Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Streetpride); Councillors Ali, Dodson, Pickering and Swift.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Walker.

54. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - APRIL, 2008 TO FEBRUARY, 2009

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Accountant, detailing the performance against the revenue budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate as at the end of February 2009. The report also set out a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2008/09 financial year.

Reference was made to the projected overspend of £100,000 which it was explained was a significantly improved position from the previous report.

It was further explained that the key areas of pressure were:-

- shortfall of fee income recovery within Asset Management
- Winter Maintenance budget
- Unfounded flood related expenses

Reference was made to the measures being sought to reduce these pressures noting that some of these would have a significant impact on service delivery.

It was also pointed out that there was potential for costs to be incurred as a result of the fatality at Fitzwilliam Road which may impact on the 2009/2010 budget.

Members present commented on:-

- Waste management savings – noting this would be for 2008/2009 only
- Impact of the opening of the new swimming pools

Resolved:- (1) That the forecast outturn position of an overspend of £100,000 for the Environment & Development Services Directorate based on expenditure and income as at the end of February 2009, and forecast expenditure and income to the 31st March 2009, be noted.

(2) That this report be referred to the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel for information.
55. REAL TIME INTELLIGENT DETECTION (RID) – PHASE 1, TRAFFIC SIGNAL OPTIMISATION

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Traffic Officer, informing the Cabinet Members of the Real Time Intelligent Detection (RID) Bus Priority Measures report and seeking approval to implement Phase 1.

It was explained that Phase 1 would involve revised traffic signal timings to optimise operation of 20 signalised junctions on the Key Routes Network particularly on the Maltby Quality Bus Corridor and Rotherham to Dearne key route. Phase 2 of the study to be commissioned during 2009/10 will involve assessing junctions and implementing additional measures including using real time information as a tool to instigate “hurry call” facilities, where a late running bus could be given priority for a green light at traffic signals.

It was noted that funding would be from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Capital Programme for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

Resolved:- (1) That the RID Bus Priority Measures report be approved.

(2) That the recommendations of Phase 1 be implemented during 2009/10 and 2010/11.

56. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004 - SOUTH YORKSHIRE NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND RMBC ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Traffic Officer, informing the Cabinet Members of the South Yorkshire Network Management Plan, submitted to the Department for Transport as part of the Local Transport Plan Progress Delivery Report 2008.

The report considered the Network Management Plan Action Plan, specific to Rotherham, which contained actions that would be required to be implemented in order that the Authority was able to demonstrate compliance with the statutory Network Management Duty of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Reference was made to:-


Appendix B Action Plan specific to Rotherham

It was pointed out that should the Secretary of State deem a local traffic authority to be failing in its duty under the Act, he/she may intervene and impose a Traffic Director on the failing Authority. The significance of intervention should not be underestimated as the appointment of a Traffic
Director would mean that the Council would lose control of the function, but be responsible for the associated costs, and additionally there is an automatic reduction in the CAA rating by one level.

Resolved:— (1) That the South Yorkshire Network Management Plan be noted.  
(2) That the RMBC Action Plan for 2009/10 be approved and actions implemented.  
(3) That the RMBC Network Management Plan Action Plan be reviewed annually with further reports submitted as appropriate to the joint meeting of Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Development Services and Streetpride Service.

57. FIXED PENALTY NOTICE SCHEME FOR STREET WORKS

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Street Works and Co-ordination Engineer, relating to a Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme to offer statutory undertakers or licensees (undertakers), under The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction by payment of a penalty.

It was proposed that the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) provisions, introduced under The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) be implemented from 1 June 2009, such that a penalty charge will be generated in circumstances where undertakers fail to provide accurate and timely data, and have committed a notice offence.

The objectives of the scheme were to:-

- Encourage accurate and timely notice data  
- Improve the co-ordination of works  
- Improve the data quality of all work promoters  
- Contribute to the aim of the TMA thereby minimising disruption from road and street works

The offences covered by the scheme were detailed in Appendix B to the submitted report.

It was explained that the penalty was £120. The period for payment is 36 calendar days, beginning with the day on which the FPN is given. The Council may extend this period at its discretion in any particular case. A discounted sum of £80 will apply if payment is made within 29 calendar days, beginning with the day on which the FPN is given.

Also the Council may deduct from the fixed penalties received under NRSWA, the reasonable costs of operating the scheme, and shall apply the net proceeds to develop policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services, to, from
and within our area.

However the Council will need to be able to demonstrate that the costs of running the FPN scheme are reasonable, and that the net proceeds, after deducting those costs, are being correctly applied. Although separate accounts are not required for an FPN scheme, there should be an audit trail of income and expenditure.

It was pointed out that the FPN scheme is not intended as an additional source of income for local authorities, and therefore we should not expect any net proceeds.

Members commented on the need to inspect reinstatements. However it was pointed out that resources were limited and much depended on third party reporting and reporting by Streetpride staff.

Resolved:- (1) That with the exception of Section 1.6 the Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme for Street Works as now reported be established to control the seven offences tabulated in Appendix B to the submitted report.

(2) That the Street Works and Co-ordination Engineer revisit section 1.6 and report back to a future meeting.

58. CONNECT2 PROGRAMME JOINT ROTHERHAM/SHEFFIELD WALKING AND CYCLING PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Public Rights of Way Officer, informing the Cabinet Members of the scope of the Connect2 project and of the financial arrangements relating to the successful bid for funding from the Big Lottery Fund (through the ‘Sustrans Connect2’ programme) for a joint Rotherham, Sheffield and Derbyshire countryside access project.

It was explained that the Connect2 project was a joint countryside access project which has been developed with Sheffield City Council and colleagues in Derbyshire and aims to introduce new and upgraded off-road walking, wheelchair, riding and cycling routes from Halfway to Killamarsh and around the Chesterfield Canal corridor, connecting local communities in the south of Rotherham and also linking into Rother Valley Country Park.

Within Sheffield, it is proposed to build a new, safe and attractive off road walking and cycling route between the Halfway tram stop and Killamarsh that people will be able to use to get to work, shops and other facilities and also for leisure. This route will also link into the Trans Pennine Trail, Rother Valley Country Park and the Rotherham elements of the project. This forms the “Core Route” of the project.

Reference was made to the Memorandum of Understanding and to the clause referring to non-delivery and liability to return any funding.
It was explained that Rotherham’s part of the route was ready for delivery. However, the project hinged on delivery of the core section and Rotherham would not commit until the partners had coordinated their sections and could guarantee completion.

Resolved:- (1) That the Rotherham elements of the project be implemented on a phased approach by 2012 as described within the report,

(2) That the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Rotherham and Sustrans be approved and be signed on behalf of the Council by the Director of Streetpride.

(3) That Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council implements the core route only when all partners are able to guarantee successful completion.

59. TOWN CENTRE PARKING PROPOSALS – FEASIBILITY

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following urgent, extra item in order to implement the proposals at the earliest opportunity.)

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Director of Planning and Regeneration, which outlined a range of parking proposals for Rotherham Town Centre aimed at encouraging further footfall and spend in order to support town centre businesses during the current economic climate.

It was explained that the proposals had been put forward following a workshop which had input from the town Centre Manager, the Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce and town centre businesses. Details of the initiatives which were explored at the workshop were set out in the report.

Consideration was therefore given to the following proposals:

- “Free after 3 p.m.”
- short stay parking only on 1st Floor, Wellgate multi storey car park
- extending maximum stay on some on-street parking bays to 2 hours

The financial revenue implications and costs associated with these proposals were detailed within the report.

It was emphasised that the proposal would be implemented on an experimental basis starting in June to the end of the current financial year.

Members commented on:-
- Commitment of the Chamber and town centre businesses
- Publicity
- Traffic regulation orders
- Monitoring and enforcement arrangements
- Location and distance of some car parks from the town centre
- Town centre retail offer
- Competition from adjacent out of town shopping centres
- The general economic situation
- Links with the overall town centre Renaissance programme
- Possibility of a free town centre bus

Resolved:- (1) That, on an experimental basis, approval be given to the proposals detailed in the submitted report, including the implementation as soon as possible of:-

- ‘Free after 3 pm’
- Short stay parking only on 1st floor of Wellgate multi storey car park
- Extending maximum stay on some on street parking bays to 2 hours

(2) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration use the powers delegated to promote the necessary changes to traffic regulation orders on an experimental basis to facilitate the agreed measures.

(3) That the Town Centre Manager be authorised to determine and prepare the necessary marketing and publicity for the proposals.

(4) That the full costs of promoting the initiative, including the loss of revenue, be funded from the Council’s ‘Economic Downturn Contingency Fund’.

(5) That progress reports be brought to this meeting after 3 and six months detailing the effectiveness and impact of the proposals following their implementation, and that a further report be submitted at the end of the current financial year.