

Finance **Annual** Review





Foreword by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Stone

I am pleased to present on behalf of the Council and our partners this review of our work done in response to the economic downturn.

A year ago we set out our action plan to help the district, its businesses and residents to manage through this turbulent economic period. Local services have adapted to treat the economic downturn as a significant priority and the Council has itself invested more than an extra £1/2 million specific funding to help local people and local businesses.

It has been a difficult time for many. But, this review shows that the investments made and efforts of partners have cushioned the impact for a large number people affected either directly or indirectly by the downturn. In particular, we have:

- Secured funding from the Government's 'Future Jobs Fund' to provide up to 600 jobs in Rotherham over 18 months, starting in October 2009. Over 100 jobs have already been filled under this scheme.
- Provided a wide range of support to people finding themselves unemployed, helping 9 out of 10 people to find new jobs or training within 1 year.
- Provided loans to 340 families*¹ to secure private sector rented accommodation and saved over £2m in homelessness costs to use on other services.
- Provided 300 furnished properties to residents who might not otherwise have been able to afford to take up a tenancy.

- Invested an extra £174,000 in voluntary sector advice services in 2009 to enable them to help an extra 5,000 residents who might not otherwise have been supported and to generate an estimated £2m of additional benefits these residents were entitled to but were not receiving.
- Made £200,000 available through the Rothersave Credit Union to assist residents in greatest financial need. So far the scheme has helped 14 residents to deal with a range of issues including mortgage arrears.
- Provided a host of other ways of helping our residents manage better, including freezing school meal prices, continuing the Rothercard Discount Scheme and extending the period over which Council Tax instalments could be paid, from 10 to 12 months.

We have also helped many businesses to secure inward investment and create and safeguard a significant number of jobs. We recognise that for business owners operating on the most slender of margins and for people still out of work, this continues to be a stressful time. We will continue to help and support these businesses and residents.

Without losing sight of the present, now is the time to think about the future. We want to make sure that our businesses and our residents can maximise the opportunities that will arise as the economy starts to improve.

Some businesses are thriving and prospects look positive in a number of areas. We have a much more diverse and resilient economy that is no longer substantially reliant on a small

number of large industries. A recent announcement of major investment into the Advance Manufacturing Park at Catcliffe by the Secretary of State for Business, Industry and Skills reflects the confidence in Rotherham to support technology companies of a global importance. Our education attainment and training performance continues to improve, although we will need further step change in skills to ensure it is Rotherham people who are filling the jobs created in these technological high skills areas.

This review highlights the various activities we have undertaken over the last year and resulting outcomes. It also reminds businesses and residents in Rotherham where they can get free help and support from the many excellent organisations that have worked hard and will continue to work hard to protect and strengthen our position.

I am sure you will find something in this review that will be of help or interest to you. More details can be found on our dedicated website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/creditcrunch. Finally, if you have any comments, questions or ideas as a result of reading the document please contact us. We have shown during 2009 that we are prepared to adopt a whole range of ideas to help alleviate the impact of the economic downturn.

Please contact Angela Kemp or Colin Earl on Rotherham (01709) 822003 / 822004 if you would like any further information on this area or anything in this document.

Councillor Roger Stone
Leader, Rotherham MBC

¹Since 2007

A Review of Rotherham's Response to the Economic Downturn

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Section I: The Local Impact of the Economic Downturn

Global economic activity was severely affected by the banking crisis, which was exposed in the Autumn 2008. As with everywhere else, Rotherham suffered from the resulting credit crunch and recession. The impact on businesses, jobs, housing and health is summarised in this section of the review.

Jobs

Rotherham lost 4,800 workplace jobs in 2008 according to the annual business survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics, and the trend continued in the first few months of 2009, when the number of people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) increased by 2,400.

However, improvements were experienced from June 2009 onwards when, with the exceptions of July and August 2009, the number of people claiming the allowance fell. The chart below shows the monthly

changes in the numbers claiming jobseekers' allowance during 2009.

There has also been an increase in the number of jobs made available through Jobcentre Plus*² during the second half of 2009. 8,400 new jobs were made available between June and November 2009, compared with 7,500 for the same period in the preceding year.

Housing

The experience in relation to housing repossessions has been less severe than predicted at the beginning of the economic

downturn. Nationally, the Council of Mortgage Lenders has cut its forecast for the number of repossessions this year to 48,000 from an earlier forecast of 75,000 repossessions. Experts report that Government measures and the beneficial effect of continuing low interest rates are helping most borrowers facing difficulty to keep their homes.

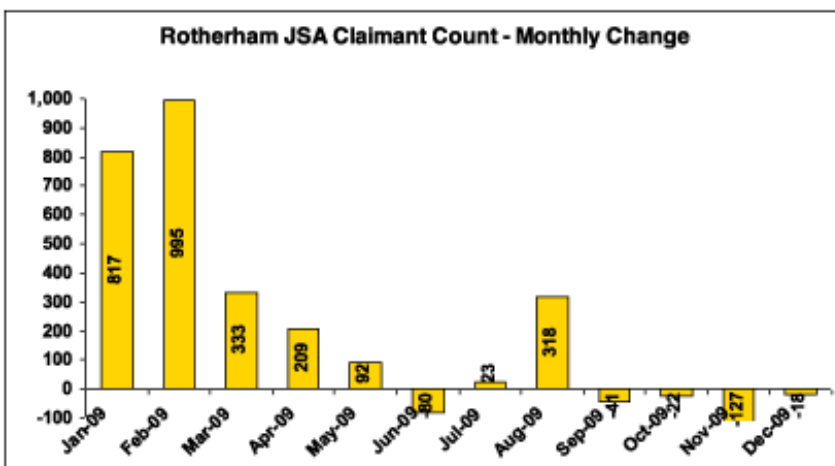
Locally, statistics relating to housing repossessions show that numbers of repossession orders have fallen during 2009 from a peak in late 2008 / early 2009. During the quarter ending September 2009, 251 repossession orders were made in Rotherham, which is 30% fewer than in the same period of 2008*³.

Health

The extent to which residents seek advice is an indicator of their need for help and / or counselling due to current or perceived future problems.

There has been a large increase in referrals to the Citizen's Advice Bureau for each area of advice. This is demonstrated in the following table:

Monthly Changes in the Number of People Claiming Jobseekers' Allowance in Rotherham - 2009.



²Jobcentre Plus deals with approximately one-third of all jobs filled

³Ministry of Justice - Statistics on mortgage and landlord possession actions in the county courts – third quarter 2009

Referrals made to Citizen’s Advice Bureau 2008/09 and 2009/10

Area of advice sought	Referrals 2008/09	Referrals 2009/10 *4
Debt	1,192	2,224
Benefits	563	1,480
Employment	208	680
Housing	283	545
Relationships	7	317

Other advice services have reported similar trends.

Businesses

During the second half of 2008 and early 2009, Rotherham suffered a number of setbacks, particularly in its manufacturing sector. High profile job losses were announced with the downsizing of Corus and the closure of the Burberry clothing manufacturer. There was also some downsizing in call centre operations in the Dearne Valley. On the high street, Woolworths, amongst others, closed as a result of lower demand and changing consumer trends.

The situation has not, however, been all negative. While Rotherham still has a substantial manufacturing sector, our economy is increasingly diversifying and, since April 2009, 285 businesses have either started up, taken on new employees or have secured investment to expand or continue trading.

These range from a large number of sole traders / small businesses through to larger employers. Collectively, these businesses have created 1,434 new jobs and safeguarded a further 1,326 during this period.

In particular the technology sector, where Rotherham has a track record of support and inward investment, has bucked the trend. Rotherham’s Advanced Manufacturing Park has been chosen as the base for the UK’s new £25m Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre. This investment will create more than 300 jobs, with more expected to be made throughout industry supply chains across the region.

Also at the Advance Manufacturing Park:

- Rolls Royce will be establishing a new facility at the site
- Drive Management Systems, a business running on-site and

wireless monitoring services for industrial equipment, has relocated to the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Rotherham after outgrowing its base at Sheffield Technology Parks.

- Pulse Tidal is to receive European grant of €8 million to enable the company to develop its first fully commercial tidal energy generator, which is expected to provide electricity for up to 1,000 homes by 2012.
- Struers, an international company providing technical support for manufacturers, is bringing its UK operation from the West Midlands to the Park.

Other examples of Rotherham’s successes include:

- Sandvick specialist medical equipment supplier created 100 jobs to meet an increase in demand for its services
- Original granite marble established 60 new jobs
- Manor motorsport, which is involved in high level motor racing, has created 50 jobs
- Rotherham based Pegler Yorkshire Group, the fittings manufacturer, has expanded, creating almost 100 new jobs

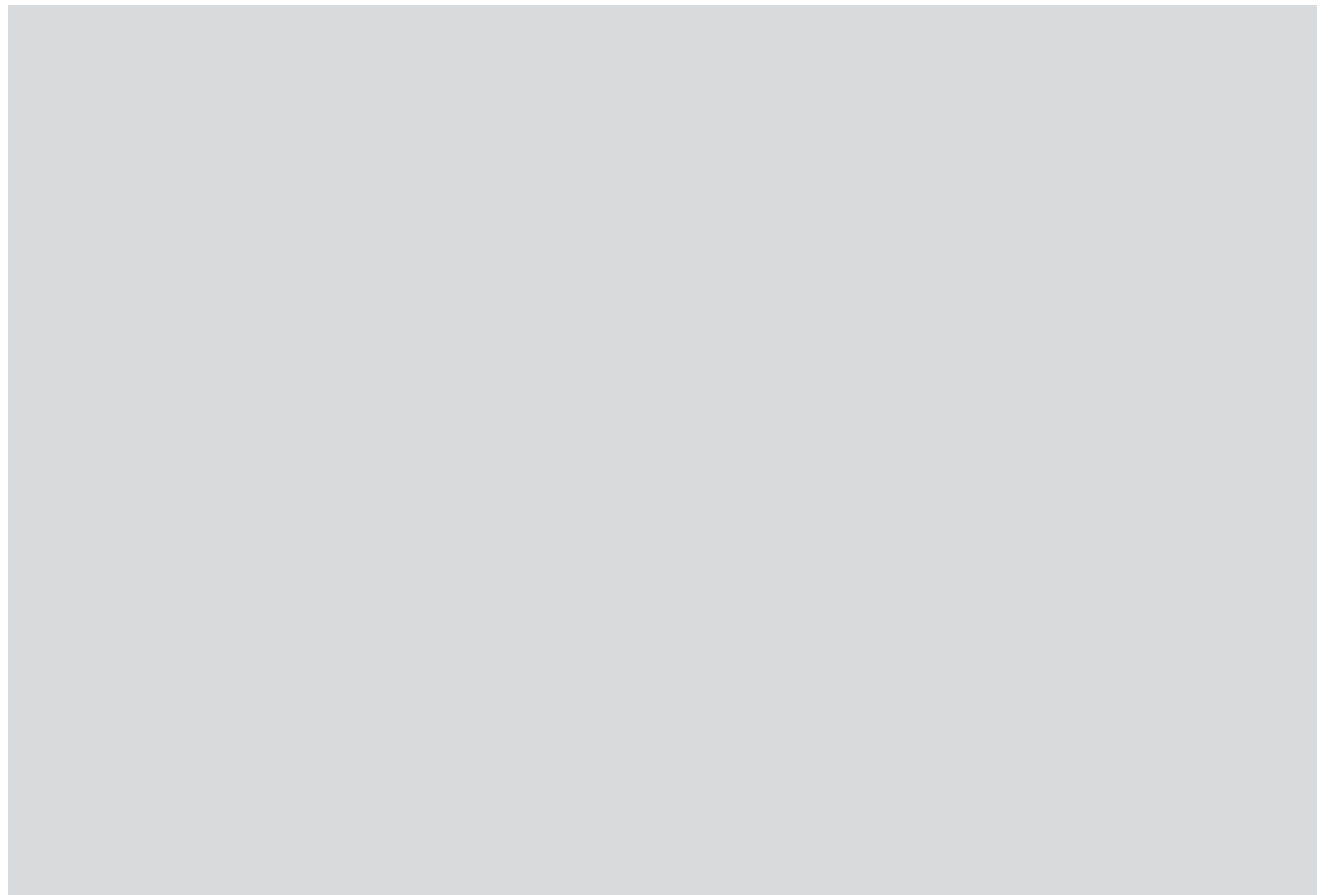
*Extrapolated from figures up to November 2009

Prospects for the future in Rotherham look promising as the economy further diversifies. In 2009, 25 out of the top 100 performing SMEs*⁵ in the Sheffield Region, which includes Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire, were based in Rotherham. This is more than twice as many as in Doncaster and Barnsley. Also in 2009, Rotherham had 99 high growth

SMEs – high growth is defined as an increase in turnover of at least 20% per year for 3 consecutive years.

It is also worth noting that the July to September 2009 Economic Survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce showed an increase in sales and investment in Rotherham, which have contributed to a significant increase in confidence.

The main part of this review, which follows, shows what the Council and its partners have done to help businesses and residents through the last turbulent year.



⁵Small to Medium Enterprises

Section 2: Employment and Training

This part of the review looks at how residents have been supported when they have found themselves out of work.

Jobcentre Plus has aimed to ensure that anyone unemployed has had the opportunity to:

- See an expert Jobcentre Plus adviser who can support them
- Access a wide range of jobs
- Get help with CV writing and completing job applications forms
- Get help with skills advice and re-training
- Access one-off cash help to improve an individual's immediate job prospects
- Access one day advice and coaching sessions
- Access to Learning and Skills Council funded work-focussed training, to help people to move into a new job.

Rotherham's joint bid with Sheffield and Doncaster for 'Future Jobs Fund' monies was successful and, as a consequence, will support up to 600 jobs in Rotherham over 18 months. Jobs are being targeted wherever possible at our growth sectors and areas suffering from the economic downturn. Over 100 jobs have already been filled under this scheme since it started in October 2009. Claire Wardell

and Daniel Marples are partners who have benefitted from the scheme:

Case Study:

Future Jobs Fund helps partners to enter employment

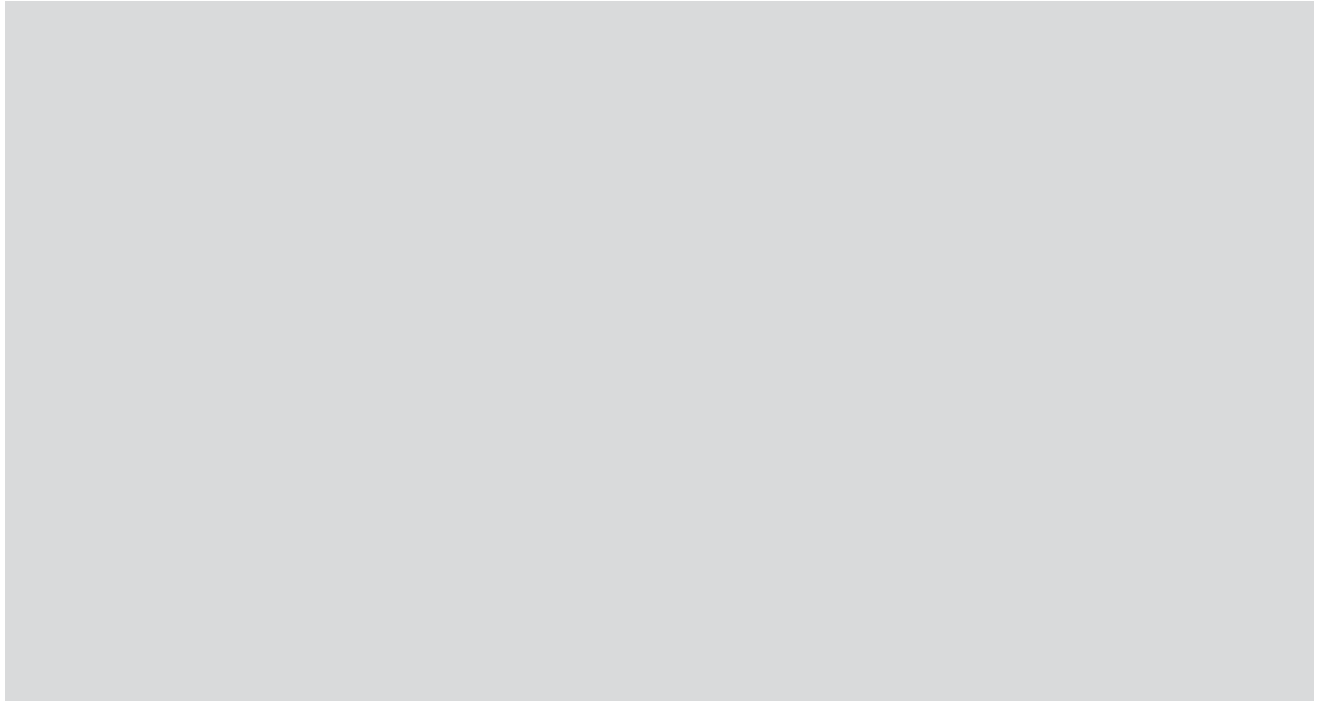
Both Claire Wardell (aged 22) and her partner, Daniel Marples (aged 24), have found work under the future jobs fund scheme. They were both previously unemployed and claiming benefits. It has made a big difference to them.

Claire told us *“ I started on the Future Jobs Fund scheme on the 7th December 2009; the scheme has made a very big difference to me and my partner. My partner is now also on the scheme. The scheme has made a huge difference to all aspects of our lives... the main changes are having a reason to get up in the morning and being financially independent – all we wished to do was pay our way in life.*

Whilst on the scheme I am completing, through my placement a number of training opportunities to forward my career when the scheme ends ”.

Jobcentre Plus can also help with the 'New Deal', which aims to help unemployed people, particularly those who have been unemployed for a long time, people with disabilities and anyone in need of extra help to find work. The New Deal will give residents a chance to train, learn and do work experience.

800 unemployed people have been given an opportunity to improve their skills levels through the local colleges using arrangements established by Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and colleges. Rotherham has been able to make an offer of learning to over 95% of eligible 16 and 17 year old people not in employment, education or training.



The Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus are developing pre-employment training packages for people who are unemployed for more than 6 months. In the future, all 18-24 year olds out of work*⁶ for more than 6 months will be guaranteed a job, work experience or training.

The Council and Jobcentre Plus have arranged job fairs for the unemployed. For example, a Care Sector jobs fair in May 2009 attracted 14 employers and over 100 prospective employees.

Rotherham's Work & Skills Board is promoting the 'Backing

Young Britain' programme*⁷ and encouraging employers to make one of the programme's pledges. Additionally, 89 Rotherham employers have so far signed the skills pledge, committing them to support employees to achieve level 2 NVQ qualifications.

RiDO is working with UK Steel Enterprise through a grant and loan fund scheme to support individuals to develop business ideas. 38 businesses have been helped so far through the scheme.

Partners are promoting volunteering schemes as one way back into employment. Since

April 2009, Voluntary Action Rotherham has:

- Helped over 400 people into volunteering.
- Provided a workshop for 50 people to explore the benefits of volunteering whilst unemployed.

It is worth noting during this period that over 70% of people losing their jobs found work or training within 26 weeks and 9 out of 10 people found new employment or training within 1 year.

⁶Claiming jobseekers' allowance

⁷Backing young Britain is about bringing businesses and public and voluntary sectors together to ensure that the valuable skills and experience of our young people aren't being wasted. Under the programme, organisations are asked to commit to one of seven pledges.

Section 3: Advice and Financial Support for Residents

This section shows what the Council and its partners have done to help residents over the last year.

'Advice In Rotherham' (AIR) is a group of community based support services available to assist all residents in Rotherham with any difficulties arising from the economic downturn or otherwise. The group consists of:

- Age Concern Rotherham
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Kiveton Park Independent Advice Centre
- Rotherham Diversity Forum
- Rotherham Disability Information Service (South Yorkshire Centre for Independent Living)
- Rotherham Advice and Information Network
- Shelter Housing and Homeless Charity
- Shelter Richochet, housing advice for under 25s
- Rotherham Council Welfare Rights and Money Advice

Collectively, these organisations support some of the most vulnerable people in Rotherham on an ongoing basis. Demand for their services has increased substantially during late 2008 and 2009 as a result of the economic downturn. Contact details for

these organisations can be found in Appendix A.

The work of these organisations is demonstrated clearly through a scheme sponsored by NHS Rotherham and delivered by the Council's Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service, to help Macmillan Nurses clients to manage their finances and maximise income at a time when they are more concerned with their health and welfare. This is proving to be a very positive project:

Case Study:

Macmillan Nurses clients are helped to access benefits they are entitled to

NHS Rotherham asked the Council's Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service in 2009 to help very vulnerable residents receiving Macmillan Nursing Care to manage their finances and maximise their income. The scheme has shown that clients were losing out financially at this very crucial time.

During the first six months of the scheme, the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service:

- saw 265 clients
- undertook 257 home visits
- lodged 358 claims for benefits
- gained an annual income of £606,388 for the clients

The Council and NHS Rotherham paid an extra £174,000 to voluntary sector advice services in 2009 to enable them to increase services during a period of intense demand. In the 6 months period from April to September 2009, the advice services helped an extra 5,000 residents who might not otherwise have been supported. This assistance has helped residents access over £2m of additional benefits they were entitled to but were not receiving.

Credit unions are local not-for-profit savings and loans co-operatives that aim to help you take control of your money. Credit unions have a particular understanding of the needs of people who want to borrow or save relatively small amounts. They encourage members to save what they can, and provide loans at competitive rates that help members avoid very expensive rates charged by some lenders. Rothersave and LASER Credit

Unions operate from the town centre, while the Ryton Credit Union is based at Dinnington. The Council has made £200,000 available through Rothersave Credit Union to assist residents in greatest financial need as a result of the economic downturn. So far the scheme has helped 14 residents to deal with a range of issues including mortgage and rent arrears. Mr Lindsay is one resident benefiting from the scheme:

When Mark Lindsay was faced with the prospect of losing his home, Rothersave Credit Union was able to provide him with a loan that meant he could pay his mortgage.

Mark (41) from Thrybergh has owned his three-bedroom semi-detached house for three years and has always been able to pay his monthly mortgage repayments.

However, as a dry liner subcontractor in the construction trade, self-employed Mark has found it difficult to get work in recent months thanks to the impact of the current recession.

He has been in the industry for 20 years and has never struggled to find work until now.

After hearing about Rothersave, Mark approached them

in July to see if they could help him with his situation. He had fallen into arrears and was being threatened with repossession.

"I'd already arranged an IVA (Individual Voluntary Arrangement) with the lender and had a deadline to pay what I owed but things have been a struggle as I work in a competitive industry," said Mark.

"I contacted Rothersave and they pushed through an application for a loan to help me make repayments. They have been really good.

"They asked me all about my situation and did everything they possibly could to help me."

Initially Mark's loan request was declined as he failed to meet the criteria as he was unemployed at that time but a

couple of weeks later he found work and was granted a £1,500 loan from Rothersave.

Mark said: "The loan is paid back at a minimum rate so it's affordable for me and relieves a bit of pressure so I don't get deeper into debt. It's given me a bit of breathing space and I feel a lot better.

"If I had lost the house it would have been meant going to the council for housing support.

"The credit crunch loan is great, helping people just like me to resolve their debts."

Rothersave offers low-cost loans and has £200,000 to support individuals suffering during the credit crunch.

To find out more information call 01709 514 263 or visit www.rothersave.plus.com

Roadshows held in Rotherham helped around 500 people in a range of issues including:

- Over 80 people were advised on the loan shark initiative and given information on options available to avoid having to resort to illegal lending (see below)
- Various people were advised about redundancies
- A number of council tenants were given advice about their rent accounts and managing their debt
- Over 50 people received advice on travel discount schemes
- Age concern gave advice and information to around 40 older people
- Numerous people were given advice on a range of topics by the Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Several people enquired about becoming self-employed
- Over 30 people received advice on pensions
- Several people enquired about volunteering, as a way back into employment
- Over 20 people were helped with benefits enquiries
- Several people were helped to apply for the Rothercard discount scheme (see below)
- A number of people received information on and had referral details for NHS general health / stress management training
- Over 40 people took away information about training opportunities.

20 community support services had stalls at the Roadshows, which were very well received:



We are operating a scheme jointly with Birmingham City Trading Standards to help people who find themselves needing extra cash to avoid using illegal lenders (loan sharks). The scheme:

- Increases awareness of illegal lending and the impact it has on borrowers' lives.
- Creates a climate in which people will report the activity of loan sharks
- Helps to identify, arrest and prosecute illegal lenders
- Assists victims to access legitimate affordable credit, face to face debt advice, and other relevant sources of support and assistance.

Voluntary Action Rotherham*⁷ is leading locally on tackling financial exclusion, which affects a quarter of adults in Rotherham. Financial exclusion may include not having a bank account, not being able to access affordable credit, inability to take advantage of cost savings associated with using direct debits or being unable to make informed choices about financial services such as savings and insurance products. It also may mean lack of or limited access to free, face to face advice and not having the skills or the confidence to manage your finances effectively. It often leads to disadvantage and loss of opportunity, and creates barriers to employment and full participation in society and the wider economy. Very good progress is being made on the key

elements of the financial inclusion strategy. To date, 418 people have been helped to obtain credit union accounts, 277 to receive training in financial capability and 76 people have been trained to give financial capability support. In addition 116 organisations are now involved in improving financial inclusion in Rotherham and 14 new initiatives have started.

The Council, Voluntary Action Rotherham and Financial Inclusion South Yorkshire secured £120,000 regional grant funding to improve people's chances across the whole of South Yorkshire, focusing on three areas:

- provision of financial capability training
- developing capacity to deliver financial advice
- working with offenders to improve access to finance.

Financial worries and job insecurities are often a cause of poor mental health. NHS Rotherham is helping the Public, employers and employees to minimise the incidence of mental health problems created by financial pressures, by providing public and work based stress awareness and alleviation projects. The 'Mind Your Own Business Project' provides advice to employers on creating a mentally healthy work environment and training and resources for employees such as Mental Health First Aid and Managing Mental

Health: Skills for Line Managers. This project is helping employers to support employees who may be experiencing stress or poor mental health.

NHS Rotherham is also:

- Providing self help books for common mental health problems. There has been an 80% increase in the number of books issued during 2009
- Holding Public stress control groups to help people manage anxiety.
- Ensuring residents can access mental health practitioners through their GPs. Each GP has a practitioner attached to it
- Facilitating access to Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service, which provides advice and support to enable people to deal with a range of work related ill health issues.

Rotherham Council kept school meal prices at the previous year's level. The Council decided to absorb cost pressures, rather than ask parents to pay more for the 3 million school meals provided every year. The Council also offers the Rothercard Discount Scheme which provides residents with discounted use of services, eg leisure facilities

The Council extended the period over which Council Tax instalments could be paid, from 10 to 12 months, so that residents could spread the costs over a longer period.

⁷Voluntary Action Rotherham is the lead body for supporting, developing and promoting the voluntary and community sector in the Rotherham borough. Its core activities and associated projects are a keystone for local community engagement and development.

Section 4: Housing

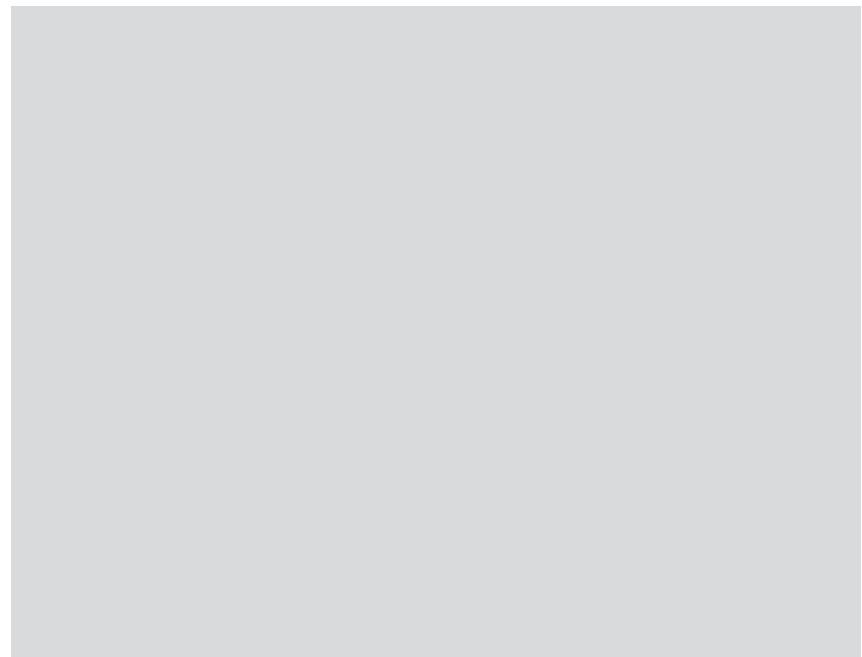
This section identifies the support we have provided to residents to ensure, as much as possible, they can stay in their own homes.

There are various actions people can take to prevent losing their home, but it is critical to seek advice as soon as you think you may need some help with managing your bills. The Council's Key Choices Property Shop brings together a range of advice services to prevent homelessness. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, our Housing Solutions Service will help find alternatives.

Rotherham's proactive work to help avoid homelessness is achieving positive and cost effective outcomes:

- 26 applications for mortgage rescue are currently being supported.
- During 2009, 102 'rent-in-advance' loans (in partnership with Laser Credit Union) were awarded, helping families to move into private rented accommodation and providing them with banking services, savings facilities, low cost credit for emergencies and support in managing their finances.

In total, over 340 families have received assistance to find accommodation under the scheme since 2007. This proactive work has saved over £2m in homelessness costs to use on other services.



During 2009 there have been 294 households prevented from becoming homeless by the Key Choices Housing Solutions team. Of these, 72 were in financial difficulties, including 17 with mortgage arrears.

In November 2009, the Council's housing service attended a "drop in" advice session at Refugee Support. The team were able to answer a range of questions and were able to help with the process of explaining issues relating to housing and employment.

In order to provide an integrated approach, Jobcentre Plus provides

Job Search sessions at the Town Centre Property Shop every Tuesday, where residents can explore and discuss employment and housing issues in the same visit.

During 2009, the Housing Services Team has provided 300 furnished properties to residents who would not otherwise have been able to afford to take up a tenancy. The Team is also encouraging landlords to complete repairs and provide carpets before to enable tenants to move in with minimum outlay of their own.

The Council's Housing Service and Housing Benefits Teams are assisting vulnerable tenants by arranging for their rent to be paid directly to the landlord and to help the vulnerable customers to manage their finances effectively, as demonstrated in the following case involving one tenant with learning difficulties:

Case Study:

The Council's Key Choices Housing Service prevents the potential eviction of a vulnerable tenant

The Council's Key Choices Housing Service took over the management of a block of flats in an area of West Melton as the private sector landlord's letting agents were not managing the property to the landlord's satisfaction.

There was a large amount of arrears on one tenants account and the landlord asked the Council to commence repossession proceedings.

The tenant has learning difficulties and thought housing benefits were being paid direct to the landlord to cover the rent. However, the tenant's housing benefit had been suspended awaiting information on the tenant's income.

Key Choices agreed with the landlord to let the tenant stay in the property until the housing benefits could be checked. The Team helped the tenant to complete a new benefits claim, obtain backdated benefits of £1,900 and organised for future rent payments to be paid to the Council.

Both the tenant and landlord were delighted with the outcome. The landlord is investing the back dated rent into making improvements to the property.

Section 5: Support for Businesses

This section of the review identifies the work we have done as partners to help businesses manage during the economic downturn.

The Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RiDO), the Chamber of Commerce, Business Link and Yorkshire Forward have provided critical support to the Town's businesses during this testing period, including:

- The Council (RiDO) and Business Link have provided consultancy advice to 81 businesses since April 2009 and helped 20 businesses to secure training support.
- Additionally, 60 businesses have accessed Business Link support to carry out skills diagnostics
- RiDO has worked with 38 companies creating or safeguarding almost 1,000 jobs in the district since April 2009
- RiDO has also actively supported investment at the Advance Manufacturing Park
- The Chamber of Commerce's Business Community Support Officers have so far in 2009/10 provided at least 2 days dedicated support to 150 SMEs, designed to help the businesses consolidate and grow

- 14 businesses have accessed Financial Health Checks, 40 have received Business Development Vouchers and 22 have accessed Innovation Vouchers*⁹ offered by Business Link.

We are making local contracts available to local businesses wherever rules allow us to do this. Initiatives include listing contracts due to be tendered in an accessible forward plan and, where appropriate, supporting local procurement in contracts. Additionally, the Council has hosted two 'Meet the Buyers' conferences in March 2009 and in January 2010, bringing buyers

and suppliers together, providing advice to local suppliers and giving information to them on upcoming contract opportunities. These were excellent events attended by over 300 representatives.

A range of business seminars were held during the Summer 2009 and more are planned. For example, a programme of four 'Beating the Recession' events attracted 63 delegates. 87% of the attendees stated the events met their expectations.

The Chamber of Commerce has held a range of other events for its members and other businesses during the year.



⁹Innovation vouchers help small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) in the region, with financial support to engage with Yorkshire's universities and other academic institutions to help their business grow and develop

Jobcentre Plus is achieving its target of offering a 'Rapid Response Service' within 48 hours to any business reporting potential redundancies to it. The service includes a range of partners providing dedicated and tailored support to meet the needs of businesses and employees at risk as a result of the downturn. Most notably, support provided to Burberry, until its closure in April 2009, and to Corus since February 2009 included:

- Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Rotherham Council provided ongoing dedicated on-site support
- Various specific events were held on site involving local colleges, Business Link and Yorkshire Forward offering suggestions and options to employees
- Housing and benefits advice, CV writing guidance and job search support has been provided by the Council's Housing and Employment Solutions Service
- Employers took part in jobs fairs on site, to enable employees to enquire about new careers and, where relevant, make applications for available jobs

- Advice has been provided regarding the possible use of vacant office space and marketing of empty buildings.

Business Link and the LSC have offered a range of options to keep employees in training while operations have been less busy. For example, one company in Rotherham was one of the first two businesses regionally operating a pilot 'Time to Train' project, which provides training whilst during periods of short time working.

The Council has awarded 5 Town Centre Business Vitality Grants and 7 Street Café grants to new businesses or businesses requiring support for development in the town centre.

To encourage retail spending in the Town Centre, the Council has provided free car parking, firstly through the 'Free after 3pm' scheme, which has operated since May 2009, and for five Saturdays leading up to Christmas. The Council has arranged a free bus service between the town centre and Parkgate. And, the Council's Town Centre Manager has arranged a wide range of discount vouchers available for use in town centre shops.

2009 was very challenging for developers, who found it difficult to obtain funding to continue with significant development schemes. Many schemes regionally and

nationally have been mothballed; suspended until economic conditions improve. In Rotherham we have worked with developers and Yorkshire Forward to ensure our flagship schemes have continued. Reasonable progress has been maintained on the Town Centre Renaissance Scheme, using public funding to supplement private investment to keep the various phases progressing. This project is crucial to the town centre's economic prosperity. As a consequence, interest from retailers in the new facilities is increasing.

On the housing front, the Council has been successful in its bids to secure funding to provide much needed new affordable housing:

- The approval of £2.3m to build 36 new homes in a development at Dalton / Thrybergh will lead to the first new council houses built for 30 years.
- The Council has also secured £3.5m investment to build 98 new homes with developers, by 2011.

Delivering these projects will help local businesses and local people.

Our interventions have had many positive benefits. We know, however, the situation remains precarious and we will continue to support all of our businesses throughout 2010 and beyond.

Appendix I: Useful Organisations for Information and Advice

These pages give you details of organisations that can provide advice and/or information if you are having any financial difficulties.

Employment and Training

- The **Learning Skills Council** is responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. It can provide access to a range of training initiatives and funding. Telephone 0845 019 4171, email southyorkshireinfo@lsc.gov.uk or go to the website at www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/YorkshireHumber/
- The **Department for Work and Pensions** provides crisis loans in certain circumstances to help people meet immediate short-term needs in emergencies. The loans are short term and applications have to meet strict criteria. For more information contact **Jobcentre Plus** or see the Jobcentre Plus website at: <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/WorkingAgeBenefits/Dev013949.xml.html>

Anyone making new claims to benefit can phone 0800 055 6688 or textphone 0800 023 4888

Help for Residents

- Rotherham Council's **Money Advice Service** offers a free confidential debt counselling service to Rotherham residents. The service advises on different types of debt such as rent and mortgage arrears, credit card debts and bank loans. The service can help check you are getting all the benefits you may be entitled to, help you plan your weekly and monthly budget and negotiate with the people you owe money to. Home visits can be made and advisers are available at the County Court for rent and mortgage repossession hearings. Tel 01709 822329 (24 hour answerphone service) Enterprise House, Bridge Street, Rotherham, S60 1QJ
- The **National Debt Line** at www.nationaldebtline.co.uk or 0808 808 4000 helps people to manage their debt
- The **Financial Services Authority** website - www.moneyadviceclear.fsa.gov.uk provides independent consumer advice with more than 100 guides available that can be ordered free of charge, including a parents guide to managing money.
- **Housing Benefit** is a national scheme administered by Rotherham Council to help people on low incomes pay their rent. For information and help, contact Benefits Services, RBT (Connect) Ltd, Civic Building, Walker Place, Rotherham, S65 1UF. Telephone (01709) 336006
- To see if you're eligible for help with your **council tax** bills, contact Rotherham Council on (01709) 336006 or Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688, or visit: <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/WorkingAgeBenefits/Howtoclaim/index.html>.
- **Voluntary Action Rotherham** is the lead body for supporting, developing and promoting the voluntary and community sector in the Rotherham borough. It is a network consisting of over 150 individuals and organisations and is leading locally on tackling financial exclusion. For more information telephone the Financial Inclusion Team on 01709 726896
- **LASER Credit Union** is a savings and loans cooperative offering its members access to affordable savings and fairly priced loans. Contact LASER at the Guardian Centre, Drummond Street, Rotherham, S65 1HY. Tel: 01709 836500

- **Rothersave Credit Union** was established in April 1998 and provides a financial service for anyone who lives or works within the boundary of Rotherham. Contact Rothersave at R.A.I.N. Building, Eastwood Lane, Rotherham S65 1EQ or Tel 01709 514263
- The **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** provides help to resolve any legal, money, welfare benefits issues or other problems. See Citizen's Advice at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or www.adviceguide.org.uk for further contacts and information. Rotherham CAB can be found at 120 - 126 Old Hall, Wellgate, Rotherham S60 2LN. Tel: 01709 515680
- The **Financial Services Authority (FSA)** operates a consumer helpline 0300 500 5000. It also operates a website that provides independent consumer advice with more than 100 guides available that can be ordered free of charge through www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk
- For information and advice about **income support and jobseeker's allowance** or the **New Deal**, or to make a claim, contact Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688 or visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html.
- For information about the **Working tax credit and child tax credit** call 0845 300 3900 or visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Help with Housing

- **Key Choices** is a scheme that lets you apply for a home of your choice, apply to join the housing register, see existing properties, find out about your 'right to buy', and access properties available through the quality landlord scheme. Telephone on 01709 336565, email keychoices@rotherham.gov.uk or visit or write to Key Choices Property Shop 20/21 Old Town Hall Rotherham S60 1QX
- The Council's **Neighbourhood Investment Service** provides advice on housing shared equity options and on affordable warmth initiatives. Contact the service on 01709 823114
- Help with **Council House Rent** can be obtained from 2010 Rotherham Ltd, which is responsible for collecting housing rents. The Income Collection Section helps tenants to manage their accounts effectively and agrees payment arrangements for those falling behind with their rent. The Section can be contacted on Tel 01709 822250.
- Free housing advice can be obtained from the **Shelter** helpline 0808 800 4444*, open 8am-8pm, seven days a week and includes help on related mortgage debt or welfare benefits issues. Alternatively visit www.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/

For businesses

- The **Rotherham & Investment & Development Office (RiDO)** is the regeneration arm of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. RiDO provides support for new businesses starting up, existing Rotherham businesses looking to expand, or inward investors from outside the borough considering an operation in the borough. RiDO provides a free, professional service that can help with everything from finding the right sites and premises, to planning advice and guidance, finding and training recruits and locating new customers and suppliers. Telephone 01709 254444 or see the RiDO website at www.investinrotherham.co.uk/
- The Barnsley and **Rotherham Chamber of Commerce** can be contacted through 0844 414 5100 or www.brchamber.co.uk/
- Real help for businesses now. **Business Link** is available to offer practical advice and information for saving your business money. Contact Business Link on 0845 6 048 048 or visit www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk/

- **Yorkshire Forward** is the regional development agency for the Yorkshire & Humber region. There are 9 such agencies in England, and each is tasked with improving the economy in its own particular region. Yorkshire Forward can be contacted through 0113 394 9600 (8.30 - 17.30) or www.yorkshire-forward.com/
- Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service, Workplace Health Advice Service, The RAIN Building, Eastwood Lane, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S65 1EQ. Tel. 01709 428964

For more information on Rotherham's response to the economic downturn and where to get help please telephone Rotherham Council on **01709 822003 / 822004** or look at the credit crunch website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/creditcrunch

If you have any questions or comments about this document please telephone Rotherham Council on **01709 822003 / 822004** or use our online comments form at http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/_Onlinefeedback.htm



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This document can be made available in your language and in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, electronic and audio-tape versions.

Contact us at:

minicom 01709 823 536

www.rotherham.gov.uk

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如需索取這份文件的其他語文譯本和/或各種形式版本，請聯絡我們。

در صورتیکہ این مطلب را به زبان و یا شکل دیگری می خواهید لطفاً با ما تماس بگیرید

أصل بنا إذا تريد هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بصيغة بديلة

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