



Notes to Support the System on Internal Control  
For the year ending 31 March 2007

## A - Establishing & Monitoring the Achievement of the Authority's Objectives

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Pride of Place (Community Plan)	<p>The Local Strategic Partnership, led by the Authority has developed a hierarchy of plans setting out its work for up to the next 5 years. The top-level plan is "<b>Pride of Place</b>" (Community Plan) which sets out the overall aims of the borough. Pride of Place has produced a vision for Rochdale for the year 2021. 'Pride of Place' brings together key issues which local residents and organisations have identified over the past two years. It describes the main points and proposed key actions for making progress, guided by the overarching principles of equality, community cohesion and sustainability.</p> <p>The plan is now being refreshed and will be published by March 2008.</p> <p>Pride of Place is now being reviewed and a further version will be available by Autumn 2007</p>	The LSP will be reviewing its governance and performance management arrangements.	Andy Zuntz
Aiming High	<p>To ensure that Rochdale Council focuses on the priorities that are important and have been identified in Pride of Place it has developed its own medium term internal strategic plan "Aiming High". Aiming High sets out what the Council will do to help achieve the priorities and other promises set out in Pride of Place.</p> <p>Aiming High has been reviewed. Considerable consultation and focus group work has taken place with the local community, Elected Members, RMBC officers and partners, to identify and restate the corporate priorities and expected outcomes. It will be published by October 2007</p>	Aiming High now encompasses "Stepping Up" the Council's Organisational Development Plan.	
The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Action Plan	<p>The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) also produces their own improvement plan, known as the ELT Action Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to set out ELT's work priorities for a particular year. These work priorities are detailed under five headings that take account of the Council's corporate priorities detailed above and the specific issues identified by the inspectors in the Corporate Performance Assessment. They describe the tasks ELT members will be responsible for progressing, with the support of managers and staff throughout the Council.</p> <p>The ELT Action Plan for 2007/08 has recently been reviewed and agreed by ELT and Cabinet..</p>	Ensure the ELT action plan and supporting service plans are integrated with the budget management process.	ELT

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Service Plans	<p>The Service Heads produce 3 yearly Service Plans identifying how their services will contribute to meeting the Council's priorities during the forthcoming years. Heads of Service also produce an annual service plan update which details previous years performance, changing priorities, future legislation etc. that may affect the three year targets and action plans</p> <p>Service Plans feature key tasks from other plans and strategies such as the Education Development Plan or the Housing Strategy, ensuring that all staff and partners focus their efforts on delivering the overall vision for the Borough. They are in a corporate prescribed format that includes performance information and risk management issues.</p> <p>The service plans are validated by the service portfolio holders and the opposition spokespersons are given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Heads of Services.</p>	<p>Ensure that risk management continues to be considered in the Service Planning process.</p> <p>Service plans and monitored through the quarterly reporting process</p> <p>Develop better integration with medium term budget strategy.</p> <p>Support Heads of Service in use of business planning tools.</p> <p>Better integration of customer focus in service planning.</p> <p>Earlier involvement of elected member in drafting service plans</p>	Marie Basting
Team Plan.	<p>At team level, individual groups or teams in each Service Group specify their own key result areas in a Team Plan. These Plans focus clearly on specific tasks and performance indicators so that all staff know what they have to achieve, and show how the team will contribute towards the targets detailed in the Service Plan and the overall aims of the Council.</p>	<p>Scope to improve quality and reach in some services.</p>	Heads of Service

## B - The Facilitation of Policy and Decision-Making

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
The facilitation of policy and decision-making,	<p>The facilitation of policy and decision-making, at officer, individual Councillor and Committee level, is set out within the Council's Constitution and the associated Schemes of Delegation, as required by the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>The Council Constitution and Schemes of Delegation are kept under constant review to take account of legislative and local changes.</p>		Catherine Witham
Control of the policy and decision-making process, and ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations	<p>Control of the policy and decision-making process, and ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations is facilitated at two levels, namely pre-decision and post decision.</p> <p>In preparing to make a decision, officers have access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ guidance on report content, including the need to identify the reasons for the recommendation; alternative courses of action considered and the reasons why they have not been pursued; and the risks involved if the decision is not taken.</li> <li>❑ the process for authorisation of reports in advance of their being submitted to Committee, and</li> <li>❑ Financial Regulations for those decisions that will have financial implications.</li> </ul>	<p>Report guidance has recently been revised to reinforce Risk issues</p> <p>Since the election a new procedure has been agreed by cabinet members and ELT relating to the procedure by which reports got to Cabinet. Roger Ellis wrote the new protocol.</p>	Catherine Witham

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	<p>In some cases, the Policy Overview Committee or Performance and Audit and Scrutiny Committee will be consulted in advance of a decision being made by the Cabinet – this process is referred to as “prior scrutiny”. Once a decision has been made, the Council’s call-in process enables executive decisions to be examined by the Policy Overview Committee if it is considered that the decision is not valid, for reasons, which are laid out in the Constitution’s Procedure Rules. Such reasons include where it is considered that the decision does not accord with the council’s pre-determined Budget and Policy Framework.</p>	<p>Our overview and scrutiny arrangements have been fundamentally revised. Responsibility for this now sits with the Performance &amp; Development Service.</p>	
Forward Plan	<p>Adherence to the Forward Plan, published on a monthly basis, ensures that the appropriate Committee makes all key executive decisions within the required timescales.</p> <p>Control of the Forward Plan has become more robust in order to ensure the accountability and transparency of the decision – making process and clear guidance is available to Officers.</p>		Catherine Witham
Accuracy of recording of decisions	<p>Once a decision is made, systems are in place to ensure that the appropriate checks are made at officer level with regard to the accuracy of the minutes. The Council’s call-in process enables executive decisions to be examined by the Policy Overview Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee where it is considered that the decision is not valid, for reasons that are laid out in the Constitution’s Procedure Rules.</p>		Catherine Witham

## C - Risk Management & Internal Audit

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Rochdale MBC's aims in relation to risk management and internal control are to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and processes for managing risk.	<p>In detail these aims can be broken down as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Developing and maintaining robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks which involve the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These systems comply with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice and ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and are used economically, efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that services are delivered by trained and experienced people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of risk management and internal control, including Internal Audit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain an objective and professional relationship with our external auditors and statutory inspectors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Publish on a timely basis an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the authority's risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice</li> </ul>		Ruth Hunter
<b>A Internal Audit</b>			
Definition	<p>Internal Audit is provided in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2006.</p> <p>Internal audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on the control environment comprising risk management, control and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources</p>		Ruth Hunter

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The scope of the Internal Audit	The scope of the internal audit section includes examining and evaluating the whole system of internal controls established by management, which is not confined to the financial control system. It involves an evaluation of the controls against an assessment of the risks facing the council to determine their adequacy, reliability and effectiveness and how well the responsibilities assigned to managers are being carried out in practice.		Ruth Hunter
Planning Process	In consultation with each Head of Service the internal audit section produces an annual audit needs assessment using a risk indices methodology that embraces financial and non-financial risks in each audit area. This enables a five-year strategic plan to be prepared which allows a broad assessment of the adequacy of audit resources. The annual audit plan is derived from the first year of the strategic plan.		Ruth Hunter
Staffing & Resources	<p>The internal audit function is provided in house by an appropriately resourced and professionally qualified unit to cover the major areas of risk identified in the audit needs assessment.</p> <p>At the end of 2005/06 a far reaching review of Support Services changed the staffing composition of the Internal Audit service: The new structure provides the optimal Internal Audit service to the authority, allowing specialisms to be developed by staff and to improve client focus.</p>		Ruth Hunter
Reporting	<p>The CIPFA publication, Audit Committee, practical guidance recommends the establishment of an Audit Committee to provide an independent review of the overall system of internal control and of the external audit process by non executive management. This is further underlined by requirements of the CPA Use of Resources assessments.</p> <p>This role has been reviewed and now comes within the remit of the newly created Performance &amp; Audit Scrutiny Committee. They will review the activities of the internal audit function (as detailed in their Terms of Reference), including its annual work programme, quarterly reports of activity, significant investigations and systems / services that have been awarded a less than adequate audit opinion (4 or 5). However this is not an independent committee and does not have discrete decision making powers</p>	Plans are in place to measure the effectiveness of this Committee after 6 – 9 months.	Ruth Hunter

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Reporting Contd	<p>The Internal Audit plan and strategic plan for 2006/07 were approved by the Executive Director (Resources) as Section 151 Officer. The audit plan was reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 11 June 2007 and will go to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2007.</p> <p>An annual report on internal audit coverage for 2006/07 has been prepared and will be submitted to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 11 June 2007, the Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and the Standards Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The report includes a summary of the audit opinions on internal control issued with each final audit report which range from 1 = Very Good to 5 = Unsatisfactory. Details are provided on the concerns identified in four audit reports with an audit opinion 4 (marginal). There were no reports issued with an audit opinion 5. The audit opinions issued in the name of the Chief Internal Auditor collectively provide an overall independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of financial control.</p> <p>During 2006/07 quarterly reports on Internal Audit coverage and performance were produced for each of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees (which undertake the role of Audit Committees). The reports included details of audit coverage of services within their remit that were finalised during the quarter, description of internal control weaknesses in relation to audits with opinion 4 or 5 and a précis of issues in connection with special investigations completed. The report to the Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee also includes performance monitoring information in relation to Internal Audits PI's.</p> <p>A final audit report for each audit (which includes an audit opinion on risk exposure and an agreed action plan for management to implement recommendations) is issued to Heads of Service in the name of the Chief Internal Auditor. A quarterly report is submitted by the CIA to the Executive Director (Resources) - the section 151 officer and the Head of Finance Services, on audit coverage, performance measures and progress against the plan, overdue responses by Services to draft audit reports and overdue implementation of action plans.</p>		

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<b>B Risk Management</b>			
Definition	<p>Risk Management has gained increasing focus and profile within the public sector over the last few years. There are many definitions but the one adopted by Rochdale is;</p> <p>“The identification, analysis and economic control of those risks which can impact on the Council’s ability to deliver its priorities and objectives”</p>		Ruth Hunter
The Corporate Risk Management Strategy	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Strategy was reviewed during 2005/06. It was approved by Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and adopted by Cabinet on the 21 November 2005.</p> <p>The strategy identifies the responsibilities of Elected Members, ELT members, Executive Director (resources), Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG), Heads of Service and the Head of Finance Services in relation to risk management. The objectives also reflect the need to continue to develop a systematic approach to risk management as an integral element of service planning and performance management.</p> <p>The Strategy clearly outlines the direction for Rochdale in pulling together the risk management agenda. The Strategy was further reviewed and updated by CRMG on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006 to recognise the structural changes of the Authority and therefore membership, at the same time the terms of reference were reviewed and amended to include RMBC’s responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.</p> <p>It is accessible on both the Intranet and the Council’s Website. <a href="http://rochdale.gov.uk/">http://rochdale.gov.uk/</a>.</p>		Margaret Carney
Member Engagement	<p>Risk Management is a focus area of the new Members Development Plan, sessions of which are planned to run during the Summer 2007.</p> <p>The Risk Management Annual Report was reported to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 4 September 2006. This will come under the remit of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in future.</p>		

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Member Engagement Contd	<p>Committee reports formats have been further amended to reflect the consideration of risk management by members. To progress this guidance notes for Committee Report authors were prepared. Members are now made aware of the risks associated with the decision making process.</p> <p>Risk Management is championed by the Executive Director (Resources) on behalf of ELT.</p>		
Staffing	<p>The Risk &amp; Business Support Manager, who reports to the Assistant Head of Finance (Business Services) has responsibility for facilitating the corporate Risk Management agenda. Both officers have clear risk management responsibilities, which are detailed in their job descriptions.</p> <p>They are both members of the CRMG and together manage the agenda for those meetings.</p> <p>Officers of the Risk &amp; Business Support section are members of a number of NW risk management initiatives and groups, e.g. NW Alarm, NW insurance Officer Group etc.</p>		Ruth Hunter
Corporate Risk Management Group	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Group is a facilitating group to enable and monitor all aspects of the strategic and business risk programme. It is made up of Heads of Service and chaired by the Executive Director (Resources). The terms of reference of this group include the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Develop the Council's risk management strategy and evaluate its effectiveness, making changes where appropriate</li> <li>❑ Monitor and report the effectiveness of risk management to ELT and Members.</li> <li>❑ Review risk registers and agreed action plans.</li> <li>❑ Monitor and review the use of the Risk Management Initiatives Fund.</li> </ul>		Margaret Carney

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<p>Embedding Risk management into decision making processes.</p>	<p>Service Planning guidance explains how the risk management is an important feature of the service planning process, and feeds into the objectives of the plan for the coming year, as follows</p> <p>“Service planning provides the opportunity to examine and re-score the risks previously identified and detailed in the risk register and to identify, analyse and include new risks to the business.</p> <p>Any control measures (including additional measures) detailed in the risk register, which are not currently in place should be included in the key objectives of the Service in the ‘Actions &amp; Improvements’ section of the Service Plan.</p> <p>In summary details of progress made is included in the Performance Plan, as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Inclusion of a risk assessment in the Project Brief developed for each of the projects designed to meet objectives detailed within ‘Aiming High’.</li> <li>❑ Development of a new Corporate Risk Management Strategy and review of membership and terms of Reference of the Corporate Risk Management Group. The membership now reflects recent structural changes to the Council’s management structure. It is chaired by the Executive Director (Resources) as Officer Champion for RM.</li> <li>❑ Further development of the Risk Register and associated action plans. The register is now populated with service specific risks, which have been classified as corporate, common and / or strategic. All strategic risks relating to the Authority’s Corporate Objectives are now also included on the register. They have been identified and responsibility allocated to Executive directors in line with the ELT action plan.</li> <li>❑ The terms of reference for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been updated to clearly reflect member’s responsibilities in relation to Risk Management.</li> <li>❑ Risk Management to be an integral part of the Terms of Reference element of all Best Value Reviews.</li> <li>❑ Authority wide Training audit and training programme in place for 2006/07.</li> </ul>		<p>Ruth Hunter</p>

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Embedding Risk management into decision making processes Contd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Risk Management is now an integral part of the Service planning template and guidance. Heads of Service have local performance indicators for :-</li> <li>❑ Performance indicators. These are reported quarterly to the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees by each Head of Service as part of the performance management processes. They are also included in the annual performance plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management – risk register % of additional control measures implemented by the due date, and</li> <li>• Review of Risks – % of risks reviewed by the due date</li> </ul> </li> <li>❑ Training sessions have been provided to Members, and copies of the training material passed to the members who were unable to attend.</li> <li>❑ Committee reporting guidance now includes advice to authors on how risk should be addressed, to enable members to make properly informed decisions. Reports should include reference to the risk of members not accepting the recommendations made as well as those associated with a positive decision.</li> <li>❑ The Risk Management Initiatives Fund has been reviewed in respect of its uses, by the CRMG. It will now be used to finance training and development for officers in respect of RM.</li> </ul>	A work stream has been commissioned by the CRMG to review the suitability of the two PI for Risk Management.	
The Risk Register	An in-house MS Access based risk register database has been produced and Heads of Service and ELT members have identified the risks associated with service delivery and strategic risks. The risks have been individually categorized and ranked (scored), controls identified to mitigate the risks, additional controls and resources required identified, and review dates set.	Due to the lack of functionality and meaningful management information a new RR system identified – with interface capabilities for Internal Audit to provide dynamic and holistic RM function. Procurement process ongoing.	Ruth Hunter

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Risk Financing	<p>A major exercise was undertaken in 2004 2005 in conjunction with 9 other Local Authorities and Aon (Insurance Broker) to investigate the current methodologies of financing liability claims. The outcome of the study was that at the time, current methods were the most cost effective for those Authorities concerned.</p> <p>All liability claims are handled by professional external claims handlers who adhere to all current relevant legislation  Aon compile an annual actuarial report on the Authority's liability provisions. This report comments on the adequacy of the existing funds and makes proposals for the forthcoming year. (Aon is registered with the Financial Services Authority).</p>		Ruth Hunter
Claim Investigation	<p>All insurance/investigation staff within the team are completely up to date with the Woolf protocols. The claims handler acknowledges claims within 21 days and a decision on liability is provided within the 90-day timescale.</p> <p>Regular reports are compiled showing repudiation rates. Quarterly reports are assessed to monitor outstanding reserves on claims. Any claims that are proven are assessed to look for lessons to be learnt and/or deficiencies in Council systems/procedures. If this is the case these findings are fed back to the appropriate Service Head with a request that they consider the issues.</p>		
Partnership Risks	<p>Schools PFI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Risk Assessments / Risk Allocation included in the project plan prior to project commencement.</li> <li>❑ Risks monitored regularly by the implementation of a markers scheme.</li> <li>❑ Gateway Review highlighted the good practice being employed in the project, but suggested scope for improvement. Implementation of improvements formalised in the resulting Action Plan.</li> <li>❑ Risk allocation / Risk Management included in the various tender documentation issued to bidders and is also contained within the Model Contract.</li> </ul>		Mark Widdup

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Partnership Risks Contd	<p>Impact Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Risk Assessments also included in the project plan and are monitored continuously.</li> <li>❑ Gateway reviews have also highlighted good practice and any improvement suggestions have been enacted. A Risk Management Strategy has also been published.</li> <li>❑ Risk Assessments / Risk Allocation is also included in the tender / contract documentation issued for this project.</li> </ul> <p>Leisure Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Risk Assessments are included in the Project Plan and are monitored at the regular project meetings.</li> </ul> <p>Housing Market Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Risk Assessments / Risk Allocation are also included in the Project Plan and are monitored at regular project meetings.</li> </ul> <p>Joint Service Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ This potential project is still being assessed for its viability, but the provisional project plan includes the requirement for Risk Assessment / Risk Allocation.</li> </ul> <p>Sources of Evidence  4P's Gateway Review documentation for both Schools PFI and Strategic Partnership projects, together with subsequent Action Plans published as a result.  Project Plans published for all major projects as indicated. Risk Assessment / Risk Allocation plans / formulae are also available for each project. Evidence of regular monitoring is also available. In addition, tender / model contract documentation indicating the above requirements is also on file for projects which are undergoing a procurement process.</p> <p>N.B. In the case of joint initiatives with other local authorities e.g. Housing Market Renewal, where in this case Oldham MBC are leading on the procurement exercise, copies of the Risk Assessment / Risk Allocation documentation will be obtained from them on request</p>		

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Risks associated with Treasury Management	<p>Adoption of the CIPFA code on treasury management and compliance with the prudential code. There is a range of mechanisms in place within the service to minimise risks in relation to treasury management and it is also the subject of an annual internal audit review. This is evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 451 1308 597">❑ Approval by Cabinet, Performance &amp; Audit Scrutiny Committee and Council prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April each year of the Treasury Management Borrowing Strategy (including prudential indicators/limits) and Investment Strategy for the following financial year.</li> <li data-bbox="478 630 1308 743">❑ Reporting to Cabinet and Performance &amp; Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis in the Financial Update with details of actuals performance compared against approved prudential limits</li> <li data-bbox="478 776 1308 954">❑ At least two strategy meetings per annum with external treasury management advisers. The purpose of these meetings is to assist the Council in the formulation of the treasury management strategy and to ensure that borrowing and investment decisions continue to reflect current and forecast macro-economic conditions (principally the outlook for interest rates).</li> <li data-bbox="478 987 1308 1068">❑ Access on an ongoing basis to external advisers to assist in the assessment of market developments and opportunities relating to both borrowing and investment products.</li> <li data-bbox="478 1101 1308 1214">❑ Reporting to Cabinet and Performance &amp; Audit Scrutiny Committee annually in July on the outcome of Treasury Management activities for the previous year and providing an update in relation to the current year.</li> <li data-bbox="478 1247 1308 1304">❑ A draft Prudential Borrowing Policy has been prepared and will be introduced during 2007/08.</li> </ul>		Ruth Hunter



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Corporate Complaints Procedure	<p>In 2004, the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified a review of the Council's complaints procedures as one of its two major planned studies for 2004/05. Committee established a Complaints Working Group comprising Members of all political parties to undertake this study on its behalf. The Working Group held a number of meetings with officers and agreed revised policies and procedures (Corporate Complaints Procedure) for handling comments and complaints in March 2005. These were agreed by Cabinet on 11 April 2005 and launched on 1 June 2005.</p> <p>Guidance notes have been produced to advise and support officers on how best to implement the revised arrangements. The Council's civic newspaper, "Local Matters" is being used to raise awareness of the revised Comments and Complaints procedures and to encourage local people to take up this opportunity to comment on the Council and the services it delivers. Complaints files will continue to be held by individual Services; however, all Services are required to report on complaint handling to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Council's routine performance management framework. Copies of the revised policies, procedures and guidance notes are available on request.</p> <p>A review of the Revised Corporate Complaints Procedure was reported to Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on the 27th February 2006, which detailed the complaints reporting figures as at Quarter 2.</p>		Paul Young
People's Champion	<p>The Council's current procedure for handling Corporate Complaints was reviewed in 2005. Fundamental to this procedure is a requirement on each Head of Service to investigate and respond to complaints about their own service. The procedure does not include a formal system for people wishing to appeal against the outcome of their complaint or provide any independent review. Leaflets and other publications direct dissatisfied complainants to the Chief Executive, however, the Council has no formal procedure for reviewing these issues and each case is dealt with on an individual basis.</p> <p>At present, the only alternative course of redress for dissatisfied complainants is via the Local Government Ombudsman. The provision of a</p>		

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<p>People's Champion Contd.</p>	<p>right of appeal via the People's Champion should reduce the likelihood of Complainants contacting the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Cabinet decided in January 2007 to establish an officer to act as People's Champion together with a supporting team in order to resolve complaints and ongoing dissatisfaction by customers.</p> <p>The role of this officer and team will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Act as an escalation point i.e. point of appeal, for customers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.</li> <li>❑ Provide an independent review of the complaint &amp; its investigation and, where necessary, carry out their own investigation.</li> <li>❑ Provide an impartial view of the issue and, where appropriate, make recommendations for resolution. These could include service improvements.</li> <li>❑ Provide feedback and recommendations directly to the Executive Leadership Team regarding resolution of complaints.</li> <li>❑ Provide regular reports to Members regarding complaints.</li> <li>❑ Provide support to and raise awareness with Services of complaints handling and resolution</li> <li>❑ Work with Services to identify improvements as a result of lessons learnt from complaints</li> </ul> <p>Whilst the Team will be part of the Customer Services Unit, they will act independently and report directly to the Executive Leadership Team.</p>		
<p>Corporate Health &amp; Safety</p>	<p>See new policy statement (intranet) for implementation June 2007.</p> <p>Induction processes implemented at Service level. Range of H&amp;S training courses provided by Central Training Unit (P&amp;D Service).</p>	<p>H&amp;S training strategy to be developed to comply with required standards beyond 2007</p>	<p>Stephen Harper</p>

## D - Code of Corporate Governance

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Responsibilities under the Code of Corporate Governance	Rochdale MBC is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of Rochdale MBC's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal. To this end, Rochdale MBC has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles and reflects the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework <i>Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance</i> .		Margaret Carney / Borough Solicitor
Dimensions of the Code	The Code of Corporate Governance has five 'Dimensions' - Dimension 1 - Community Focus Dimension 2 - Service Delivery Arrangements Dimension 3 - Structures and Processes Dimension 4 - Risk Management and Internal Control Dimension 5 - Standards of Conduct		
Responsible officers	The Monitoring Officer is responsible for - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Code</li> <li>❑ Reviewing the operation of the Code</li> <li>❑ Reporting annually to the Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on compliance with the Code and any changes that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness.</li> </ul>		
Preparation of the Code	RMBC's first Code of Corporate Governance was produced and approved in November 2003. The Executive Director (Resources), via the Head of Audit and Risk Management, is also responsible for reviewing independently the Code and reporting to the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Code and the extent of compliance with it. The code was reviewed and updated in 2006/07 and presented to Corporate O&S Committee. It will be subject to continual review and reported annually.		

## E - The Financial Management of the Authority and the Reporting of Financial Management

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Budget Strategy	<p>The Council's medium term financial strategy sets out the framework through which financial resources are effectively managed and directed. In doing so it supports the corporate and service objectives and policies that the Council sets out to achieve. The existing budget strategy was approved by members in early 2007, and provides for an integrated approach to the preparation of soundly based capital and revenue plans. The main aims and objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AIM1: To produce three year capital and revenue financial budget plans which enable Aiming High priorities to be achieved and facilitates effective and integrated service and resource planning.</li> <li>▪ AIM2: To ensure the council maximises the generation of resources</li> <li>▪ AIM3: To ensure the council spends within its available resources and maintains a risk assessed level of reserves.</li> <li>▪ AIM4: To ensure ownership and accountability for financial resources is at the lowest appropriate level and that this is reflected in the council's processes and procedures.</li> <li>▪ AIM5: To respond to the government efficiency agenda, support the council's transformational change program and achieve Value for Money in service delivery.</li>   <li>▪ OBJECTIVE1: To ensure that appropriate notice is given of increases or reductions in resources to enable effective service planning</li> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE2: To accurately assess the Councils financial outlook for the next three to five years</li> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE3: The approach to budgeting to be changed to reflect a cash limited approach</li> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE4: To target additional resources at high priority services linked to the achievement of predetermined outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>During 2006/07 the budget strategy underwent a fundamental review alongside the review of the Community Strategy for the Borough and the Council's Corporate Plan. A fundamental review will continue in line with each update of the corporate plan. In addition, from 2007/08 we will be introducing an annual operational update on as part of the process for developing the budget plan.</p>	Ruth Hunter

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Budget Strategy Cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE5: To achieve a clear understanding of the impact of investment on the achievement of priorities</li> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE6: To develop monitoring systems which clearly and accurately demonstrate the relationship between cost and activity</li> <li>▪ OBJECTIVE7: To redistribute resources from lower to higher priority activities in an objective way and therefore minimise the need for across the board reductions</li> </ul> <p>The strategy sets out the activities that will be undertaken to achieve these aims and objectives in addition to targets against which performance will be measured.</p>		
Budget Setting	<p>In February/March each year, the budget fixing Council makes the decision to formally set the budget, on recommendation from the Cabinet. That budget is set on the basis of robust, three-year financial forecasts, with a fully detailed budget for the year ahead.</p> <p>The process begins in September/October with the preparation of budget guidelines and a timetable. This is undertaken in consultation with ELT, Heads of Service and elected members. The guidelines are approved by Cabinet and ensure a corporate approach to revenue and capital budgets.</p> <p>Projections take account of the levels of estimated external funding, acceptable increases in local taxation, fees and charges and prudent but robust analysis of cost and demand pressures. Capital expenditure plans and their revenue implications are developed through the Capital Investment Strategy Group. Corporate and service priorities and plans are used to inform decisions on resource prioritisation. Value for money and efficiency requirements drive the agenda for budget reductions. The medium and longer-term affordability of spending plans and the adequacy of Council balances are reviewed in the context of the budget strategy.</p> <p>Consultation on the budget proposals is undertaken through Township Committees, the LSP, Trade Unions, the Voluntary Sector and other key stakeholders. Decisions to finalise the budget that will be formally recommended to Council are taken in early February. They are based on the outcome of the consultation process and government announcements on the financial settlement.</p>		

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Budgetary Control	<p>Budgetary control ensures that once a budget has been approved by the Council, the resources allocated are used for their intended purpose and are properly accounted for. This is managed through financial procedure rules, budget monitoring and the Council's performance management framework.</p> <p>Financial procedure rules set the freedom and flexibility within which budget management can take place. Expenditure is required to be maintained within an approved budget. Delegations to Head of Service and portfolio holders are only within clear financial limits and where funding has been identified to meet any non-budgeted costs.</p> <p>Budget monitoring seeks to continuously identify and explain actual income and expenditure variations against established budgets. All budgets are subject to monthly budget monitoring and reporting. A risk-based approach is applied to ensure areas most at risk of variation receive the highest level of scrutiny. An annual assessment is requested from each Head of Service in respect of the areas of budget most at risk from variation/overspend and in respect of implementing budget reduction measures. Areas of risk are included as on-going agenda items on budget management meetings between the relevant Head of Service, Head of Finance and Portfolio holder.</p> <p>Financial updates are reported to each meeting of Cabinet and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The detailed financial processes used to produce budget monitoring statements mirror the risk based approach of the budget management meetings, with areas of high budget risk receiving a higher level of scrutiny and financial forecasting. The financial update reports the overall financial position with focus on any projected variations to budget. Corrective action in respect of over spend projections is required as soon as the overspend is identified and will also be a focus of portfolio holder budget management meetings. The Council's performance management framework requires each Head of Service to report on financial and service performance to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. In addition all services are required to report financial and operational performance to the Council's performance Board (Executive Director level). This ensures that the service is achieving the objectives and targets established within the service plan and is doing so within the allocated budget resources.</p>	<p>Financial regulations and procedure rules are undergoing a fundamental review during 2007/08. The aim is to ensure they are effective in meeting the business needs of the council and that they are made more accessible to users. The processes will incorporate a number of user workshops and the development of an integrated framework for accessing regulations and linked financial guidance.</p> <p>Budget Monitoring Processes are being subject to Business Process Re-engineering in 2007/08 to improve the efficiency of this work stream and the effectiveness of outputs.</p> <p>In 2007/08 we are also introducing a financial update report to May Cabinet. At this early stage in the financial year the focus of the report is on the financial risks within the budget for the coming year and actions to mitigate those risks.</p>	Ruth Hunter

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Final Accounts	<p>The Final Accounts (or Statement of Accounts) present the Council's financial position at the 31<sup>st</sup> March and the income, expenditure and cash flows in relation to its activities for the financial year running from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. This allows the Council to assess financial performance and the adequacy of balances, provisions, reserves. It also enables comparison with other authorities.</p> <p>The statement of accounts are required to be produced in line with proper accounting practices, as stated in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003. This is achieved through compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.</p> <p>The production of the accounts is managed through a detailed project plan and clear guidance on the treatment of financial transactions. Regularly scheduled meetings assess progress against the plan and ensure consistency of treatment with regard to cross cutting issues. Dialogue is maintained with the district auditor with regard to material transactions and the application of any changes in regulations or accounting standards.</p>		Ruth Hunter
Governance	<p>The Cabinet is charged with the duty of safeguarding the council's finances, setting financial strategy and policy and approving the annual budget. The duties of the Cabinet include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ To consider the finances of the council and to ensure adequate attention is given to finance in reports made to the Council</li> <li>❑ To oversee the financial services, eg raising loans, collecting money, managing funds, approving supplementary estimates;</li> <li>❑ To oversee the financial position of the council and monitoring of expenditure throughout the year;</li> <li>❑ To recommend areas for economies and improvement.</li> </ul> <p>The Head of Finance provides a financial update to each meeting of the Cabinet setting out the overall financial position in respect of current year, prior year and future year budgets as appropriate. Each quarter, the update statement provides a fully detailed variation statement in respect of each service of the Council, in addition to the financial management of treasury activities and the Housing Revenue Account.</p>		Ruth Hunter

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Governance Cont	<p>All Cabinet reports in respect of corporate and service plans and activities are required to take account of financial implications and identify funding where expenditure is not contained within an approved budget. Variations to approved budgets require the approval and scrutiny of Cabinet either through formal Cabinet meetings or delegated decision making to portfolio holders.</p> <p>Treasury management strategy and policy and prudential guidelines are set by the Cabinet. The annual audit plan receives Cabinet Scrutiny and approval. Progress against the plan is reported throughout the year.</p> <p>The Cabinet also receives scrutiny study reports and recommendations as part of the value for money framework and approach to ensuring the economic delivery of services and continuous improvement (see section below on VFM).</p>		
Financial Administration	<p>Financial Administration is managed through the Council's Procedure Rules. The Procedure Rules provide controls over the activities undertaken by the Council, its members and officers. They are made by the Council itself to regulate the conduct of business. They cover the activities that the Council is Authorised to undertake and how that activity should be undertaken. This ensures that the Council only undertakes functions that are within the limitations imposed upon it by statute and also that those functions are carried out with appropriate regard to proper practices.</p> <p>The Procedure Rules cover a wide range of Council business activity. Some are more specific to member and committee administration, such as the order of business, the rules of debate and the powers of the chair. Certain Procedure Rules relate to finance. Financial Procedure Rules cover high level financial management such as budget preparation, budget guidelines and budget monitoring. Financial Regulations form part of the Financial Procedure Rules and cover the detailed requirements for financial activity across all areas from letting major contracts to paying invoices.</p> <p>All Procedure Rules ensure that work is performed correctly, with appropriate controls to meet the needs of the Council and its customers. Putting these requirements in writing ensure common standards of delivery.</p>	<p>Financial regulations and procedure rules and contract standing orders are undergoing a fundamental review during 2007/08. The aim is to ensure they are effective in meeting the business needs of the council and that they are made more accessible to users. The processes will incorporate a number of user workshops and the development of an integrated framework for accessing regulations and linked financial and contract guidance.</p>	Ruth Hunter

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Financial Administration Contd.'	<p>In doing this, Procedure Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a clear set of rules governing finance in the authority</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set out the powers and duties of committees and director/head of services. This is important when there are changes in committee members or when a new director service is appointed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure uniformity of financial administration between different services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are invaluable to the external and internal auditor</li> </ul> <p>Financial Regulations deal with the more detailed aspects of financial administration. In addition, financial standing orders set out the main rules in relation to contracts. Financial regulations set out required practices in relation to the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> accounting procedures and details of budget preparation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the powers and duties of internal audit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> orders for work, goods and services and payment of accounts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> payment of salaries, wages, pensions, traveling and subsistence allowances and financial loss allowances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> collection of income including writing off of bad debts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> security of assets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> insurance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> banking arrangements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> investments, borrowing and trust funds</li> </ul>		
Internal Review	<p>Internal review aims to ensure the effectiveness of the internal controls operated by the Council. It seeks to ensure that these controls promote the economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the authority's assets and interests are safeguarded. Internal review also validates and makes judgment on the accuracy of financial and related information.</p> <p>The key elements of the Council's internal review framework are risk assessment, internal audit and external audit.</p>		

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 310 1312 480">❑ Risk assessment comprises a review of the financial risks facing the council and the establishment of appropriate controls and procedures to manage and mitigate those risks. This work results in the establishment of a 'financial control environment' through financial procedure rules, financial regulations and contract standing orders.</li> <li data-bbox="464 483 1312 626">❑ Internal Audit review the financial control environment and consider its effectiveness in managing and mitigating financial risk. Risks and controls are tested and accounting records and systems assessed to ensure their appropriate application to operational practices. The outcomes of each review are reported and acted upon.</li> <li data-bbox="464 630 1312 889">❑ External auditors are required to certify the financial statements of the authority and place reliance on the work of the internal auditor in doing so. They provide assurance that the accounts are properly prepared, that proper accounting practice has been followed and that quality arrangements have been made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the authority's resources. Collectively this enables an annual judgment on the Council's financial management, financial practices, financial information and financial controls.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="415 922 1312 974">Further detail of the scope, role and responsibility of Internal audit is detailed at part C of these notes.</p>		

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Value For Money	<p>A systematic approach to value for money was agreed by the Cabinet in March 2006 and a Business Development Unit within Finance Services established to develop and implement the framework. Ownership of the framework is vested in a Value for Money Board comprising the Head of Finance, the Head of Performance and Development and representation from front line Heads of Service. The board is responsible for:</p> <p><b>Corporate Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Determining the Corporate VFM Framework</li> <li>* Developing and implementation of a VFM framework for partnerships</li> <li>* Receiving and Reviewing VFM Self Assessments</li> <li>* Reviewing and challenging service VFM scorecard</li> <li>* Reviewing and agreeing the annual VFM submission</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of Studies and Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Making recommendations in respect of scrutiny studies and receiving draft / final reports</li> <li>* Receiving and agreeing action on any such relevant VFM information that should come to the board e.g. national studies</li> <li>* Receiving and reviewing annual inspection reports</li> </ul> <p><b>Direction and Intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reviewing and agreeing the annual VFM submission</li> <li>* Acting as project board for VFM transformation programme</li> <li>* Receiving and Reviewing requests for Interventions</li> <li>* Determining priority services for support and intervention</li> <li>* Reviewing business case proposals and agree forward funding in principle and within the requirements of financial regulations</li> </ul> <p><b>VFM within Procurement and Partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ensuring VFM is an integral part of the Procurement of Services</li> <li>* Ensuring VFM is on the agenda within Partnership working</li> </ul> <p><b>Management Information and Performance Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Specification of data / information requirements for VFM purposes and championing developments to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of data</li> </ul> <p><b>Awareness and Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Informing the annual programme of information and education</li> </ul>	Value for money is a continually developing field of work. The boards annual work programme in addition to the outcome from framework activities (VFM Scorecards, VFM reviews, inspection reports) will inform annual improvement activities.	Ruth Hunter

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Procurement Strategy	<p>The Council's Procurement Strategy sets a framework within which all the Council's procurement policies, contracting rules and practices operate.</p> <p>The strategy was evolved as a result of work carried out by a variety of disciplines, but led by Corporate Procurement. After approval by the cabinet, the strategy was published and placed on the council's intranet site.</p> <p>As part of the drive towards continuous improvement, the council, in early 2003, commissioned the IDeA to carry out a review of the council's procurement arrangements, in order to assist us in identifying and building on its strengths and to help develop an improvement plan for procurement, which would lead to the achievement of "excellent" status.</p> <p>The review teams report was presented to the council in September 2004, and although the findings suggested that it was within our capabilities to become a regional centre of procurement excellence by 2005, the AGMA Chief Executives decided to nominate Tameside as the site for the North West Centre of Excellence.</p> <p>The centre is now operational and Rochdale Council is represented on the work stream activities that have been created in order to drive the project forward.</p> <p>The IDeA recommendations have been incorporated in the Improvement Plan for procurement, which covers actions required until 2007.</p> <p>The Improvement Plan has been incorporated into a revision of the Procurement Strategy, which was approved by Corporate Overview &amp; scrutiny Committee on the 7 November and by Cabinet on the 21 November 2005. The Medium Term Procurement Plan has supplemented this. A procurement board has also been created to monitor the progress of the procurement agenda against the objective of the strategy.</p>		Mark Widdup

## F - Performance Monitoring and Management and the Best Value Duty

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
<p>Performance Management</p>	<p>The Council has well established performance management monitoring systems. Heads of Service are responsible for reporting performance management information to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the service’s portfolio holder and to the Performance Board.</p> <p>Performance is monitored through quarterly monitoring reports submitted by Heads of Service to the Performance &amp; Audit O&amp;S Committee. (Following a fundamental review of the Committee Services function the Council has taken the opportunity to further enhance its scrutiny role by introducing the new Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. Part of this Committee’s remit will be to scrutinise the performance of all services within the Council.) These reports detail progress, performance, action plans and corrective actions along with six monthly progress against service plans’ objectives, fundamental service reviews and budgets.</p> <p>The Council has an established “Performance Board” which is responsible for high level monitoring of performance and ensuring that the Council maintains its focus on key performance measures affecting CPA and the Council’s priorities.</p> <p>Service heads provide regular updates on progress to date against service plan targets and objectives.</p>	<p>The Best Value Performance Plan will continue to play a major role in performance management within the Authority.</p> <p>Ongoing work to encourage and further develop performance management culture.</p> <p>To further embed a performance management culture throughout the Authority.</p>	<p>Pam Smith</p>
<p>Best Value</p>	<p>Best value reviews are seen as just one tool for improvement. Authorities are encouraged to build their review programme around the areas that present the most serious challenges and biggest opportunities for service improvement. The best value review programme should reflect our own strengths and weaknesses as identified through the CPA improvement process.</p>	<p>For many areas it is felt that straightforward improvements can be made without the need for a review and the importance of developing corporate capacity to deliver improvement is stressed.</p> <p>Continue to develop culture of continuous improvement through service planning process.</p>	<p>Pam Smith</p>

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
<p>Delivering continuous improvement in services not undergoing a best value review</p>	<p>The Council has a number of programmes in place that will ensure improvements are made in leadership and management that will catalyze further improvements across the board as well as in specific service areas.</p> <p>In terms of building general improvement capacity and ensuring it is focused on the most appropriate areas the newly formed Performance &amp; Development Service has developed the Stepping Up programme aimed at developing the organisation so it is better equipped to be customer focused and able to deliver continuous improvement.</p> <p>The ongoing reviews of Pride of Place (Community Plan) and Aiming High (Corporate Plan) will ensure that improvement priority is given to the right areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure progress is monitored the P&amp;D service and Heads of Services provide performance information for scrutiny to the Performance Board and members via the refocused overview and scrutiny arrangement</li> <li>▪ More service specific improvements are investigated via an agreed work programme for scrutiny studies and implementation of the recommendations is monitored on a 6 monthly basis by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>▪ A number of corporate and cross cutting project have been developed that do not sit within one service. These are formally project managed using the agreed project management methodology and progress and outcomes are reported to the relevant project board.</li> </ul>	<p>We continue to develop an improvement culture that ensures the principles of best value are integrated into day-to-day service delivery and the authority continues to deliver improvement across the board.</p>	<p>Pam Smith</p>

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Developing Corporate Capacity To Improve	<p>The Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework measures the effectiveness of the whole council, focusing on the infrastructure that supports service improvement as well as current performance. The ELT action plan addresses the issues raised during our own corporate assessment concentrating particularly on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning and Prioritisation;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Building</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Budgeting;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Performance Management;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a learning organisation.</li> </ul> <p>In December 2005 the Audit Commission's corporate assessment judged the Authority as being a "3 Star" council that is "improving well". The inspection has highlighted development areas for the Council that have been incorporated into the service planning process.</p>		Pam Smith
Local Area Agreement	<p>The Local strategic partnership and council have developed a LAA with its local partners and will report progress to Government Office North west on a 6 monthly basis. The targets within the LAA have been arrived at through extensive consultation.</p> <p>Performance will be closely monitored and managed with all partners too ensure individual and joint targets are met.</p>	The development of an integrated performance management system will enable regular internal progress reporting against all targets and objectives.	Pam Smith

**G - Anti – Fraud & Corruption Strategy**

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
<p>Anti – Fraud &amp; Corruption Strategy</p>	<p>During 2003/04 the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy was produced. This combined the Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistle blowing), the Prosecution Policy and the Benefits Prosecution Policy into one cohesive strategy. It was reported to Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and adopted corporately.</p> <p>The Confidential Reporting Policy has been rolled out to the Council’s workforce with the full support of trade unions. As and when issues are raised under the policy these are progressed in line with the stated procedure</p> <p>A procedure for recording complaints under the confidential reporting policy has been drawn up, early in 2006/07, jointly by Internal Audit and People Management Services.</p>	<p>The policy has been further reviewed and updated during the first quarter of 2006/07 and is currently under consultation.</p>	<p>Ruth Hunter / Stephen Harper.</p>

## H - Staff Development & Conduct

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Job Descriptions and person specifications	<p>The main objective is to ensure that services are delivered by experienced and appropriately qualified people. Job descriptions are designed in a standard format. Where adherence with legislation is part of the role of the post this is included in the job description and person specification. Essential qualification requirements are included where appropriate against posts to ensure that properly experienced and qualified people are placed in the correct roles. Pilots in some areas have used competency based person specifications</p> <p>The recruitment process involves review by the interview panel of the job description and person specification. Recruitment panels can only be made up of staff who have attended the corporate Fair Recruitment and Selection training.</p> <p>Prior to advertisement posts are reviewed by Support Services staff to ensure that they are in the standard format and include all the standard paragraphs, i.e. health &amp; safety responsibilities, equality and diversity compliance and requirement to undergo or provide training.</p>	Further development of competency based person specifications to allow identification of key skills and skills gaps to be addressed by workforce planning and development.	Stephen Harper
Performance & Development Reviews	The Performance & Development Reviews Scheme has been implemented during 2006/07, replacing the Employee Development Scheme council wide. Annual staff appraisal interviews are used to inform the training plan for the section for the next 12 months.	The process is being improved as part of the One to One Staff Review initiative.	Pam Smith
Investors in People Accreditation	IIP accreditation is held by a number of Service Areas in the Authority. Some Departments lost their accreditation with the implementation of the new management structure, e.g. Corporate Services as the department no longer exists.	Consideration is being given to training and development standards as part of a Workforce Development Plan which forms part of the Human Resources Strategy.	Pam Smith
Code of Conduct for Officers	The officer's code of conduct is in place but requires some review, update and a relaunch.	e await the government's model code for officers and will revise our Code as necessary in the light of that.	Catherine Witham

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Monitoring Conduct	The Authority has responsibilities to monitor and report statistically the number of cases of misconduct dealt with. Examples are complaints made by staff, disciplinary cases undertaken and cases of harassment. The statistics are published externally to comply with legislation such as the Race Relations Act. Internal reporting to Service Heads assists in identifying staff management, development and training needs.	The People Management Service currently maintains information of this nature. The database is currently in the process of being improved in order to ensure that this becomes more effective.	Stephen Harper

## I - External Review

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
<p>External Audit</p>	<p>All public bodies are subject to external scrutiny. The role of these review agencies has expanded from certifying the accounts to include performance reviews and quality audits.</p> <p>The Audit Commission is responsible for appointing all external auditors to authorities. The Commission also undertakes Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) reviews for all Authorities, judging them in the following areas: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainable communities and transport</li> <li>▪ Healthier communities</li> <li>▪ Children and young people</li> <li>▪ Safer and stronger communities</li> <li>▪ Older people.</li> </ul> <p>In the service blocks above, the 'harder test' places much greater emphasis on performance indicators and achieving minimum standards across all services. An overall CPA rating is awarded at the conclusion of the process based on star ratings (0 – 4 range, 4 being high). See section below for RMBC's CPA 2005 outcome.</p> <p>The Audit Commission in its Audit Letter dated March 2007 provided an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council, and from a wider analysis of the Council's performance and its improvement over the last year, as measured through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework.</p> <p>The main messages for the Council included in this report are as follows.</p> <p>Rochdale Council is improving well and is now rated as a three-star council under the CPA methodology, an improved overall rating since last year. There is a strong commitment to improving the quality of life, working well with partners to address issues that matter most for local people.</p>		

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
External Audit Contd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has achieved good improvement in services to local people in its priority areas, with notable improvement in educational attainment, rising recycling rates and regeneration activity making visible signs of progress.</li> <li>• Physical regeneration is contributing effectively to improvements to the local economy, revitalising deprived areas and making the area a more attractive place to live. Continued emphasis is needed to ensure inequalities across communities are further addressed, such as narrowing the gap in terms of health, education and employment.</li> <li>• There is strengthened internal capacity, which places the Council in a good position to deliver its ambitious plans. This includes improved staff management, workforce planning, lower absence rates and enhanced performance management arrangements.</li> <li>• Effective multi-agency working is helping to reduce violent crime and burglaries. Success needs translating to other areas such as vehicle crime as there is a risk that long-term crime reduction targets will not be achieved if some recent rises in crime levels are not reversed.</li> <li>• Whilst rising in some areas, resident satisfaction with services is still low compared with Greater Manchester neighbours and other areas. Without a clear understanding of the reasons for low satisfaction it will be difficult for the Council to fully meet local residents' needs.</li> <li>• Concerted effort is taking place to improve value for money through new ways of working including the Impact Partnership, however there remains scope to reduce costs and deliver better quality services across a number of areas of the Council.</li> </ul> <p>An overall summary on the Direction of Travel stated, "Rochdale Council is improving well and is now rated as a three-star council under the CPA methodology, an improved overall rating since last year. The Council retains a strong commitment to improving the quality of life, working well through a range of wider partnerships and is making progress against issues that matter most for local people."</p>		

Description	Process to maintain system and review effectiveness	Improvement Opportunity	Responsible
Services for Children and Young People	CSCI's and OFSTED's 2006 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of Rochdale's services for children and young people. This found that the service consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users in respect of two out of three areas of assessment, therefore scoring grade 3 out of 4. A detailed report is available on the OFSTED website.	Implement Action Plan	Terry Piggott
Waste Management	<p>The Audit Commission inspected the Council's Waste Management Service, including enforcement, environmental education and recycling, refuse collection and street cleansing services. The Council's Environmental Management Service is responsible for delivering these services. Its mission statement is 'we will contribute to providing a sustainable local environment in which we can all take pride by providing a range of quality public services responsive to the needs of the community.'</p> <p>The Service was as providing a fair, one-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. Judgments are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined in the report which is accessible on the Audit Commission website.</p>	Implement Action Plan	Peter Cunningham
Internal Audit	Implement the Post Inspection Action Plan as agreed with the Audit Commission	Implement Action Plan	Wendy Ready