change one thing about the service they received what it would be.
- Introducing a 'Learning from Complaints' template which has led to greater focus and clarity on lessons learnt. This is completed by team managers and is reviewed by each of the Directorate Complaints Officers, to ensure that learning is shared across teams and shared corporately.
- We have reviewed our complaint customer satisfaction process and are trialling a new process which will provide us with more meaningful information to improve the complaint handling process.
- We have begun to implement a process to monitor and track the cost of complaints. Once fully rolled out, this will provide an oversight of the cost of handling a complaint, particularly as this escalates through the complaints process.
- We have improved the way customers can provide feedback online, resulting in a significant increase in the number of customers contacting us by the online channel. Over the final quarter of the year 8234 electronic forms have been submitted. Customers have used the forms to give the Council feedback, to apply for Council services and to report information to the Council.

**7.2.1 Complaints Volumes**

In 2009/10, 911 individual complaints were received. A quarterly breakdown is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Quarterly Breakdown of Complaints Volumes in 2009/10**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Total
CEX	1	1	0	1	3
CYPS	75	80	88	141	384

EDS	25	29	27	56	137
Finance	1	1	0	0	2
NAS	67	83	73	44	267
RBT	28	23	26	41	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>911</b>

Table 3 shows the percentage of complaints which were dealt with at each complaint stage including those referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). This showed that:

- 77% of complaints were dealt with at stage 1;
- 17% of complaints were referred to Stage 2;
- 4% of complaints were referred to Stage 3; and
- 2% of complaints were dealt with by the LGO.

Definitions of complaint stages are as follows:

Stage 1 – The complaint is dealt with by the manager of the service area relating to the complaint.

Stage 2 – The complaint is reviewed with by an Independent Officer, as the customer is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint at Stage 1.

Stage 3 – The complaint is reviewed by a panel of elected members, known as the complaints review panel, as we have been unable to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 or Stage 2.

**Table 3: Breakdown of Complaint by Stage**

	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>LGO</b>
CEX	2	0	1	0
CYPS	262	96	21	5
EDS	121	14	2	0
Finance	2	0	0	0
NAS	205	40	8	14
RBT	107	8	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>

A large number of stage 2 complaints were received by CYPS and NAS. Whilst both services are working to resolve complaints at Stage 1, a number of social care complaints have escalated to Stage 2 or to the LGO. The Complaints Officers in each of these directorates are currently identifying how performance can be improved.

### 7.2.2 Complaint Categories

Each complaint received is classified by one of the following categories:

- Actions of staff



- Cost of service
- Delay in service
- Lack of information
- Lack of service
- Quality of service
- Other

Table 4 gives a breakdown of complaint categories that we have received throughout the year.

**Table 4: Breakdown of Complaint by Category**

	Actions of staff	Cost of service	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Quality of service	Other
% of overall complaints 2009/2010	28%	2%	7%	11%	7%	43%	2%
% of overall complaints 2008/2009	27%	2%	7%	8%	12%	41%	3%
<b>Change from 2008/2009</b>	<b>+1%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+3%</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>+ 2%</b>	<b>- 1%</b>

Complaints around quality of service continue to remain high at 43% and this level is typical across most Directorates; however, there are notable exceptions to the corporate average and those Directorates are either taking appropriate action to address the issues raised or sharing good practice with others. Table 5 sets out the notable exceptions.

**Table 5: Analysis of Complaint Categories**

Category	Corporate Average	Notable Directorate results
Actions of staff	28%	19% NAS: <i>The Directorate places great store in completing ongoing customer care training for all staff members, and it is likely that this is contributing to the positive results achieved.</i>
Delay in service	7%	16% NAS: <i>These are predominantly complaints about delays in completing financial assessments and customers building up arrears. The charging date has been amended to ensure that the customer is not penalised by any delay.</i>
Lack of service	7%	20% EDS: <i>These are predominantly relating to potholes and lack of grit. Work is ongoing to complete highway repairs.</i>

Quality of service	43%	52% RBT: <i>These are predominantly in the Revenues and Benefits Service. Whilst the service saw an increase in complaints, only 27% of these complaints were upheld.</i>
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### 7.2.3 Turnaround times for complaints

In 2009/10, 93% of complaints were processed within target service levels. This is an improvement of 2% on 2008/2009. A quarterly breakdown of results is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Percentage of Complaints Processed within Service Standards**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	2009/10	2008/09
CEX	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	60%
CYPS	85%	84%	95%	67%	82%	80%
EDS	95%	91%	100%	100%	97%	96%
Finance	100%	100%	-	-	100%	67%
NAS	99%	100%	100%	100%	99.6%	95%
RBT	97	100	100	100	99.2%	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>91%</b>

CYPS performance dipped in Quarter 4. The Directorate has had a number of delays in responding to Stage 1 complaints and often complaints have been passed from one manager to another in a short space of time due to high staff turnover. A robust system has been implemented by Complaints Officers within the Directorate to issue reminders, monitor responses and provide feedback to help strengthen performance levels, and increased monitoring of performance is being implemented to ensure that performance levels are improved. Recommendations for improvements will be made via the Complaints Officer Group. A robust system is also in place to share lessons learned from complaints and these are fed into learning and development activity and quality assurance reports which track improved practice.

### 7.2.4 Complaints closed by outcome

There has not been a consistent approach to classifying complaint outcomes across the Council and it is therefore difficult to draw performance comparisons. Details of the complaint outcomes for complaints 'closed' are listed in Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Complaint Outcomes**

Directorate	% of complaints upheld	% of complaints partially upheld	% of complaints not upheld	% of complaints which were deemed 'inconclusive'	% of complaints which were withdrawn	% of complaints which were 'dealt with'
CEX	0	0	100%	0	0	NA
CYPS	3%	4%	7%	2%	5%	79%
EDS	22%	23%	47%	2%	6%	NA

Finance	100%	0	0	0	0	NA
NAS	19%	23%	54%	2%	2%	NA
RBT	36%	4%	51%	5%	4%	NA

As part of their complaints process, CYPS did not indicate whether a complaint has been upheld but instead stated that it had been “dealt with” for most of 2009/10. The Complaint Forum has recommended that CYPS close complaints in a consistent way and this has been implemented for 2010/11. We will therefore be able to provide more meaningful comparisons against Directorate performance during 2010/11

### 7.2.5 Lessons Learnt

All complaints are reviewed within Directorates and learning points are implemented where relevant. These learning points have resulted in the following general improvements:

- Changes to processes to provide improved services to customer;
- Additional training and support being provided for identified staff members;
- Sharing information across teams within Directorates. This has helped to reinforce what we have done well and what we can do better;
- Literature within some Directorates being updated to ensure it is easier to understand and is written with the customer in mind; and
- Technology improvements being implemented.

We have improved our performance in identifying lessons learnt from complaints by reviewing Directorate lessons learnt as a standing agenda item at the Complaints Forum. This is helping to ensure that Complaints Officers continue to challenge each other, benchmark their performance against other Directorates and share best practice. ‘You Said – We Did’ material will be uploaded onto the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council website on a quarterly basis to ensure customers are kept abreast of the actions we are taking. Greater focus will also be placed on telling customers about the areas we are unable to take action on and providing reasons why. Specific examples of improvements from ‘lessons learnt’ are provided in **Appendix A**.

### 7.2.6 LGO summary of performance

The authority has continued to improve its performance in handling complaint referrals from the LGO. The LGO received 66 RMBC customer contacts throughout the year, although only 19 of these resulted in ‘formal’ complaints for the Ombudsman to resolve. Our average response time for LGO cases was 23.8 days against a target of 28 days. Performance for the last 3 years is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Performance**

	No. of complaints	Average no. of days to respond
<b>2009/10</b>	17*	23.8
<b>2008/09</b>	12	28.0
<b>2007/08</b>	29	28.5

\* Note that 19 complaints were received by the LGO, but 2 complaints were still open when year end results were published.

### 7.2.8 Key tasks to be progressed during 2010 / 2011

Table 8 sets out the key tasks that will be completed during 2010/11 to further strengthen the Council's approach to customer feedback.

**Table 8: Key Improvement Tasks for 2010/11**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Delivery date</b>
Review the Corporate Complaints Customer Satisfaction Survey and address any issues that emerge.	Corporate Complaints Group	August 2010
Complete quality audits and address any issues that emerge.	Corporate Complaints Officer, RBT	Quarterly
Eradicate duplication of ICT systems used and the need for manual manipulation of data	Corporate Complaints Officer, supported by the Corporate Complaints Group	August 2010
Understand the cost of the complaint handling process and make recommendations to reduce costs year on year.	Customer Access Client Manager	September 2010
Review Corporate Complaints processes as part of the ongoing Customer Service Excellence accreditation and ensure it continues to be compliant.	Customer Access Client Manager	September 2010

## 8. Finance

There are no financial implications contained in this report.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to respond appropriately to complaints may impact on the Council's reputation and could ultimately increase transactional volumes and costs. It may also have the potential of increasing the number of cases referred to the Local Government Ombudsman and will significantly impact our ability to retain the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Having an effective corporate feedback procedure will strengthen the Council's evidence in demonstrating that it is delivering outcomes in line with customer expectations and requirements and should therefore support all performance and policy agendas.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Corporate Complaints Group
- LGO annual statistics

#### **Contact Name(s):**

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## Appendix A: Customer Feedback for 2009/10 – Lessons Learnt

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
All required information has not been requested from the customer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Revenues and Benefits process is being reengineered.</li> <li>• Retraining has been provided to customer service staff.</li> </ul>
Incorrect data added to a customer record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data is now being cross matched against information provided by partner organisations.</li> <li>• Retraining has been provided to customer service staff.</li> <li>• Quality Assurance processes have been implemented.</li> </ul>
Summons issued to customers who had been informed that they had made an overpayment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A system error occurred which affected a number of local authorities. Staff members have implemented manual checks until the error was resolved.</li> </ul>
Incorrect information provided to customer by a member of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retraining has been provided to customer service staff.</li> </ul>
Direct debit incorrectly set up for a number of customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process for implementing new payment arrangements has been reviewed and revised.</li> <li>• Training notes have been produced and retraining has taken place.</li> </ul>
Summons issued to customer who had made a payment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process has been reviewed and retraining has been provided.</li> </ul>
Customer requests for information have been left unanswered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work allocation and quality assurance processes have been refined</li> </ul>
Incorrect customer details input on customer correspondence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process has been reviewed and revised.</li> <li>• Quality Assurance processes have also been implemented.</li> </ul>

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
Customer complained about the length of time they had to wait before a member of staff was able to deal with their query.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross training has taken place to increase knowledge levels of staff members.</li> <li>• The contact centre system has been enhanced to allow us to inform customers of delays.</li> </ul>
Customer has not received a refund of council tax which was promised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retraining has taken place for a member of staff.</li> </ul>
Customer has not received a benefit payment which was promised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative working practices have been implemented within the service.</li> </ul>
Customer complained that the attitude and manner of the Customer Service Representative was unacceptable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retraining has taken place and this is reinforced through ongoing customer care training.</li> </ul>
Customer did not receive a call back as promised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance processes have been implemented.</li> </ul>
Customer did not receive a home visit as promised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching has been provided to staff members.</li> </ul>
Payment has been taken twice from a customer's bank account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes have been reviewed and reinforced across the team.</li> </ul>
Customer complained about the length of time taken to administer their service request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Revenue and Benefits process is being reengineered.</li> </ul>
Customer complained that social services were invited to a meeting without authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process has been amended to validate that authority has been obtained.</li> </ul>

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
A refund was issued to a customer for a payment that had not cleared the banking system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process has been reviewed and retraining has been provided</li> </ul>
Customers received a misleading mail shot suggesting that refreshments would be served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality Assurance processes have been implemented for mail shots and we will ensure that we clearly state when and where refreshments will be served.</li> </ul>
Mobile library service did not attend as scheduled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Contact details have been reviewed so that more customers can be contacted when services need to be amended.</li> </ul>
All Saints Toilets were closed at 5pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The service has improved advertising the facilities opening times and provided signposts to the nearest alternative.</li> </ul>
Inappropriate language was used by a taxi driver whilst transporting a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The service has met with the contractor and formally re enforced the need for them to be mindful of their responsibilities when vehicles are occupied by customers.</li> </ul>
Customers complained that the computers in Central Library were slow to boot up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More frequent PC clean up exercises are undertaken.</li> </ul>
The blocked gullies section of the website is unclear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The website has been amended. Drainage booklets have been amended and the procedure for logging blocked gullies has been reviewed and improved.</li> </ul>
The surface of Clifton Park water play area is slippery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing surface is to be removed and samples of new surface alternatives will be tested for suitability.</li> </ul>



Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
A fixed penalty notice was received for displaying an out of date parking permit, but no renewal reminders had been issued to the customer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fixed penalty notice was reimbursed and all residents will be informed that reminder letters are no longer issued.</li> </ul>
A complaint was received about the issue of a legal notice under Building Act 1984.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will issue a covering letter which accompanies all future legal notices.</li> </ul>
Bins are emptied and are not replaced in the correct spot, causing obstructions to driveways and properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crews have been reminded of their obligation to replace the bins in locations left by residents and that obstructions should not be created.</li> </ul>
Customers complain that we do not contact them individually in relation to planning consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory documentation is followed. Neighbourhood consultation is undertaken and site notices are displayed. Often notices are also put in the press. We are unable to individually contact all individual parties within the timescales prescribed.</li> </ul>
Customers are aggrieved that only a temporary repair is undertaken for pot holes, rather than a full resurface.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgetary constraints prevent a full resurface to be completed. Additional funding has been secured specifically to invest in our highways. Regular updates in relation to road condition are being posted on the website.</li> </ul>
Refuse bins have not been emptied in accordance with the weekly schedule and customers have not been informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The website will be regularly updated.</li> <li>Radio messages will be provided.</li> <li>We will provide email updates to those customers who provide us with their email address.</li> <li>Consideration is ongoing in relation to using Neighbourhood Wardens to cascade messages.</li> </ul>
A customer complained that they were not consulted when changes were made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures have been reviewed and revised to ensure consultation happens and staff members have been informed.</li> </ul>

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
Customer complained that consent was not obtained before changes were made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The case has been reviewed and there is a need for greater communication with the family. This will be implemented.</li> </ul>
Customers want us to take a proactive attitude towards dog fouling.	We will publicise information about how many fines we issue. We will also make the process to report dog fouling much clearer for customers.
The council failed to provide them with updated information about a council meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have introduced a standard protocol for cancelled meetings across all Area Assemblies.</li> </ul>
Customers are prevented from transferring properties as they are considered to be adequately housed and they are concerned about the availability of suitable properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have strengthened mutual exchange advertising at key locations. We are promoting mutual exchange on the website and have promoted this within Rotherham Advertiser.</li> </ul>
Customers feel a lot of council stock is being used to house asylum seekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have developed a myths and key facts poster to display on the website, in Key Choices Property Shop and 2010 Neighbourhood Offices.</li> </ul>
Complaints were received about a lack of information after an application of adaptation has been submitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have introduced a 10 easy steps card, including key contact numbers.</li> </ul>
Customers feel penalised by the housing allocations policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have created an easy read version which will help customers to better understand the way properties are allocated. We now provide improved information on lettings for customers.</li> </ul>
A customer was concerned that the assessment of their mother had not been completed correctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review and improve information available to families at 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact.</li> </ul>
Customers were not properly consulted regarding placement into respite care and that other options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review and improve the simplicity of information regarding charges for care.</li> </ul>

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
were not considered.	
A customer was concerned that services were going to be taken away because he has made a complaint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will introduce a statement within complaints literature to reassure customers that this will not have a negative impact on the services/support they are entitled to.</li> </ul>
A customer was concerned that no action was taken following submission of noise nuisance monitoring diary sheets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will include an advice leaflet when we issue a first stage letter.</li> <li>• We will review and refresh information leaflets and standard letters.</li> <li>• We will review and refresh the service standards.</li> </ul>
A customer complained about the service they received from occupational therapy staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will strengthen our customer care training package and roll out to staff.</li> </ul>
A customer complained that the occupational therapy service did not take their views into account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review the Social Care Assessment document to ensure that customer views are included and that a negotiated outcome is reached.</li> </ul>
A customer complained that there were errors in the assessment document and carers assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop quality service standards for social care assessments and care note recording.</li> <li>• We will include a letter which allows the customer to agree or disagree with the assessment, and recommends contacting the assessor to discuss amendments required.</li> </ul>
Customers complained that there were delays in completing social care assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will refresh customer service standards to incorporate current performance and indicate actions for improvement. These will be issued to customers at 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact.</li> </ul>
Customers believed that the publicity covering changes to the Meals on Wheels service was misleading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will identify learning from meals on wheels and carers grant publicity and implement this in future publicity campaigns.</li> </ul>

Issues Raised	Lessons Learnt / Actions Taken
Customers did not understand the information they received or understand why decisions had been made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information has been reviewed via the Learning from Customers Forum.</li> </ul>
A customer complained that the social worker completing their community care assessment had left their post and had not been replaced. This resulted in a 7 month delay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaver procedures have been implemented and are quality checked by senior members of staff.</li> </ul>
Customers complained that there was a lack of contact details for social care services other than assessment direct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will look to develop personalised information for customers and include 'my top 5 contacts' with the information packs provided to customers.</li> </ul>

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Information Flow to South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA)</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>

### **5. Summary**

A recent report received by the Council from the Audit Commission and KPMG has highlighted that the Council through RBT HR & Payroll has generally a very well regarded performance at providing timely and usable pensions data to the Pensions Authority.

There are however, some issues to note regarding the historical backlog that are impacting on Service Level Agreement (SLA) timescales. These are being worked through as time and resources allow which will improve the current performance statistics still further.

Further issues result from managers failing to supply information in an accurate and timely manner, that result in some Service Level Agreement deadlines being missed.

The Audit Commission, KPMG and SYPA confirm that the Rotherham MBC performance is recognised as the 'top performer' of the Metropolitan Borough members of the South Yorkshire Pensions Authority.

### **6. Recommendations**

**The Cabinet is asked to:-**

- **Approve the report.**
- **To note the performance of RBT HR& Payroll in achieving a high level of performance and the activity to eliminate the remaining backlog cases.**
- **To support and endorse the steps being taken to encourage managers to supply timely and accurate data to the HR Service Centre to help meet the SLA deadlines.**
- **That a follow-up report be submitted to the Audit Committee on progress each year end once figures had been made available.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### a) Background

The recent report by the Audit Commission and KPMG on data flow between the Council and South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA) is attached at **Appendix 1** for information. This report highlights Rotherham MBC's performance and also sets out the various timescales for submission of data.

The report has highlighted the good performance against the standards in the regulatory Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and also in comparison with neighbouring Metropolitan Borough Councils.

The report however rightly highlights some areas of difficulty or reduced performance. In the main these are as a result of dealing with a significant historical backlog to processing pension information for our younger leavers who had not got immediate access to their pension benefits at the date they retired. Following more stringent requirements from the SYPA Actuary and changed arrangements for accounting for pensions liabilities together with the need for SYPA to produce annual pension statements for deferred pensioners, this has meant the backlog has become a much higher priority. Additionally these 'deferred' cases are counted against the current performance levels which skew the actual ongoing and current performance. It was suggested a more sensible approach could be to separate out the historical cases and deal with these as a discreet category thereby highlighting the actions required to eliminate the backlogs, but also this would more accurately reflect the current performance.

Colleagues in RBT HR & Payroll are working towards clearing the backlog by the end of the current financial year.

The Audit Commission and KPMG also highlighted the operational difficulties we experienced this year as a result of one of the 'external' HR & Payroll providers serving our schools (Schools First) not being able to balance their pension contributions annual return. Unfortunately this is combined by SYPA into the Rotherham return and led to us being quoted as 'missing' the completed return deadline. Despite them being a 'competitor' to the Council provider (RBT HR & Payroll) additional work is now being done by RBT to help Schools First comply and balance on a more regular basis in future. This should prevent a repeat of the situation this year where we were cited as non-complete by the deadline.

Other SLA shortfalls occasionally occur as a result of operational managers not sending in details of changes, new starters, or leavers on time. Additionally, managers often notify the HR Service Centre of changes being effective from a retrospective date meaning they are already outside the SLA timescales despite being handled quickly by RBT HR & Payroll once they were notified.

Reports on performance are tabled monthly via the RBT / Council Client management arrangements and so this enables close scrutiny of any issues as they arise. The Audit Commission and KPMG believed this was

satisfactory and a useful mechanism to address backlog activity, but felt there was a need to highlight the issues to Elected Members charged with governance responsibilities within the Council. While Elected Members acting as Trustees and representatives from this Council have regular updates on this performance, this report is tabled to provide this awareness to wider audience as recommended.

## 8. Finance

The establishment and maintenance of robust processes for the provision of information between the Council and SYPA is essential to ensure that:

- employees will be given correct information on which to make decisions on their pension choices, and their benefits will be calculated correctly;
- payments to retirees will be on time and Council staff will have a good 'pension experience' in their last contact with their employer;
- the Council does not incur a fine or incur additional charges for the late delivery of information, however as yet there has been no indication that these would be applied ;
- there will be no material impact on the valuation of the fund and correct charges will be levied on contributing authorities;
- queries to the Pension Fund will be at an acceptable level; and
- production of Annual Benefit Statements and year-end processing will not be delayed unduly.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

- a) RMBC's failure to fully comply with the SLA, when taken as a whole with other South Yorkshire MBCs, has potential risks:-
- SYPA cannot accurately calculate the annual benefit statements for members.
  - New retirees may not receive the correct pension or it may be late.
  - Incorrect employer contributions may be set due to inaccurate actuarial valuations.
- b) The SLA provides for the following penalties:-
- Persistent failure to comply with the requirements for the paying over of contributions will result in the Administering Authority taking the action required of Scheme Administrators by the Pensions Act 1995. That requirement is to inform the Pensions Regulator.
- c) SYPA reserve the right to notify the entire membership in the event of serious or persistent failure.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

- a) Community Strategy & Corporate Plan – ‘Proud, Achieving and Fairness’

The work of the Council in this area is to clearly demonstrate we are treating all our employees fairly and sensitively.

- b) Workforce Development Strategy 2009/12 – ‘Ensuring RMBC has a sustainable pay and reward structure’.
- c) A failure to retain employees and working through serious economic downturn could lead to skills shortages, high turnover and high recruitment costs while de-motivating those employees who remain.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Regular reports are given to Elected Members in their role as Trustees of the SYPA. Briefing papers are supplied to Members in advance of any meetings to set out any issues from Rotherham MBC’s perspective.

Performance is highlighted at the Annual Employers Forum hosted by SYPA each year and discussions held as to ways to improve.

Rotherham MBC has introduced through a collaboration with SYPA ICT colleagues an electronic interface to help share data swiftly and from one input source to help minimise the potential for errors and delays.

### **Contact Name:**

**Phil Howe, Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources), Ext 23716**

### **Appendix:**

**Appendix 1: Audit Commission and KPMG Report: Pensions Data Flows**

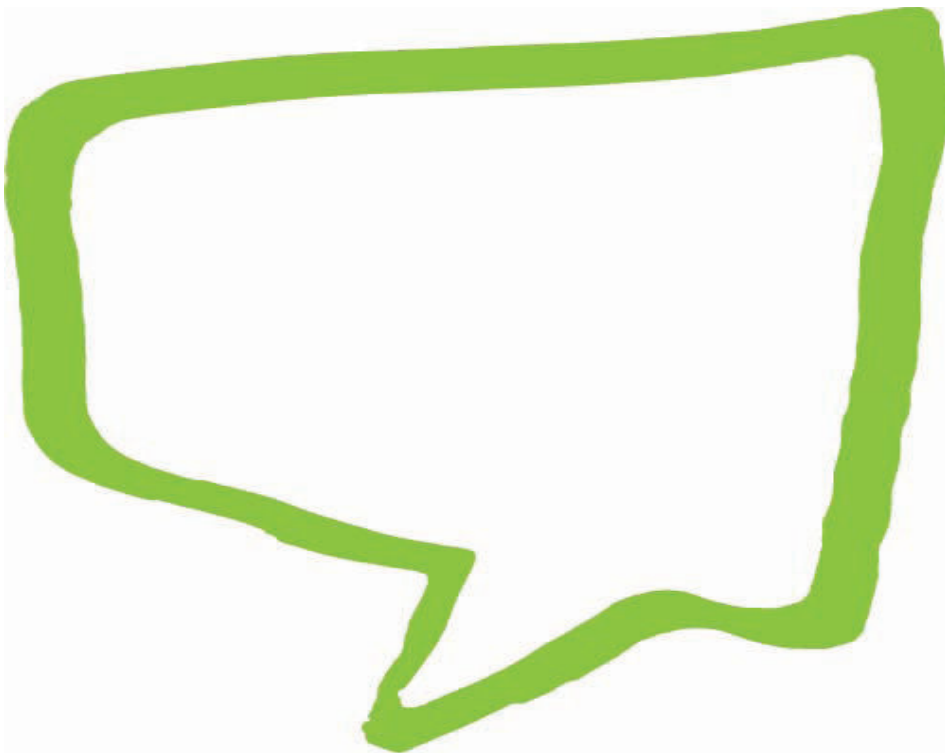


# Data Flows (Joint work with KPMG)

South Yorkshire Pensions Authority and  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Audit 2009/10

August 2010



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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Audit approach</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Main conclusions</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Detailed report</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Way forward</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Key lines of enquiry</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Performance against SLA compared to other South Yorkshire MBCs</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – Action Plan</b>	<b>17</b>

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## Status of our reports

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors/members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or
  - any third party.
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# Introduction

- 1 South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA) maintains, invests and administers the South Yorkshire Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme. It does so on behalf of over 120 contributing employers including four local authorities, police and fire civilian staff and staff at colleges and charitable trusts in the area. The four local authorities of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and Sheffield City Council account for 73 per cent of contributions to the fund.
- 2 SYPA uses the CLASS-AXIS application system for pension's administration. It also uses an external workflow system to manage the flow of documents through the system. A document imaging system is installed and all correspondence coming into SYPA is scanned. Member documents are held electronically following a project to convert microfilmed records to scanned images.
- 3 Controls around the administration system have been improved over a number of years, partly due to audit recommendations. However the quality of the data in the pensions system is heavily reliant on the contributing employers.

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# Background

- 4 The Pension Scheme Regulations require contributing organisations to supply information on time. The Pensions Act provides for fines to be levied on pension scheme administrators when information is not processed in a timely manner.
- 5 The administering authority may draw up an administration strategy which could contain service levels with employers for the supply of data. The strategy document would also allow the administering authority to levy additional administration charges on poorly performing employers.
- 6 Inaccurate or incomplete data will lead to wrong pensions' calculations for members and an incorrect valuation of the Pension Fund, which could mean higher or lower than necessary employers' contributions being fixed.
- 7 Pension schemes are required to issue an annual statement of benefits to contributors and the LGPS regulations require such a statement to be issued to those members with a deferred pension. An unacceptable level of queries is generated if the benefit statements are based on poor quality data.
- 8 The Pension Fund provides members with information on what options are available to them. There are many variables and the best option is not always obvious. Members will have the opportunity to make a more informed choice on what is best for them if the options presented to them are calculated on the basis of sound information.
- 9 If processes for passing information to SYPA are robust then:
  - employees will be given correct information on which to make decisions on their pension choices, and their benefits will be calculated correctly;
  - payments to retirees will be on time and Council staff will have a good 'pension experience' in their last contact with their employer;
  - the Council will not be fined or incur additional charges for the late delivery of information;
  - there will be no material impact on the valuation of the fund and correct charges will be levied on contributing authorities;
  - queries to the Pension Fund will be at an acceptable level; and
  - production of Annual Benefit Statements and year-end processing will not be delayed unduly.

# Audit approach

- 10 The Audit Commission is the appointed auditor of SYPA and KPMG is the appointed auditor of RMBC. This report is based on the Audit Commission's review of SYPA and KPMG's review of RMBC.
- 11 We reviewed the processes and procedures in place at RMBC for passing electronic and manual data to the SYPA and we considered the timeliness and accuracy of outputs from these.
- 12 The work was carried out by:
  - interviewing members of staff at RMBC and SYPA; and
  - reviewing relevant documentation.
- 13 The key lines of enquiry for this review are detailed in Appendix 1.

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# Main conclusions

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## Findings

- 14 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has made significant efforts to improve its performance in relation to providing pension data to South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA). The introduction of automated systems has contributed towards this and has enabled RMBC to be the best performing metropolitan authority in South Yorkshire.
- 15 However, whilst RMBC is recognised as being the 'top performer', the provision of timely and usable pension data to SYPA is not consistent or routine. The risks of this, to RMBC and SYPA, include:
  - the annual benefits statement for RMBC staff may be wrong;
  - new retirees may not receive the correct pension or it may be late; and
  - RMBC may be paying the wrong amount in contributions to SYPA due to inaccurate actuarial valuations.
- 16 RMBC and SYPA should work together to ensure information is provided in accordance with the service level agreement.

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# Detailed report

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## Resources

- 17** SYPA is situated in Regent Street, Barnsley. There are SYPA staff based at RMBC who have specific responsibility for RMBC pensions related issues. They receive training on new legislation and other relevant changes; and have the skills and knowledge to provide the agreed service to RMBC. Staff at both SYPA and RMBC have the skills and knowledge to provide an effective service to members.
- 18** However, as at 31 March 2010, SYPA reported to its Corporate Planning and Governance Board (CP&G) there were 711 un-notified leavers with some going as far back as 1997/98. This number has reduced, from 1,154 in April 2009; whilst this is a clear improvement, progress needs to be maintained to clear the backlog within a reasonable time.

Recommendation	
<b>R1</b>	SYPA and RMBC should consider whether there are sufficient resources to clear the backlog of work.

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## Data quality

- 19** RMBC does not always meet the targets to provide timely and accurate information to SYPA. This creates a risk that the pension scheme liabilities may be under or overvalued as SYPA cannot calculate member benefits accurately and the actuary receives incorrect information.
- 20** SYPA and RMBC have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which states, 'the employer is responsible for the accurate and timely provision of information to the Administering Authority'. The agreed standards in the SLA for changes to members' details are as follows.
- New Starters: eight weeks (56 days).
  - Change in circumstances: four weeks (28 days).
  - Leavers: eight weeks (56 days).
  - Retirees: four weeks (28 days).
  - Death in service: two weeks (14 days).
- 21** The actual times are reported to SYPA's Corporate Planning and Governance (CP&G) Board. During 2009/10, RMBC failed to meet the SLA standards for leavers and achieved it for new starters and miscellaneous changes in only one quarter. It met the standard for retirements every quarter and almost met it for death in service. Table 1 summarises the performance of RMBC against the SLA in 2009/10.

**Table 1 RMBC performance against the SLA in 2009/10**

RMBC has mixed performance against the SLA

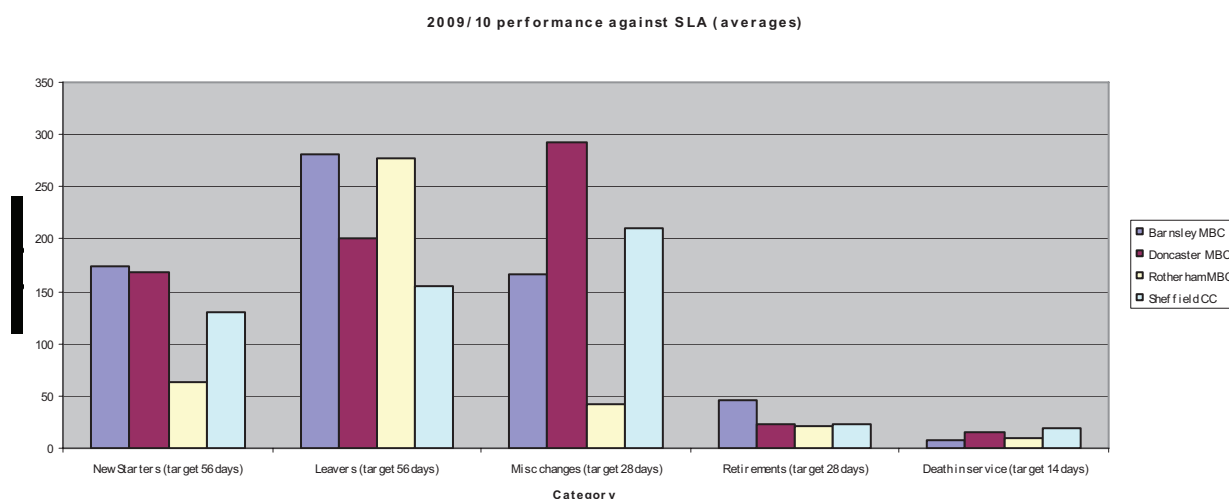
	Average days taken to send information			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
New Starters (target 56 days)	97	31	64	60
Leavers (target 56 days)	214	237	328	333
Misc changes (target 28 days)	47	45	29	48
Retirements (target 28 days)	23	23	19	21
Death in service (target 14 days)	10	none	21	7

Source: Employers performance against SLA reports to SYPA CP&amp;G Board.

- 22** There is wide variation in the figures in some quarters. For example in quarter one, the average time for new starters was 97 days, this decreased to 31 in quarter two but increased again to 64 in quarter three. The average days for leavers has increased from 214 to 333 days during the year.
- 23** Compared to the other South Yorkshire MBCs, with the exception of information relating to leavers, RMBC performs better than the rest. Comparison of each MBC's average performance against the SLA for 2009/10 is summarised in figure 1 below and shown in detail at Appendix 2.

**Figure 1 South Yorkshire MBC's Performance against the SLA**

With the exception of information relating to leavers, RMBC performs better than the other South Yorkshire MBCs



Source: Employers performance against SLA reports to SYPA CP&amp;G Board (average of four quarters performance).



## Detailed report

- 24** The significant backlog of work, as reported to SYPA's CP&G Board at 31 March 2010, was 711 un-notified leavers, some of which go back to 1997/98. It is noted that RMBC have agreed an action plan with SYPA to clear the backlog over two years and there is evidence that this is taking effect (for example the backlog of un-notified leavers was 1,154 in April 2009).
- 25** RMBC's failure to fully comply with the SLA, when taken as a whole with other South Yorkshire MBCs, has potential risks.
- SYPA cannot accurately calculate the annual benefit statements for members.
  - New retirees may not receive the correct pension or it may be late.
  - Incorrect employer contributions may be set due to inaccurate actuarial valuations. (Our work has not set out to quantify any values in this respect).
- 26** The SLA provides for the following penalties.
- Persistent failure to comply with the requirements for the paying over of contributions will result in the Administering Authority taking the action required of Scheme Administrators by the Pensions Act 1995. That requirement is to inform the Pensions Regulator.
  - SYPA reserve the right to notify the entire membership in the event of serious or persistent failure.

### Recommendations

- R2** SYPA and RMBC should work together to understand the source of the data and ensure it is accurate and useful in identifying the underlying problems.
- R3** RMBC officers should report performance against the SLA to Those Charged with Governance at RMBC.
- R4** RMBC and SYPA should be able to demonstrate that contributions paid and received, respectively, are correct.

### Reconciliations

- 27** RMBC pays contributions to SYPA each month and an annual reconciliation of contributions is required to be carried out and provided to SYPA by 31 May each year. SYPA received the 2009/10 reconciliation in a usable format on 24 June 2010 which was after the deadline.
- 28** RMBC submitted what it perceived to be fully reconciled figures to SYPA before the end of May. At the beginning of June SYPA Officers alerted the Authority with an issue relating to an external payroll supplier's data. RMBC allocated a resource to the external supplier to work through and reconcile their information where there were discrepancies but, due to lack of access to the external supplier's systems, this caused difficulties.

- 29 It is recognised that using data from an external payroll supplier has a direct effect on the Authority's final annual reconciliation and is a weakness in the overall controls. RMBC is therefore working with the external supplier on a monthly basis to identify variances to contribution and pensionable pay data, requesting evidence of corrective action where appropriate. In addition a 'year-end procedures' workshop is to be arranged for Autumn 2010 to inform the external supplier's knowledge and processes.
- 30 Risks of completing the reconciliation late include:
- SYPA will be unable to guarantee the timely issue of annual benefit statements for current members of RMBC for that year; and
  - SYPA will be unable to guarantee the accuracy of information provided to the actuary for completing the triennial valuation of the fund, resulting in potential inaccurate employer contribution rates being set.
- 31 The SLA states, 'a written response to any query, except those queries resulting from the annual year-end routines, raised in writing by the Administering Authority will be provided within 2 weeks of its receipt'. Whilst this doesn't directly relate to SYPA, there are times when SYPA responds verbally to queries raised by RMBC. This poses risks of misinterpretation and does not provide an adequate audit trail.

### Recommendation

- R5** SYPA and RMBC should respond in writing, within two weeks, to pensions queries. Where not confidential, SYPA responses should be shared with other employers.

### Communication

- 32 There is good communication within RMBC, SYPA, and with members of each organisation. The Authorities pro-actively review processes to ensure effective and accurate capture of information. The development and level of automation of pension processes is extremely high and continues as part of the overall transformation programme.
- 33 Notification of changes to employee's data is a recognised problem area in a large organisation with dispersed worksites. RMBC is seeking to help educate the workforce responsible for this workflow through the use of Directorate Forums and workshops.
- 34 However, there is an opportunity to strengthen communications between Those Charged with Governance at SYPA and the equivalent body at RMBC. Such strengthening could facilitate better monitoring of performance against the SLA.
- 35 SYPA's CP&G Board plays a key part in monitoring the performance of SYPA and the districts (including RMBC) against the SLA. However the minutes of CP&G Board meetings are unclear on how issues relating to poor performance against the SLA are being responded to.
- 36 SYPA routinely issues Pension Matters, a newsletter for employers in the South Yorkshire Pension Fund. This is written in clear, understandable language with links to other guidance.

**Detailed report**

- 37** SYPA have launched a new website for employers, EPIC (Employer Pensions Information Centre). This site contains key contacts, frequently asked questions, membership information and other reference material.

**Recommendation**

- R6** Minutes of the CP&G Board should provide sufficient detail to enable the reader to understand the course of any actions taken in response to poor performance against the SLA.

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## Way forward

- 38 This report has been discussed with officers at SYPA and RMBC and the recommendations in the action plan attached at Appendix 3 have been agreed. The report and action plan will be presented to SYPA CP&G Board and the Audit Committee at RMBC and we will follow up the implementation of actions in the coming months.

# Appendix 1 – Key lines of enquiry

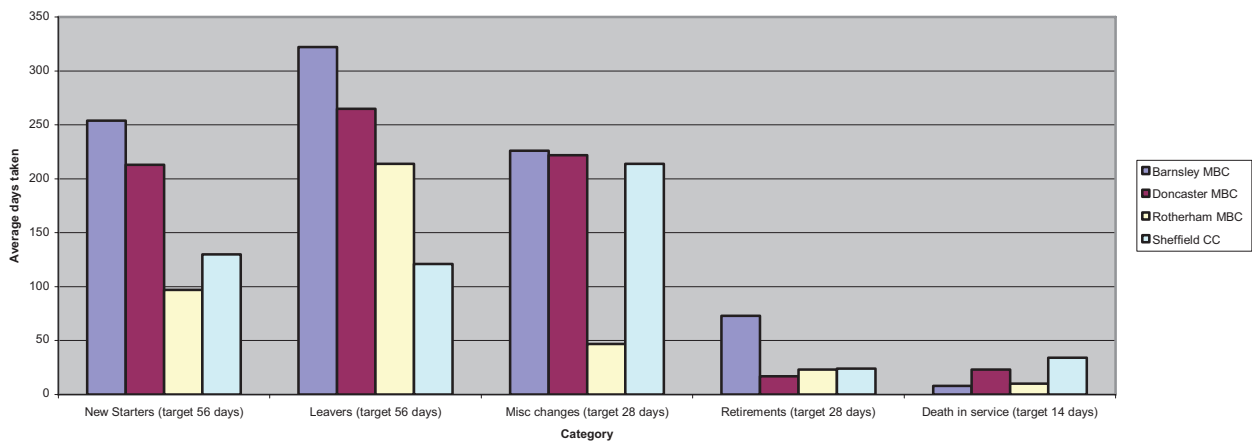
<b>1 Resources – staff have the capacity, skills and knowledge to provide an effective service to members</b>	<b>Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory</b>
<p><b>1.1 Pensions Authority resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pensions Authority has the capacity, skills and knowledge to provide the agreed service to its clients;</li> <li>• There are staff at the Pensions Authority who have specific responsibility for the Council;</li> <li>• Pensions Authority staff visit the Council on a regular basis; and</li> <li>• Staff receive training on new legislation and other relevant changes</li> </ul>	<p>Partial</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>
<p><b>1.2 Council HR/payroll resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are adequate HR and payroll resources to manage the pensions work flow;</li> <li>• Staff understand how their work impacts on pensions, and how the Council’s discretionary policies affect pension entitlement;</li> <li>• Staff receive training in pensions, both at induction and as part of professional development;</li> <li>• Staff have a good understanding of pension’s regulations.</li> <li>• There is clarity of roles and responsibilities throughout the retirement process; and</li> <li>• There are controls in place where work has been outsourced.</li> </ul>	<p>Partial</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Partial</p>
<p><b>2 Data quality – processes in place at the Council and the Pensions Authority contribute to good quality data in the pension administration system</b></p>	
<p><b>2.1 Timely data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on new starters, leavers and employee changes is passed to the Pension Fund on a timely basis;</li> <li>• Information is timely and provided in accordance with the SLA.</li> <li>• There is no permanent backlog of outstanding queries;</li> <li>• Any Council or Pensions Authority project work is discussed at the planning stage; and</li> <li>• Pensions for new retirees are paid on time.</li> </ul>	<p>Unsatisfactory - leavers</p> <p>Partial - others</p> <p>Partial</p> <p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>

<b>2 Data quality – processes in place at the Council and the Pensions Authority contribute to good quality data in the pension administration system</b>	
<b>2.2 Accurate, valid and consistent data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are controls in place to ensure accurate information is provided in accordance with the SLA.</li> <li>• Year-end reconciliations are accurate, timely and in accordance with the SLA.</li>   <li>• Member queries are dealt with in a timely manner;</li> <li>• Queries generated by Annual Benefits Statements are reducing year-on-year;</li> <li>• Leaver forms are completed to a consistently good standard; and</li> <li>• Members are given correct information on which to make pensions decisions.</li> </ul>	Partial  Satisfactory - Council Unsatisfactory - External supplier Partial Satisfactory  Partial Partial
<b>2.3 Complete data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic HR/payroll data is complete and easily accessible;</li> <li>• Standard forms are in use throughout the Council to capture employee data;</li> <li>• Breaks in service are notified to the Pensions Authority; and</li> <li>• Paperwork for new starters is passed to the Pensions Authority.</li> </ul>	Partial Satisfactory  Satisfactory Satisfactory
<b>3 Communication – there is effective communication within the Council, with members and the Pensions Authority</b>	
<b>3.1 Council communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is communication between the HR and payroll departments;</li> <li>• Actions agreed at meetings with the Pensions Authority are communicated to those responsible in the Council;</li> <li>• The Council is proactive in communicating with members of the scheme and staff have a 'good pension experience';</li> <li>• The Council attends meetings with the Pensions Authority on a regular basis; and</li> <li>• Weaknesses are reported to those charged with governance and action is taken.</li> </ul>	Satisfactory Partial  Satisfactory  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory
<b>3.2 Pensions Authority communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are nominated points of contact for specific services;</li> <li>• The Pensions Authority disseminates information to the contributing authorities on a timely basis so that the authorities are aware of current and future requirements;</li> <li>• The Pensions Authority arranges regular meetings with the Council and with the Council and other contributing authorities; and</li> <li>• Authority communicates with the Council in 'plain English'.</li> </ul>	Satisfactory Satisfactory  Satisfactory  Satisfactory

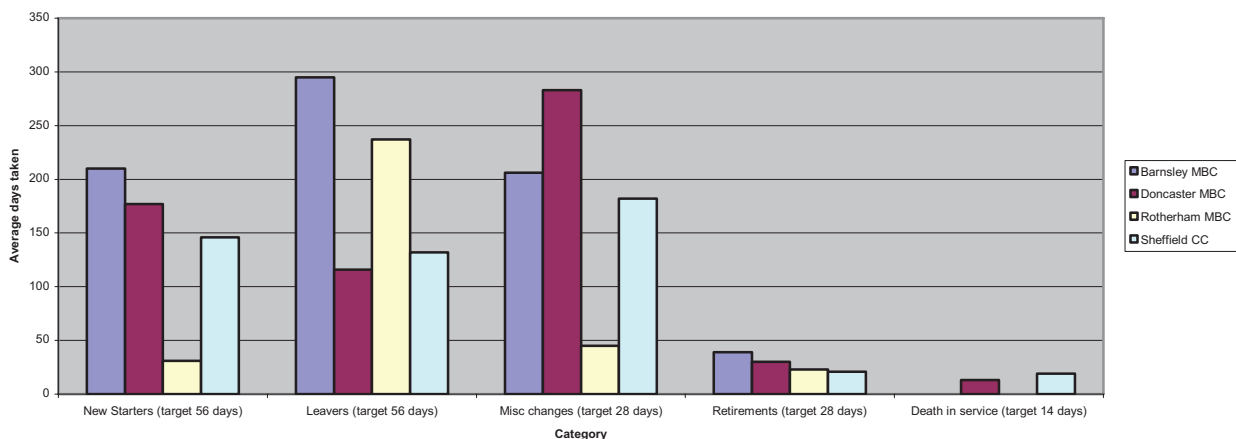
# Appendix 2 – Performance against SLA compared to other South Yorkshire MBCs

All South Yorkshire MBCs are failing to routinely meet the targets as specified in the SLA for sending information to SYPA. However it is noted that, with the exception of information relating to leavers, Rotherham MBC performs consistently better than the other MBCs.

Quarter 1 performance against SLA

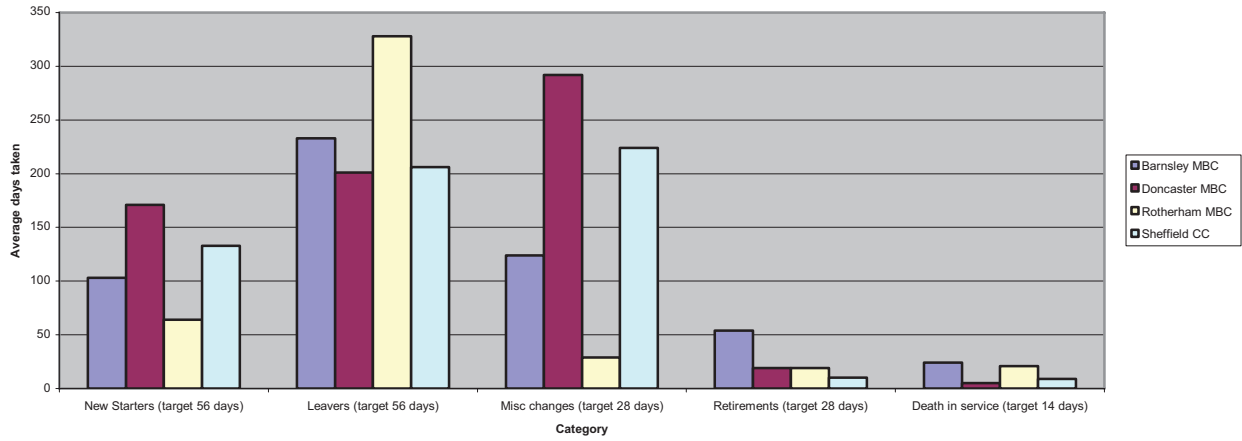


Quarter 2 performance against SLA

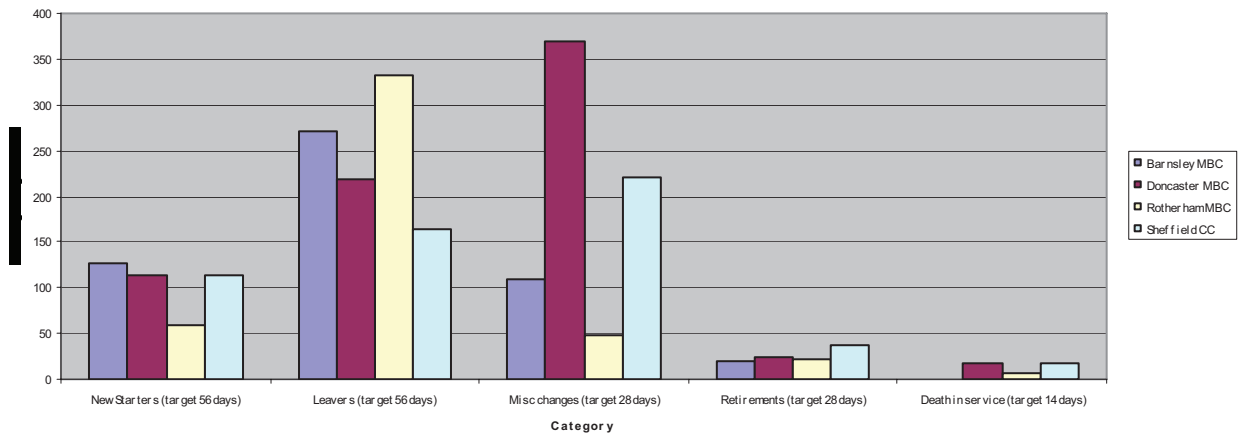


Appendix 2 – Performance against SLA compared to other South Yorkshire MBCs

Quarter 3 performance against SLA



Quarter 4 performance against SLA





## Appendix 3 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed?	Comments	Date
7	R1 SYPA and RMBC should consider whether there are sufficient resources to clear the backlog of work.	3	RMBC	Agreed	RMBC were advised in 2009 of a backlog of 1,344 un-notified leavers. An action plan to clear the backlog over two years was agreed with SYPA. The plan is on track and at July 2010 there are 504 outstanding cases. It is anticipated the remaining cases will be cleared by March 2011.	Clear by 31 March 2011
9	R2 SYPA and RMBC should work together to understand the source of the data and ensure it is accurate and useful in identifying the underlying problems.	3	RMBC	Agreed	The SLAs count days from the date of the event. Local Authorities can only process documentation from the date received and processed through payroll. Timely notification is therefore vital as there is no contingency within the SLA deadlines. A range of issues have been identified in quarter one 2010/11. Details have been provided to the Audit Commission / KPMG and are available if required. In addition, leaver statistics include the backlog cases and 'skew' the data. It would be helpful if the backlog cases were separated out from the current cases as it would make the statistics more meaningful.	Ongoing

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed?	Comments	Date
9	R3 RMBC officers should report performance against the SLA, to Those Charged with Governance at RMBC.	3	RMBC	Partially agreed	Performance statements are produced via monthly Client Report to RMBC Client Officer detailing current caseload and the backlog cases. Reports reflect the performance of the payroll process from the point the data is received into the office. This will not match the SYPA SLA that measures the period from the date of the event ie leaving date.	Ongoing
9	R4 RMBC and SYPA should be able to demonstrate that contributions paid and received, respectively, are correct.	3	RMBC	Agreed	RMBC takes seriously the requirement for balanced reconciled contribution data. RMBC has never missed a payment due date and all contributions for RMBC are fully reconciled. Some schools in the Borough buy their payroll service from an external supplier and there are recognised issues in relation to the quality and timeliness of their data. RMBC does not have access to the external supplier's systems and is unable to provide anything other than a notional validation of information provided. This notional validation is undertaken each month on contributions received from the external supplier and also on the year-end data. The Authority is working with the external supplier to help improve knowledge and quality of data.	Ongoing

## Appendix 3 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed?	Comments	Date
10	R5 SYPA and RMBC should respond in writing, within two weeks, to pensions queries. Where not confidential, SYPA responses should be shared with other employers.	3	SYPA / RMBC	Agreed	SYPA will respond to written queries in writing and where not confidential will publish any responses, felt to be beneficial to other employers, via announcements on EPIC.	Ongoing
11	R6 Minutes of the CP&G Board should provide sufficient detail to enable the reader to understand the course of any actions taken in response to poor performance against the SLA.	3	SYPA	Agreed	The minutes of the CP&G Board will be improved to record any actions taken by Members in response to poor performance.	Ongoing

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# The Audit Commission

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20TH OCTOBER, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) MEMBERS' STEERING GROUP HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2010</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</b>

### **5. Summary**

In accordance with Minute No. B29 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2004, minutes of the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group are to be submitted to the Cabinet.

A copy of the minutes of the LDF Members' Steering Group held on 17th September, 2010 is therefore attached.

### **6. Recommendations:-**

**(1) That progress to date and the emerging issues be noted, and the minutes be received.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The Council is required to review the Unitary Development Plan and to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

## **8. Finance**

The resource and funding implications as the LDF work progresses should be noted.

Changes to funding will occur following consultation on the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. It should be noted that the new regime would focus on plan making and delivery of new housing rather than development control performance.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to comply with the Regulations.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

There are local, sub-region and regional implications. The Local Development Scheme will form the spatial dimension of the Council's Community Strategy.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Minutes of, and reports to, the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group.

Report to Cabinet 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

Attachments:-

- A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

**Contact Name : Karl Battersby, Strategic Director,  
Environment and Development Services  
Ext 3801  
[karl.battersby@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:karl.battersby@rotherham.gov.uk)**

**ROTHERHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP**  
**Friday, 17th September, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Jack, Pickering, St. John, Sangster, Welbourn and Whysall.

together with:-

Andy Duncan	Strategic Policy Team Leader
Neil Finney	Technical Assistant, Planning and Regeneration
Anthony Lowe	Solicitor
Ken MacDonald	Planning Manager
Bronwen Peace	Principal Officer, Planning and Regeneration
Neil Rainsforth	Senior Planner
Helen Sleigh	Senior Planner
Ryan Shepherd	Quality and Design Co-ordinator
Gordon Smith	

**19. INTRODUCTIONS/ APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Steering Group:-

The Mayor	Councillor McNeely
Councillor Austen	Chair, Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Dodson	Vice-Chair, Planning Board
Councillor Lakin	Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children
Councillor R. S. Russell	Cabinet Member for Town Centres
Councillor Walker	Senior Adviser, Regeneration and Environment
Councillor Wyatt	Cabinet Member for Resources and Commissioning

**20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH JULY, 2010**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a

correct record.

**21. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**22. TOWN CENTRES RETAIL SURVEY AND BOROUGH-WIDE RETAIL AND LEISURE STUDY**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Neil Rainsforth, Research and Spatial Analysis Officer, and Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, relating the results of the latest surveys of the main borough town centre shopping areas, including Rotherham town centre.

The report highlighted the general increase in vacancy rates seen over the last few years and the varying fortunes across the borough's retail centres. It also provided information on the appointment of consultants to undertake an update of the Borough-wide Retail and Leisure Study which will form part of the evidence base for the preparation of the LDF.

Particular reference was made to:-

(i) the Town Centre Retail Surveys

It was reported that the annual survey in respect of Rotherham Town Centre, Bramley, Dinnington, Kiveton Park, Maltby Parkgate and Rawmarsh, Swallownest, Swinton, Thurcroft, Wath and Wickersley had taken place in July, (rather than October), in order to provide consultants with the latest information.

Attention was drawn to the graph within the report, which illustrated town centre vacancy rates over the period 2001 to 2010. It was noted the graph showed a steady increase in the retail vacancy rates. This however was a national trend.

(ii) Borough-wide Retail and Leisure Study

It was reported that PPS4 highlighted the need for an up to date and sound evidence base to plan positively for town centre uses. It was explained that due to the detailed and technical nature of the study, and in accordance with Standing Orders, Colliers CRE had been commissioned to undertake the study. A copy of the brief was attached to the submitted report. It was anticipated that the study would take between 3-4 months to complete and a further report would be presented to a future meeting of the Steering Group.

Those present raised and discussed the following:-

- misleading figures which indicated a centre was thriving when in



fact it was not

- occupancy by Take-aways which distorted the figures
- infrastructure provision e.g. easy links to transport
- success of the Business Vitality Grants in Rotherham town centre
- the need for a marketing policy to increase the number of units let in townships
- what were the barriers preventing properties being let e.g. those that had been vacant for several years
- decline in traditional markets and other changes in shopping behaviour e.g. internet shopping and banking
- inclusion of leisure facilities e.g. bowling alleys, cinemas

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the report and the general upward trend in retail vacancy rates experienced in many of the main borough town centres, particularly in Rotherham town centre, be noted.

(2) That the commissioning of a borough wide retail and leisure study, which will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, be noted.

## **23. EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW CONSULTATION**

Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, reported on the feed back from the consultation in respect of the Employment Land Review which was carried out during June and July 2009.

It was reported that 76 representations had been received from 23 individual consultees from a range of organisations e.g. Yorkshire Forward, landowners, local organisations and members of the public.

The purpose had been to look at the amount of employment land required over the LDF period and to assess the suitability of existing employment land and its continued use in the future and also identify any sites to be re-allocated for other uses.

A re-assessment of the figures was now needed following the abolition of the RSS. This would include looking at how much growth existing sites could take up.

All the comments received would be entered onto the Council's LDF Consultation Portal. The original document would be amended accordingly to take account of the comments and a future report brought to a future meeting of this Steering Group.

## **24. PUBLICATION OF BDR JOINT WASTE PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Neil Finney, Technical Assistant, relating to the Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham (BDR) Joint Waste Plan that had been developed by planning officers from the three

authorities as part of the Local Development Framework.

The aim of the Plan was to provide policies to determine planning applications for waste management facilities and included facilities for the following waste types: Municipal, Commercial & Industrial, Construction & Demolition, Hazardous, and Agricultural.

It was further explained that the BDR Joint Waste Plan was a formal Development Plan Document which had already been subject to statutory public consultation and other stages of consultation with public and private bodies, to assist in its development.

In addition to providing policies to inform the determination of planning applications, the Plan also proposed to allocate four strategic sites of up to 5 hectares (12 acres), for the development of larger scale waste management centres and to encourage the co-location of similar facilities from the waste industry.

The 3 local authorities were simultaneously moving the Plan forward to the publication stage, and that would be followed by a further 6 weeks consultation period to challenge the soundness of the Plan. Ultimately the Plan would be submitted to Government to be examined for soundness by an Independent Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. If the Inspector's report was favourable then the BDR Joint Waste Plan would be recommended to each of the Local Authorities' full Councils for formal adoption.

Reference was made to the importance of the design of the facilities and also to the planning process.

Resolved:- (1) That the formal Publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan be endorsed insofar as this Steering Group is concerned.

(2) That a report be submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the formal publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan.

## **25. LDF SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Helen Sleight, Senior Planner, proposing a settlement hierarchy to guide ongoing work on the Core Strategy and to assist in the selection of sites for future development.

It was explained that a clear spatial strategy for the Borough was the bedrock for the preparation of the final draft Core Strategy and would guide the preparation of the Sites and Policies DPD Issues and Options Consultation Draft Development Plan Documents (DPD's).

Some of the key issues that had been considered in preparing the suggested settlement hierarchy were:-

- to clearly demonstrate the settlement hierarchy for the borough
- to determine how the settlement hierarchy will function in the future
- to determine how a settlement identified for growth will change in the future

The proposed settlement hierarchy reflected the status of the centres / settlement groupings as they were and also their potential future role. It reflected the availability of existing facilities and where growth could potentially be supported in the future.

The settlement hierarchy and the emerging Spatial Strategy would be the over arching policy to guide future development.

Members were asked to consider the wording of the draft Spatial Strategy for the Borough as set out in the submitted report. This spatial strategy would guide the preparation of the Sites and Policies DPD Issue and Options Consultation Draft. It was explained that the submitted report proposed a settlement hierarchy to guide ongoing work on the Core Strategy and in the selection of sites for future development.

Further reference was made to:-

- the greenbelt review background paper to support the draft Core Strategy
- Preferred sites and those that are the most sustainable
- Changed terminology – principal town was now ‘principal settlement’
- Identification of settlement groupings by population and dwellings
- Super Output Areas mapped out
- 7 key issues (listed in the submitted report) that had been considered in proposing the suggested settlement hierarchy
- Tables summarising the proposed settlement hierarchy and comparison to the Retail Hierarchy
- Identification of principal settlements for growth:- Rotherham Urban Area; Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common/ Wath, Brampton Bierlow, West Melton/Bramley, Wickersley and Ravenfield/Kiveton Park and Wales.
- Identification of Waverley as a Local Service Centre with significant potential for Growth

Members present raised and discussed the following:-

- the Dearne Valley Eco Vision
- renewable energy – sustainability (noting the required sustainability appraisal) and climate change
- local wildlife and geological sites
- provision of schools re: number of homes proposed, and other

- infrastructure requirements
- preservation and development of local communities
- provision of affordable housing
- proximity to rail links and the M1/M18/A1 corridors
- potential future benefits from the development of the Chesterfield Canal (noting legal advice re: whether those aspirations can be achieved over the lifetime of the Plan)
- area of the Borough that would welcome development of housing and employment opportunities, and the proximity of the South Yorkshire Navigation

Resolved:- That the content of the report be noted as work in progress.

## 26. LDF NEXT STEPS

Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader, reported on the next steps in the LDF process.

He reported that Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 had considered a report which set out details of the public consultation on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy over the summer of 2009, together with the feedback on that consultation response. This report had also been considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

Consideration as given to the next round of public consultation and the proposed timetable. It was pointed out that approval had also been given to a new approach to standard letters and petitions.

Reference was made to the revocation of the housing targets set in the Regional Spatial Strategy and it was reported that the Cabinet had supported proposals to set an interim housing target to provide continuity. This would demonstrate to the market that there was land available for mixed and affordable housing development over the next five years and provide a stop-gap figure until the LDF process had been completed.

Reference was also made to the yet uncertain role of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), noting that a bid had already been submitted to form a LEP.

It was also noted that the details of the new homes scheme had not yet been made available and so it was uncertain which organisations (i.e. the Council or the LEP) would benefit from this reward grant.

It was confirmed that the Council would need to continue to work closely with other local authorities within the sub-region.

Resolved:- That this Steering Group notes the following:-

- (1) the draft Local Development Framework Consultation Plan and the draft Local Development Framework timetable.

(2) the revised approach to standard letters and petitions received in response to future Local Development Framework consultation.

(3) the adoption of an interim housing target for Rotherham of 750 net new dwellings per annum (based on the 2005 draft RSS figure, or "Option 1" figure, as allowed for by Government guidance following revocation of regional strategies).

(4) the further public consultation through the Local Development Framework process on a range of housing targets to determine a final housing target.

(5) the issuing of a Press Release on the position.

**27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following issue was raised:-

(i) Census data

It was reported that the April 2011 census was to be the last. The question was asked what other population/demographic information would be available in its place to guide work such as the LDF.

It was reported that the ONS had a range of statistics updated and available every two years.

**28. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of this Steering Group be held on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 at 10 a.m. in the Town Hall.

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