Present:- Councillor Hussain (in the Chair).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Burton.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER, 2007

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement held on 12th November, 2007 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

50. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NEW ARRIVALS WORKING PARTY HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2007

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the New Arrivals Working Party held on 21st November, 2007 be noted.

51. NEW EUROPEAN MIGRATION

Consideration was given to a report presented by Zafar Saleem, Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager, which provided information on the impact and opportunities for the Rotherham borough presented by new European migration. It also summarised the results of a self assessment carried out by Council Directorates to develop and promote good practice on migration and the integration of new migrant communities.

Overall, migration offered many opportunities for Rotherham in terms of economic, social and cultural development. However, it was recognised that commitment and action was needed at a local level in order to manage the integration of new migrant communities successfully.

Specific initiatives have been put in place to meet the needs of migrant workers and their families by all Directorates, but there was still work to be done and the results of the self assessment showed that challenges remained.

It was noted that resources were currently being absorbed within services, where necessary, to tackle the challenges above. Any future increasing demand on services would require more accurate financial planning and further research was recommended to identify any hidden costs that were currently absorbed within mainstream services.
A discussion ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Demands and impact of demand on the delivery of education.
- The need for further information on the cohesion work taking place in Neighbourhood and Adult Services.
- The need for a press management strategy and co-ordinated approach.
- Community capacity building, awareness raising on rights and responsibilities and outreach activities.
- Unease in communities and demographic changes.
- Financial demands on translations, bespoke and specialist services.
- Briefing session on concerns for Cabinet Members.

Resolved:- (1) That the results of the self assessment be noted.

(2) That the following actions be approved:-

- Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager to lead and co-ordinate the Council’s response to new European migration issues, reporting to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement, Cabinet, CMT, the New Arrivals Working Party, the LSP Community Cohesion Partnership and Rotherham Partnership Proud Board.

- To provide information to Members on new European migration into Rotherham, possible future trends and the opportunities and challenges that migration provides to the Borough.

- To continue to share information and good practice on New European Migration in Rotherham and plan a way forward with Rotherham Partnership Board.

- Holding of a conference in January, 2008 for Partner agencies, voluntary and community sector organisations. The purpose of this will be to share information and good practice, and begin development of a coordinated approach to respond to current and future demographic changes caused by migration.

- Request, via the LSP, that Partners undertake a similar mapping exercise (using the I&DeA toolkit, adapted as appropriate) prior to the proposed January conference, to facilitate sharing good practice and co-ordinating responses.

- Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager to seek support from GOY&H on sharing good practice across the region.

- Continue the assessment of the needs of new migrant communities (including further research to assess impacts on services) and recommend responses to identified needs.
(3) That this report be referred to Cabinet, the New Arrivals Working Party, relevant Scrutiny Panel and relevant Rotherham Partnership structures.

(4) That a further report be submitted on the concerns and implications for the Council across the borough and a briefing be arranged for Cabinet Members in due course.

52. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 (C. 28) – DUTY TO INVOLVE LOCAL PEOPLE AND ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Consideration was given to a report presented by Steve Eling, Principal Policy Officer, which highlighted how the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (c. 28) provided a duty to involve local people, the detail of which would be set out in “Best Value” guidance. A consultation on this new guidance had been published, which would be the subject of a further report. The provision in the Act built on the objectives set out in the Local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities”. In addition to the “Best Value” guidance, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Association have published a joint report “An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success”, which sets out twenty-three action streams to be piloted with a number of authorities.

After writing the report statutory guidance had been published and which would be open to consultation up to the 12th February, 2008. Once the detail had been considered it would be shared with Members in due course and comments sought.

A summary of each of the actions was set out in the report, with indications, where available, of potential dates for future developments.

Whilst the actions were largely being driven by the Government to achieve its policy objectives, it would be for local authorities to shape how they were implemented at the local level.

Here in Rotherham, a detailed set of workstreams have been produced for the implementation of the White Paper proposals and associated documents. The workstreams reflected the fact that there were a complex set of inter-related issues and actions making up a broad reform agenda. The scoping of work against each of the workstreams in a co-ordinated approach was ensuring that the Council was fully on track with all detailed developments. This was enabling the Council to develop its own proposals, maximising the robust policy intelligence, advice and support available.

Critically, the approach being taken was enabling progress on key components of reform around the leadership role of the Council in:-
• Refreshing the Community Strategy and further developing the LAA.
• Community governance through consultation, communication and developing the “Councillor Calls for Action.
• Developing members’ leadership and scrutiny roles.
• Community cohesion.
• Improved performance and efficiency.
• Providing alignment between the Government’s policy proposals and taking forward the Council’s “Our Future” commitments.

The Government’s own costs assessment stated that there would be some fiscal costs to the public sector and that the vast majority of these would fall initially on local government. Over the years 2007/08 to 2012/13 the Government’s forecasts predicted that additional costs would be met by savings, except in 2008/09 where there was a net cost of £17 million nationally. New costs were arising mainly from reforms in governance including community empowerment and engagement. The Government had given a commitment that this would be funded, but there was no indication at this stage of how this sum would be distributed and/or what formula would be used.

The cost of establishing Local Involvement Networks was to be funded from the savings arising from the abolition of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health and Public and Patient Forums. This was set at £28 million per annum nationally. There was no indication at this stage on the distribution of these resources.

It was suggested that due to the number of consultation papers currently being circulated, that comments and approval of the guidance be shared via a Members’ Seminar and that this feed into the consultation response

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

(2) That further reports be presented on the detailed guidance consultation and specific proposals in relation to these for implementation in Rotherham.

(3) That consideration be given to the sharing of information via Members’ Seminars and for these to feed into the consultation response.

53. LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORKS (LINKS) UPDATE

Julie Slatter, Director of Policy and Performance, explained a report was to be presented to the Corporate Management Team today and a report on Local Involvement Networks, which were new ways for patients and the public to be involved in decisions about the operation of health and social care services, would be presented to the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement.

Resolved:- That the information be noted and the report be received at
the next meeting.

54. **VAR SLA**

Zafar Saleem, Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager, confirmed that negotiations on the Service Level Agreement with Voluntary Action Rotherham were ongoing and further meetings were scheduled.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

55. **NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE PILOT PROJECT - EASTWOOD AND SPRINGWELL GARDENS**

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member held on 12th November, 2007, a further report on progress of the Governance Pilot was submitted.

Resolved:- That the report and its contents be noted.

56. **FORWARD PLAN/WORK PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITIES AND INVOLVEMENT**

Items to be included in the Forward Plan would be provided in due course.

57. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement take place on Monday, 14th January, 2008 at 11.30 a.m.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item in order to consider the matters referred to)

58. **CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING THE PROCESS OF DEATH CERTIFICATION**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Waheed Akhtar, Principal Officer (Community Engagement and Cohesion), which detailed the consultation carried out by the Department of Health on improving the process of death certification. The deadline for comments was 24th October, 2007 and a response had been submitted by the Council on behalf of local stakeholders.

Concerns had been raised by local community members and in particular those from the Muslim community on their needs in the event of a bereavement. For Muslim and Jewish communities the deceased was always buried and the burial should take place as quickly as possible after
Some members of the community may wish to take the deceased for burial abroad and again in such cases it was important to deal with administrative/legal certification requirements as quickly as possible in order to enable a speedy conclusion of the process.

A meeting of key professionals was, therefore, held on 15th October, 2007 to consider these issues as well as to prepare a local response to the national consultation on death certification.

Representatives were invited from: the Coroner’s Service; Rotherham Primary Care Trust; Rotherham Foundation Trust Hospital; National Association of Funeral Directors (Yorkshire branch); RMBC Bereavement Services; Registrar Service; RBT and Chief Executive’s office. Simon Bennett - Co-ordinator of the national consultation on improving death certification attended to provide an overview of the Government’s proposals and to respond to enquires.

It was also noted that Sheffield City Council was to be a pilot for bereavement services and it was suggested that a visit to Sheffield be arranged.

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

(2) That a visit be arranged to Sheffield City Council to share information on their arrangements for bereavement services.