CABINET

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

Date: **Wednesday, 21 September 2011**

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 7th September, 2011 (copy supplied separately)

5. Rotherham Community Strategy (2011-2014) (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 6)
    -   Chief Executive to report.

6. Rotherham Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (report herewith) (Pages 7 - 30)
    -   Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.

7. RMBC Customer Access Strategy 2011 - 2015 (report herewith) (Pages 31 - 70)
    -   Strategic Director of Finance to report.

8. Discretionary Home to School Transport Provision (report herewith) (Pages 71 - 76)
    -   Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services to report.

9. Localising Support for Council Tax - Consultation Response (report herewith) (Pages 77 - 93)
    -   Chief Executive to report.

10. Equality Analysis (report herewith) (Pages 94 - 114)
    -   Chief Executive to report.

11. RMBC Public Health Annual Report (herewith) (Pages 115 - 157)
    -   Director of Public Health to report.

Agenda Item 5

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – CABINET

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	21st September 2011
3.	Title:	Rotherham Community Strategy (2011-2014)
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executives

5. Summary

This report provides an overview of work undertaken by the Rotherham Partnership to prepare for Rotherham's third, three-year Community Strategy due for publication this year. The paper provides details of the process employed to develop the strategy and progress to date.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

o Endorse the three strategic priorities for the Community Strategy recommended by the Chief Executive Officers Group and agreed by the Rotherham Partnership Board

o Consider and comment on the contents of this paper and proposed next steps

7.   Proposals and Details

7.1   Background

a. The Partnership

The Rotherham Partnership is Rotherham's accredited Local Strategic Partnership and was established in 2002. It consists of the Rotherham Partnership Board and a small executive group consisting of Chief Executives of local agencies (including the Council, Police, Fire & Rescue, NHS, Hospital, Chamber and VAR). The Board contains representatives of local public sector bodies, the voluntary and community sector, the local business community and elected members.

b. Community Strategy

The key document for the Partnership is the Community Strategy, a three year strategy which sets out partners shared vision, priorities and objectives for the life of the document. It sets the direction for the Partnership over the three year period and dictates what initiatives the Partnership engages in. The next Community Strategy is due to be published later this year following the expiration of the 2008-2011 strategy.

c. Partnership review

In preparation for the new strategy the Partnership undertook a comprehensive review of its working arrangements during the past year. The result of this was a much leaner structure consisting of a smaller Board of fifteen members and the deletion of the five theme boards, which were established in 2005. The new partnership structure was implemented in April 2011.

7.2   Development of the Community Strategy 2011-2014

a. **Process and progress**

Early preparations for the new Community Strategy began in summer 2010. Presented below is an approximate timeline of the process to date:

- o Focused *interviews with all Partnership Board members* conducted. One of the key findings was that Board members felt that the next Community Strategy should be more targeted and consist of fewer priorities (*August 2010*)

- o *Chief Executive Officer Group structured session took place* and three new high level priorities for the Partnership proposed (*September 2010*)

- o *The three new priorities (see below, page 3) agreed by the Partnership Board and three facilitated Board workshops* held, including Board members and representatives of the five theme boards (Alive, Achieving, Learning, Proud and Safe) and their sub-groups - over one hundred attendees (including several Elected Members). Workshops used to bring together broader expertise to identify objectives and actions that could be begin in the first year of the strategy and would deliver progress against the priorities (*October 2010-February 2011*).

- o *Draft objectives and actions* for the first year of the Strategy (2011-2012) identified based on proposals from the workshops. Refinements made to these through:
  - o Rotherham Partnership team and Chair working directly with colleagues in partner agencies
  - o Proposals compared to what we know about local needs from research and consultation
  - o Consideration of the proposals at meetings of the Chief Executive Officers Group and Rotherham Partnership Board
  - o Support from a Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership funded 'Local Improvement Advisor'.

(*February-June 2011*)

As a result of this work a small number of task and finish groups have already been established to take forward activity, while a number of other proposals are in development. A first draft of the strategy document is also currently being produced with assistance from RMBC's, 'Policy, Performance and Commissioning' team. This will elaborate on the rationale for the choice of the three priorities, provide context and further articulate what we aim to achieve. Discussions are also taking place with RMBC colleagues about how performance will be monitored and activity evaluated.

While partners remain committed to the three priorities Chief Executive Officers have recommended that the Partnership pause and reflect on the latest data recently released from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which identifies worrying trends from Rotherham in relation to deprivation and inequalities. The Chief Executive Officers Group have agreed to dedicate their meeting on the 22nd September to consider how the IMD findings should influence and how the Partnership should proceed with the Community Strategy. It is anticipated that the three priorities will remain, but the focus for activity will be targeted.

b. **Priorities and objectives**
Presented below are the three broad priorities and associated draft objectives which will form the core of the published strategy and plan.

Priorities & objectives

Priority 1: **Ensuring the best start in life for children and families**

Proposed objectives:
  - o Have a clear evidential base to demonstrate the impact of partnership programmes of support delivered to families with a child who is aged 0-3
  - o Understand the effectiveness of multi-agency delivery and implement improvements
  - o Contribute to Rotherham's commitment to reduce child poverty

Priority 2: **Providing additional support to vulnerable people in our communities**

Proposed objectives:
  - o Tackle rising inequalities
  - o Break the cycle of negative engagement with partnership services and overcome barriers to positive engagement for a cohort of Rotherham families
  - o Better information sharing and collaborative working (and first point of contact)
  - o Reduce harms caused by alcohol misuse in Rotherham

o Reduce loneliness and isolation in older people in Rotherham

Priority 3: **Supporting the growth of a sustainable and competitive local economy**
(led by the new Economy Board)

Proposed objectives:
- o Focus on high-growth sectors (through business support, supply chains, apprenticeships, research and development. Potential sectors include advanced manufacturing and low carbon)
- o Maximise local spend in the Rotherham economy
- o Enterprise – business starts, higher skills, young people, growing existing business, promoting innovation

c. **Delivery**

The Rotherham Partnership's leaner and more flexible working arrangements, introduced in May 2011, are designed to deliver the new strategy. The intention is that small, focused and time limited **task and finish groups** will be formed with an identified leader and a remit to deliver a particular element of an annual plan owned by the Board. In implementing the new strategy there is a desire to work in a more cooperative and complementary fashion with Elected Members and scrutiny and with this in mind the Partnership would welcome the **involvement of Elected Members**. This is reflected by the proportionally higher representation of Elected Members on the new look Partnership Board.

The Health and Well Being Board has joined the partnership structure, this is a new statutory board that will have responsibility for leading on the joint strategic needs assessment. The Chair of the Health and Well Being Board will have a place on the Rotherham Partnership Board.

8. **Finance**

No direct financial implications are currently identified, although some are likely to emerge as task and finish group's progress activities. These will be considered by the Partnership Board/Chief Executive Officers Group/relevant agencies as appropriate when they emerge. It is also possible that collaboration in some areas identified in the draft plan may lead to financial savings for partners, including RMBC.

However, it has been estimated that over 70% of the 'old' partnership infrastructure has been removed, mainly through the dissolution of the theme boards, which has resulted in cashable savings of over **£52,750 p.a. approx** and non cashable savings estimated at - **£42,715 p.a. approx**

9. **Risks and Uncertainties**

There are risks associated with ensuring that the necessary understanding, buy in and commitment from partners exists, in order to ensure that the strategy and plan are successfully implemented. The transparent and consultative approach employed to produce the strategy aims to ensure a sense of shared ownership of the document and responsibility for leading and contributing to its delivery.

10. Policy and Performance agenda Implications

The strategy will have implications across a range of policy and performance areas, most notably those aligned to the three priorities highlighted above. There is also an intended strand associated with prevention and early intervention running across the priorities.
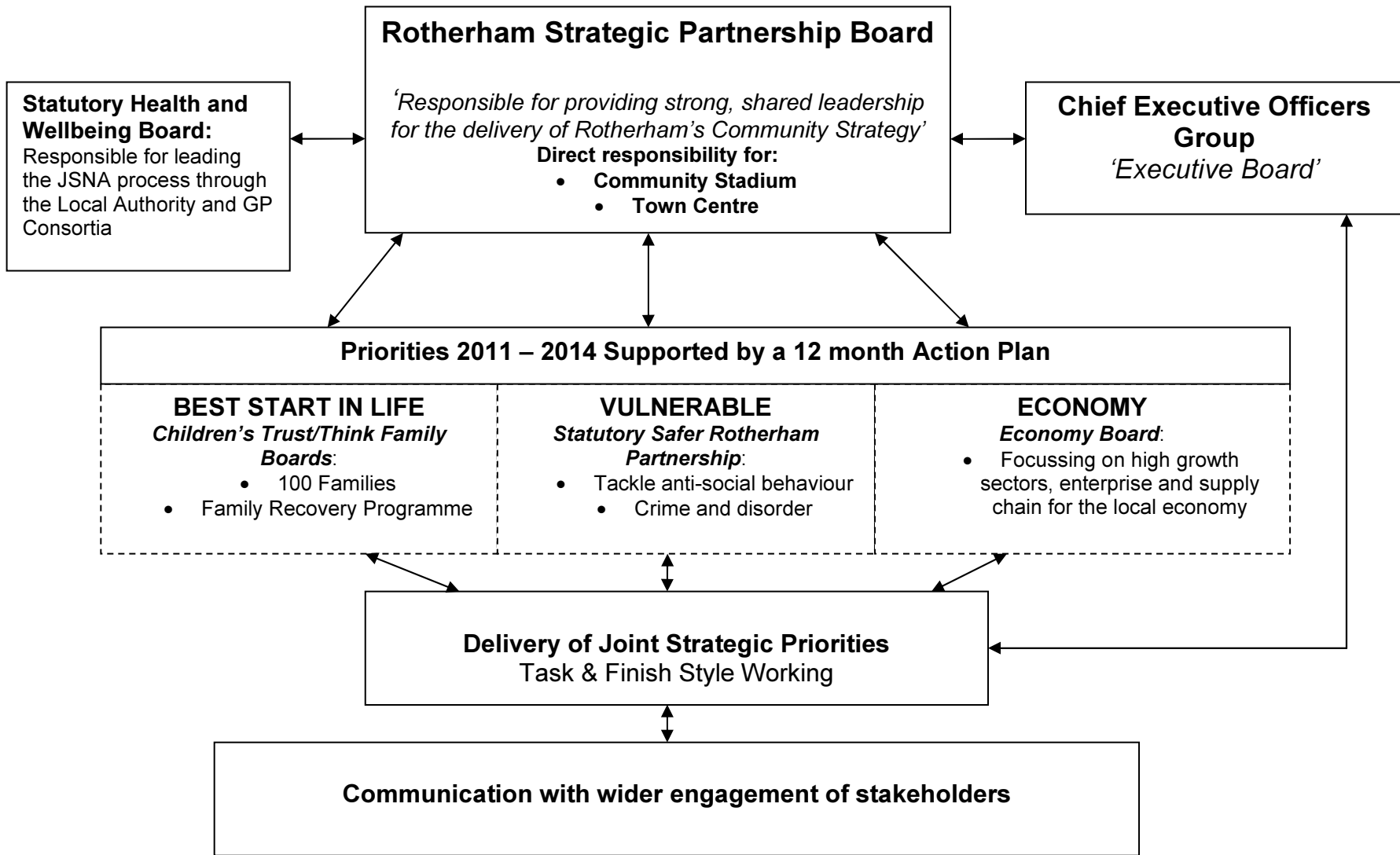
10. **Background Papers and Consultation**

Appendix 1: The new Rotherham Partnership structure is contained in the appendix

12. Contact

Carole Haywood, Manager of the Rotherham Partnership
01709 254435, carole.haywood@rotherham.gov.uk

Author

Michael Clark, Partnership Officer, Rotherham Partnership
01709 254432, michael.clark@rotherham.gov.uk

Rotherham Strategic Partnership Board

'Responsible for providing strong, shared leadership for the delivery of Rotherham's Community Strategy'
Direct responsibility for:
- **Community Stadium**
- **Town Centre**

Statutory Health and Wellbeing Board:
Responsible for leading the JSNA process through the Local Authority and GP Consortia

Chief Executive Officers Group
'Executive Board'

Priorities 2011 – 2014 Supported by a 12 month Action Plan

BEST START IN LIFE
Children's Trust/Think Family Boards:
- 100 Families
- Family Recovery Programme

VULNERABLE
Statutory Safer Rotherham Partnership:
- Tackle anti-social behaviour
- Crime and disorder

ECONOMY
Economy Board:
- Focussing on high growth sectors, enterprise and supply chain for the local economy

Delivery of Joint Strategic Priorities
Task & Finish Style Working

Communication with wider engagement of stakeholders

	ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	21 September 2011
3.	Title:	Rotherham Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5.   Summary

Rotherham Council, as the lead organisation, has developed an Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (enclosed) in consultation with Local Strategic Partners.   The report was sanctioned by the Sustainability Partnership on 20 July 2011.

6.   Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to endorse the Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

7.   Proposals and Details

Climate Change is one of the most important issues facing the United Kingdom and the rest of the World.   Addressing it is a key national and local priority, and central Government is encouraging local authorities such as Rotherham to take the lead and play a crucial role in addressing climate change.

On 9 March 2011 Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Vice-Chair of the Local Government Association, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) designed to acknowledge the pivotal role local authorities have in tackling climate change.

The MoU sets out how DECC and the Local Government (LG) Group will work together to take firm action to:

- reduce the carbon emissions from their own estate and operations
- reduce carbon emissions from homes, businesses and transport infrastructure, creating more, appropriate renewable energy generation, using council influence and powers; and
- participate in national carbon reduction initiatives at the local level, particularly the roll out of the Green Deal, smart metering and renewable energy deployment.

The MoU sets out the partnership approach to helping meet climate change mitigation targets (Climate Change Act 2008) and related objectives (underpinned by local targets) including:

- 80% greenhouse gas emissions reduction target in the Climate Change Act 2008 by 2050 (34% by 2020) against a 1990 baseline
- The fuel poverty targets arising from the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000
- The target to supply 15% of the UK's energy consumption from renewable energy by 2020 as set out in the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive.

In November 2007, Rotherham Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, through which a public commitment was made to develop a Climate Change Action Plan. The declaration is now under review with the Nottingham Declaration Partnership with a view to redefining its role, purpose and structure to better support local authorities and partners under the new arrangements Government, local government and the members of the partnership are making.

The development of this Strategy has been led by the Sustainability Partnership and supported by the Council's Sustainable Development Officers Group. It is proposed that the Sustainability Partnership will take responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of delivery within the partnership and the Sustainable Development Officers Group will performance manage the strategy from a RMBC delivery perspective.

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will set the direction for managing, combating and preparing for climate change across Rotherham. It not only considers the challenges associated with climate change but also the opportunities it presents. Following consultation and researching best practice from other areas, 10 key areas of action have been identified:

1. Strategic Planning and Policy
2. Built and Natural Environment
3. Emergency Planning and Recovery, Social Care and Health
4. Energy and Water
5. Engagement, Education And Awareness Raising
6. Housing
7. Procurement and Resources
8. Regeneration and Business
9. Transport
10. Waste and Recycling

8. Finance

There is no cost directly associated with the development of this strategy. However, as climate change continues to climb the agenda of central government, more resources will be required in the future to deal effectively with new duties and responsibilities expected to be given to Local Authorities. There are also opportunities to adopt sustainable procurement practices and construction methods; reduce resource use; reduce transport and save money.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The main risk and uncertainty is ensuring that Rotherham Council and Rotherham Partnership work jointly to continue to improve environmental performance and meet increasingly strict government targets.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will assist in delivering the objectives contributing to Climate Change Act 2008, MoU and the refreshed Nottingham Declaration.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

Contributions from a wide range of organisations and individuals have influenced the development of the Strategy and Action Plan. A workshop took place in January 2009 with a wide range of stakeholders and presentations have been given to a number of groups and organisations.

A more detailed consultation took place with partners to enable greater partnership working on environment and climate change issues. New structures and revised priorities have changed throughout this period and the strategy has been amended to reflect the changes.

The LSP considers sustainable development as a cross cutting theme across the new themes and boards (economic; crime and disorder; health and wellbeing). It has been agreed that the strategy will be circulated to members of the LSP, and that subject to the agreement of the Partnership Board, their Chair endorses the strategy on their behalf. The Board will be open to receive issues which it was felt had an LSP dimension.

Contact Names:

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, ext 23815 karl.battersby@rotherham.gov.uk

David Rhodes, Corporate Environmental Manager, Environment and Development Services, ext 54017, david.rhodes@rotherham.gov.uk

Rotherham's Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2011 - 2015

Introduction

The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006 and the Climate Change Act 2008 places significant duties and expectations on local authorities to work with partners to address climate change issues.

The purpose of this Strategy is to explain how Rotherham Partnership will reduce environmental impact; reduce its contribution to climate change and adapt to future changes resulting from climate change. The strategy will contribute to national climate change objectives including:

- The 80% greenhouse gas emissions reduction target in the Climate Change Act 2008 by 2050 against a 1990 baseline.

- The fuel poverty targets arising from the review of the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001 and the implementation of Green Deal.

- The target to supply 15% of the UK's energy consumption from renewable energy by 2020 as set out in the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive

Climate change is set to be an issue that will dominate the 21st century because of its economic, social and environmental implications. Although an international issue, many of the effects will be felt, and ultimately will need to be managed, on a local scale.

The strategy therefore sets out three key themes that summarise the main areas where the partners believe they have the greatest ability to make changes. These will be the basis for the partners' actions to improve our local environment and reduce carbon emissions. The themes are:

- Public buildings and operations. Making a difference through design and adaptation of new buildings, reviewing operational policies and ensuring sustainable use of resources for example recycling.

- Community involvement. Working with residents, communities and businesses to raise awareness of climate change issues and to develop initiatives to tackle them.

- Transport infrastructure. Ensuring that our transport network takes account of positive and negative impacts on the environment.

This strategy is accompanied by an action plan which contains detailed and smart actions that fall under one or more of the above themes.

Progress of the Strategy and Action Plan will be regularly monitored and achievements and areas of concern against the objectives and targets will be reported annually. The strategy will be reviewed annually or as a result of significant changes from local, regional or national legislation and policies. This Strategy operates on a long-term perspective, but includes targets and actions to be achieved in both the short and the medium-term.

The Challenge of Climate Change

Climate change is caused by the rise in average global temperature due to increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. This in

turn causes rises in sea level, increased surface ocean temperatures and changes to weather patterns. There is overwhelming international scientific evidence that human activity is the primary cause of observed recent changes and that urgent action is needed to stabilise atmospheric greenhouse gases. If left, these changes will fundamentally alter the environment and will lead to massive extinction of some species, loss of biodiversity and even loss of human life.

We are however, already facing inevitable climate change, regardless of how much greenhouse gas emissions are reduced now and in the future. UK Climate Impacts Programme reported changes already occurring including:

- Global average temperatures have risen by nearly 0.8 ºC since the late 19th century, and rising at about 0.2 ºC/decade over the past 25 years.

- Global sea-level rise has accelerated between mid-19th century and mid-20th century, and is now about 3 mm per year.

- All regions of the UK have experienced an increase in average temperatures between 1961 and 2006 annually, and for all seasons. Increases in annual average temperature are typically between 1.0 and 1.7 °C, tending to be largest in the south and east of England and smallest in Scotland.

- Sea-surface temperatures around the UK coast have risen over the past three decades by about 0.7 ºC.

- Sea level around the UK rose by about 1 mm/yr in the 20th century, corrected for land movement. The rate for the 1990s and 2000s has been higher than this.

Not only is it necessary to take action to mitigate future climate change, there is also a need to adapt to the changes we are likely to face.

Results of modelling carried out for the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Climate Change Adaptation Study also suggest that by 2050:

- Greater rainfall would lead to increasing and more frequent flood problems for local properties, businesses and infrastructure. Greater seasonality of rainfall would bring an extended winter 'flood' season and higher intensity, flashy flood flows. In fact, a sixth of Yorkshire and Humber is at risk of flooding (385,000 properties), second highest in England after London.

- Air pollution episodes, especially during extreme heat events in urban areas, are expected to increase the incidence of complications associated with respiratory illnesses such as asthma, and with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

- There is likely to be increasing pressure on hedgerow species due to soil moisture stress. Any loss of hedgerow will also affect the movement of species that use hedgerows for navigation or food.

Climate change will present the borough with opportunities as well as challenges:

- The number of jobs needed to meet the government's renewable energy targets will rise from 16,000 to 150,000 by 2020.

- There will be significant opportunities for the Advanced Manufacturing Sector and the region's advanced technology industries in developing solutions to the challenges presented by climate change

- High levels of regeneration activity in the borough provide an ideal opportunity to build climate adaptation into all new developments. Increased use of shade trees in urban areas would also limit the heat island effect through shading and evaporative cooling

- The creation and development of green space and landscaping can encourage and attract high value industry to a region creating employment opportunities

Ownership of the Strategy and Action Plan

Rotherham Partnership and Rotherham Council have worked together to develop this strategy and action plan. As the largest employer in the borough, the author of key strategies and a major service deliverer, Rotherham Council will take responsibility for delivering large elements of the action plan. The success of this action plan is dependant upon all organisations represented across the Rotherham Partnership making a commitment to work in partnership to address climate change.

To ensure a collaborative approach, the Sustainability Partnership has taken responsibility for developing, consulting on and publishing the strategy and associated action plan. The Sustainability Partnership will monitor delivery of the plan through the production of regular progress reports across the Rotherham Partnership. Rotherham Council's Sustainable Development Officers Group will offer support to ensure that the Strategy and Action Plan is driven forward and actions are achieved.

Action Plan

Reducing our carbon emissions is essential to translating our commitment into actions. Carbon reductions can often be linked to improving efficiency and reducing cost by reducing waste; reducing energy and water consumption; using low carbon modes of transport; implementing sustainable procurement processes; contributing to carbon reductions through our built and natural environment and influencing behaviour through planning, policies, training and awareness. Rotherham Partnership intends to work to tackle climate change through 10 key areas of action:

1.	Strategic Planning and Policy	2.	Built and Natural Environment
3.	Emergency Planning and Recovery, Social Care and Health	4.	Energy and Water
5.	Engagement, Education And Awareness Raising	6.	Housing
7.	Procurement and Resources	8.	Regeneration and Business
9.	Transport	10.	Waste and Recycling

1. Strategic Planning and Policy

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
1.1 Strategic approach to sustainable development adopted that cuts across all aspects of estate management, service delivery and community leadership	1.1.1 Dedicated Resource and Network for Climate Change Co-ordination	Sept 2011	Identify Climate Change Champions at Senior Officer level	**RMBC** –SLT, LSP Board	Current
	1.1.2 Report performance and progress of action plan through the annual Environment Statement	March 2012	Annual report	**RMBC –** Property Environmental Team, Sustainability Partnership	EMS Fund
1.2 Ensure that a system is in place for gathering data in relation to climate change	1.2.1 Audit of Activities across LSP that contribute to sustainable development	March 2012	Internal Audit Programme / Annual updates Contribution to Annual Environmental Statement	**RMBC** - Sustainable Development Officers Group, Sustainability Partnership	SDOG / Current
1.3 Monitor review of Nottingham Declaration with a view to signing and committing to revised targets	1.3.1 Monitor and report DECC/LGA MoU and action plan	October 2011	Nottingham Declaration signing Targets adopted	**RMBC –** Property Environmental Team, Sustainability Partnership	Current
	1.3.2 Monitor and report on Nottingham Declaration				

2. Built and Natural Environment					
Objective	**Key Actions**	**Target Date**	**Progress Measure**	**Delivery partners (lead in bold)**	**Resources**
2.1 Manage and improve the quality and accessibility of parks, open spaces and public rights of way	2.1.1 Development of Site Management Plans	Ongoing annual target dates (March)	Site Management Plans	**RMBC –**Directors of Streetpride; Planning & Regeneration.	Current
	2.1.2 Green space strategy & LDF to include specific measures relating to climate change		Performance of climate change targets in Green Spaces Strategy & LDF		
	2.1.3 Implementation of Rights of way improvement plan		Rights of Way performance indicators		
2.2 Improve street cleanliness by reducing litter, graffiti, fly tipping and other enviro-crime	2.2.2 Maintain cleanliness standards	Ongoing annual target dates (March)	Performance indicators	**RMBC –** Streetpride	Current
	2.2.3 Undertake awareness / action campaigns		Campaign reports		
2.3 Conserve existing biodiversity and reduce sources of harm	2.3.1 Implement Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plan and review as appropriate	Review planned for 2010 / 2011 Ongoing	Project Plans and biodiversity records Reviewed biodiversity action plan	**RMBC –** Green Spaces Manager, Sustainability Partnership	Current
	2.3.2 Develop and implement site based management plans for Council owned sites	Ongoing	Management plans		
	2.3.3 Implement the Local Wildlife System to encourage non RMBC landowners to manage important biodiversity sites appropriately	Ongoing	System records		
	2.3.4 Ensure all land use and management strategies, policies and plans take account of biodiversity-related climate change issues and incorporate adaptation measures.	Ongoing	Management plans		

2. Built and Natural Environment

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
2.4 Establish ecological networks through habitat protection, restoration and creation to create ecologically resilient and varied landscapes	2.4.1 Agree Green Infrastructure mapping and incorporate into LDF policy	2009-2012	Net loss / gain of agreed mapped green network.	**RMBC** – Green Spaces Manager; Forward Planning	Currently within LDF production scope.
2.5 Maintain environmental evidence base to allow sound ecological decisions to be made	2.5.1 Assess existing internal and external systems to develop resourced flexible monitoring & performance indicator systems for LSP and Council targets	Ongoing	Environmental evidence base in place and meeting agreed standards.	**RMBC** – Environment and Development Services, Sustainability Partnership	Current
2.6 Manage Rotherham woodland	2.6.1 Maintain, manage and conserve trees & woodlands in the borough	Annual certification	FSC Certification and Management Plans / improvement schemes	**RMBC** – Streetpride, Sustainability Partnership	Current
	2.6.2 Identify local market for wood management by-products				
	2.6.3 Support woodland management projects for socially excluded communities				
2.7 Ensure that asset portfolio's are sustainable by integrating sustainability into all capital and asset management strategies, plans, programmes and projects	2.7.1 Develop a Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Code of Practice incorporating building standards.	Annual reporting project dependant	Design standards BREEAM ratings Environmental audit programme	**Asset Management Department**, Procurement Panel, School Organisation Planning and Development Manager, Sustainability Partnership	Current
2.8 Employ planning policy to address climate change	2.8.1 Consider climate change impacts and incorporate sustainable features in applications	Annual reporting	Planning applications	**RMBC** Development Control Manager	Current
2.9 Ensure Biodiversity Duty (NERC Act 2006) is implemented in line with recommended Best	2.9.1 Integration of biodiversity considerations into all relevant service areas and functions	Ongoing	Monitoring standards (to be agreed) Annual compliance	**RMBC** – LSP wide, Sustainability Partnership	Current

2. Built and Natural Environment					
Objective	**Key Actions**	**Target Date**	**Progress Measure**	**Delivery partners (lead in bold)**	**Resources**
Practice.			monitoring to be undertaken by Defra. Internal monitoring system		

3. Emergency Planning (and Recovery), Social Care & Health

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
3.1 Ensure potential environmental damage is minimised in emergency situations and accidents through the development of emergency response plans at sites of significant environmental risk	3.1.1 Maintain and implementation if required, of Borough Emergency Plan, site specific plans and Multi Agency flood plan.	Annual Review	Annual training and exercises together with validation	**Asset Management Department** - Rotherham Emergency Planning Forum and the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum	Current
3.2 Ensure communities are prepared and able to adapt to future climate	3.2.1 Undertake Local Climate Impact Profile	Rolling Programme	Production of a local risk register Validation of Awareness Raising Events Place Survey	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team	Current
	3.2.2 Raise community awareness				
	1.1.3 Assess the relative risks of the projected climate change impacts on Rotherham / South Yorkshire and identify the priorities for action to reduce and manage those risks.	June 2011	Improved resilience in Rotherham to current and future climate change	**South Yorkshire Climate Change Network** – Property Environmental Team, Sustainability Partnership	LGYH RIEP Funding
3.3 Promote healthy eating / healthy food production	3.3.1 Promote local healthy food procurement	Ongoing	Local food procurement	**Rotherham Partnership**	Current
	3.1.2 Support community projects e.g. using underused land in public spaces to produce food		Local food production		

4. Energy & Water

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
4.1 Sustainable energy use and wider sustainable development recognised as a priority	4.1.1 Ensure energy issues reported regularly to Senior Management Teams	Annual / 6 monthly	Annual / 6 monthly reporting	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	Current
4.2 Reduce CO_2 emissions	4.2.1 Reduce CO_2 emissions from LSP activities	Annual - July	GHG Report Annual CRC report	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	Current
	4.2.2 Promote energy efficiency in schools through technical improvement and awareness	Annual	Energy Consumption / Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Performance Certificates / Display Energy Certificates	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team	Current & external funding
4.3 Reduce water consumption	4.3.1 Reduce water consumption from LSP activities	Annual	Water conservation features in new builds / refurbishment projects	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	Current
	4.3.2 Develop and adopt a Sustainable Construction Strategy for water conservation				
4.4 Adopt /promote renewable energy	4.4.1 Set targets for renewable technologies in new buildings and refurbishment	2011	On site renewables	**RMBC** - Forward Planning	LDF
	4.4.2 Identify and implement projects through FITS / RHI	Ongoing	FITS / RHI project records	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	FITS/RHI
4.5 Develop a proactive programme to secure external funding	4.5.1 Investigate and apply for available funding	Ongoing	Funded projects ongoing / complete	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	Current
	4.5.2 Identify EU funding projects to apply as partners				
4.6 Engage with local business	4.6.1 Raise Energy Awareness of Local Business and LSP Partners, creating links with	2011	Key Care Management Programme No of businesses	**RMBC** – RIDO; Business Regulation Team; NAS; Barnsley	Current

4. Energy & Water					
Objective	**Key Actions**	**Target Date**	**Progress Measure**	**Delivery partners (lead in bold)**	**Resources**
	RIDO, Chamber , Carbon Trust and EST		reached Rotherham Green Business Club	and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce; CO_2 Sense Yorkshire	

10

5. Engagement, Education and Awareness Raising

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
5.1 Provide environmental training and information	5.1.1 Implement an ongoing communications and awareness campaign / training	Ongoing	Records of awareness campaigns / training sessions School inset days Raised awareness measured through surveys	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team Sustainability Partnership Rotherham Education for Sustainable Development Partnership	Current
	5.1.2 Support community groups / champions to provide local environmental advice	Ongoing	Records of support	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams; Streetpride; Neighbourhoods and Adult Services	Current
	5.1.4 Communicate the environmental performance and initiatives of the LSP	Ongoing	Articles and press releases	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	Current
	5.1.5 Develop an Annual Environmental Statement for Rotherham Partnership	March Annual	Annual Statement	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams	To be identified
5.2 Work in partnership with schools, and other organisations to promote and support action / projects that improve the quality of our environment	5.2.1 Expand and support Eco-Schools	Ongoing	Number of EMAS / Eco-Schools / Sustainable Schools	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team; SYCCN; Rotherham Education for Sustainable Development Partnership	Current
	5.2.2 South Yorkshire Climate Change Network Schools Programme	June 2011	School training records		
5.3 Mainstream sustainable	5.3.1 SD included as an	March 2012	PDR Reports	**Sustainability**	Current

5. Engagement, Education and Awareness Raising

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
development through job descriptions, PDRs and staff inductions	employee / Manager competency within the PDR (appraisal) process			**Partnership** – Environmental Teams; Human Resources	

6. Housing

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
6.2 Improve the energy efficiency of social housing as measured through the SAP rating	6.2.1 Improve insulation	Ongoing	SAP rating of 75 by 2015	**Asset Management Department** – Neighbourhood Investment Service; Property Environmental Team	Current; potential external funding; Green deal
	6.2.2 Improve heating systems				
	6.2.3 Improve energy awareness				
6.3 Improve and maintain access to information on energy efficiency for Rotherham residents	6.3.1 Provide householders with a local energy efficiency advice and grant information services	Ongoing	Case / advice records	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team	Current
	6.3.2 Neighbourhood Service Centres advice				
6.4 Obtain external funding to support energy efficiency initiatives	6.4.1 Promote Green Deal	June/Sept 2012	Green Deal project records	**RMBC** – Property Environmental Team	External Funding
6.5 Achieve zero carbon new residential development	6.5.1 Adopt the code for sustainable homes and seek to build new homes to code level 6 prior to 2016	2016	Achieve code level 6 certification for all new residential development	**Asset Management Department** – Property Environmental Team; EDS Planning	Current
	6.5.2 Train an officer to code level 6 to issue certificates				

7. Procurement & Resources

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
7.1 Promote sustainability and environmental considerations through procurement activities	7.1.2 Develop a Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Code of Practice	2011	CoP monitoring through environmental audit programme Whole Life costs procedure and records of application	**RMBC** - Procurement Panel / RBT	Sustainable Procurement Working Group
	7.1.3 Promote to LSP members and support wider adoption where feasible		CoP adoption	Sustainability Partnership	Current
7.3 Work in partnership with contractors and suppliers to minimise the environmental impact of their goods and services	7.3.1 Assess the environmental performance of suppliers and contractors	Ongoing	Audit a min of 2 of the top fifty suppliers and contractors each year Assess through the Pre Tender Qualification process	**Asset Management Department** - Procurement Panel / RBT	Current Current
7.4 Encourage procurement of local products and services	7.4.1 Action through the Procurement Strategy	Ongoing	Increased local products or services Encourage through LSP	**RMBC** - Procurement Panel; RBT; LSP; RIDO Business Development Team	Current
7.5 Where feasible, purchase goods and materials that can be manufactured and disposed of in an environmentally sustainable way	7.5.1 Action through the procurement activities	Ongoing	Types of goods and materials purchased	**RMBC** - Procurement Panel / RBT	Current
	7.5.2 Award suppliers who have proven sustainability credentials.				
	7.5.3 Devise an incentive scheme to promote the production of sustainable goods and materials in dealings with suppliers / manufacturers.				

8. Regeneration / Business

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
8.1 Regenerate derelict land and focus new developments on brown-field sites	8.1.1 Review and improve the current non domestic regeneration and land policy	Ongoing	Number of regeneration projects on brownfield sites	**RMBC** –Forward Planning, RMBC Neighbourhood Investment Service	Current
	8.1.2 Review Local Development Framework land allocations in relation to modern market requirements		LDF		
	8.1.3 Exceed the national target for brown field domestic developments		Domestic properties constructed on brownfield sites		
8.2 Communicate the advantages to businesses of adopting new environmental practices, that reduce costs and increase business performance	8.2.1 Provide information to businesses on the environmental and economic benefits of sustainable practices	Ongoing	Number of businesses reached	**RMBC** – RiDO Business Development Team; Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce; Business Link; Carbon Trust	Current
	8.2.2 Business Community Support Officers – extend role to helping businesses 'be greener' and save money				
	8.2.3 Develop a training package				
	8.2.4 Raise awareness of loans and assistance for SMEs, particularly linked to the low carbon agenda & their bottom line				
	8.2.5 Showcase successful projects (i.e. Rotherham Advance Manufacturing Park) and business processes/ partnership projects that showcase greener processes and initiatives that also save costs.	Ongoing	Case studies		

9. Transport

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
9.1 Reduce the environmental impact of fleet transport and promote the use of sustainable transport	9.1.1 Assess feasibility of alternative fuel fleet vehicles	Ongoing	Alternative fuel vehicles	**Sustainability Partnership** – Asset Management Department; Environmental Teams**;** Corporate Transport Unit	Current / external funding
	9.1.2 Install on board tracking device	Ongoing	Tracking devices fitted		
	9.1.3 Liaise with Waste Management to assess feasibility of using waste derived fuel from:	Ongoing	AD fuel vehicles	**RMBC** - Waste Management / Transport Manager	Current
	9.1.4 Anaerobic Digestion (AD) treatment of municipal organic waste		PP fuel vehicles		
	9.1.5 Pyrolysis treatment of municipal / farm plastic waste				
	9.1.6 Promote sustainable transport through the Local Transport Plan	Review prior to LTP3 in 2011	LTP projects and performance indicators	**Asset Management Department** - Transportation Team	Current
	9.1.7 Reduce staff grey fleet mileage	5% Annual	GHG report	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams; Transportation Team, RBT	Current
	9.1.8 Service Planning to contribute to LTP targets	Annual	LTP targets considered in service plans	**Sustainability Partnership** – Service Directors; Performance & Quality; Transportation Team	Current
	9.1.10 Raising awareness and gaining commitment to sustainable	Monitor annually	Long distance train journeys survey required	**Sustainability Partnership** – Asset	Current

9.Transport

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
	transport from staff and contractors including moving people to public transport		–capture data Contract monitoring and LPS Staff and contractor buy ins Service level agreements	Management Department; Environmental Teams; Corporate Transport Unit; Transportation Team	
	9.1.11 Implement a car club for Rotherham similar to system operating in Sheffield City Council	2012	Completion of new offices with car club	**RMBC** – RBT; Transportation Unit	Corporate funding
9.2 Management of taxies and contractors	9.2.1 Develop clear set criteria for taxies and hire vehicles including: • set age limits and emission standard following technology standards e.g. euro five • Install on board tracking device • Enforce idling regulations	2011	Standards report and monitoring	**Asset Management Department -** Licensing key driver; Licensing Committee Develop policy EDS with Licensing and Trade Bodies, CTU and TRANSLINK	Current

10. Waste / recycling

Objective	Key Actions	Target Date	Progress Measure	Delivery partners (lead in bold)	Resources
10.1 Reduce the amount of waste produced through the adoption of the waste hierarchy 'reduce - reuse – recycle - recover'	10.1.1 Implement Waste Management Strategy 10.1.2 Assess and improve internal waste management 10.1.3 Reduce packaging from suppliers	Waste Strategy target dates	Performance indicator reports Waste management arrangements and volume Domestic waste arisings	**Sustainability Partnership** – Waste Management Team / RBT	Current
10.2 Reduce the amount of waste produced in schools	10.2.1 Promotion of waste minimisation and recycling including: • paper banks • composting	Ongoing	Number of schools with recycling facilities	**RMBC** - Waste Management Team	Current
10.3 Improve management of ICT Waste	10.3.1 Develop and set targets for reuse / recycling	Ongoing	Waste reused / recycled	**Sustainability Partnership** – Environmental Teams**; ICT** Client Team; RBT	Current
10.4 Promotion of the benefits of waste management	10.4.1 Promotion of waste management to Local Business		Business take up	**RMBC -** Waste Management; RiDO; Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce; Business Link	Current

Key Strategies and Policies

- Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy

- Climate Change Act 2008

- Climate Change Plan for Yorkshire & Humber

- Rotherham's Sustainable Community Strategy

- RMBC Environmental Statement 2010

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act

- Green Spaces Strategy

- Local Development Framework

- Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plan

- Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Code of Practice

- NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy

- Rotherham Public Health Strategy

- Regional Energy Infrastructure Strategy

- Local Transport Plan

- Rotherham Waste Management Strategy

Key

SLT	Strategic Leadership Team
CTU	Central Transportation Unit
DEC	Display Energy Certificate
EDS	Environment and Development Services
EMS	Environmental Management System
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
LDF	Local Development Framework
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership (Rotherham Partnership)
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NAS	Neighbourhoods & Adult Services
PDR	Performance and Development Review
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
SDOG	Sustainable Development Officers Group
DECC	Department of Environment and Climate Change
LGA	Local Government Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
LGYH	Local Government for Yorkshire and Humber
RIEP	Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive
FITS	Feed in Tariffs
RIDO	Rotherham Investment and Development Office
EST	Energy saving Trust
SYCCN	South Yorkshire Climate Change Network
CoP	Code of Practice
SME	Small / Medium Enterprise

Agenda Item 7

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1)	Meeting:	Cabinet
2)	Date:	**21 September 2011**
3)	Title:	**RMBC Customer Access Strategy 2011 - 2015**
4)	Directorate:	**Commissioning, Policy and Performance**

5. Summary

This report introduces the refreshed Customer Access Strategy, which has been updated to cover the period 2011 – 2015.

The Strategy is attached for consideration.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Note the Council's current position and the achievements which have been achieved following implementation of the Customer Access Strategy 2008 - 2011

2. Endorse the refreshed Customer Access Strategy, which has been updated to cover the period 2011 - 2015.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1   Background

The Council adopted its first Customer Access Strategy in 2005, and has regularly reviewed and refreshed the document, to ensure the strategy remains current and appropriate.

The latest refresh of the Customer Access Strategy has been developed in line with the Council's refreshed ICT Strategy, to ensure that there is a co-ordinated and strategic approach to delivery.

The refreshed Customer Access Strategy covers the period from 2011 – 2015.

Implementation of the Strategy has been built around four key themes. These are

1   Customer Focus

- listening to our customers, developing services which meet customer needs and getting service delivery right first time.

2   Availability

- developing ways that a customer can easily obtain services

3   Support

- encouraging and supporting customers to use cost effective ways to obtain services

4   Innovation

- working with partner organisations to deliver services in new and innovative ways

The strategy also references the Council's proposed model for customer service delivery which is based around functional groups rather than around individual service lines. This approach was approved by Cabinet in August 2010.

8. Finance

Delivery of significant elements of this strategy will be supported by the refreshed ICT Capital Programme, service delivery budgets, central government grants and other external funding sources.

Individual business cases which demonstrate improved service delivery and reduced costs will be developed to support any financial investments required in delivery of the Customer Access Strategy.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Delivery of the Customer Access Strategy is a critical element in ensuring the Council transforms its services for the benefit of customers, businesses, members and staff in order to improve the customer experience and deliver customer service excellence.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The development of the Customer Access Strategy contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan and its policy and performance agendas. It will deliver key efficiency and value for money improvements.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Customer Access Strategy 2008 – 2011
- Customer Access Group Members and other key Directorate lead officers
- Elected Member seminar

Contact Name(s):

Rachel O'Neil
Customer Access Client Officer, x54530
rachel.oneil@rotherham.gov.uk

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Delivering excellent customer services

**Customer Access Strategy
2011 – 2015**

Contents

Section 1: Our Vision

Rotherham Council has a desire to provide excellent services to the public and to provide value for money to tax payers. The ways that we enable the public to contact the Council play a big part in supporting this requirement.

Our vision for customer access is simple.

Council Services will be *easy to use. Our services will be cost effective, good quality and meet our customers' needs.*

This Strategy sets out how the Council will turn our vision into a reality for our customers. It explains how we will meet customer needs and demands using our resources most effectively.

We believe it is important to continually develop and improve the ways that customers are able to get in touch with us and to ensure that our customer services are effectively and efficiently managed. This will mean that despite the challenging financial climate the Council is facing, we will continue to be able to deliver against our commitment to always put the customer first.

Section 2: *Our current position*

The Council is working to make Rotherham a prosperous place, where people have choices and opportunities to improve their lives.

Like all other Councils, Rotherham faces a significant reduction in the amount of money we have to spend and we must review and develop the ways that we provide access to our services so that we are able to continue to deliver cost effective, good quality services to our customers, particularly the most vulnerable. The Council's Corporate Plan sets out how we will do this and focuses on the most important things that we want to achieve, which are

- Making sure no community is left behind;
- Providing quality education; ensuring people have opportunities to improve skills, learn and get a job;
- Ensuring care and protection are available for those people who need it most;
- Helping to create safe and healthy communities; and
- Improving the environment.

Rotherham is a Metropolitan Borough, which has a population of approximately 254,000. The Council provides services to a diverse population that is made up of men and women, children and young people who make many different and valuable contributions to the life of the Borough. Our aim is to ensure that all people in Rotherham are able to reach their full potential.

Over the last few years, the Council has modernised its customer access channels, making customer service delivery more efficient and ensuring that it puts the customer at the centre of all activities.

The Council has developed five local Joint Service Centres, which enable customers to obtain information, make payments, report problems and apply for a range of different services. The Joint Service Centres are sited across the Borough, meaning that people are able to access services in person at a location which is within approximately 5 miles of their home. Over 550,000 customer visits were made to these local centres in 2010.

Customers can also obtain information about some services at local libraries and Children's Centres, the Information Centre and other Neighbourhood facilities across Rotherham. A map showing the location of customer access points across the borough can be found in Appendix 1.

To accompany our Joint Service Centres, the Council has developed its telephone contact centre, which handles over 1 million of the Council's

customer telephone calls. The telephone contact centre offers extended customer opening hours, providing greater flexibility for our customers.

The Council has a well used website (www.rotherham.gov.uk) as an additional contact channel. The website provides information about our services and also offers the facility for customers to complete service requests online. Over 750,000 visitors obtained information by using the website in 2010.

The Council has also begun to use social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, to help us provide immediate information to our customers and has begun to offer the facility for customers to get or give information about some services via their mobile phone.   Research shows that 80% of the UK population owns a mobile phone and the number of people who want to use this method as a way to access services is steadily increasing. We will continue to increase the number of services which can be accessed in this way.

To help us provide easy access to services for the many diverse communities of Rotherham, the Council has commissioned 'thebigword' to provide translation services on its behalf. This enables the Council to communicate effectively with all of our community groups. We are able to offer translators and interpreters via telephone or in person, and are able to provide translated documents or documents in braille, audio, large print and easy read formats where required.

The Council has been able to modernise the way customer services are delivered by focusing on customer experiences and ensuring that customer needs drive the changes that we make to services.

Over the period of this Strategy, the Council will continue to work with communities to ensure that access to services continue to improve and develop. In doing this, we will challenge ourselves; ensure that we fully understand the needs of our communities and that we are clear about what local people want from public services.   This will ensure that we deliver what matters for the people of Rotherham.

Section 3: Our achievements

There have been significant achievements in Customer Service delivery since our last strategy was published in 2008. During 2008 - 2011 the Council has focused on the delivery of five strategic objectives which underpin the Customer Access Strategy. These were:

- to improve the customer experience,
- to refocus our priorities, by reviewing our processes and technology requirements,
- to provide joined up service delivery, by proactively working with partners
- to market and promote ways to access our services and publish our achievements; and
- to strengthen the learning, development and training of our staff

Over this time, we have

- **Increased Customer Satisfaction levels**, achieving a 13% increase in the number of people who were satisfied with the customer service levels they received over the last three years. In 2008, 80% of our customers told us they were satisfied with service levels. In 2010, 93% of customers were satisfied with the service they received. More information is available in Section 4 of the Strategy document.

- **Developed our telephone contact centre**, which has doubled the amount of calls it handles since 2008, to over 1,000,000 calls a year. We have also improved the performance of this contact centre. In 2010, 97% of our customers were able to immediately speak to a customer service adviser.

- **Refreshed the council website**. Approximately 65,000 service requests and transactions were completed via the Council website in 2010, which was a 20% increase on those completed in 2009. This is a very convenient way for customers to access services and is a cost effective contact method for the Council. The website can be accessed at **www.rotherham.gov.uk**

- **Implemented new ways to let customers know what is happening.** We have a registration facility on our website, **www.rotherham.gov.uk/signup,** which allows customers to receive information about services and events.   We also use text messaging and email messaging to let people know about important service information and we now use social media, such as twitter and facebook to provide information and news.

- **Improved our website accessibility** for those customers who have a disability, a sensory impairment or additional language needs. We also continue to provide access to translation and interpreting services where required.

- **Continued to provide free internet access** at all our local libraries, supported by trained staff. We also deliver ICT taster sessions, to help customers become more familiar with technology.

- **Continued to provide local Joint Service Centres** in the Town Centre, in Maltby, in Dinnington, in Aston and in Swinton. Our final Joint Service Centre will be based in Rawmarsh and will be completed by summer 2012. This means that customers can access a range of services in person from various locations across the borough (see Appendix 1 for locations and addresses).

- **Developed opportunities to access services at libraries and, Children's Centres** across the borough. We have also **developed 'Carer's Corner'**, a venue dedicated specifically to supporting carers within Rotherham.

- **Expanded the ways you can pay for goods and services from the Council by joining the PayPoint network**. This means that customers now have the opportunity to pay their council tax or their rent at any PayPoint venue or at any Post Office across Rotherham and the rest of the UK. In Rotherham, this has increased the number of cash payment facilities to over 140 places.

- **Encouraged over 70% of our customers to use a direct debit to pay for their Council Tax.** 1800 customers have switched to using Direct Debit as their preferred payment method in the last two years. This is a cost effective way for the Council to be able to collect Council Tax payments, and means that customers do not have to make the journey to one of our Joint Service Centres to pay their bill.

- **Implemented clear customer service standards**, so members of the public know what to expect from us, and we have successfully delivered against these standards.

- **Provided training and support** to our staff members, enabling them to deal with customer queries in a professional and timely manner.

- **Actively engaged with customers** when we have made changes to our services. We have set up 'learning from customer groups', regularly completed customer consultation and have provided a facility on our website so that you can tell us what we are doing well and what we need to improve.

- **Provided a 'Tell Us Once' service for people who are registering births or deaths**. We are able to tell all other local and central government agencies of such changes, removing the need for customers to have to tell numerous departments the same information.

- **Provided Welfare Rights advice** to terminally ill cancer patients on behalf of the Macmillan Service, via the Council's Advice Services.

- **Worked closely with NHS Rotherham to deliver the Registration service from Rotherham hospital** as well as from the Town Centre Registry Office.

- **Developed Joint Service Centres in Aston and in Maltby**, working in partnership with other public and private sector providers. This enables customers to access a wider range of services under one roof.

- **Implemented flexible ways of working** for our staff members. This means that most of our staff members can now access customer records and do their job from any location. This reduces the need for additional travel, improves the efficiency of our staff and means we can reduce the number of buildings the Council needs to maintain whilst delivering services to customers more flexibly.

- **Achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard** across all our Council Services, which means that the Council has been independently recognised for meeting the national standards which demonstrate excellent customer service delivery. The Council has also been recognised for exceeding the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard in the work we do to provide joined up service delivery with our partners.

- We have also been rated as **Excellent under the Equality Framework for Local Government,** which means the Council has been independently recognised as performing excellently to meet the needs of the diverse communities within Rotherham.

Section 4: Customer Feedback

What our customers are telling us.

We have completed a number of consultation exercises to help us understand what customers like and dislike about our services and how they think the Council should provide access to services.

Our surveys tell us that generally Rotherham people are satisfied with the way in which they can obtain services and that their customer service experience is improving.   In 2008, 80% of customers were satisfied with their service experience. By 2011, **93% of customers told us that they were satisfied with the service provided** via our Joint Service Centres and our contact centre.

Satisfaction with our Joint Service Centres at Maltby and Aston is very high, with 99% of customers questioned in 2010 telling us that they were very satisfied with their service experience. Customers have told us they enjoy being able to access a range of public services under one roof and they like the modern facilities which have been developed. Based on the success of these Centres, the Council will look to provide services delivered by other public or voluntary sector partners at other Joint Service Centres across the borough.

Satisfaction with the Council website is also increasing. In 2008, 60% of customers were satisfied with the level of service they received via our website. In 2011, 75% of customers told us that they were satisfied with their overall service experience when using our site. Customers have told us they like to use our 'Google' search facility to find information and want to be able to submit service requests using electronic methods. We will continue to work with customers to help develop our website, strengthen customer satisfaction levels and ensure that the content we provide is simple, easy to obtain and meets customer needs.

We will continue to monitor our customer views on a regular basis and will take action to make appropriate changes to services where we are able to do so.
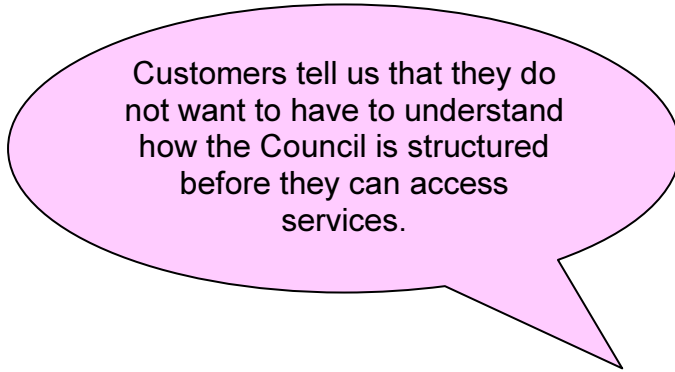
Where customers think we can improve.

Customers tell us they would like better information about where they can access services 'in person'.
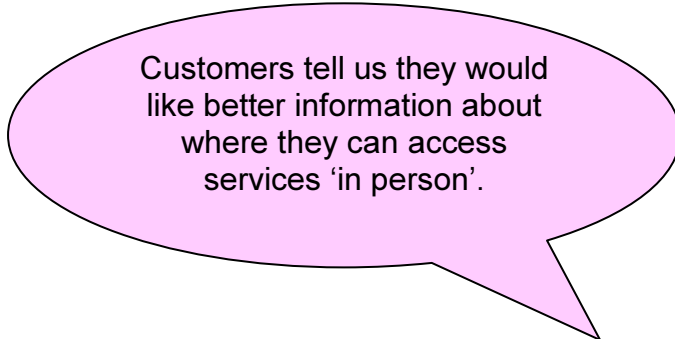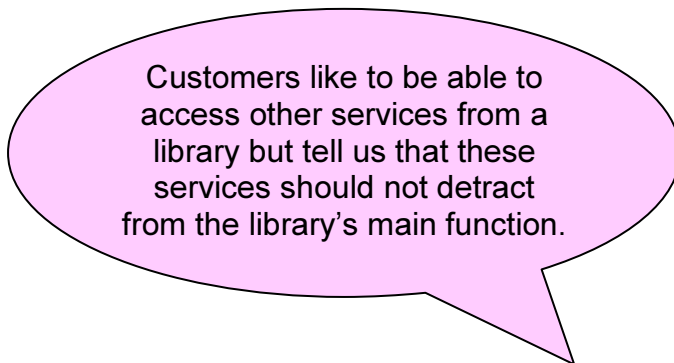
Customers have told us they do not want to have to visit several different offices to resolve their queries. This Strategy will focus on bringing more services into our customer service centres, making it easier for customers to access a full range of services from one place.

Customers tell us they would like their telephone calls to be answered quickly and by someone who can resolve their query
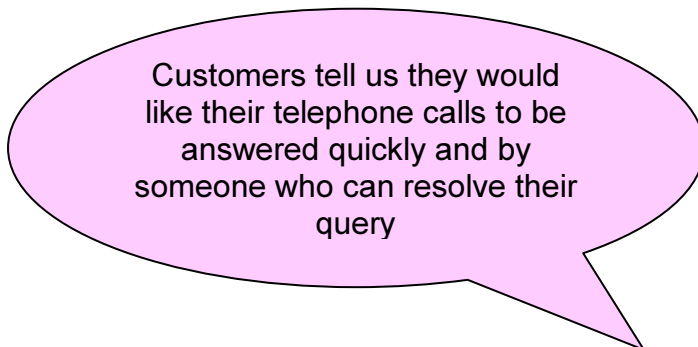
Customers have told us they do not want to have their telephone calls passed to a number of different members of staff. This Strategy will focus on reducing the amount of telephone numbers customers will need to use and making it easier to speak to someone who has the right knowledge to answer customer queries.

Customers tell us that they do not want to have to understand how the Council is structured before they can access services.

Customers have told us they expect Council services to work together seamlessly. This Strategy will ensure that the full range of services can be accessed via our Joint Service Centres, telephone contact centre and website. We will use simple language and will ensure that information is easy to find. This will mean that customers do not need to understand how the Council is structured when they contact us.

Customers like to be able to access other services from a library but tell us that these services should not detract from the library's main function.

We will ensure that this feedback is used when we design new buildings and when we review and develop our customer contact points.

Specific actions are included in this Strategy which will address the feedback we have received about how the Council can improve its access channels. A full list of actions is set out in Section 7 of the Strategy.

Section 5: An overview of our Customer Access Strategy

Our customers have told us that they want to have choices in the ways they can access services and interact with the Council. Customers want to use different ways to contact the Council for differing service requests and to suit their own convenience.
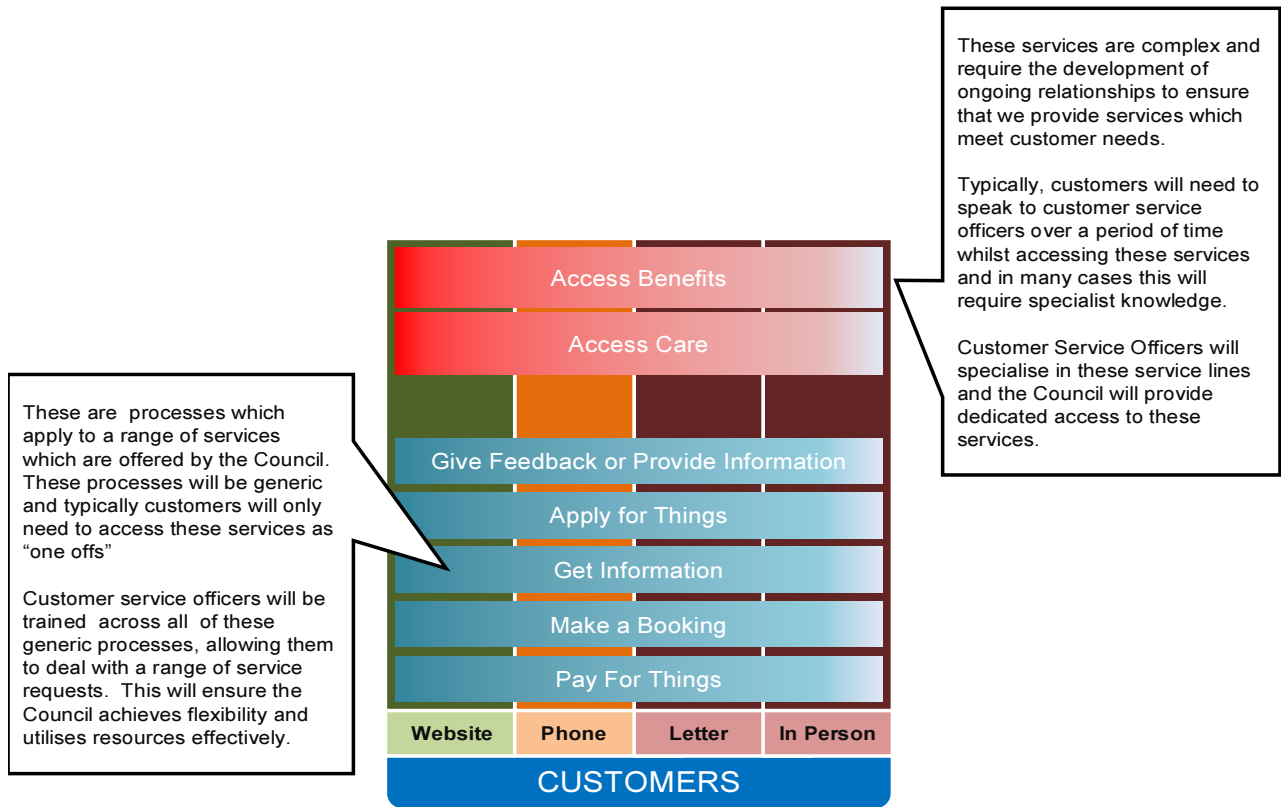
To help customers do this, Rotherham Council will continue to offer four ways to enable customers to access services. These are

- The Website (including social media such as Facebook and Twitter)
- Telephone
- Letter or email
- In person

We want to ensure that customers don't have to understand the complexities of our Council structures when contacting us.   By opening our local Joint Service Centres and our telephone contact centre, we have helped to make this clearer, but we always want to do more.   We will therefore put more services into our Joint Service Centre network so our customers can access the same range of Council services whichever Joint Service Centre they visit. We will also put more services into our telephone contact centre, making it easier for customers to get their query resolved at the first point of contact.

We will have clear links between the four different ways that customers can access services. This will ensure that the same level of service is obtained, no matter which method is chosen by customers.

To help us achieve this in a cost effective way, we will simplify the ways customers can access services. We will provide specialist access to Social Care and Benefits services. For most other services, customers will be able to speak to a single customer service advisor who will be able to deal with a range of service requests. Our proposed model for service delivery is shown below:

These services are complex and require the development of ongoing relationships to ensure that we provide services which meet customer needs.

Typically, customers will need to speak to customer service officers over a period of time whilst accessing these services and in many cases this will require specialist knowledge.

Customer Service Officers will specialise in these service lines and the Council will provide dedicated access to these services.

These are processes which apply to a range of services which are offered by the Council. These processes will be generic and typically customers will only need to access these services as "one offs"

Customer service officers will be trained across all of these generic processes, allowing them to deal with a range of service requests. This will ensure the Council achieves flexibility and utilises resources effectively.

Access Benefits

Access Care

Give Feedback or Provide Information

Apply for Things

Get Information

Make a Booking

Pay For Things

| Website | Phone | Letter | In Person |

CUSTOMERS

The Council's Customer Charter will provide clear and simple information about the standards customers can expect from us. The charter will be displayed in our customer contact points and can also be found on our website. A copy of the Customer Charter can be found in Appendix 2.

The Council will seek feedback from customers to help us understand how we are performing and to help shape ongoing service delivery and we will provide a number of ways for members of the public to tell us their views about our services and our performance.

We will tell customers how we are performing against our standards on our website, www.rotherham.gov.uk/performance.

Section 6: Developing our Customer Contact Channels

Our four customer contact channels will be reviewed and developed over the lifetime of the Strategy and we will learn from and share best practice with a number of leading public bodies and private sector companies.

To support continuing development, we have implemented a number of commitments for each of our access channels.

Using the website to contact the Council

- We will expand our website by providing sixteen additional services for our customers and will enhance a further ten existing services. We will also provide access to services via the single central government website which is expected to be implemented over the lifetime of this strategy.

- We will encourage customers to use our website when applying for some services. We already encourage customers to use the website when applying for jobs and when applying for social housing and we will look to extend this approach for seven additional services.

- Where customers need support in using online services, we will offer this or be able to signpost customers to those people or organisations who are able to assist.

Using the telephone to contact the Council

- We will look to reduce the amount of telephone numbers customers have to use when they want to contact the Council to 3 'golden numbers'. The Council currently has 13 'golden numbers' and also publishes a vast number of service specific telephone numbers.

- We will move eight additional services into our telephone contact centre. This will ensure that the Council is able to handle customer telephone calls quickly and effectively and is able to easily tell customers how we are performing against our performance standards.

- Where we are able to work with partner organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Voluntary Action Rotherham, Rotherham NHS and other local authority partners to streamline the ways that customers can obtain services via the telephone and provide greater value for money, we will look to do so.

- Our telephone contact centre will respond to telephone calls within 21 seconds and our telephone abandonment rates will be less than 2%.

Contacting the Council in person

- We will provide access to an increased range of Council services at all of our Joint Service Centres.

- We will work to share our facilities with other organisations, ensuring that people can access a wide range of local services under one roof.

- Where there is a clear customer need, we will provide ways for customers to access services from some of our other Council buildings. For example, a library, Carer's Corner or a Children's Centre may have free phone access, internet kiosks or video conferencing facilities, providing ways to contact customer service staff in one of our Joint Service Centres without the need to travel.

- We will regularly review usage of our Joint Service Centres and our smaller customer contact points, ensuring that we offer services in the right places at the right time in Rotherham.

Using letter or email to contact the Council

- We will roll out an electronic document records management system, which will ensure that all our staff can access letters and information no matter where they have been received. This will help to make the Council more efficient and means that we can answer customer queries from any of our contact points.

- We will communicate with customers using their preferred method of contact, where they tell us what this is. We will use email to communicate with customers who tell us their email address.

- We will encourage the use of standardised emails, which will help us to automate processes and remove duplication.

- We will use plain English and avoid the use of jargon.

Section 7: Delivering the Strategy

The Customer Services Strategy 2011 - 2015 is built around four main areas, or themes. These are:
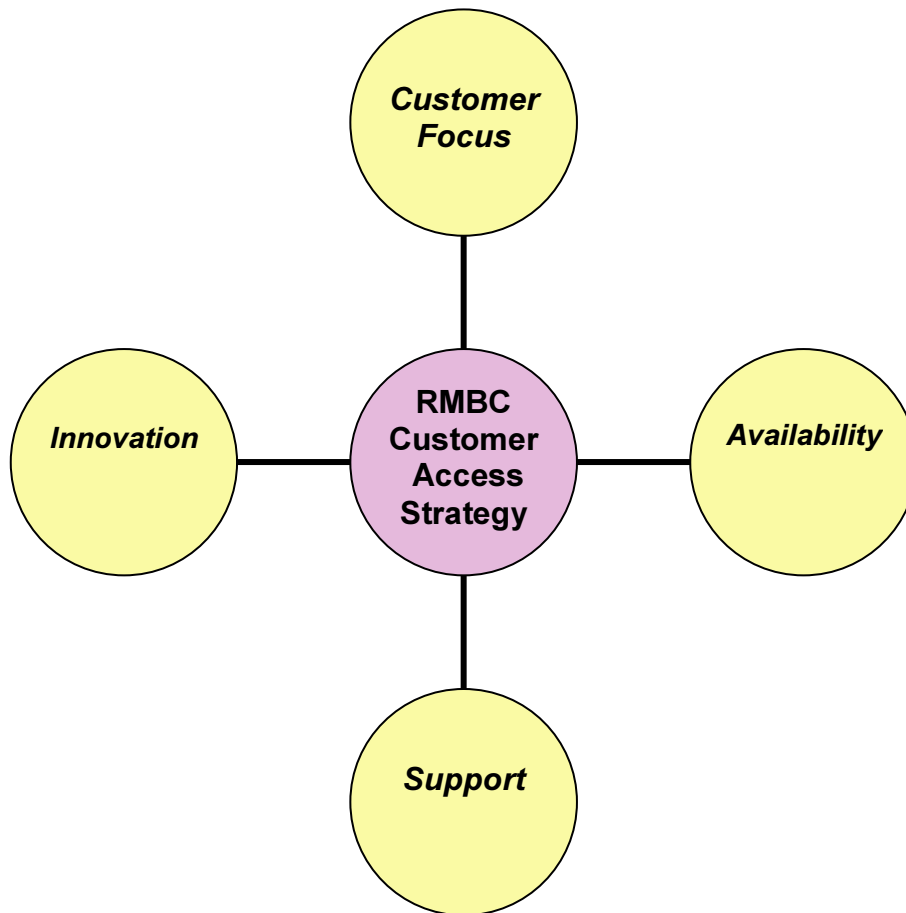
The Council has developed a detailed action plan underpinning each theme, which explains in more detail what we want to achieve and what we will do to deliver the Strategy.

Section 7a:	Customer Focus

This theme focuses on listening to our customers, developing services which meet customer needs and getting service delivery right first time.

Working closely with our customers has helped the Council to modernise and effectively develop access to services. This theme builds on the working practices that have already been embedded across the Council and will ensure that we place the customer at the heart of all that we do.

The Council has a range of customer groups in place that we work in partnership with to shape services and this helps to ensure that we are able to continually improve our processes using customer feedback. The full list of our customer groups is listed in Appendix 3.

Over the last two years, the Council has measured the number of times we have been unable to resolve customer queries at the first point of contact. This measure is known as 'avoidable contact'. Using this information, the Council has continued its focus on identifying processes which need improvement. This has resulted in being able to reduce levels of avoidable customer contact from 17% in 2008/2009 to 11% by the end of 2010/2011. This means that we are able to deliver services more cost effectively.

We will continue to focus on reducing avoidable customer contact over the period of this Strategy document, aiming to reduce levels by a further 6% over the period of this Strategy. This will help us to deliver cost effective local services that compare favourably with other high performing Local Authorities. We will do this by taking quick and decisive action to improve our processes and to put things right when they have gone wrong.

What we want to achieve is:	We know who our customers are, how they get in touch and what their needs are.
	We provide a service that gives customers a range of options to meet their individual needs.
	We consult with customers, listen to their feedback and make changes to services where required.
	Our services continue to improve through the effective use of technology and redesign.
	We deliver services that are right first time
	We reduce avoidable contact levels to 5% or less by the end of this strategy period.
	At least 95% of customers are satisfied with the

		customer service levels provided by the Council by the end of this Strategy period.

The way we will do this is:	1.1	Appoint Service Improvement Officers who will be responsible for reviewing processes and implementing improvements to service delivery; ensuring services are delivered effectively to our customers
	1.2	Continue to use customer feedback to help review and shape services.
	1.3	Work with our partners to develop a regional customer insight programme.
	1.4	Benchmark our performance against the Customer Service Excellence standards.
	1.5	Where there is a clear business case, integrate online and contact centre transactions directly into back office administration systems. This will remove duplication and increase efficiency.
	1.6	Continue to invest in customer care training and development for our staff members.
	1.7	By April 2012, where customers have requested a service online, the Council will provide regular update messages to customers electronically, so that customers can track the progress of their request.
	1.8	Encourage and support staff members to identify inefficiencies and make rapid changes to processes which will improve customer service delivery.
	1.9	Improve the information we provide to customers about council housing applications, including offering online bidding, improved access to information about council house availability and access to individual information relating to waiting list status, by October 2011.
	1.10	Provide easy access to online financial information such as how the Council's budget is made up, how much we spend on service delivery and details of Council spend which is over £500. This will increase openness and transparency.

	1.11	Explore the use of a system (known as bluetooth technology) which will allow the Council to send public messages and marketing information such as events and important information directly to mobile phones and free of charge, by September 2012
	1.12	Integrate email, text and postal distribution lists and enable customers to select their preference by September 2014.
	1.13	Ensure that all post received is electronically scanned by April 2012. This will help to improve the time taken to process customer service requests.

Section 7b:	Availability

This theme focuses on developing ways that a customer can easily obtain services.

We know that our customers like to have a range of ways to be able to obtain services. This theme aims to ensure that the Council continues to develop and improve the contact methods that customers can use.

What we want to achieve:	Customers can get their queries answered from one place, rather than having to go to different offices or having to use multiple telephone numbers.
	It is quick and simple for customers to access any service.
	Customers have a choice in the way they are able to access services.
	The range of services available via our telephone contact centre and via our website is increased.
	Information about how customers can get in touch is easy to find and is clearly displayed.
	Staff members have access to the information they need to respond effectively and promptly to a customer.

The way we will do this is:	2.1	Move seven additional services (Phase 1) into our customer service network by April 2012 and complete further phases by April 2013. This will ensure customers can get a consistent and increased range of services across all Joint Service Centres and via the telephone contact centre.
	2.2	Implement the agreed recommendations from the Council's locality review, by Summer 2012. This aims to ensure that we are delivering the right services in the most suitable locations and are making best use of our buildings and assets.
	2.3	Structure Customer Services in line with the proposed model for customer service delivery, making it easier for customers to speak to the same Customer Services Advisor and obtain information about an increased range of services by December 2012. The model is detailed in Section 5 of the Strategy.
	2.4	Open a Joint Service Centre in the new civic building (Riverside House), which will provide access to a broad range of customer and cultural services by April 2012.
	2.5	Implement easy ways for customers to be able to access Council services from Wath library, Kimberworth Park library and Greasbrough library by Autumn 2012.
	2.6	Reduce the amount of telephone numbers which customers use to contact the Council from 13 golden numbers to 3 golden numbers, by April 2014, making it easier for customers to know where to call.
	2.7	Implement online access to licensing information by December 2011, which will make it easier for businesses to obtain licensing information and make electronic applications.
	2.8	Implement online renewals of applications such as blue badges by April 2013, which will provide increased availability and remove the need for customers to make a visit to the Council 'in person'.
	2.9	Implement an online booking facility by April 2013, which means that customers will be able to view

		availability and book Council facilities or make appointments via the website or via our telephone contact centre.
	2.10	Provide secure online access to Council Tax records by April 2013, which will mean customers are able to view their personal data and make alterations electronically.
	2.11	Implement automated telephone agents for high volume Street Pride service requests by June 2012, which will mean that customers will be able to report problems quickly and efficiently.
	2.12	Provide access to a range of language and easy read options where practical. If not, clearly indicate how a customer can obtain translation services or information in a suitable format.
	2.13	Make the content of the Council website available to partner organisations and also take content from partners. This will mean that customers can get a full range of public service information from one place.
	2.14	Use digital screens in our Joint Service Centres to provide information about the Council and the locality by April 2012. This will help to increase public awareness of what is happening in their local area.
	2.15	Develop further applications for mobile telephones, including fault reporting, payments and simple information provision by October 2012. This will mean customers can easily use their mobile phone to contact the council electronically.
	2.16	Develop online forums that will provide greater opportunities for customers to interact with the Council by April 2012.
	2.17	Broadcast events on the website, such as Election information, ceremonies and Council events using webcam and pod cast technology.
	2.18	Pilot live web chat sessions by June 2012, which will enable customers to interact with Council Officers and Elected Members electronically about a range of issues and get an immediate response to their questions.

	2.19	Implement an electronic document management system, which will ensure that staff members can access customer correspondence electronically from any location by April 2012 and will improve efficiency and cost effectiveness by reducing the size of accommodation which is required across the Council.

Section 7c:	Support

This theme focuses on encouraging and supporting customers to use cost effective ways to obtain services

The number of people in Rotherham who use the Internet has increased by 20% over the last three years. 65% of the Rotherham population now regularly uses the internet and there is good broadband coverage within the area. However there are still a high proportion of people in Rotherham who have never used the internet and who face higher prices for goods and services such as insurance, which are increasingly traded online.

This theme aims to encourage and support customers to use cost effective and flexible contact channels which will result in financial savings for both customers and for the Council.

| What we want to achieve: | Where customers want to obtain services electronically, they are able to do so.

New services are designed using electronic methods as a key option for customers to use.

Where customers (including those who do not have personal access to a computer) need support in using online or electronic services, we are able to offer this easily, via support from customer service advisors or by signposting to other suitable organisations.

Customers can find out about all the Council's key communications via the website.

Customers are encouraged to use electronic methods when applying for some services.

The number of customers using electronic methods to request services and complete service transactions increases by 30% each year from 2012. Currently, approximately 65,000 transactions are completed electronically. By 2015, over 142,000 transactions will be completed in this way.

The number of customers using the telephone to request services and complete transactions increases by 10% each year from 2012. Currently, approximately 1 million customers contact the Council by telephone. By 2015, we expect to receive over 1,465,000 customer contacts by this |
|---|---|

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>channel.

At least 85% of customers tell us it is easy to use electronic or automated methods to obtain Council services by the end of this Strategy period.</td></tr>
</table>

The way we will do this is:	3.1	Provide existing customer service advisors in our telephone contact centre and Joint Service Centres with skills to help customers use the Council website by April 2012.
	3.2	Using some of our existing customer service advisors, implement digital champions in our Joint Service Centres, who will provide in depth help and support to customers or who will be able to signpost customers to other organisations who are able to assist customers by April 2012.
	3.3	Support initiatives which will help increase the number of people in the Borough who are able to use the internet.
	3.4	Continue to provide free access to the internet in all libraries, supported by trained staff. In addition, provide public access computers and self service booths in children's centres and Joint Service Centres across the borough by April 2012. This will help customers access the internet and Council services if they do not have personal access to a computer.
	3.5	Promote the website and electronic channels as one of the main access points for Council services.
	3.6	Develop the ways that we use mobile phone text messaging to communicate with all customers, including hearing impaired customers and hard to reach groups by September 2013.
	3.7	Develop website processes for all high volume transactions by April 2013. These processes will be used by members of the public and by customer service advisors supporting our telephone and in person access channels.

Section 7d:	Innovation

This theme focuses on working with partner organisations to deliver services in new and innovative ways

The Council is working actively with partners to deliver services in different ways. This ranges from contracting other public sector or voluntary sector bodies to deliver services, to contracting a private sector company or a social enterprise group to deliver the service on behalf of the Council. This theme focuses on the work we will do to deliver customer services on behalf of others and on the work we will do to commission customer service delivery from other organisations.

What we want to achieve is	The Council works proactively with other organisations and voluntary groups to provide customers with easy access to the full range of services they need. We will always commission services to be delivered on behalf of the Council, where others can provide a better and more cost effective service. We will identify opportunities where we are able to deliver cost effective customer services on behalf of others. We will share systems, accommodation and resources with other organisations where it is cost effective to do so, and where the customer's service experience will be enhanced.

The way we will do this is:	4.1	Develop a 'Tell us Once' facility for customer change of circumstances by April 2014. This will mean that customers only need to tell one organisation about their changes in circumstance and other agencies will be updated automatically.
	4.2	Investigate the opportunities to develop joint services with voluntary and other partner organisations in our Swinton, Dinnington and Town Centre Customer Service Centres by Autumn 2012.

	4.3	Seek opportunities to utilise 'internet kiosk' facilities via partner organisations, including the NHS, Job Centre+, Citizens Advice Bureau and South Yorkshire Police by June 2012.
	4.4	Work with the Department for Work and Pensions to successfully transfer the 1st phase of the Housing Benefits and Fraud Investigation Services to central government, beginning in April 2013.
	4.5	Work closely with service users and community groups when commissioning services which are not delivered by the Council, to ensure that services are accessible and meet customer needs.
	4.6	Review opportunities for shared customer service delivery throughout the lifetime of this strategy and implement shared services where contractually agreed.
	4.7	Work with partner organisations to open a new Joint Service Centre in Rawmarsh, which will provide local access to Council services, health services, other public services and access to voluntary organisations.
	4.8	Work with Community Advice Groups across Rotherham to review and strengthen the delivery of Community Legal Advice Services in Rotherham by April 2012.
	4.9	Work with Community Advice Groups across Rotherham to review and strengthen the delivery of Employment, Housing, Immigration and Health Advice Services by January 2013.

Section 8: Expected Outcomes

The vision for our Strategy is that

Council Services will be *easy to use. Our services will be cost effective, good quality and meet our customers' needs'.*

Successful delivery of this Strategy will result in customers

- Having increased choice in the ways they contact the Council;

- Having simplified access to services;

- Seeing a reduction in the amount of times they have to contact the Council unnecessarily;

- Being able to participate in service design;

- Receiving good quality services

- Receiving 'value for money,' cost effective customer services; and

- Being supported to use new contact methods.

Section 9: Measuring Success

How will we know if we have been successful?

We will monitor our progress regularly and will provide feedback on our performance and on-going progress annually to Elected Members.

We believe we will be successful in delivery of this Strategy when,

- We see improving customer satisfaction levels, with results reaching above 95% by the end of this Strategy period.

- We see reducing numbers of customer complaints.

- We see a 10% increase in the number of people using the telephone channel and a 30% increase in the number of people using electronic channels to contact the Council each year.

- We see a reduction in the 'cost to serve' of each transaction.

- We continue to comply with the Equality Standard for Local Government.

- We have reduced levels of avoidable contact to 5% or less by the end of this Strategy period.

- Our telephone abandonment rates are less than 2%, and

- We achieve our customer charter commitments and our service performance standards.

Section 10: Finance

A variety of funding sources will support the delivery of the Customer Access Strategy. These include the Council's capital programme, service delivery budgets, central government grants and external funding sources.

The Customer Access Strategy will support improved efficiency within the Council and will also support business change across the Council. We will regularly evaluate the cost of services and look for opportunities to reduce service costs, whilst also continuing to meet customer needs.

Throughout the period of the Strategy, ICT will be used to enable improved service delivery. Investments in ICT and business change will be determined by clear business cases which demonstrate improved service delivery and reduced costs.

Section 11: Governance of the strategy

Who is responsible for delivery of the Customer Access Strategy?

Delivery of the Customer Access Strategy will be overseen by the Strategic Director of Finance, supported by the Customer Access Client Officer.

The Council's Customer Access Client Officer will be supported in the implementation of the Strategy by the Customer Access Group and the Customer Service Consolidation Board, who will act as champions and drivers of change to others members of staff within the Council.

Technological investments will be approved by members of the Council's ICT and Information Governance Board and by Elected Members where appropriate.

The Strategy is a living document and as such, a formal review will be completed annually, following initial publication. Progress will be reported to the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and to members of the Council's Cabinet.

Appendix 1 – Location map of customer access points

Joint Service Centres: By the end of this Strategy period customers will be able to access a wide range of Council Services from all Joint Service Centres. Customers will also be able to access a number of voluntary services such as Citizens Advice Bureau from these centres.

In Maltby, Aston and Rawmarsh Joint Service Centres, customers are able to access GP services, Community Health Services and some services delivered by South Yorkshire Police. We provide social care family contact facilities at our Centres in Maltby and Aston and rooms are also available which community organisations may hire for events and activities.

Joint Service Centre* (Town Centre) (Will relocate to Riverside House in February 2012)	Civic Building, Walker Place, Rotherham S65 1UF
Joint Service Centre (Swinton)	Station Street, Swinton S64 8PZ
Joint Service Centre (Dinnington)	New Street, Dinnington S25 2EX
Joint Service Centre + library (Aston)	Worksop Road, Swallownest S26 4WD
Joint Service Centre (Maltby)	Braithwell Road, Maltby S66 8JE
Joint Service Centre (Town Centre) (Opens February 2012)	Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham
Joint Service Centre + library (Opens April 2012)	Barbers Avenue, Rawmarsh

Libraries: Customers can access library facilities, public access computers, information about local services, local travel information and general information about Council services. Customers will also be able to obtain advice and apply for some Council Services at Wath, Kimberworth Park, and Greasbrough libraries by the end of this Strategy period.

Library* (Will relocate to Riverside House in March 2012)	Central Library, Walker Place, Rotherham S65 1JH
Library	Mowbray Gardens, Herringthorpe Valley Road S65 2UH
Library	Sough Hall Avenue,Thorpe Hesley S61 2QJ
Library	Montgomery Square, Wath S63 7RZ
Library	Station Street, Swinton S64 8PZ
Library	Coach Road, Greasbrough S61 4PU
Library	Wheatley Road, Kimberworth Park S61 3JU
Library* (Will relocate to Rawmarsh Joint Service Centre from April 2012)	Rawmarsh Hill, Rawmarsh S62 6DS
Library	286 Bawtry Road, Wickersley S66 1JJ
Library	High Street, Maltby S66 8LD

Library	Dinnington Resource Centre, Laughton Road, Dinnington S25 2PP
Library	Ellis Street, Brinsworth S60 7DJ
Library	Wales Road, Kiverton S26 6RB
Library	School Road, Thurcroft S66 9DE

Children's Centres: Children's Centres provide a variety of advice and support for parents and carers. Services are developed in line with local community needs. You can access child and family health services, childcare and early learning facilities, advice on parenting and advice on local childcare options. General information about Council services can be accessed via internet kiosk.

Children's Centre (Cortonwood)	Brampton Cortonwood Infants, Chapel Avenue, Brampton Bierlow S73 0XH
Children's Centre (Wath Victoria)	Wath Victoria J + I School, Sandymount Road, Wath S63 7AB
Children's Centre (Ferham Centre)	Rotherham Central, Ferham Road, S65 1AP
Children's Centre (Kimberworth)	Kimberworth Road, Kimberworth S61 1HE
Children's Centre (Thorpe Hesley)	Thorpe Hesley Infants
Children's Centre (Rockingham)	Rockingham J+I School, Roughwood Road, S61 4HY
Children's Centre (Redscope)	Park View Primary School, Kimberworth Park S61 3JT
Children's Centre (The Arnold Centre)	The Arnold Centre, Goldsmith Road, S65 2LY
Children's Centre (Coleridge)	Coleridge Primary School, Coleridge Road, S65 1LW
Children's Centre (Dinnington)	Dinnington Primary School, School Street, Dinnington S25 2RE
Children's Centre (Ryton Brook)	Ryton Brook, Ryton Road, Anston
Children's Centre (Thurcroft)	Locksley Drive, Thurcroft
Children's Centre (Sue Walker)	Meadows Juniors, Kiverton Park S26 5QT
Children's Centre (Silver Birch)	Greenfield Court, Flanderwell S66 2JF
Children's Centre (Marcliffe)	Beech Avenue, Dalton Listerdale S65 3HN
Children's Centre (Aughton)	Aughton Early Years Centre, Main Street, Aughton S26 3XH
Children's Centre (The Meadows)	Catcliffe Primary School, Catcliffe S60 5SW
Children's Centre (Valley)	Broom Valley Road, S60 2QU
Children's Centre (Stepping Stones)	Tickhill Road, Maltby S66 7NQ
Children's Centre	Barber's Crescent, Rawmarsh S62 6AD

| Children's Centre (Thrybergh) | Thrybergh Primary School, S65 4JG |
| Children's Centre | Lime Grove, Swinton S65 4HQ |

Specialist Customer Access Points

Key Choices Property Shop (Providing information about housing allocation services)	20 – 21 Howard Street, Rotherham S60 1QX
Information Centre (Providing information about local attractions, events and accommodation. A range of Rotherham and Yorkshire souvenirs are available)	40 Bridgegate, Rotherham S60 1PQ
Carers Corner (Providing information and support for carers based in Rotherham)	2 Drummond Street, Rotherham S65 1HY

Appendix 2 Customer Charter

The standards customers can expect from us:

EASY ACCESS

- We will make it easy for you to find out what services are available to you.
- We will provide four main ways for you to obtain services – by website, telephone, in person or by email/letter.
- We will make our opening hours clear.
- We will make our application processes simple and easy to understand.
- You will not have to repeat information.
- We will provide modern, comfortable places for you to access services in person.
- We will ask how you prefer to be contacted, and use this method where we are able.
- We will provide information in other formats and languages upon request

ON TIME

- We will tell you how long it will take to deal with your service request.
- We will tell you what will happen next and how you can get the service you require.
- We will keep in touch and tell you how your request is progressing.
- If we need to make an appointment to meet you, we will offer times which are convenient for you.
- We will keep to our scheduled appointment times.
- We will complete outstanding work within a reasonable timescale, which is agreed with you.
- We will ensure that all the time which is allocated to you is spent with you.

RIGHT RESULT

- We will provide you with information that is easy to understand.
- We will aim to reach the right outcome for you.
- We will take your views into account
- We will offer you choices and alternatives.
- We will give you an explanation for our decisions.
- We will tell you what you need to do if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your service request
- We will provide aftercare for some of our services, to check whether the service you are receiving is suitable for you.
- We will ensure that you are kept informed of any changes to services.
- We will tell you upfront about any costs you are responsible for.
- We will work with others to ensure we are able to personalise the service we offer.

TREATED AS A VALUED CUSTOMER

- We will always put our customers 1st.
- We will listen to your needs, allowing you time to fully explain your circumstances.
- We will treat people fairly and with dignity.
- We will take your needs seriously and treat you and your home with respect.
- We will be honest about our service delivery timescales.
- We will respect your privacy.
- We will think about all the people involved in your service request, eg parents, carers, family and friends
- We will be flexible in our approach, enabling customers to change their mind.
- We will ask for your feedback, and act upon it
- We will tell you how we are performing against our service standards. You can find this information at www.rotherham.gov.uk/performance

Appendix 3

Our Customer Groups

50+ Group	Hard of Hearing Group
Rotherham Access Group	Hellaby Community Project
Arbour Drive Community Group	Henley Action Group
Parish Councils	Highton View Social Group
Beeversleigh Action Group	Housing Panel
TARA organisations	Learning Disability Partnership Board
Blackburn Community Partnership	Learning from Customers Forum
Brampton and West Melton Parish Community Partnership	Customer Inspection Service
Brinsworth Women's Group	PDSI Customer Inspection Team
Carers Forum	Meadows Community Partnership
Catcliffe Mother + Toddler Group	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group
Clifton Community Partnership	Area Assembly Groups
Cortonwood Comeback	Rotherham Older People's Forum
Deaf Social Club	ROPES
Dinnington Community Development Forum	Visually Impaired Group
Dinnington Crime and Community Safety Group	Speak Up
Dinnington Youth Forum	Sunnyside Group
Direct Payments Service User Focus Group	Swinton Community Partnership
East Maltby Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	Thorpe Hesley and Scholes Community Fund
Eastwood Village Community Group	Thurcroft Crime and Safety Forum
Wath Community Partnership	Domiciliary Care Forum
Wellgate, Broom Valley, Moorgate Planning Group	Residential and Nursing Care
Whiston Community Partnership	Provider Forum
Whiston Youth Sub Group	Inclusive Forum
Wickersley Community Planning steering group	Strategic Housing and Drugs Forum
Youth Cabinet	REMA
Voluntary Action Rotherham	University of 3rd Age

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	21st September 2011
3.	Title:	Discretionary Home to School Transport Provision
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The current "Transport Policy for Children and Young People" contains both statutory and discretionary provisions. This report outlines the current provision and identifies potential budgetary savings which could be made by the discontinuation of the discretionary transport provision.

6. Recommendations

To consult upon the proposals set out below:-

a) That current provision of discretionary free transport to children less than 5 years old is discontinued from September 2012

b) That current provision of discretionary free transport for primary and secondary learners attending denominational schools is discontinued commencing September 2013

c) That the Post 16 Education Transport Policy is deleted from the overall Transport Policy for Children and Young People from September 2012

d) That the new Transport Policy for Children and Young People be renamed the Home to School Transport Policy from September 2012

e) That a new Post 16 Education Transport Policy be published separately by the Council by 31 May 2012

f) That remaining statutory obligations are met.

7. Proposals and Details

a) Overall Policy
The current "Transport Policy for Children and Young People - July 2010" outlines the transport provision available to learners in the Rotherham area. This provision consists of transport which must be provided as a statutory duty and other transport which has been provided historically or to meet specific requirements. This latter provision is discretionary and there is no legal duty for it to continue. Current financial restrictions require us to review discretionary provision, and this report serves to outline and recommend three specific areas which can be discontinued to achieve financial savings.

b) Client Groups Affected
- *Children below Compulsory School Age.*
All children under 5 years of age with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or attending an Enhanced Nursery place, or currently in receipt of free transport assistance to mainstream settings.

- *Children attending Faith Schools.*
Pupils attending denominational schools on the basis of their religion or belief which is not their nearest appropriate school and who are not from "low income" families

- *Post 16 Learners*
Post 16 learners in receipt of free transport assistance funded by RMBC.

c) Statutory Obligations
- *Children below Compulsory School Age*
For such children there is no statutory entitlement to free Home to School transport except that if the LA names a school in the child's statement of SEN then under Section 509 (of the Education Act 1996) it is required to consider whether the provision of transport is necessary, if so it has to be provided "free".

- *Children attending Faith Schools*
There is no statutory duty to provide free home to school transport on grounds of religion or belief.

There is, however, a statutory duty under Section 509AD of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to provide free transport "for secondary aged children from "low income" * families to attend their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where that school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home".

As well as the above RMBC currently provides discretionary denominational transport to other pupils living more than 2 miles (for those aged under 8) and 3 miles (for those aged 8-16) and attending their nearest denominational school.

* "Low income" is identified as either pupils in receipt of free school meals or pupils from families in receipt of maximum working tax credit.

- *Post 16 Learners*
In the case of Post 16 transport, the only statutory duty is that the LA must publish annually, by 31st May, a Post 16 Education Transport Policy outlining what transport support is available in their area. The LA has been the lead member of the

Rotherham Post 16 Education Transport Partnership along with other external stakeholders from the Rotherham Area.

The Post 16 Transport Policy would be subject to consultation with other stakeholders; however the duty remains with the LA to publish the policy and fund any transport support it feels is necessary. Although any transport support is discretionary, as the LA provides free transport to Post 16 SEN learners attending Special Schools it must also provide the same level of support to Post 16 SEN learners attending other educational provision.

d) Discretionary services proposed to be discontinued/amended

- **"It is proposed to discontinue provision of all transport assistance for children under 5" from September 2012**

Transport has previously been provided for children in these categories either where attendance will be at an educational establishment some distance from the home address, or where the child has some physical or mobility issues. It should also be noted that children under 5 years travel for free on public transport.

RMBC currently provide free transport assistance to 32 children under the age of 5.

- **"It is proposed to discontinue the discretionary element of denominational transport commencing September 2013"**

There are 2 denominational secondary schools in Rotherham.

St Bernard's, situated in Herringthorpe, is attended almost exclusively by Rotherham pupils. RMBC currently provide 337 zero fare passes to pupils at St Bernard's of which 316 are provided discretionally.

Pupils attending St Pius, at Wath-Upon- Dearne, attend from Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham LAs. RMBC currently provide 17 zero fare passes to pupils at St Pius of which 14 are provided discretionally.

Barnsley LA commenced phased removal of discretionary denominational transport in September 2007 and Doncaster LA commenced phased removal in September 2010

Denominational transport is currently provided on a discretionary basis for 13 pupils attending primary schools.

Discontinuation of the discretionary element of primary denominational transport would not necessarily achieve a financial saving, since most pupils living in outlying areas would qualify on statutory distance criteria, if the denominational school remained the nearest school to the home address. However, it is important that transport provision remains equitable to that of mainstream schools and so free transport to primary aged children should only be provided where they are attending their nearest school irrespective of whether this is denominational.

It is proposed that the discontinuation of the discretionary element should be performed by a phased process. For example, pupils in secondary schools already in receipt of zero fare passes should continue to receive these. No new zero fare passes should be issued except for those pupils from "low income" backgrounds under which there is a statutory duty to provide it.

- **"It is proposed to remove the 'Post 16 Education Transport Policy' from the Transport Policy for Children and Young People"**

There is a statutory duty to prepare and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy but there is no statutory duty to provide transport (except as identified within the Policy). For this reason it is recommended that the 'Post 16 Transport Policy' be removed from the 'Transport Policy for Children and Young People'.

- **"It is proposed that the Transport Policy for Children and Young People be renamed the Home to School Transport Policy"**

In the case of pupils of statutory school age (5-16) there is clear guidance and legislation which sets a minimum standard which all national L.A.'s need to provide. Removal of the 'Post 16 Education Transport Policy', as proposed above, from the 'Transport Policy for Children and Young People', together with discontinuation of all other discretionary elements, would leave a policy which only addresses statutory duty. It is, therefore recommended that, to easily identify the new policy and to highlight the fact that this is now only applicable to children of statutory school age, it is renamed the 'Home to School Transport Policy'.

- **It is proposed that a new Post 16 Education Transport Policy be published separately by the Local Authority by end May 2011**

The 'Post 16 Education Transport Policy' dated May 2010 remains applicable to transport provided until the end of the academic year in July 2011. However, there is a statutory duty on the Local Authority to publish a Policy annually by 31 May 2011 which will be applicable to the 2011/12 academic year. An updated Policy has not been ratified and it is therefore recommended that the existing Policy be re-published immediately to cover our statutory duty. This Policy would be applicable for the 2011/12 academic year. A new Policy will need to be published by 31 May 2012 to cover the 2012/13 academic year.

8. Finance

a) Transport for children aged under 5

The total potential financial saving of discontinuing provision of all transport assistance for children under 5 is estimated to be £40,000 p.a.

b) Discretionary Denominational Transport

The initial savings would commence 2013/14 financial year anticipated to be £20,100 increasing annually thereafter at a rate governed by the cost of concessionary fares.

There are no financial implications for the removal of the Post 16 Education Transport Policy from the Transport Policy for Children and Young People or renaming it to the Home to School Transport Policy.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

a) Transport for children aged under 5

Early identification of children under 5 with either a Statement of SEN or attending Enhanced Nursery places may assist in planning for future educational provision. It is also a concern that if the LA has issued a Statement of SEN for a child under the age of 5 and the educational placement is some distance from the home address, then there may be some responsibility to provide transport assistance.

Some current discretionary provision of free transport assistance to children under 5 years attending mainstream settings does not result in extra expenditure for RMBC. Some under 5's travel together with older siblings who do receive free transport assistance.

b) Discretionary Denominational Transport

There is likely to be some adverse reaction to any removal of denominational transport. This may involve complaints from school or the diocese regarding possible falling numbers of pupils. Both Barnsley and Doncaster Councils are in the process of removing discretionary denominational transport but neither has seen a reduction in the number of school places being applied for.

It should also be recognised that whilst older siblings continue to receive zero fare passes, younger siblings would not. This phased discontinuation is being implemented by other LAs. This is a consequence of achieving the required savings.

The current provision of discretionary denominational transport is only favourable to certain communities and its discontinuation will ensure a more equitable service is implemented for all other pupils.

The Transport Policy is published in the Admissions prospectus and is available to parents in July 2012 onwards for admission to school in September 2013. If changes in the Transport Policy take place prior to July 2012 following consultation, financial savings could begin to be made from September 2013 but only 60% of the initial academic years savings could be realised in the 2013/14 financial year.

c) Post 16 Education Transport Policy

Unless the existing policy is to remain in place, a new policy must be published by the Local Authority by 31 May 2012 which will be applicable to the 2012/13 academic year.

This Policy cannot state that no transport assistance is available and any support that is provided should be equitable between educational providers. A distinction is made between mainstream learners and LLDD (Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities).

National Post 16 Travel and Transport Guidance issued for the 2010/11 academic year remains in force and advises that the responsibility for providing and funding transport in accordance with the Post 16 Transport Policy rests with the LA. For those Post 16 LLDD learners who continue to attend Special Schools with Post 16 provision, this transport is currently provided free of charge since most travel with pre 16 learners. Given that this group receive free transport, then we are also duty bound to provide similar free transport to Post 16 LLDD learners attending local mainstream 6th forms and FE colleges. Some learners require specialist FE educational provision which may be distant and/or residential. Educational placement is decided by the SEN Post 16 Panel, and transport has to be considered.

There are major changes to the way that Post 16 learners are funded including elements for transport. There is to be a new 16-18 Bursary Scheme and increases in Learner Support Fund grants to schools and Colleges. Clarification and guidance are awaited from National Government.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

RMBC continue to provide our statutory requirements in line with legal duties and responsibilities.

Adoption of the recommendations and proposals of this report will result in changes to the "Transport Policy for Children and Young People - July 2010".

Any performance issues will be addressed by the Council's management framework and reported back to members.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

It is essential that any changes to the current Transport Policy are the subject of a consultation exercise with stakeholders. This would involve the school, pupils, parents, other neighbouring authorities and in the case of denominational transport with the relevant diocese and local religious representatives. This consultation should be completed in advance of any proposed changes to the Transport Policy to comply with Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance and must be undertaken over a period of 28 school days minimum.

The Transport Policy must be published annually prior to each new academic year. The Rotherham Transport Policy is published annually in July, but the Policy should be correct for the annual publication of the admissions prospectus. If agreed, the earliest date that any proposed changes to denominational transport could take effect would be in September 2013. These changes would need to be incorporated within the 2012 Transport Policy.

Information from YPLA is that no new Post 16 Education Transport guidance is to be issued for the 2011/12 academic year, but that LA's should use the previously issued 2010/11 guidance.

Background Papers
- "Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance – 2007".
- Guidance issued by DfES to accompany the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- "Transport Policy for Children and Young People – July 2010".
- Draft "Home to School Transport Policy – April 2011"

Contact Name:
Ian Smith, Director of Asset Management
Tel: 01709 823850 Email: ian-eds.smith@rotherham.gov.uk

Craig Simpson, Corporate Transport Manager
Tel: 01709 334314 Email: craig.simpson@rotherham.gov.uk

Craig Ruding, Principal Officer – Education Transport
Tel: 01709 822527 Email: craig.ruding@rotherham.gov.uk

Agenda Item 9

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	21st September 2011
3.	Title:	Localising Support for Council Tax – Consultation Response
4.	Directorate:	Commissioning, Policy and Performance

5. Summary

As part of the Government's reform of welfare, they announced that Council Tax Benefit would be abolished and be replaced with new local schemes for support for Council Tax, together with a 10% cut in funding. The Government is now consulting on the new arrangements.

This report now seeks views on the full recommended response from the Council to the Government's consultation.

6. Recommendations

That   Approval be given to the Council's recommended response to the consultation as set out in the appendix to this report, taking account of any comments expressed by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at their meeting on 23rd September.

7. Proposals and Details

The Government announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review that Council Tax Benefit would be localised with the amount paid out to be cut by 10%. This consultation sets out how the Government intends to take this forward and invites comments by 14th October. The proposals sit alongside the provisions in the Welfare Reform Bill that will remove the current benefit arrangements for both Council Tax and housing. The Government intends that the new arrangements will be effective from March 2013 and will provide for the changes in a Local Government Finance Bill, to be introduced in the autumn.

A brief overview of the key elements of a framework for local support for council tax is as follows:

Scheme
The support for council tax will be delivered through a local scheme adopted by the Council. However, the Government have committed that pensioners will be protected and should not notice any change. The scheme will also need to make provision for vulnerable groups. For working age people, the scheme will be expected to support the Government's approach being taken with Universal Credit, where the benefit acts as an incentive for people to return to work. Other aspects of the scheme include provisions for joint working and managing risk. The Council will be expected to consult on the scheme before bringing it into effect.

Administration
Whilst the Government are promoting localised schemes, they are also looking consistency between schemes including eligibility criteria. This is said to simplify claims for people who move from one authority area to another. The Government propose that support for council tax should be delivered as a new form of council tax discount, which reduces council tax liability once other discounts have been taken into account (single person etc). It is envisaged that arrangements will need to provide for transitional arrangements for claimants and appeals. Other proposals include data sharing, joint working with other councils and dealing with fraud and error. A national single fraud service is to be provided for other benefits and Councils will be expected to collaborate with them in dealing with Council Tax fraud.

Funding
The Government envisages funding to be paid to local authorities in the form of an un-ringfenced special grant. However, in calculating the level of grant to be provided, the Government is considering the options of either providing a grant level over several years or re-assessing the grant level more frequently to more closely align with the actual level of claimants over time.

Administrative costs
The Government states that it does not intend the administration of local schemes to put pressure on local government finances, in line with the new burdens doctrine.

However, further detailed work will be required to separate out the administration of Housing Benefit to arrive at a figure.

Transitional and implementation issues
The Government envisages a one-off transition to the localised schemes in April 2013. This is said to minimise processes for both councils and claimant. Questions arise as to weather existing claimants will need to re-apply and what happens to claims that are in process at that time.

Whilst many of the changes relate to finance and administration, it will be the development of the local scheme in the context of a reduced budget that will generate most policy issues.

Whilst it will be for the Council to devise and implement a scheme, the Government are setting out objectives to protect low income pensioners; vulnerable groups; and align to Universal Credit, providing an incentive for people to return to work. In the case of pensioners, the Government intends to prescribe the criteria, allowances and support for Council Tax. No other vulnerable groups are specified in the consultation, whilst the Government recognises that there are others who could not be expected to raise their incomes through work.

The requirement for support for Council Tax to support the objectives of Universal Credit, incentivising people to return to work raises issues of compatible entitlement. In particular, the use of tapers for benefit reduction as earnings rises. Currently, housing and Council Tax benefits have a taper of 85% of net earning (meaning for £1 extra net income, the benefits are reduced by 85 pence). The proposed taper for Universals Credit is intended to be about 65%, as single taper replacing current different tapers for benefits and tax credits. The Government views that the 65% taper will provide an incentive for people to move into work, but that maintaining the current taper for Council Tax for low earning workers could act as a disincentive for working at all. To avoid this, the Government is seeking views on establishing one or a combination of the following:
- Guidance on setting taper rates and earnings disregards.
- Guidance on maximum participation tax rates that low earning households should face.
- Guidelines on the treatment of income and earnings to avoid the double counting of different income types.
- Model schemes, demonstrating how this could be achieved.

Local schemes will need to be drawn and consulted on before implementation. In developing a scheme, the Council would be required to take account of:
- Any national framework produced by the Government, including support for pensioners;
- Duties and responsibilities including tackling child poverty;
- Forecast demand and assumptions on take-up; and
- Budget impact including level of government grant, and potential collection fund deficits arising from non-payment where benefit has been reduced or stopped.

The scheme will require consultation before it is adopted, but there is no suggestion from government about the form of this. However, precepting authorities should be

consulted, including the sharing of risk between the Council as the billing authority and precepting authorities in relation to Council administered on their behalf.

Revisions to the scheme would require proportionate consultation and could be undertaken on an annual basis, but in year reviews would not be permitted.

Given that the full level of detail to be provided by the government is not yet available, it is difficult to estimate the real impact on the Council or community of the proposed changes, including the 10% cut in financing. However, work is underway to identify the make-up of the Council's current Council Tax Benefit caseload, which would at least help to identify who will be left to feel the impact of the cuts once pensioners and vulnerable groups have been accounted for. As an indication, the Local Government Group (LGG) has modelled the results from a small sample of 8 authorities (a London borough, 3 metropolitan authorities and 4 shire districts). The results show that:

- 80% of total CTB is paid out to those who receive 100% CTB;
- 35% of total CTB is paid to pensioners;
- If both those on 100% CTB (the vast majority of whom will be in receipt of other benefits) and pensioners are excluded, the 10% cut would be restricted to 9% of the total paid out.

The LGG's view is that this "would clearly be financially impossible".

Furthermore a research paper by Dr Phil Agulnik of "Entitledto" reveals that, based on Department for Work and Pensions figures, the average cut to support for Council Tax for non-pensioners would be an average of 19%. For England, this ranges from 14% to 30%. The figure for Rotherham is 19%.

However, details of the Council's caseload show an increase in the number of pensioners claiming Council Tax Benefit of 2.5% per year over the last two years. Should this trend continue, the cuts required for others would increase year on year.

This report provides the recommended Council response to the consultation including input from:

- Policy Team;
- Finance Services; and
- Revenues and Benefits Service.

The recommended response is attached as an appendix to the report.

8. Finance

There will be financial implications arising from the government's proposals. An assessment of some of the implications are included in the recommended response.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There will be a range of risks associated with the government's proposals. These have been included in the answers to the appropriate questions in the recommended response.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

There are likely to be implications for achieving the policy priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, whilst complying with the national requirements imposed on a local scheme, and remaining within financial limits.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

The Overview & Scrutiny Management Board received and commented on a policy overview of this consultation on 9th September. Views expressed have been incorporated in the recommended response. However, owing to meeting dates and the closing date for responses, OSMB will not receive a report on the recommended response until their meeting on 23rd September. Consequently, it is proposed that OSMB be asked to comment further to the decision of Cabinet.

Source: "Localising Support for Council Tax in England" DCLG August 2011.

Contact Name:
Steve Eling, Policy Officer, ext 54419, steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk
Michael Holmes, Policy Officer, ext 54417
Anne Ellis, Special Projects and Technical Accountant, ext 22019
Andrew Sheldon, Operational Manager - Benefits Assessment ext 34146
Dave Morley, Service Leader ext 23310

RMBC Response to Localising Support for Council Tax in England

Introduction

Please find below answers to the consultation in respect of localising support for Council Tax in England.

Whilst Members of the Council are supportive of decision making at the most appropriate local level, they see Council Tax Benefit (CTB) as Social Security support for housing costs alongside rent etc, and that any move away from this would be a retrograde step in supporting vulnerable people and tackling poverty, especially child poverty. Notwithstanding the issues arising from a 10% cut in the funding available, they see the removal of CTB and its proposed replacement as a return to an archaic "poor law" approach not befitting the 21st century.

The Authority has not assessed the type of scheme it would like to operate, therefore, the answers are very broad and are constructed in a way that any framework/governance that is set by central government will still provide Authorities with the flexibility it needs to devise a financially viable local scheme.

At the time of writing, it is difficult to consider a scheme other than one that is means tested in some way as it is in the current scheme. Although, this brings with it greater administration requirements it will result in a fairer system where support is withdrawn at gradual rates as income increases.

A scheme where discounts are awarded to certain groups would be easier to administer but would probably result in a less fairer system. It also has to be acknowledged that any scheme that becomes a discount is likely to increase take up for example among pensioners which will lead to pressure on budgets and possibly limit the help Authorities can give to other vulnerable groups.

An alternative suggestion that has been mentioned recently by some stakeholders, although not at this time being promoted by the Council, is adjustments to the single person discount rules, even as far as removing this type of council tax reduction. This would more than save the £500M savings the Government are targeting.

Single Person Discount (SPD) is not income related and allows people to claim 25% off council tax whether they are on income support or a millionaire. This scheme could be changed allowing authorities to vary the discount rate perhaps with a national minimum rate – say 10% and then let authorities agree their own percentages between 10% to 25%. The additional income from this could then contribute to or pay for the localised council tax benefit scheme.

For 2011/12 we are currently reducing council tax for SPD at a total cost of £9.8M. The 10% reduction in benefits is looking to save £2.25M. So if the SPD discount is reduced from 25% to 20% then this may achieve the same level of saving required from the 10% council tax benefit reduction. However, there are people claiming council tax benefit that also claim SPD and therefore, the SPD level would be towards 15% rather than 20%

Section 5: Principles of the scheme

5a: Given the Government's firm commitment to protect pensioners, is maintaining the current system of criteria and allowances the best way to deliver this guarantee of support?

Yes – The Authority cannot see any other way to protect pensioners in the way Government requires without retaining the current criteria. Changes to the current system would invariably lead to winners and losers.

5b: What is the best way of balancing the protection of vulnerable groups with the need for local authority flexibility?

The Authority has taken this question in the context of providing certain guarantees of support to other groups as detailed in 5.6 of the consultation. The Authority feels that should the Government provide further protection to groups laid out in the framework, then it is likely that the scheme would be un-workable given the 10% funding cut.

Based on current year figures, the Authority has projected it will award £22.588m in Council Tax Benefit (£11.017m to 14,208 pensioners and £11.571m to 15,303 working age). Taking into account that pensioners are protected the 10% saving of £2.26m must be applied across **working age customers which will equate to a 19.5% reduction for them**. Achieving this reduction across 15,303 working age customers will prove challenging however, by introducing further protected groups through legislation will result in the saving been made over a much smaller group which may prove financially impossible for this group and possibly create collection problems for the Authority.

Example – if we also protected the 1,261 Employment Support Allowance(Income Based) claimants the impact on all other claimants would be a **reduction in council tax benefit of 28.3%.**

If you look at para 6.10 of the DCLG document it indicates that the Government's aim is to "create a maximum net participation rate of no more than 20%". Just protecting pensioners more or less brings all other claimants up to the 20% limit and any other vulnerable group will bring it above that.

Under the Government's proposals the scope of schemes will not be able to protect all vulnerable groups, leading to other policy objectives to support people with disabilities and tackle child poverty being undermined. The Government need to understand that what is an arbitrary cut of 10% is the greater cause of this than the issue of local schemes.

It appears to the Authority that the Government announced the 10% cut in funding before giving any consideration to how this could be practically implemented and what implications would arise. The Government need to recognise their shortcomings and either amend their proposals accordingly or take responsibility for the consequences.

Section 6: Establishing local schemes

6a: What, if any, additional data and expertise will local authorities require to be able to forecast demand and take-up?

Draft 12 September 2011

The number of pensioners in the area now and expected numbers in future years. This would help the Authority gauge pensioner demand/expenditure in the future. Does the DWP have forecasts for numbers of people becoming pensioners or of pensionable age for future years and by local authority area?

Beyond the above, the authority believes this is a difficult question to answer until it starts the design of its scheme. It is highly likely that Authorities will be able to use existing benefit data to assess whether a proposed scheme financially viable. However, it is possible that additional information may be require from central government once we are in the design phase and arrangements should be put it place for this to happen.

6b: What forms of external scrutiny, other than public consultation, might be desirable?

The Authority will carry out public consultation in accordance with its community engagement framework.

In addition other external scrutiny should include national advice agencies (CAB, Age UK etc), local advice agencies, local community groups (disabled, carers), external audit, precepting authorities and neighbouring authorities. However, The Authority believes that the decision on external scrutiny should remain with the Authority as any Government imposed scrutiny may result in the Authority losing its flexibility in devising a scheme that it feels meets local needs.

6c: Should there be any minimum requirements for consultation, for example, minimum time periods?

No – The standard consultation period in Rotherham is 12 weeks in accordance with national guidelines. Although Authority's should be encouraged to maintain this standard, it does not feel it should be set by central government. Local Authorities will need the flexiblility to set shorter consultation periods if it feels necessary for adjustments to their scheme. In addition, as detailed above in 6b, the only minimum requirements should be that some consultation takes place in accordance with the Authority's consultation policy but the decision on who to consult should ultimately remain with the Authority.

Introducing national scrutiny requirements could result in restricting the Authority's flexibility in devising a scheme to meet local needs.

6d: Do you agree that councils should be able to change schemes from year to year? What, if any restrictions, should be placed on their freedom to do this?

Yes – Authorities should be able to change their schemes from year to year as local priorities can change and adjustments may be needed to meet its financial commitments.

Although it is not the Authority's intention to change the scheme regularly in year, it does believe that it should have the flexibility to do so if it feels it is necessary. The Authority believes it may need such flexibility to accommodate changes to local priorities, meet its financial commitments and also accommodate changes that may happen to national benefits.

Authorities have shown, whilst administering the current scheme, that it can manage in year changes whilst having regard to the needs of claimants In the first year of the localised scheme, the Authority will have to devise a scheme which will have to change in year to accommodate claimants who commence to receive the new Universal Credit.

There should be no restrictions on the Authority in changing it scheme providing relevant consultation has been conducted and sufficient lead in times have been allowed for.

6e: How can the Government ensure that work incentives are supported, and in particular, that low earning households do not face high participation tax rates?

As detailed in 5b, with the protection of pensioner support the reduction in funding results in a 19.5% cut across our working age claimants (including low earning claimants). The clear way to ensure low earning households do not face high participation tax rates would be for Government to legislate for it by setting a maximum withdrawal rate that can be applied to low earners to ensure that work incentives are maintained. However, the Authority would like to see a minimum of central criteria and therefore an alternative would be for the Government to provide example schemes which can be considered showing how local schemes could interact with Universal Credit to maintain work incentives.

However, any legislative provision would need to take account of affordability within the resources that the Government makes available. It should be recognised that if certain vulnerable groups receive protection, then certain other low income households receiving Universal Credit would receive no support for Council Tax at all and the issue of withdrawal rate would be purely academic.

Section 7: Joint working

7a: Should billing authorities have default responsibility for defining and administering the schemes?

Yes as it is the Authority who has the responsibility for Council Tax collection.

7b: What safeguards are needed to protect the interests of major precepting authorities in the design of the scheme, on the basis that they will be a key partner in managing financial risk?

Precepting authorities should be consulted on the design of any scheme.

7c: Should local precepting authorities (such as parish councils) be consulted as part of the preparation of the scheme? Should this extend to neighbouring authorities?

Yes on both accounts.

Precepting authorities should be consulted in the preparation of the scheme to ensure that they are aware of how their increases in precepts can affect the Authority's financial ability to protect vulnerable residents with support in the localised scheme.

Neighbouring Local Authorities should also be consulted as a scheme in one area could have an impact on another.

7d: Should it be possible for an authority (for example, a single billing authority, county council in a two-tier area) be responsible for the scheme in an area for which it is not a billing authority?

The Authority welcomes the proposal that councils have the flexibility to consider joint working and the level of such arrangements.

7e: Are there circumstances where Government should require an authority other than the billing authority to lead on either developing or administering a scheme?

No – The Authority cannot envisage such requirements being required at this time.

Section 8: Managing risk

8a: Should billing authorities normally share risks with major precepting authorities?

The authority agrees that it should be able to share the financial risks across major precepting authorities within it. However, the Authority also believes that it should also have flexibility to share the risk with local precepting authorities (local parish council) if it feels necessary.

In addition, consideration should be taken by Government on how risk will be managed between Authorities and Central Government. It is accepted that it is for Authorities to manage risk in respect of general changes to demand, however, it also considers that Central Government should also build in safeguards where change in demands are exceptional. Authorities have always had an interest in the local economy and the benefits of attracting new businesses to the area to move people into work. Such actions should reduce the burden on benefit support however such issues are sometimes beyond Authorities control, as shown in the previous 3/4 years. Such arrangements could include releasing additional grant when the total number of claimants increase in an area or nationwide or where the pensioner take up in an area increases significantly which would hinder the Authority's financial ability to provide support to working age customers.

The Government have announced that there will be separate detailed technical consultation on the factors and indicators that should be used to determine the level of the new grant. These technical details, at the time of writing, have not been published. Without these details, additional risks arise concerning the sharing of risk.

Other potentially shared risks concern the implications on the collection of Council Tax. These include:
- The Council would need to collect relatively small sums from those on low incomes - this would increase the costs of collection as well as giving rise to higher levels of arrears.
- Increased arrears would have cash flow implications for the Council.

- Over time, the higher levels of arrears are likely to result in larger losses on collection of Council Tax. Increased losses could mean that the current 3% assumption (giving a 97% collection rate) would need to be reviewed. Increasing the assumption would reduce council tax yield and lead to increases in tax rates.

8b: Should other forms of risk sharing (for example, between district councils) be possible?

The Authority believes that there should also be flexibility to share risks with neighbouring Authorities where joint working is implemented.

8c: What administrative changes are required to enable risk sharing to happen?

For the Government's approach to be consistent, given financial responsibilities and accountability, administration changes should be included in primary legislation, although it would be acceptable for some detail to be set out in Regulations.

8d: What safeguards do you think are necessary to ensure that risk sharing is used appropriately?

Billing Authorities and precepting authorities should be compelled to set out a framework/agreement in advance of the introduction of the localised scheme. The framework/agreement should clearly show how the risk will be shared without any one authority being exposed to un-necessary financial risk and how it will be governed/reviewed.

Any scheme also needs to build into its governance arrangements the involvement of elected members.

Section 9: Administering local schemes

9a: In what aspects of administration would it be desirable for a consistent approach to be taken across all schemes?

The intention of a localised scheme is to allow Authorities the freedom to devise a scheme that they believe will meet the needs of its residents. Introducing central legislation to ensure consistencies across all schemes will only reduce such freedom.

The Authority believes that Government will achieve some kind of consistent approach by producing guidance aspects of where they feel a common approach should be taken. Possibly identifying the key criteria that all schemes should have as a minimum.

However, the ultimate design should remain with the Authority.

9b: How should this consistency be achieved? Is it desirable to set this out in Regulations?

Please see 9a above.

9c: Should local authorities be encouraged to use these approaches (run-ons, advance claims, retaining information stubs) to provide certainty for claimants?

Yes – The guidance mentioned in 9a above should encourage the above. Such approaches supply's certainty for claimants and also makes schemes simpler and reduces administration. These may also help towards the incentives for getting people back into work

9d: Are there any other aspects of administration which could provide greater certainty for claimants?

The guidance mentioned in 9a above should include all aspects where Government believes a common approach should be taken, e.g. start date of claims, backdating rules, disregarded income/capital however, ultimate responsibility should remain with the Authority.

9e: How should local authorities be encouraged to incorporate these features into the design of their schemes?

The clear way would be to legislate for the inclusion of such features or offer financial incentives. However, the Authority believes incorporation of these features in a good practice guide or a model scheme would encourage Authorities to include them in a localised scheme.

9f: Do you agree that local authorities should continue to be free to offer discretionary support for council tax, beyond the terms of the formal scheme?

Yes – the Authority believes that it should be able to use the existing provision detailed in section 13a of the Local Government Finance Scheme to provide discretionary support to residents who do not fall within the formal localised scheme.

9g: What, if any, circumstances merit transitional protection following changes to local schemes?

The Authority is of the opinion that previous transitional schemes in the current benefit system have proved unsuccessful in the past and only complicates the system and can make administration more expensive. More errors are likely too be made and systems will have to cope with these extra rules

Such arrangements tend to confuse claimants resulting multiply contacts for explanations and increases software costs. Therefore, the Authority believes transitional schemes should not be encouraged and Authorities should plan changes to their scheme to allow sufficient time to be able to notify claimants of the changes. Please see 6d above in respect of mid-year changes which could be used where there is insufficient lead in time to notify claimants of changes before the start of the new year.

9h: Should arrangements for appeals be integrated with the new arrangements for council tax appeals?

The Authority's opinion is that it would be difficult for a centralised body to conduct appeals over a number of Authority's which will have different rules. Therefore, appeal arrangements should be devised by Authorities when devising it scheme and be included in any consultation. To ensure independence of decisions Authorities should be encouraged to include external local stakeholders in any appeals process it devises e.g. the head of the local CAB, senior DWP officer/manager

9i: What administrative changes could be made to the current system of council tax support for pensioners to improve the way support is delivered (noting that factors determining the calculation of the award will be prescribed by central Government)?

The Authority believes the Government should retain the ability for Authorities to obtain similar information to that obtained in the current scheme - accessing information via CIS, in respect of pension credits and state pensions.

In addition, any pension reform should accommodate what information Authorities will need to safeguard pensioner entitlement in its localised scheme. Clear guidelines should also dictate on how government expects Authorities to engage with pensioners to ensure they receive the support it should, e.g. pensioners not having to make claims, with authorities contacting them directly at pension age to obtain information to assess if they would qualify for assistance.

Such a scheme would require a change to the data protection so Authorities could retain liable parties' dates of birth to enable them to make contact at the appropriate time.

The government should accept that such a scheme is likely to increase take up amongst pensioners and therefore, likely to lead to pressures on council finances as would a discount scheme for pensioners. Please see 8a above in respect of risk sharing between Authorities and central government.

Section 10: Data sharing

10a: What would be the minimum (core) information necessary to administer a local council tax benefit scheme?

The Authority believes that this is a difficult question to answer until it starts to design its local scheme. However, it does consider that the information that is currently available to Authorities should remain available to them and in addition provision should be made for Authorities to access Universal Credit information when introduced October 2013. Also where available, details of household members included in national benefits should also be available.

Raw data would provide Authorities with the flexibility to manipulate it and use it as it see's fit to meet the requirements of its local scheme.

10b: Why would a local authority need any information beyond this "core", and what would that be?

At the present time the only information the Authority can foresee it would require beyond this would be information in relation to occupiers of the property who are not dependant on the council tax payer.

10c: Other than the Department for Work and Pensions, what possible sources of information are there that local authorities could use to establish claimants' circumstances?

Would you prefer to use raw data or data that has been interpreted in some way?

Authorities should be able to obtain the data it can now and should be able to obtain the different elements of support claimants are receiving via Universal Credit when introduced. Other possible sources of information that maybe useful would be HMRC data, bank information and credit reference data.

As the scheme is localised, any data provided should be the raw data to enable authorities to manipulate it as it sees fit and this data to be electronic where possible.

10d: If the information were to be used to place the applicants into categories, how many categories should there be and what would be the defining characteristics of each?

It is our belief that claimants should not be placed into categories as it would be difficult for central government to accommodate the requirements from so many Authorities who may be operating different schemes. Imposing centrally defined categories would indicate that central government intend certain groups should receive more help than others and would detract the flexibility Authorities has in devising its own scheme.

In addition, at the present time, it is difficult for the Authority to look beyond a means tested benefit similar to the one currently being operated where support is withdrawn gradually in line with increases of income. The Authority believes that such a scheme is fairer than applying a discount based on client groups but would be more expensive to administer. The Authority is of the opinion that, in general, Authorities will devised schemes based on the financial constraints place on it based on the grant that is given to cover support and administration.

10e: How would potentially fraudulent claims be investigated if local authorities did not have access to the raw data?

Without access to raw data the only way the Authority could review claims/investigate suspected fraudulent claimants would be via claimants. The Authority considers that having raw data only acts as a tool for Authorities to use in combating fraud and in the majority of cases will not replace contact with the claimant.

10f: What powers would local authorities need in order to be able to investigate suspected fraud in council tax support?

The powers needed to enable Authorities to investigate suspected fraud should be similar to those that are included in the current scheme for example powers to contact banks,

employers, summon for interview under caution etc. In addition powers should be supplied to Authorities to enable it to allow third parties to carry out such functions on its behalf.

10g: In what ways could the Single Fraud Investigation Service support the work of local authorities in investigating fraud?

Arrangements should put in place for joint working to continue or at the very least referrals to be made to the unit where suspected fraud affects both the national scheme and the localised scheme, e.g. undeclared work. In addition arrangements should be made to enable each organisation to share information with the other even though the suspected fraud may only affect one of the schemes.

Although this may fall outside the remit of the Single Fraud Unit, the Authority would also like to see arrangements where Authorities can have its data matched against DWP data. This would be similar to the current matching service with Authorities setting the matching criteria based on its local scheme.

10h: If local authorities investigate possible fraudulent claims for council tax support, to what information, in what form would they need access?

Please see 10f and 10g above, Authorities should retain access to the information it currently has and universal credit information once it is introduced.

10i: What penalties should be imposed for fraudulent claims, should they apply nationally, and should they relate to the penalties imposed for benefit fraud?

The Authority believes that a national guideline of penalties should be produced by central government but should also give Authorities the flexibility to set its own criteria of when certain penalties will be applied and the length of such penalties. The prescribed penalties should include current penalties such as sanctions and prosecutions as well as withdrawal of benefits.

10j: Should all attempts by an individual to commit fraud be taken into account in the imposition of penalties?

Yes – all attempts of fraud against central government and local authorities should be taken into account and arrangements should be put in place to ensure this happens. Arrangements on sharing the results of investigations between Authorities and the Single Fraud unit would need to be put in place or alternatively a national system could be introduced where results are recorded against claimants utilising the their national insurance number.

Section 11: Funding

11a: Apart from the allocation of central government funding, should additional constraints be placed on the funding councils can devote to their schemes?

Authorities should be allowed to decide if it wants to commit more to its scheme than the central grant offered without constraints. However, past experience of dealing with cash

limited budgets (for example discretionary housing payments in the current scheme) it is highly likely Authorities will work towards a scheme that will not exceed its grant.

Given the level of cuts being imposed on local authorities, it is difficult to see how additional resources will be identified to top-up the Support for Council Tax scheme.

11b: Should the schemes be run unchanged over several years or be adjusted annually to reflect changes in need?

To ensure this is a progressive scheme and reflects circumstances relevant at the time annual adjustments should be made. Or at least the scheme should have an annual review probably based on forecasts of the scheme covering changes is claimant types and volumes and changes to council tax levels

Section 12: Administrative costs

The Authority welcomes the Governments commitment to carry out further detail work to determine the amount of funding it will supply to Authorities to administer the scheme. Such funding should cover the continued requirement for Authorities to investigate suspect fraudulent claims.

12a: What can be done to help local authorities minimise administration costs?

Ensure that the information that is available to Authorities under the current scheme continues to be available under the localised scheme. The design of Universal Credit should also include the requirement of making information available to Authorities to enable it to carry out its functions.

Having a set of core rules or criteria for the base of the scheme for every local authority would help minimise the costs, especially those related to computer system development.

12b: How could joint working be encouraged or incentivised?

Joint working could be encouraged by offering financial incentives/grants for setting up such schemes.

Section 13: Transitional and implementation issues

13a: Do you agree that a one-off introduction is preferable? If not, how would you move to a new localised system while managing the funding reduction?

Yes – The Authority believes that a one off introduction is preferable.

However, we consider that the current timetable is un-realistic. Central government should consider deferring the introduction of the new scheme for a year to give Authorities the sufficient lead in time to carry out the functions it needs to, e.g. devise the scheme, procure software, test software, consult and publicise the scheme.

13b: What information would local authorities need to retain about current recipients/applicants of council tax benefit in order to determine their entitlement to council tax support?

It is highly likely that Authorities will retain all the current data it holds in respect of claimants to move them across to the new scheme.

13c: What can Government do to help local authorities in the transition?

Provide funding so Authorities are not left out of pocket on introducing the new scheme at the same time as managing the transition to universal credit. Also see 13a in respect of revised timeline.

13d: If new or amended IT systems are needed what steps could Government take to shorten the period for design and procurement?

The Authority believes it would be difficult for central government to influence this without offering large financial incentives to suppliers to prioritise such work. Alternatively, the only other way would be for central government to set a national framework or core set of criteria with allowance for flexibility for Authorities to configure for local needs.

13e: Should applications, if submitted prior 1 April 2013, be treated as if submitted under the new system?

Yes – all live claims held by the Authority should be transferred to the new scheme and outstanding claims at the transfer should be considered under both schemes.

13f: How should rights accrued under the previous system be treated?

As detailed above in 13a above, the Authority prefers a single transfer to the new scheme and therefore customers should have no accrued rights under the new scheme.

Agenda Item 10

	RMBC – REPORT TO MEMBERS	

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	**21 September 2011**
3.	Title:	**Equality Analysis**
4.	Directorate:	**Chief Executive's Directorate**

5. Summary

This report is to update Cabinet on the outcome of a Judicial Review case involving Birmingham City Council's adult social care assessment procedures, and to highlight the changes made to the RMBC Equality Impact Assessment process in light of the case.

The judicial review was lodged by a care user as a result of a decision by Birmingham City Council to fund only the community care needs of people assessed as having "critical" care needs; previously they had provided services to those individuals assessed as having overall "substantial" and "critical" care needs. The case being one of two recent decisions made by the High Court which declared the Council's decision making processes unlawful.

The Court ruled however that the cuts themselves were not unlawful, but the process Birmingham Council undertook including consultation, impact assessments, and consideration of mitigation must be a lawful process. The Court stated that all public bodies had a duty to follow disability discrimination law even though this could place "significant and onerous" obligations on local authorities. Councils were under an obligation to take account of an individual's disabilities, even where that involves treating that disabled person more favourably than others.

With the strengthening of the Equality Act 2010 and the implications of the judicial review, revisions have been made to the council's Equality Impact Assessment process which will now be referred to as 'Equality Analysis' in accordance with the guidance provided by the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet agree the councils revised approach to conducting equality impact assessments to ensure compliance with EHRC guidance and the findings of recent case law.

7.   Proposals and Details

Guidance provided by the EHRC on Equality Analysis and the Equality Duty emphasises "more attention on the quality of the analysis and how it is used in decision making , and less on the production of a document, which some may have taken to be an end in itself" is required.

Guidance has been issued by EHRC which suggests an approach for Equality Analysis to help public bodies meet their legal obligations. The stages are:

- Identifying who is responsible for the equality analysis
- Establishing relevance to equality
- Scoping your equality analysis
- Analysing your equality information
- Monitoring and review
- Decision-making and publication

The revised Equality Analysis form and process meets the above principles.

8.   Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising. There will be a requirement to spend officer time providing briefing sessions on the new form and process and for officers who will be carrying out Equality Analysis to attend these briefing sessions.

9.   Risks and Uncertainties

The Council is required to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular with regards to Equality Analysis.

To reduce the risk to the Council of unnecessary challenge it is important that Managers and staff are briefed on the new form, the change in focus and the process for Equality Analysis.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

To improve access, reduce barriers and make improvements to services or information provided by the Council to local residents, visitors and employees. Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their protected characteristics. To reduce the risk of Council services discriminating against individuals and being opened up to legal challenge.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Equality analysis and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities.

The judgement of The Honourable Mr Justice Walker between the Queen on application of W, M, G & H and Birmingham City Council

Community Engagement Team members and Equality & Diversity Managers were involved in the development of the revised form and guidance.

The proposed changes have been considered by the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Equality and Young People's Issues and at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board; comments have been incorporated in the revised forms and guidance.

Appendix 1 Equality Analysis Form
Appendix 2 Equality Analysis Guidance
Appendix 3 Equality Analysis Guidance one page summary
Appendix 4 Judgement Briefing

Contact Name:

Matt Gladstone, Director of Commissioning, Policy & Partnerships, Chief Executives Directorate; email: matthew.gladstone@rotherham.gov.uk; tel: 01709 822791.

Author

Caroline Naylor, Community Engagement Officer Chief Executives Directorate Telephone 01709 822324 email caroline.naylor@rotherham.gov.uk.

Gillian Damms, Equality & Diversity Manager, ex- 2010 Rotherham, email: gillian.damms@rotherham.gov.uk, telephone: 01709 822238

RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning &/ Decommissioning Services, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSF)

Under Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity. Page 3 & 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1	
Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:	
Name of service and Directorate	
Lead manager	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA)	
Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)	
Aim/Scope (who the Policy /Service affects and intended outcomes if known) See page 7 of guidance step 1	
What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics? See page 7 of guidance step 2	
Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings) See page 7 of guidance step 3	
Engagement undertaken with staff about the implications on service users (date and group(s)consulted and key findings) See page 7 of guidance step 3	

RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning &/ Decommissioning Services, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSF)

The Analysis
How do you think the Policy/Service meets the needs of different communities and groups? Protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity. Rotherham also includes Carers as a specific group. Other areas to note are Financial Inclusion, Fuel Poverty, and other social economic factors. This list is not exhaustive - see guidance appendix 1 **and** page 8 of guidance step 4
Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service: See page 8 of guidance step 4 and 5 **Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Group?**   Identify by protected characteristics **Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers?** Identify by protected characteristics   **What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?** Identify by protected characteristics

Please list any **actions and targets** by Protected Characteristic that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment and ensure that they are added into your service plan.

Website Key Findings Summary: To meet legislative requirements a summary of the Equality Analysis needs to be completed and published.

RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning &/ Decommissioning Services, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSF)
<u>**Equality Analysis Action Plan**</u> - See page 9 of guidance step 6 and 7

Time Period …………………

Manager:……………………………… Service Area:………………………………… Tel:………………

Title of Equality Analysis:

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic.
List all the Actions and Equality Targets identified

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics (A,D,RE,RoB,G GI ,O,SO, PM, CPM, C or All)*	Target date (MM/YY)
Name Of Director who approved Plan		**Date**	

*A = Age, C= Carers D= Disability, G = Gender, GI Gender Identity, O= Other groups, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage.

**RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning &/ Decommissioning
Services, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSF)**

Website Summary – Please complete for publishing on our website and append to any reports to Elected Members, CMT or Directorate Management Teams

Completed equality analysis	Key findings	Future actions
Directorate: .... Function, policy or proposal name: .... Function or policy status: .... (new, changing or existing) Name of lead officer completing the assessment: .... Date of assessment:		

Equality Analysis

A guide and methodology

What is Equality Analysis?

Equality Analysis (EA) is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of **commissioning, decommissioning services, decision-making, policies, projects, services, strategies and functions** (CDDPPSSF), to identify any unmet needs, and to provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate.

It systematically analyses and records the actual, potential or likely impact of a CDDPPSSF or a significant change in a CDDPPSSF – on different groups of people. The consequences on particular groups are analysed and anticipated so that, as far as possible, any negative consequences can be eliminated or minimised and opportunities for ensuring equality can be maximised.

Equality Analysis is a different focus to Equality Impact Assessments **more attention on the quality of the analysis and how it is used in decision-making, and less on the production of a document, which some may have taken to be an end in itself.**

You need to analyse the effect on equality for all of the protected characteristics, and all aims of the general equality duty, apart from in relation to marriage and civil partnership, where only the discrimination aim applies.

Why do an Equality Analysis?

The purpose of Equality Analysis is to improve the service we provide by making sure it does not discriminate in the way we provide services and employment and that, where possible, it does all it can to promote equality and good relations between different groups.

To understand why Equality Analysis is necessary requires an understanding that "equality" is not about treating everybody the same. Equality means making sure that the individual requirements of different people and different communities are taken into account.

Why is Equality Analysis important?

They form part of Rotherham Council's commitment to improving equality practice. This commitment is expressed in the Single Equality Scheme and its Equality Statements. They are required by law. The Equalities legislation requires local public bodies to analyse the impact of their CDDPPSSF, or the likely impact of any that are proposed on equality. **Public bodies must publish evidence of the analysis** that they undertook to establish whether their policies or practices would further or have furthered the aims of the duty, details of the information that they considered and details of engagement undertaken when doing the analysis.

All public bodies need to consider equality as they make their decisions. Equality Analysis is a way of ensuring that this is done and they are essential in meeting the statutory equality duties.

They will help us to identify inequalities in:
- service design and delivery

- employment

The benefits of EA's include:

- helping to identify whether we are excluding different groups from any of our services
- helping to identify direct or indirect discrimination
- assisting us in considering alternative policies or measures that might address any adverse impact
- helping mainstream equality in our policies and practices
- helping us to target resources more effectively
- helping us to better understand the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities we serve
- helping us to reality check our policies and services with the people affected by them.

Introduction

EA can be retrospective or prospective activity undertaken by managers and employees. EA is usually undertaken in a **3 year cycle with an annual review.** If your service has significantly changed, you will need to carry out further Equality Analysis. It is not a one-off exercise, it is ongoing and cyclical and it enables equality considerations to be taken into account before a decision is made, this does not mean repeating the equality analysis, but using the experience gained through implementation to check the findings and to make any necessary adjustments.

Who needs to be involved in an EA?

It is recommended that a minimum of 3 officers are involved in an EA. These officers should be drawn from different areas of expertise and could also include service users.

Depending upon the CDDPPSSF to be assessed there needs to be an assessment team leader, but the team should also aim to include:

- **Relevant and appropriate employees** – for example, representatives from the different working groups
- **Stakeholder involvement** – for internal services that may have an impact on other services or, where a service is outwardly focused, service user representatives
- **Critical friend** – this could be another manager or external representative to help provide challenge
- **Equalities expertise** – this could be someone in your service area who sits on the Directorates Equality Lead Officers Group or someone with an interest and some knowledge of this area of work
- **Information/monitoring/performance management expertise** – this will help when identifying data, identifying gaps in information and identification of performance based objectives and targets
- **Human resources expertise** – particularly in the case of employment based policies, services and functions to provide guidance around legal employment obligations and procedures.

The legislative protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Identity, Race, Sexuality and Religion or Belief**,** Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership. You need to analyse the effect on equality for all of the

protected characteristics, and all aims of the general equality duty, apart from in relation to marriage and civil partnership, where only the discrimination aim applies.

Before you start
Collect any relevant equality information about your service, such as recent consultation reports, monitoring data, service reviews. Use this as a starting point for your analysis rather than repeating work that has already been carried out.

Monitoring data might show, for instance, that more men than women use your service, or particular communities are under-represented. This will be useful information, which will help you in your analysis.

How to use the forms
The EA template will give you a framework for analysing your CDDPPSSF, but this is not exhaustive and you can change or add to the framework as you wish.

In some cases, you might need more information, if you need to do some research, you will have to identify this in the equalities action plan in the final section of this document.

If the analysis indicates that you need to consider major changes to a CDDPPSSF, you will need to consult relevant communities and other stakeholders. But if the changes are minor, you might not need to consult on them; use your judgement. Staff training might be an important issue, note this in the action plan.

Equality analysis for other communities or groups
In addition to the 9 legislative protected characteristics or groups you will need to consider carrying out analysis to include the needs of other communities or groups of people, for example carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, parents, lone parents or guardians or people who are homeless (see Appendix 1 for further groups). The template can be adapted as required.

Promotion of good community relations and community cohesion – for example, if your proposals are aimed at addressing unmet needs in one community of interest, this could lead to resentment in the wider community and damage community relations, if you do not let everyone in the area know your plans and aims. This would mean explaining that the action is not about preferential treatment for some groups but to address imbalances in service provision.

Links to other strategies, policies or action plans
You might already be taking action to improve services as part of a particular strategy, policy or plan. If so, refer to this in the comments/evidence column, rather than duplicate the whole strategy. You should also consider whether any further action is needed.

Assessing policies and internal services
If the customers for your services are internal to the organisation, rather than members of the public, you still need to carry out an impact assessment on your work.

Responsibilities and keeping records

Please keep copies of your equality analysis (EA) forms and action plans, as you will need to include them as evidence for publication. Members of the public may also request copies of completed EA's.

- It is the responsibility of Service Managers to quality assure the EA's of their service area, function or policy before being sent on to the Equality Lead Officer for their Directorate.
- It is the responsibility of the Lead Managers to enter the completed EA's Actions and Targets in their service plan and monitor it.
- Through the PDR process all Managers need to allocate equality actions and targets to be completed by Team members and monitored.
- All completed EA's need to be sent to the Directorates Equality Lead Officer.
- The Organisation has a legal responsibility to publish EA's year on year, this function will be discharged by Lead Manager of the Equality Analysis through completing the Key Findings Report of EA's which will be published on the Rotherham Council Website so they are available for public scrutiny.
- EAs progress to be monitored by Cabinet Member for Community Development, Equality and Young People and scrutinised by the Overview Scrutiny Management Board twice a year.

What is the end result?

The ultimate aim of Equality Analysis is to improve what we do. The results will provide a baseline from which we can monitor our work on equalities. It will help the organisation to target its resources more effectively. It may also help to identify areas where improved relations with equality groups can be achieved.

More help and information

After reading the **full guidance**, if you have any questions about using or adapting the forms, you should contact your Directorate Equality Lead Officer within the Community Engagement Team.

Equality Analysis

These guidance notes are intended to help you understand how to carry out an EA. If carried out successfully, it can lead you towards identifying how the Organisation's CDDPPSSF can be best delivered to meet the needs of all communities including disadvantaged or vulnerable communities and to reduce any adverse effects on communities. Analysis is a way of finding out whether your actions or proposals will affect some communities or groups of people differently. Such differential treatment could lead to unfair decisions and unlawful treatment by the Organisation, analysis should help to avoid this. Please note that all **new CDDPPSSF or those under review or being substantially changed should be analysed.**

Directorates must decide which of their CDDPPSSF will be analysed, based on a number of factors, including:
- The impact on external customers and if this will differ for different communities
- Likelihood that staff or customers will be affected differently
- Whether the function will affect relations between communities
- Any statutory obligations that apply
- Whether the service is specifically designed to tackle discrimination or disadvantage.

Equality is not about treating everybody the same. For example, providing a service for everybody only on a Friday will adversely affect certain religious groups. Equality means making sure that the individual requirements of different people and different communities are taken into account. Therefore, you need to consider the likely impact or barriers in relation to **protected characteristics**:
- Race/ethnicity (BME and non-BME communities including Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Gypsies and Travellers etc.)
- Gender (male, female)
- Gender Identity (transgender)
- Disability (using the Social Model of Disability – see Glossary)
- Age - considering the needs of both older and young people and people of working age
- Faith/religious or other beliefs
- Sexual orientation – people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- And other groups who might not have equal access to your service such as Carers, Parents, lone parents and guardians, homeless people, looked after children, people living in fuel poverty etc. (**see appendix 1**)

A small group (at least 3 people) should carry out analysis, including people who know the function well. The group should include someone who can make sure that any actions/targets feed in to service improvement plans and service delivery plans.

Keep records of your decisions and the actions; use the EA Template to record the key points of your Analysis. The completed analysis needs to be considered by the Directorate's relevant management team for approval and comments**.**

Equality Analysis Stages

Step 1 - Aim
It is important at the start of the Analysis to spend time to briefly identify the purpose and aims of the CDDPPSSF. This should include consideration of any specific objectives and how these will be delivered:
- What are you trying to achieve and for whom
- Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want
- Who needs to contribute to meet the objectives
- Are there any individuals or groups who might be prevented from benefiting from the service.

This information can be entered in the Aim and Scope section of the EA template

Step 2 - Fact Finding
Gather any relevant equalities and customer information or data that exists in relation to the delivery of the CDDPPSSF. This should include any research, statistics, performance indicators, customer feedback, information and reports from earlier consultation.

You will need to assess and identify any gaps in the information you have and make a decision about whether you need that information now in order to complete your analysis. In many cases the information you have will be incomplete, especially in relation to religion or belief, and sexual orientation. However, you should continue with the analysis and include an action within your action plan for finding out more about how this information can be obtained as the service is developed.

If you have not already done it, you will need to identify how you will involve people from different equalities groups in the delivery of your service.
This information can be entered in the Equality Information is available section.

Step 3 – Engagement
Do you have a plan with clear reasons for carrying out engagement? This is a fundamental part of the Analysis to find out what other people think of your policy, services or ideas and actions: To avoid engagement fatigue, find out if any similar consultation exercises have taken place and use their findings. If you do this, and feel confident that your actions will have clear benefits, you might find that you don't actually need to consult at this point. It should include:

- Feedback from service users, members of the public, managers and staff on how well the policy or service is being delivered to a wide range of people
- Discussion on any proposed changes to how the policy or service will be delivered to test them out before implementation
- A review of the service information and outcomes to promote/celebrate success with details of how you will consult with services users and those who don't
- Different techniques to promote the policy or service to gain greater access and awareness

- A summary of the comments received with feedback to people you've consulted to show how their views have been taken into consideration.

This information can be entered in the Engagement undertaken and key findings sections of the EA template.

Step 4 – The Analysis

Use the information that has been gathered to analyse whether there is likely to be a negative impact upon any individuals, groups or communities. Then think about the actions you will need to take to remove or avoid these barriers.

- Are the premises and/or environment from where the policy or service will be delivered from easy for everyone to find, get into or use, safe and user friendly
- Does the data/information highlight any differential impact, and if so for whom
- Do you have a strategy that makes communication and information as accessible to as many people as possible
- Is a system in place to measure and evaluate how people from different equality groups are involved in and benefiting from the policy or service
- What methods have you used to consult with and get feedback from a range of individuals, groups and communities
- Are there any particular training needs arising for staff involved in delivering the policy or service to diverse communities.

If people have to pay for your service, or if a service provides particular benefits or concessions, is this fair for everyone and how will changes to these costs affect different groups?

This information can be entered in the How you think the Policy/Service meets the needs of different Communities and Groups section of the EA template.

Step 5 – Think of Alternatives

You may have to do things differently if your Analysis highlights any important differences or barriers to any individual or group from accessing your service. This will mean coming up with alternative ways for delivering the service where the impact will not be reduced. For example, you may need to develop different delivery strategies for different groups to ensure that the service you are delivering is appropriate and accessible to them all. The following should be considered:

- What are the options
- What are the costs associated with each option and how can they be resourced
- How does each option affect different groups or communities
- Do your opening times, appointment and waiting systems, timescales or deadlines suit everyone
- Will the alternatives promote equality of opportunity, improved treatment and access
- How will people know about the new way(s) of delivery so that they can benefit.

This information can be entered in the Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Policy/Service and the Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers sections of the EA template.

Step 6 – Action Plans and Equality Targets

Simply collecting data is of little benefit. The main reason is to review what the information is telling you so that you make improvements or changes if these are necessary. Therefore, before finalising your Analysis, you must identify what actions you must take and how you will go about monitoring the involvement of people from different equality groups. You should:

- Ensure all actions are SMART with targets for improvement
- Allocate responsibility, resources and timescale for each action or target to make sure they are carried out in a timely manner
- Review and report progress on all actions or targets as part of your service improvement plan
- Targets should set improvement rates for identified differentials in service delivery
- Amend your action plans as needed to deal with any new issues that arise from the consultation process.

This information needs to be entered in the Action Plan identifying the equality objectives and targets.

Step 7 – Monitoring and Feedback

Once the Analysis has been completed and the actions agreed, you should let people know the outcome by writing up a summary of the findings. Decide when and how you will review your action plans and the progress against targets. This could include further consultation or a public promotion campaign after a policy or service change has been implemented, to let people know that you have included their views after you engaged them.

Finally, it is vital that you follow through with your Action Plan and regularly report on progress. If issues arise that you could not have anticipated during the analysis, they should be picked up as part of the service improvement process. Adjust your action plans as needed to deal with these new issues.

After approval within your Directorate, the EA and Action Plan should be entered into your service plan for monitoring purposes and monitored

A copy of the completed EA should be sent to your Manager and Directorate Lead Officer for validation.

If you have any questions or need any further information please contact:

Gillian Damms, Equalities and Diversity Manager 2010 Rotherham Ltd, Telephone 01709 822238 email Gillian.damms@2010rotherham.org

Caroline Naylor, Community Engagement Officer Chief Executives Directorate Telephone 01709 822324 email caroline.naylor@rotherham.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Race:
When looking at race consider different ethnic groups within the five broad census headings, and groups not listed as separate census categories, for example Middle Eastern, North African, European, Gypsies and Travellers, Asylum Seekers, Refugees and migrant workers.

Gender:
Remember that women and men may have different priorities in relation to what services they want and different needs for how these are provided. Men-only or women-only delivery for some services could be an option.

Disability or long-term limiting illness/condition:
All service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including physical features of premises, so it is advisable to anticipate any adjustments that may be required. Consider the barriers faced by different groups of disabled people as listed below. Note also that changes to legislation mean that conditions such as MS, HIV and cancer are now covered from the time of diagnosis

- Physical impairment - such as people who have difficulty in using their arms or who have mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches

- Sensory impairment - such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / having a serious hearing impairment or a speech impairment

- Mental health condition - such as depression or schizophrenia

- Learning disability/difficulty - such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia or a cognitive impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder

- Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy.

Gender Identity, Reassignment and Transgender
Transgender is a wider umbrella term used to include people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include, but is not limited to, transsexual people and others who define as gender-variant. Transsexual is the term used to describe a person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery). Gender reassignment is covered by the gender reassignment provisions in the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA).

Considering the different needs of people from Trans communities can be complex. Key areas of concern include 'hate crime' and a lack of social facilities.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual People
Key areas of concern include 'hate crime' and a lack of social facilities. Remember that this type of information is very personal and although people may be willing to declare their sexual orientation on surveys to aid improvement of services they may prefer it to not otherwise be known.

Older People
Older people have different needs so we need to ensure the views of older people are heard and increased participation is encouraged. Communication, mobility and transport are areas we need to consider to aid this involvement, also access to learning opportunities to develop new skills.

Younger People
Younger people have different needs and we need to ensure their views are heard and increased participation is encouraged along with opportunities to help develop services.

Religion or Belief
Also includes people who do not follow a religion or have any particular belief system. Because 'hate crime' is a concern for many people from different faith communities this may be a factor in low responses to surveys, so imaginative ways of gathering this information could be considered and good practice established to highlight the benefits of accurate data. Consider issues around times/dates of visits and service provision being flexible to work around religious celebrations, events and regular worship.

Carer
A carer is someone who looks after a partner, relative or friend who has a disability, is an older person, or has a long term condition. Carers may be paid or unpaid, can often be isolated and are of every age group and ethnic origin. We may therefore need to use more diverse approaches to delivering services and ways to consult with this group; consider using radio, internet, library services or other imaginative ways of consultation. Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

Other Groups
It is good practice to consider the profile of *all* our communities who belong to different socio-economic groups e.g. Parents, lone parents and guardians, people on low incomes, people living in fuel poverty, people who misuse drugs (legal and illegal), ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people and to note anything of which you are already aware or that results from your research.

Glossary

Social model of Disability
Disabled people do not face disadvantage because of their impairments but experience discrimination in the way society is organised. This includes failing to make education, work, leisure and public services accessible, failing to remove barriers of assumption, physical, communication, stereotype and prejudice and failing to outlaw unfair treatment in our daily lives.

Equality Analysis Guidance – EA's can be retrospective or prospective assessment.

- Need to consider the likely impact (positive and negative) for Policies, Services, or Functions in relation to-
    - Race/ethnicity (BME and non BME communities, including Refugee status, Asylum seekers, Gypsies and Travellers
    - Gender (Male, female,)
    - Gender Identity (transgender)
    - Disability (using the Social model of disability i.e. society disables people, not a person's ability/disability)
    - Age – (consider the needs of older, working age and young people)
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Faith/religious or other beliefs
    - Other groups who might not have equal access to your service (i.e. Carers, Parents, lone parents and guardians, homeless people, looked after children, people on low incomes, people living in fuel poverty etc)
- A small group (3 to 5 people) should carry out the assessment
    - Include some one who knows the function well
    - Some one who can make sure that any actions feed into service improvement plans
- Keep records of your decisions and actions through all stages of the assessment (use the template to record the key points of your assessment).
    Step 1 Briefly identify the purpose and aim of the policy or service.
    Step 2 Fact finding – gather relevant data, assess and identify any information gaps
    Step 3 Engagement – Avoid Engagement/consultation fatigue by using previous or recent engagement findings.
    Step 4 The Analysis – Use the information gathered to analyse whether there is likely to be a negative impact upon individuals, groups or communities. Consider what actions need to be taken to reduce, avoid or remove barriers/negative impact.
    Step 5 Think of Alternatives – You may have to do things differently if your analysis highlights any important differences or barriers to any individual or group accessing the services provided
    Step 6 Action Plans and Equality Targets (identify what actions (SMART) need to take place)
    Step 7 Monitoring and Feedback (Feed back to people, decide when and how you will review your action plans and progress against target. Report regularly on progress – adjust action plans if necessary.
    Step 8 Set up monitoring arrangements, so that you can monitor the impact on communities or groups according to any relevant protected characteristics.

Completed EA's need to be approved by the relevant Directors for approval and comment.

Briefing Note
Adult Social Care - Judicial Review Birmingham City Council
Case no CO/1765/2011 & CO/1772/2011
This briefing note is to update SMT with the outcome of the Judicial Review of Birmingham City Council decided on 19 May 2011. The Review was brought about as a result of challenges to their decision to only fund the community care needs of people assessed as having "critical" care needs. Previously they provided services to those individuals assessed as having overall "substantial" and "critical" care needs as is currently the case in RMBC.

The decision by Birmingham City Council to change the criteria was made when they were facing significant cuts to their budgets. The families of four disabled people fought Birmingham council's spending cuts decision and took legal action against the authority. A Judicial Review was brought on the basis that the process the Council had gone through to assess the impact of these particular cuts, was unlawful and contrary to the Disability Discrimination Act.

This case is one of two recent decisions made by the High Court which have declared the Council's decision making processes as unlawful. It is not the case that the cuts themselves are unlawful, but the process they undertake involving consultation, impact assessments and so on must be a lawful process.

Implications for RMBC
The judgement has implications for all local authorities in England and Wales in that the judges said all public bodies had a duty to follow disability discrimination law and while acknowledging that it placed "significant and onerous" obligations on local authorities, Councils <u>must</u> take account of people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than others.

The Equality Act 2010
Since the Judicial Review began the Equality Act 2010 has introduced the new Public Sector Equality Duty bringing together the previous Disability Equality Duty with other existing duties (on race and gender). It also now covers age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. The new duty came into force on 5 April 2011.

The duty has three aims, when developing or implementing policy, it requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having 'due regard' means to consciously consider the aims when making decisions about policy or practice which would affect people and involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where they are different from other groups
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

The risk to RMBC is that if we fail as a public authority to give due regard to the duty, it could be challenged through a judicial review made by an individual or by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

It is important therefore that RMBC demonstrates compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and relevant guidance regarding the Equality Act 2010 whilst ensuring continued support for engagement and involvement activity across all groups in particular those people with protected characteristics.

By using equality monitoring data, engagement opportunities and targeted consultation, managers will then have sufficient information for reliable equality analysis which is essential to show they have an adequate evidence base for any decision making.

Author

Caroline Naylor, Community Engagement Officer Chief Executives Directorate
Telephone 01709 822324; email caroline.naylor@rotherham.gov.uk.

23 May 2011

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	**21st September, 2011**
3.	Title:	**RMBC Public Health Annual Report**
4.	Directorate:	**Public Health**

5. **Summary:**

One of the duties of a Director of Public Health is to produce an Annual Report outlining the health needs of the local population. This year's Report is based on the Marmot Report (2010) and produces a review of the position in Rotherham against the Marmot themes. The Marmot report was produced as part of the Labour Government's examination of progress in addressing health inequalities. It set out a new approach to tackling health inequalities based on the "life course" approach.

This year's Public Health Annual Report reflects the Marmot chapter themes with the addition of a chapter which horizon scans future issues:

- Giving every child the best start in life.
- Enable all children, young people and adults to meet their capabilities and have control over their lives.
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable communities.
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.
- Identify, monitor and respond to emerging problems.

The Public Health white paper now before Parliament responds to Sir Michael Marmot's *Fair Society, Healthy Lives* report and adopts Marmot's life course framework for tackling the wider determinants of health. It proposes to give Local Authorities responsibility for improving public health and addressing health inequalities.

6. **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is asked to receive the report and to support the Marmot principles as a policy framework for developing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Rotherham and Rotherham's approach to addressing health inequalities.

The approach has been supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

7. **Proposals and Details:**

The 2011 Health Profile[1] for Rotherham gives average male life expectancy as 76.6 years 1.7 years worse than the England average. Female life expectancy is 80.7 years 1.6 years worse than the England average. Life expectancy is 9.9 years lower for men and 5.9 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Rotherham than in the least deprived areas.

Smoking rates and levels of adult obesity are above the England average. The percentage of adults eating poorly or exercising regularly (from the Health Survey for England) are far worse than the England average.

The most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008/9 shows that 17% of the Borough is now amongst the 10% most deprived areas in England compared to only 12% in 2007. Rotherham's position regarding the wider determinants of health is consistently worse than the England average[2].

Health improvement and prevention programmes need to work across life course pathways and work together with citizens, communities and partners to deliver improved health outcomes and reduced inequalities for Rotherham.

The *Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010* by Sir Michael Marmot (2010) was commissioned as a national review of health inequalities across England and the evidence base of interventions to address them. The review has a crucial relevance to the health of Rotherham residents as it sets out a framework for systematically thinking through how to reduce inequalities at a local level.

Marmot's review identifies six high level priorities for action and evidence based objectives within each of these.

Two things stand out: first the importance of tackling all of the social determinants of health taking a 'life course' approach and, second, doing more than just targeting the most disadvantaged, but addressing the whole social gradient.

Rotherham has a strong record of working to tackle health and social inequalities. This has contributed to substantial improvements in health outcomes across the Borough despite the recent deterioration in economic circumstances and Government service cuts.

8. **Finance:**

For information only

9. **Risks and Uncertainties:**

The report identifies future health and social care needs of Rotherham. These will allow planners and providers of services to plan accordingly. However there will be financial implications, for example:
- The increasing elderly population with complex health needs,
- People with learning disabilities living longer.

---

[1] DoH 2011 www.healthprofiles.info
[2] Yorkshire and the Humber Public Health Observatory Wider Determinants of Health Profile, Rotherham. Jan 2011.

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

The report will be key in setting out the policy areas to be considered as priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and will feed into the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

10. **Background Papers and Consultation:**

Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010 by Sir Michael Marmot (2010)

Contact Name :

Dr John Radford, Director of Public Health 01709 302160
john.radford@rotherhampct.nhs.uk
Jo Abbott, Consultant in Public Health 01709 302156

Public Health Annual Report 2011

Contents

Welcome to the 2011 Public Health annual report.

There have been a lot of changes in Public Health over the last year since the election of the new coalition Government. This has led to the publication of a new Public Health White Paper *Healthy Lives Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England (DH 30 November 2010)*. The paper builds on the work of the Marmot Review and seeks to tackle the major public health challenges facing our community. These include rising levels of obesity, alcohol and substance misuse and a high prevalence of smoking. The paper outlines a commitment to protecting the population from serious health threats.

Fair Society, Healthy Lives (the Marmot Review)

The Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010 by Sir Michael Marmot (2010) was commissioned as a national review of health inequalities across England and the evidence base of interventions to address them. The review has a crucial relevance to the health of Rotherham residents as it sets out a framework for systematically thinking through how to reduce inequalities at a local level.

Marmot's review identifies six high level priorities for action and evidence based objectives within each of these.

Fair Society, Healthy Lives high level priorities are:

1 Give every child the best start in life.

2 Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.

3 Create fair employment and good work for all.

4 Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.

5 Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.

6 Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Two things stand out: first the importance of tackling all of the social determinants of health taking a 'life course' approach and, second, doing more than just targeting the most disadvantaged, but addressing the whole social gradient.

This report aims to take Rotherham into the next phase of work as Public Health Departments prepare to merge with Local Authorities. This provides a great opportunity for a joint approach to Public Health that addresses the wider factors that shape the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and

local communities – such as education, employment and the environment. The Public Health Initiatives within this report strongly support Rotherham's Children's Plan, the Community Strategy, Rotherham Metropolitian Borough Council Corporate Plan and the NHS Single Integrated Plan.
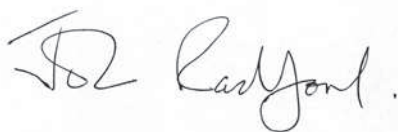
This years annual report therefore forms the bases for discussion about this new approach to Public Health and the development of a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough as part of the Governments ambitious plan to improve Public Health.

Each chapter is divided into:

- What the data shows…

- What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

- What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

I have attached an appendix showing Rotherham's performance indicators against the Marmot areas for information.

Life expectancy in Rotherham remains significantly worse than the England average. Through closer working of the NHS, Local Authority, Voluntary Agencies and communities we can work together to drive the change we need to create a healthier Rotherham.

Dr John Radford
Director of Public Health

The facts:

- Life expectancy in men is 76.6 years. This is 1.7 years less than the national average.

- Life expectancy in women is 80.7 years. This is 1.6 years lower than the national average.

- Men living in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) target areas are likely to live around 3 years less than the Rotherham average. Women living in these areas are likely to live 2 years less.

- Rotherham cardiovascular disease rates are dropping faster than the national rates, with deaths halving in the last 10 years. However it still remains one of the largest causes of death across the borough.

- 1 in 3 deaths are due to cancer, especially lung and breast cancer.

- 1 in 7 deaths are due to respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

Chapter 1 -
Give Every Child The Best Start In Life

What the data shows...

- 25% of children in Rotherham live in poverty. In some areas this is as high as 70%.

- 14.2% of all Rotherham children live in areas which are within the 10% most deprived nationally.

- A quarter of all mums in Rotherham smoke during pregnancy. Smoking in pregnancy increases the risk of complications in labour, having a low birth weight baby and/or a baby who suffers from asthma and behavioural problems. It also increases the risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy (known as cot death).

- 9% of all babies born in Rotherham have a low birth weight (much higher than the national average).

- Rotherham has approximately 20-25 infant deaths every year (under 1 year).

- The review of child deaths shows that parental alcohol use and smoking are significant factors implicated in a number of infant deaths (under 1 year).

- Half of all mums in Rotherham breastfeed their babies at delivery and only one in five babies is still breastfed at 6-8 weeks.

- Two out of three babies are born in some of the most deprived areas in Rotherham, lessening their life chances, throughout all stages of their lives.

- There are more teenage pregnancies in Rotherham than the national average.

Pregnancy and the first three years of life are the most important stages in our life cycle; foundations of future health, development and wellbeing are laid down.

1

> *It is increasingly recognised that giving babies a healthy start is crucial to every aspect of a child's development – physical, intellectual and emotional. What happens in the early years, beginning in pregnancy, has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and wellbeing – from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status.*
>
> *Rotherham's Children & Young Peoples Plan 2010-13*

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

1 Reduce inequalities in the early development of physical, learning and social skills in children under 3 years of age.

2 Provide early intervention into the pre, post natal and early years to ensure family functioning and wellbeing is of an optimum standard.

3 Build the resilience of families to ensure that the health, welfare and social needs of their children are met.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

1 To increase the proportion of overall expenditure allocated to the early years.

2 Support families to achieve progressive improvements in early child development, for example through good pre and post natal care, paid paternity leave, offering good routine support.

3 Provide good early years education and childcare.

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

Maternity Services:

- Direct and quicker access into an effective midwifery service.

- Employing additional maternity support workers, to support a reduction in smoking in pregnancy and an increase in the number of women breastfeeding.

- Ensure that all families and the people working with them are aware of safe sleeping to prevent cot death.

- Employing specialist midwives to address issues detrimental to infant health and wellbeing at point of delivery and in the early years e.g. smoking, alcohol and substance misuse.

- Ensuring that teenage parents and their children are given the additional support and guidance required to meet their long term health and wellbeing needs.

- Implementing breastfeeding peer support across Rotherham through joint working with children's centres.

- Implementing Stage 2 of UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative

Health Visiting Services for Children from Birth to Age Three:

- Access for all families to a universal health visiting service.

- Strengthen parents' understanding of childhood and the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and keeping children safe.

- Ensure that parents receive timely, up to date information to support them in making informed decisions on their child's health and welfare.

- Provide a specialist health visiting service to support universal provision ensuring that issues detrimental to good outcomes are identified at the earliest opportunity.

- The number of Health Visitors nationally will be increased by 4,200 between 2010-2015. Rotherham's allocation will be an additional 20.00 WTE funded by NHSR and 4.00 WTE funded from existing provider services resources. The main focus of the 'new' Health Visitors Service will be on 0-3 year olds and their families and a return to Public Health Nursing. There will be an expectation to achieve quality outcomes which will be monitored against 4 delivery levels:

1. Community – Health Visitors should know what exists in the community they are assigned to and work to develop these for children and families e.g. Sure Start Services.

2. Universal Services – delivery of the Healthy Child Programme and support for parents to access a range of community services/resources.

3. Universal Plus – rapid response from the Health Visitor when families require specific expert help e.g. postnatal depression; sleepless baby; feeding concerns.

4. Universal Partnership Plus – ongoing support from the Health Visitors Team plus a range of local services to deal with complex issues over a period of time, working with Children's Centres, charities and where appropriate Family Nurse Partnerships.

Prevention and Early intervention Services:

- Schools, children's centres, youth workers, maternity services, GPs, the health visiting and school nursing services and voluntary and community sector organisations work together to ensure that vulnerable children are identified and that action is taken to prevent and tackle problems before situations escalate into crisis , and that these professionals have access to Common Assessment Framework training and development.

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- The 25% of children living in poverty in Rotherham need extra support to achieve their full potential. This equates to 18,000 families (assuming three children per family).

- Delivering early interventions during pregnancy and ongoing support in the early years are critical to the long term health and development of the child and other long term family outcomes.

- Integrating pre natal, post natal and early years services to ensure that services are seamless is essential to good outcomes.

- Ensure high quality maternity and health visiting services through effective, nationally evaluated parenting programmes, leading to a successful transition into childcare and early years education.

- Professionals working with pregnant women and new mums should identify and offer support and treatment to women with mental health issues.

- Professionals working with pregnant women and new mums should identify and offer support and treatment to women with a history of substance misuse.

- Targeted interventions are necessary for a significant number of children and families, where children will fail to achieve as they grow up and develop.

- Families have exclusive influence on their children in the early years – influencing care at this stage is a challenge.

- Greater embedding of Early Intervention and Family Support processes.

Investment in early years is vital for reducing health inequalities and needs to be sustained otherwise its effect is lessened. Returns on investments in early childhood are higher than in adolescence. Currently spending is higher in later childhood and needs to be rebalanced towards early years. The obstacle is that resources invested in initiatives to tackle health inequalities in the early years don't produce instant returns.

Where children are unable to remain with their birth family services are supported to ensure sustainable and permanent alternative family care.

In September 2011 a Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) will be implemented in Rotherham providing intensive support to pregnant teenagers from the ante-natal period and for 2 years following the birth of the baby. It is expected that the FNP will demonstrate positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

2

Chapter 2 -
Enable children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

What the data shows...

- Many health risks affecting young people are more common in deprived areas, for example teenage pregnancy, smoking, obesity, substance misuse (including alcohol) and accidents.

- Attainment in Rotherham's schools is below the regional and national average at all key stages.

- Rotherham has almost 12,000 children living in households where there was no one in employment (2001 census)

- Indicators suggest Rotherham's 16-24 year olds are less likely to enter further education than is the case in other areas, preferring to seek employment in jobs that may not be sustainable.

- Rotherham's workforce is gradually transforming. Currently (2008) 22% of the working age population are qualified to at least NVQ level 4, compared to less than 15% in 2001. Despite this improvement we are still behind regional and national averages.

- 6.6% of all 16-17 year olds in Rotherham are not currently in employment, education or training. This has dropped from just under 11% in 2006.

- 1in 6 people (adults aged over 16) will have a mental health problem at any one time and for half of these people the problem will last longer than a year. The number of people on Rotherham GP practice registers with a mental health problem at the end of 2009-10 was 25,807 (QOF data).

Supporting children and young people through childhood and adolescence into adulthood lays important foundations for healthy, fulfilled lives. Early child development and educational attainment are crucial for future health and wellbeing, as well as improving job opportunities and providing a route out of poverty.

2

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

1 Improve educational aspirations and attainment to reduce the inequalities in educational outcomes.

2 Ensure that schools, families and communities work in partnership to improve health, wellbeing and resilience in children and young people.

3 Improve the access and use of quality life long learning.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

1 Ensure that reducing social inequalities in pupils' educational outcomes is a sustained priority.

2 Prioritise reducing social inequalities in life skills by:

   a Extending the role of schools in supporting families and communities and taking a 'whole child' approach.

   b Developing the school-based workforce to build their skills in working across school-home boundaries and addressing social and emotional development, physical and mental wellbeing.

3 Increasing access and use of quality lifelong learning opportunities across the social gradient, by:

   a Providing easily accessible support and advice for 16-25 year olds on life skills, training and employment opportunities.

   b Providing work-based learning, including apprenticeships, for young people and those changing jobs/careers.

   c Increasing the availability of non-vocational lifelong learning for people of any age.

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

Healthy Schools

- 97% of Rotherham schools have achieved Healthy Schools status.

- Working towards and sustaining Healthy Schools status equips schools to promote universal health by embedding health behaviours and wellbeing outcomes into the everyday business of school life. Tackling emotional health and wellbeing with school-based mental health promotion improves self esteem and reduces risky behaviour.

Support for parents

- Families are supported by multiagency staff, including health visitors and children's centres, to develop an interest in and skills to support their children's education. What parents do to support their children is crucial for children's development and attainment – home learning activities have a greater impact upon children's intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income. Furthermore good parent-child relationships help build children's self esteem and confidence and reduce the risk of children adopting unhealthy lifestyles.

School nursing service

- Each school has a designated school nurse who delivers the Healthy Child Programme for all school-aged children including both universal and targeted provision. The school nursing service is fundamental to a healthy school

service, managing pupils' wellbeing, medical and long term conditions and developing schools as health promoting environments.

Teenage pregnancy care pathway

- Teen parents are supported to continue or get back into education, employment or training via the teenage pregnancy care pathway. The multiagency pathway has been developed and implemented to address the needs of teen parents and their children and pull together key services at the right time including support from specialist Connexions personal advisors dedicated to teen parents. The Rowan Centre provides an alternative education programme for teen mothers who are of statutory school age where they learn parenting skills as well as continuing formal education. A holistic team centred on the family is adopted to nurture both parent and child whilst learning.

The Family Nurse Partnership will provide intensive and structured home visiting for first time teenage mothers with the aim of improving pregnancy outcomes, child health and development and parents' economic self-sufficiency. Much of the work will focus on behaviour change.

Mental Health First Aid

Training has been provided for front line staff including health, social care, housing and the voluntary sector. The course helps identify signs and symptoms and refer to appropriate agencies.

Healthy Eating

The content and quality of food eaten is related to developmental, cognitive and behavioural outcomes that are important in childhood for health and well-being. Various initiatives encourage children and young people in Rotherham to make informed choices and develop good eating habits. These include Maltby MasterChef, implementing Healthy Packed lunch polices within schools and taking part in the Small Steps programme in Partnership with the School Food Trust.

Physical Activity

The School Sports Partnerships through enforcing two hours of Physical Education, providing school sport coaching, interschool competition, leadership and volunteering opportunities and formalising links to sports clubs and the community have significantly increased the number of local young people engaging in sport and physical activity.

Rotherham's children and young people's plan 2010-13

This multiagency plan demonstrates how all the partners are working together to provide services that will improves children's lives. Areas included in the plan are:

1. **Keeping children and young people safe**

2. **Tackling inequalities**

3. **Prevention and early intervention**

4. **Transforming Rotherham's learning**

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

The key challenges are:

- Maintaining the initiatives in the face of government cuts.

- Supporting the 18,000 families living in poverty.

- Prioritising health in services for families and in schools in face of competing priorities.

- Delivering the Rotherham children and young people's plan, particularly support or training and employment opportunities for 16-25 year olds.

- Support the implementation of the prevention and early years strategy.

3

Chapter 3
Create fair employment and good work for all

What the data shows...

- Rotherham has 21,600 workless people, who are predominantly concentrated within the more deprived areas.

- There is a generational worklessness damaging aspirations and access to opportunities to develop enterprising behaviour.

- Numbers claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) have risen sharply during the recession.

- Sharp rise in long-term worklessness, with the numbers claiming JSA for over 12 months increased by over 200% in the last two years, to 1,430.

- Numbers in employment are not predicted to reach pre-recession levels until around 2020.

- Over 14,000 people are on Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefit.

- Only 23% of those who are economically inactive state that they want a job.

- Rotherham has 7,000 more people without any qualifications than the national average.

- Average earnings are 10% below the national average.

- 6.5% of the Rotherham working population claimed Incapacity Benefit or ESA in February 2010 (10,540 people).

- The two most common long term conditions leading to Incapacity Benefit/ESA claims are mental illness and musculoskeletal disorders.

- 37% of the borough remains within the top 20% most deprived areas nationally for employment.

Unemployment in Rotherham is higher than the national average. Although employment rates have improved dramatically in recent years the recession has hit Rotherham hard and rates have now fallen. Many of those who are unemployed state that they do not want a job (JSNA 2010). Of the people that are in work, a higher than average proportion are in low skilled jobs.

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

1 Improve access to good jobs and reduce long-term unemployment across the social gradient.

2 Make it easier for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market to obtain and keep work.

3 Improve quality of jobs for all.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

1 Prioritise active labour market programmes to reduce long term unemployment.

2 Encourage, incentivise and, where appropriate, enforce the implementation of measures to improve the quality of jobs by:

  a Ensuring public and private sector employers adhere to equality guidance and legislation.

  b Implementing guidance on stress management and the effective promotion of wellbeing and physical and mental health at work.

3 Develop greater security and flexibility in employment by:

  a Prioritising greater flexibility of retirement age.

  b Encouraging and incentivising employers to create or adapt jobs that are suitable for lone parents, carers and people with mental and physical health problems.

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

Reducing long term unemployment

Rotherham has invested in *Improving Access to Psychological Therapies* which provides talking therapies to people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems. Mental ill health is one of the main causes of sickness absence and unemployment due to ill health. Improving access to a range of treatments will help people to stay in work or return to work more quickly.

Rotherham Occupational Health Advisory Service is an additional service funded by NHS Rotherham that provides support and advice to help people deal with work related health issues. The service enables people to stay in work or return to work successfully following a period of absence and can provide mediation with employers to ensure that the work is not damaging to the person's health.

Rotherham Health Trainer Service provides free and confidential support and advice to people wishing to make a behaviour or lifestyle change. Health trainers work with clients to promote self efficacy, self care, increase health literacy and encourage people to take responsibility for their own health. In doing so they empower individuals to manage their physical health which may lead to improved attendance at work and make it less likely that individuals will become unable to work due to ill health. Where a client is not currently in

employment this empowerment approach may increase confidence and motivation to seek employment.

NHS Rotherham hosts the *Mind Your Own Business* project funded by the Big Lottery Fund. This project aims to improve the mental well being of those who live and/or work within Rotherham through targeted work with employers. The project has helped almost 100 local employers to improve the mental wellbeing of their workforce and has provided training such as Mental Health First Aid to around 1000 employees.

Community services such as *Stop Smoking Services, Reshape Rotherham* and *Health Trainers* provide their services within workplaces to help improve the health of staff.

Improving employment opportunities

The Rotherham Economic Plan aims to promote productive and competitive businesses in Rotherham, raise aspirations to increase the number of employable young people and to create conditions for sustainable growth in Rotherham.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has developed Access All Areas which provides voluntary work placements to people with disabilities who wish to return to or start work. To date over 100 people have benefitted from the experience gained during Access All Areas placements. Of these 32 have now gained paid employment through open recruitment, the Future Jobs Fund or the RMBC Move on to Employment project.

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- Rotherham continues to be badly hit by the recession and unemployment figures have increased. Spending cuts in the public sector may further increase unemployment rates as a large proportion of people in Rotherham work within the public sector.

- The workplace is potentially a powerful vehicle for improving people's health. Most full time workers spend more than a third of their waking hours at work, so their workplace will have a significant influence on their health and wellbeing. We should be supporting small and medium sized business to promote health.

- Prioritise the under 24's living within deprived communities to reverse the apathetic attitude towards employment by raising personal aspirations.

- We should continue to support the Rotherham Occupational Health Advisory Service and Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

- We should consider how NHS Rotherham can support the new Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme which aims to help unemployed people back to work.

- Public sector organisations are some of the largest employers in Rotherham and need to set an example to other employers in creating healthy, supportive workplaces. Particular care needs to be taken in light of the likely job losses that adequate support is put in place for staff at

risk of redundancy. The public sector has also been encouraged to take positive action to recruit staff from disadvantaged groups. Recruitment freezes mean that organisations will find it difficult to achieve this.

- Mental health issues need to be addressed in an attempt to reduce sickness/ absence rates.

- Due to short term funding and changes in commissioning arrangements some of the services working with employers and employees to improve health may come to an end within the next few years. This could lead to an increasing number of people becoming or remaining out of work due to ill health.

- Reduce the number of people in Rotherham claiming Employment Support Allowance by ensuring adequate, structured, systematic, evidence-based services are offered, as a minimum, in the areas of mental illness and musculoskeletal problems.

4

Chapter 4
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all

What the data shows...

- Deprivation has reduced over the last ten years but Rotherham is still in the bottom 20% of local authorities when considering overall deprivation.

- The recent recession has also had a major impact on many of the factors which affect families living in poverty.

- 31,000 or 12% of the Rotherham population live in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

- 36,000 households in the district are managing on less than the minimum income needed to achieve an acceptable standard of living.

- In the winter of 2009/10 Rotherham had 136 excess winter deaths.

The Marmot review recognises that not having enough money to lead a healthy life is a highly significant cause of health inequalities. If there is a gap between the minimum income for healthy living (a figure which takes into account costs for nutrition, physical activity, housing, social interactions, transport, medical care and hygiene) and actual income then standards in health will not be maintained.

The review also acknowledges that people on low incomes spend a larger proportion of their money on commodities that attract indirect taxes than those on higher incomes.

4

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

Marmot's recommendations are about influencing national policy, for example establishing a minimum income. The recommendations below are how we might influence and support these at a local level.

There should be a focus upon:

1 The unemployed having access to good benefits advice to ensure maximum uptake of the benefits they are entitled to.

2 The unemployed having good access to job opportunities including support with applications and interview technique.

3 Providing opportunities for people to gain work experience, for example, through the voluntary sector and back to work/ community schemes.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

These are based on ensuring a healthy standard of living for all.

1 Ensuring the availability of healthy, affordable food.

2 Developing a good transportation network.

3 Providing accessible, affordable recreation.

2 Providing life-long learning opportunities.

3 Developing affordable warmth initiatives.

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

- *Hotspots* is a partnership project to address affordable warmth/energy efficiency, finance, safety and health. The project offers free energy saving and grant advice, home safety checks, benefit entitlement checks (for those over 60) and stop smoking advice and support.

- *Housing market renewal* offers great opportunities for regeneration in many parts of Rotherham. The regeneration team aims to improve the quality and choice of affordable housing in Rotherham.

- *Rotherham Local Ambition Programme* aims to increase volunteering and assist people into work and self-employment in three of our most deprived and vulnerable neighbourhoods. A number of projects/initiatives have been delivered to tackle child poverty.

- *Shop Local* is a partnership between the council and local retailers and enables people who have signed up to the scheme to receive discounts and offers at 60 shops and restaurants in Rotherham town centre. The scheme ran for six months from July 2010 to January 2011.

- *Food Aware* is a not for profit social enterprise which redistributes surplus food. A key objective of the project is to redistribute healthy 5-a-day produce e.g. tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and fruit.

- *Maltby Masterchef/Market Meals* are campaigns which promote family lifestyle interventions around affordable healthy eating in a community setting.

- *Affordable, accessible recreation* activities are offered across Rotherham by DC Leisure and RMBC.

- *Ministry of Food* has taught over 6,000 people to prepare and cook simple meals using fresh, local ingredients over the last two years. The initiative has also provided training and employment opportunities.

- *A transport strategy* is being developed by the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive to ensure that local public transport is affordable, accessible, reliable, safe, well publicised and easily understood. Rotherham Community Transport has a variety of 'door 2 door' services available to provide transport to people with disabilities.

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- Ensure that people are receiving the benefits they are entitled to and that families receive adequate support to avoid serious debt.

- All agencies must work together to ensure that everybody in Rotherham has access to good quality, affordable food, access to affordable recreation, can travel easily, safely and efficiently across the borough and live in homes which are sufficiently warm and free from damp.

- Aim to achieve the aspiration that 'everyone can expect to live longer and healthier lives regardless of where they live'. This would require further targeting of preventative services to our more disadvantaged populations – challenging the new GP commissioning consortium and adult and children's social care.

- Many of our interventions have used short term funding which is now coming to an end. The challenge is to ensure that good practice is not lost and to prioritise funding appropriately.

5

Chapter 5
Sustainable places and communities

What the data shows...

Green issues:

- Access to green spaces improves people's mental and physical health.

- Areas with more green spaces have lower health inequalities.

- Rotherham has a lot of green space available for use.

- Appropriate planning can encourage people to walk and cycle.

- On average, each person in the UK throws away seven times their body weight in rubbish every year.

- Around 67% of private rented housing stock in Rotherham would fail the Government's Decent Homes standard due to excessive cold.

Community cohesion:

- Being involved in your community is associated with better health outcomes.

- Approximately 1 in 7 local households (14.4%) has a pensioner living alone.

- Rotherham's black and minority ethnic population are fairly evenly divided between those born in the UK and those born abroad, the latter being more likely to have limited English language skills.

- Nearly 8% of pupils have English as a second language.

- 79.4% of Rotherham's population describe themselves as Christians. 2.6% belong to other religions, the largest of which is Islam (2.2%).

- National estimates suggest that 6% of the UK population are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. This would equate to 15,200 people in Rotherham.

5

Climate change presents a growing threat to health. Many of the activities promoted to prevent climate change – for example walking, cycling and eating less meat – have additional health benefits.

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

1 Develop common policies to reduce the scale and impact of climate change and health inequalities.

2 Improve community capital and reduce social isolation across the social gradient.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

1 Prioritise policies and interventions that reduce both health inequalities and mitigate climate change by improving active travel, access to affordable healthy food and improving the energy efficiency of housing.

2 Fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address social determinants of health.

3 Support locally developed and evidence based community regeneration programmes that remove barriers to community participation and action and reduce social isolation.

5

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

- Regeneration of Clifton Park has produced an environment where the whole borough can enjoy the green space, improving social integration.

- Rotherham public sector organisations have sustainability plans. These cover waste management, recycling and green/active travel.

- Rotherham Hospital has received an award for their work towards the NHS Carbon Management Plan.

- Rotherham public sector organisations support the Rotherham: One Town, One Community Strategy that promotes and celebrates the values that unite people living in Rotherham, including fairness, understanding, mutual respect, and a desire to achieve the best for Rotherham.

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- Ensure that people are receiving the benefits they are entitled to and that families receive adequate support to avoid serious debt.

- All agencies must work together to ensure that everybody in Rotherham has access to good quality, affordable food, access to affordable recreation, can travel easily, safely and efficiently across the borough and live in homes which are sufficiently warm and free from damp.

- Support the development and implementation of the green spaces sport and recoration plan.

- Support the development and implementation of the environment and climate change strategy.

- Support the development and implementation of the waste strategy.

- To prioritise policies and interventions that reduce health inequalities and lessen climate change by:

  - Improving active travel for all.

  - Improving the availability of good quality open green spaces.

  - Improving the access to good quality affordable food.

  - Improving energy efficient housing in the private sector.

  - Fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address social determinants of health.

- Support locally developed and evidence based community regeneration programmes that remove barriers to community participation and action and reduce social isolation.

6

Chapter 6
Strengthening the role and impact
of ill health prevention

What the data shows...

Unhealthy lifestyles are too common in Rotherham.

Many residents are not fit and do not have healthy diets. Each year, more and more adults and children are becoming obese. Drug and alcohol misuse is more common. Many Rotherham residents also smoke, including pregnant women who put their unborn children at risk. Many residents have developed a long term condition or disability when they reach retirement age and are in poor health with illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

- **9 in 10 adults are not physically active.**

- **4 in 5 don't eat healthily.**

- **28% of adults and 12% of children are obese.**

- **1 in 5 adults binge drink.**

- **1 in 4 adults smoke.**

- **1 in 4 pregnant women smoke.**

- **30% of adults over the age of 65 years report not being in good health.**

Smoking, poor diet, and a lack of exercise all lead to poor health, especially cancer, heart disease, diabetes and respiratory disease.

6

Marmot's Priority Objectives:

1 Prioritise prevention and early detection of those conditions most strongly related to health inequalities.

2 Increase availability of long term and sustainable funding in ill health prevention.

Marmot's Policy Recommendations:

1 Prioritise investment in ill health prevention and health promotion.

2 Implement an evidence based programme of ill health prevention, including medical intervention as well as smoking cessation and alcohol reduction.

3 Focus core efforts of public health departments on interventions related to the social determinants of health.

6

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

- Community alcohol services such as *Lifeline* and *Clearways* provide a wide range of services including counselling, support and help for people to come off and stay off alcohol. Trained doctors, nurses and other staff identify and help people who misuse alcohol. Rotherham has several access points to alcohol related brief advice and information as well as to longer term interventions.

- *Reshape Rotherham* and the *Rotherham Institute for Obesity* have helped people lose weight and to lead healthier lives. Weight management programmes for children and their families are provided by *Carnegie International Camps* and *Carnegie Clubs*. There are also innovative projects such as the *Mini-Masterchef* challenge in Maltby to encourage families to make healthier food choices.

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council promote walking for health programmes such as *Steps to Health* and have helped to train local walk leaders. For older residents, there are physical activity schemes, such as *Active Always Keep Moving* and *Active in Age*, run by exercise instructors and health trainers to promote healthy, active ageing.

- The National Child Measuring Programme delivered in reception and year 6 provides statistical data to support plans to tackle childhood obesity. Early identification of childhood obesity enables targeted work to take place to prevent escalation.

- *Stop Smoking Services* have helped more than 2,700 people quit smoking. The *Smokefree Homes* scheme has got more than 3,000 homes signed up to be smokefree.

Examples of our local partnerships

Fire and Rescue Service *- Smokefree Homes*

Police Service *- Lifewise scheme to encourage safer communities and good citizenship.*

DC Leisure *- Carnegie Club children's weight management programme*

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council *- Active Always and Walking for Health programmes*

Rotherham United Football Club *- Extra Time physical activity scheme*

6

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- It is important that people realise that ill-health can be prevented. There needs to be new and sustained ways to spread health messages, for example through shopping centres, parks, pubs and other community hubs. Every meeting with residents is an opportunity to encourage them to adopt healthy lives; it is important to make every contact count.

- Young people must be helped to live healthily by taking exercise, having supportive social networks and enjoying a socially responsible time across Rotherham. Getting the message across to our young people and helping them adopt healthy lifestyles is vital.

- We need to cut down the number of smokers and especially mums-to-be who smoke. To do this we need to change attitudes, and help them to not just quit smoking but to stop for good.

- Physical activity helps people get fit and keep fit. We therefore need to get people playing sport, walking and cycling more.

- It is a challenge not only to encourage people to choose healthier lifestyles, but also to help them maintain them. The spending cuts likely in the next few years will put a strain on services. We need to make sure we can keep preventative services going.

- There are also other people in our community who are vulnerable and need more help to adopt a healthy lifestyle, such as pregnant mums, those living in poverty and those with chronic ill-health.

6

Chronic disease

The largest causes of death in Rotherham are cancer, coronary heart disease and respiratory disease making these priority areas. Sadly, many of these deaths are preventable.

What the data shows...

- 1in 3 deaths are due to cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks and strokes.

- 1in 3 deaths are due to cancer, especially lung and breast cancer.

- 1in 7 deaths are due to respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

What are we currently doing in Rotherham to address these priorities?

- All GPs have chronic disease registers, including diabetes, which has a strong link to heart disease.

- Over the last 18 months GPs have been carrying out NHS Health Checks to detect early signs of heart disease and prevent them developing further.

- Rotherham's Breathing Space facility focuses on lung rehabilitation for people with breathing problems.

- There are successful cancer screening programmes for breast, cervical and bowel cancers.

6

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

- Maintaining a focus on prevention by ensuring that evidence-based clinical and lifestyle interventions are implemented. GPs should continue to improve the health and wellbeing of their patients, thus ensuring that children's resilience, learning and development opportunities and adults' abilities to make a positive contribution to the workforce are maximised.

This can be done through offering preventative services including:

- NHS Health Checks (measuring cardiovascular disease risk)

- Screening

- Immunisation and vaccination, for example MMR, seasonal flu

- Lifestyle advice including alcohol and drugs , smoking, healthy eating and diet and physical activity

- Mental health services Understanding the causes of mental ill health by intervening in the social causes such as debt, and making appropriate referrals.

GPs need to look at new ways of working collaboratively to promote good health including:

- Working more closely with citizens' advice agencies, benefit agencies, debt counselling and housing organisations in an attempt to address the causes of ill health.

- Working with occupational health services and other agencies to maximise the full potential of the Fit Note.

- Working with others to prevent seasonal excess deaths, for example housing, provide advice on keeping warm and refer to the Hot Spots scheme and Warm Front.

Rotherham can address the wider determinants of health through areas such as adequate private sector housing, transport and green spaces.

7

Chapter 7
Identifying, monitoring and responding to emerging problems for the population as identified in the joint strategic needs assessment for Rotherham (2010).

The following highlight some key challenges that Rotherham will have to address over the coming years in terms of health and social care needs.

Aging and dementia

- **Dementia is predicted to increase by 38% in 15 years (from 2,851 diagnoses in 2010 to an expected 3,934 by 2025).**

- **Our population is growing older with the number of people over 85 years of age expected to double in the next 20 years. This means there will be an increasing need for care services for the elderly and for services to treat conditions associated with old age.**

- **19.5% of dementia patients in Rotherham are prescribed an anti psychotic (a powerful behaviour controlling drug).**

Learning disability

- **As people live longer the number of adults with learning disabilities over 65 years is predicted to increase by 52% between 2010 and 2030. This is an increase of 14% from previous predictions.**

The four main reasons for the increase in the number of people with a learning disability are :

- *Increased life expectancy, especially among people with Down's Syndrome.*

- *Growing numbers of children and young people with complex and multiple disabilities who now survive into adulthood.*

- *A sharp rise in the reported numbers of school age children with autistic spectrum disorders, some of whom will have learning disabilities.*

- *Greater prevalence among some minority ethnic populations of South Asian origin.*

Long term conditions/ physical disability

- It is estimated that in 2015 there will be 28,199 people over 65 in Rotherham with a long term clinical or psychological condition which causes a disability.

- The 2001 census shows that 22.4% of the population considered themselves to have such a disability, compared with 17.9% nationally.

What more could we be doing and what are the key challenges?

Health and social care services need to plan and respond to the anticipated increases in these conditions and ensure evidence based services are implemented. This may involve redesigning care pathways towards prevention of disability rather than a response to it.

Acknowledgements

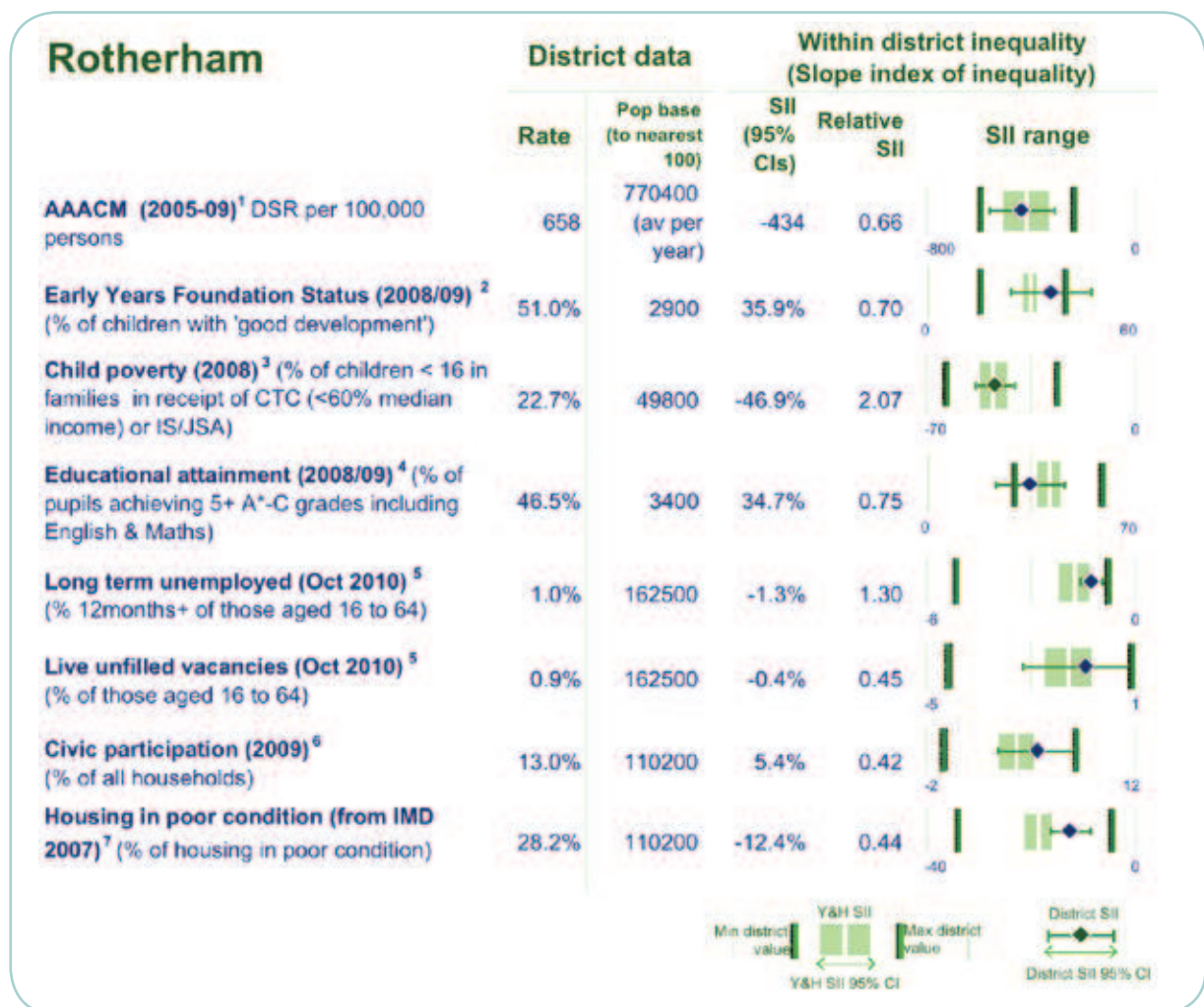Please E mail any comments to: jo.abbott@rotherham.nhs.uk

Appendix 1:

The following Information has been obtained from the Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory.

The spine charts in table 2 report on the six Marmot chapters.

Table 1

Rotherham	District data		Within district inequality (Slope index of inequality)		
	Rate	Pop base (to nearest 100)	SII (95% CIs)	Relative SII	SII range
AAACM (2005-09)[1] DSR per 100,000 persons	658	770400 (av per year)	-434	0.66	
Early Years Foundation Status (2008/09)[2] (% of children with 'good development')	51.0%	2900	35.9%	0.70	
Child poverty (2008)[3] (% of children < 16 in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA)	22.7%	49800	-46.9%	2.07	
Educational attainment (2008/09)[4] (% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English & Maths)	46.5%	3400	34.7%	0.75	
Long term unemployed (Oct 2010)[5] (% 12months+ of those aged 16 to 64)	1.0%	162500	-1.3%	1.30	
Live unfilled vacancies (Oct 2010)[5] (% of those aged 16 to 64)	0.9%	162500	-0.4%	0.45	
Civic participation (2009)[6] (% of all households)	13.0%	110200	5.4%	0.42	
Housing in poor condition (from IMD 2007)[7] (% of housing in poor condition)	28.2%	110200	-12.4%	0.44	

Glossary of terms:

AAACM - All Age All Cause Mortality
CTC - Child Tax Credit
DSR - Directly Standardised Rate
IMD - Index of Multiple Deprivation
IS - Income Support
JSA - Job Seekers Allowance

Table 2

Spine charts for wider determinants of health

Rotherham	Year	Current rate	Significantly different from England (95% confidence)	Eng 'Worst'	National Range / Y&H / District / England / z scores	Eng 'Best'
1: Give every child the best start in life						
NI 72: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile teacher assessments[1] (% of children with 'good development' - 78 points across all 13 EYFSP scales at the end of the academic year in which they turn 5)	AY 2008/09	61.0		36		67
Child poverty[2] (% of children under 16 in families in receipt of CTC <60% median income or IS/JSA)	CY 2008	22.7		55.3		4.1
Under 18 teenage conceptions[3] (rate per 1000 females aged 15-17)	2006-08	53.5		74.8		14.9
Mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks[4] (% by PCT)	Q1 2010/11	28.7		21.9		83.0
NI 50: Emotional health of children[1] (% of children who enjoy 'good relationships' with their family and friends)	FY 2009/10	56.4		43.8		62.7
Households accepted as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need[1] (per 1000 households)	FY 2009/10	0.7		8.3		0.0
2: Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives						
Educational attainment[5] (% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English & Maths)	AY 2008/09	47		38		80
NI 117: Proportion of 16-18 year olds Not in Education or Training - NEET[1] (%)	CY 2009	7.9		11.9		0.0
NI 150: Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment[1] (% at the time of their most recent assessment)	FY 2009/10	1.8		0.8		22.9
NI 079: Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19[1] (%)	AY 2008/09	70.9		62.5		99.1
NI 051: Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) services[1] (%)	FY 2009/10	14		10		16
NI 118: Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families[1] (% of working families benefiting from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit)	FY 2008/09	13.8		7.6		30.0
NI 54: Services for disabled children[1] (% Parents general experience of services and delivery)	FY 2009/10	60		57		68
3: Create fair employment and good work for all						
Long-term - 12months+ unemployed[6] (% of those aged 16 to 64)	Oct 2010	1.0		2.2		0.0
Unemployment rates[6] (% of those aged 16 to 64)	Jan to Mar 2010	10.8		16.3		0.0
Claimant rates[7] (% of those aged 16 to 64)	Oct 2010	4.5		0.3		7.1
Live vacancies at Job Centres[6] (% of those aged 16 to 64)	Oct 2010	0.9		0.2		3.8
5: Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities						
Housing stocked deemed as decent[1] (%)	CY 2009	93.6		42.8		100.0
Neighbourhood perception[8] (% people perceiving neighbourhood as being improved)	CY 2008	13.9		6.9		41.6
Access to green space - A comparison of accessible land[9] (% of all land)	CY 2009	3.8		0.0		47.3
Civic participation[8] (% of all households)	CY 2009	13.0		12.8		29.7
NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering[1] (taking part in formal volunteering at least once a month in the 12 months - %)	CY 2008	20.0		14		36
6: Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention						
Healthy life expectancy at 65 (years) Males[1]	CY 2001	5.9		4.2		10.5
Females[1]		6.7		0.0		11.7
Cervical Screening Programme - all eligible women seen for screening[10] (% by PCT)	FY 2008/09	79.8		65.8		85.8
Estimated prevalence of adults who eat healthily[11] (%)	2006-08	19.8		18.3		48.1
Participation in moderate intensity sport and active recreation on 20 or more days in the previous 4 weeks[11] (%)	FY 2008/09	9.2		5.4		16.6
Proportion of adults (aged 16+) who binge drink[11] (%)	2007-08	27.8		33.2		4.6
Proportion of adults (aged 16+) who smoke[11] (%)	2006-08	26.4		35.2		10.2
Claimants of incapacity benefit/ severe disablement allowance with mental or behavioural disorders[2] (%)	CY 2008	34.9		68.5		9.0

Sources (further details available in the main report's metadata): 1: Dept for Communities and Local Government. 2: Dept of Work and Pensions. 3: Every child matters. 4: Unify2. 5: Dept for Children, Schools and Families. 6: NOMIS. 7: Taylor Associates. 8: Acxiom survey data. 9: Natural England. 10: Information Centre. 11: APHO Health Profiles.

Produced Dec 2010