

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET

1.	Meeting	Cabinet
2.	Date	28th March, 2012
3.	Title	Scrutiny Review Regeneration funding and Neighbourhood Renewal
4.	Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

On 21 December 2011 Cabinet agreed that the Scrutiny Review of Regeneration Funding and Neighbourhood Renewal be noted and a response be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

This report, in the main, accepts the recommendations. Many of the scrutiny commission's recommendations are being addressed as part of the Council's Deprived Communities work.

6. Recommendations:

- To note the contents of this report and Appendix 1.

7. Proposals and details

The scrutiny review was commissioned following the publication of the latest indices of multiple deprivation, which showed a deterioration for a number of areas in Rotherham.

The initial scoping and research in July and August 2011, was followed by review sessions at Dinnington Resource Centre (6th October) and Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (21st October).

The main aims were to:

- assess the effectiveness of past neighbourhood-based regeneration programmes in Rotherham and identify good practice and key lessons
- see whether learning could be applied to the planning or delivery of existing or future projects to ensure the greatest impact is made
- analyse, in particular, the various intensive neighbourhood management schemes (i.e. Chesterhill, Local Ambition Programme) and assess the potential for further roll out.

Following detailed consideration the commission made 13 recommendations, 12 of which are accepted; one recommendation is deferred. The attached action plan gives full details of these recommendations and the proposed actions.

Many of the recommendations will be met either partially or in full by the emerging approach to the 11 most deprived neighbourhoods and Community First activity. This work is being given the highest level of priority and is being led by the Council's Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team, and progress has been made over a very short time frame.

Other issues raised by the scrutiny commission, mirror those raised by the scrutiny review of the private rental sector, and here a detailed action plan has been developed to improve practice, and focus the scarce resources that exist.

The one recommendation which has deferred relates to preparing a report on the feasibility of establishing community budgets. At this present time funding has been secured as part of the Big Lottery and Community First Initiatives, for the most deprived areas of the borough. It needs to be noted that whilst extremely welcome, these funds are relatively modest compared to the scale of the challenge faced by these communities, and in comparison with monies that have previously been invested in to some of these communities. This is particularly the case given that the available finance is spread over periods of up to 10 years. Further consideration will be given as part of the budget exercise and as part of a review of the medium term financial strategy to establishing community budgets, but the opportunity to create such budgets is very limited in view of the current climate faced by the Local Authority and its partners.

8. Finance

Funding of £770k (over 4 years) has been secured as part of the Community First Programme, and up to £1m (over ten years) as part of the Big Lottery fund. No specific other financial resources have been identified at this time.

9. Risks and uncertainties

The main risk relates to the scale of the challenge faced by a significant number of Rotherham's neighbourhoods and the diminishing resources available to tackle such problems. Additional funding from two government initiatives is extremely welcome, but likely to be limited in its impact. To be successful, the Local Authority and its partners will need to channel sufficient resource into the most 'needy' communities. This may negatively impact on remaining areas outside of the 11 most deprived categorisation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This work will have significant impact on a number of the council's key priorities, in particular ensuring that no community is left behind. The problems faced by Rotherham's deprived communities are multi-faceted and as such the issues arise within a wide range of other policy and performance agendas.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Appendix 1: Cabinet's Response to Scrutiny Review – Regeneration Funding and Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Scrutiny review of regeneration funding and neighbourhood renewal – final report. Cabinet, 21 December 2011

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