

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

- Date and Time :-** Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 11.00 a.m.
- Venue:-** Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
- Membership:-** Councillors Clark (Chair), Barley (Vice-Chair), Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, Browne, Burnett, A Carter, Cooksey, Elliott, Pitchley, Wyatt and Yasseen.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

7. HRA Business Plan 2022/23 (Pages 3 - 45)

Cabinet Portfolio: - Housing

Strategic Directorate: - Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report to follow

8. Housing Rent and Service Charges 2022/23 (Pages 47 - 78)

Cabinet Portfolio: - Housing

Strategic Directorate: - Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report to follow

9. Medium Term Financial Strategy (Pages 79 - 99)

Cabinet Portfolio: - Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance

Strategic Directorate: - Finance and Customer Services

Report to follow

10. New Council Plan 2022-2025 (Pages 101 - 212)

Cabinet Portfolio: - Leader

Strategic Directorate: - Assistant Chief Executive

Report to follow

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 December 2021

Report Title

HRA Business Plan 2022-23

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

Paul Elliott, Interim Head of Housing Operational Services
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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide – all wards

Report Summary

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records all expenditure and income relating to the provision of council housing and related services, and the Council is required to produce an HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a 30-year period.

Following the introduction in 2012 of HRA self-financing, the Council was awarded control over its HRA in return for taking on a proportion of national housing debt.

The current business plan takes account of known costs for housing growth, housing management and repairs & maintenance. By the end of March 2022 194 new Council homes will have been built since the start of the housing growth programme. It is proposed a further £92.3m will be invested to deliver the Council's ambition to create 1,000 new homes between 2018 and 2025-26. Over the short to medium term forecast, the Business Plan is operating at or around the minimum balance; however, over the longer term there is a significant squeeze on resources due to inflationary pressures even before the costs of achieving net zero carbon are factored in.

This report provides a detailed technical overview of the current position and the reason for changes to the Business Plan. This report is to be considered alongside the proposed 2022-23 rents, service charges and budgets.

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends to Council to:-

1. Approve the proposed 2022-23 Base Case Option 1 for the HRA Business Plan.
2. Review the plan annually to provide an updated financial position.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 HRA Operating Statement
Appendix 2 Summary of Modelled Business Plan Scenarios
Appendix 3 Equalities Assessment
Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

HRA Business Plan 2021-22
DCLG Guidance on Rents for Social Housing
Annual Housing Development Report to Cabinet, 22 November 2021

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 15 December 2021
Council – 12 January 2022

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

HRA Business Plan 2022-23

1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals for the HRA Business Plan for 2022-23 onwards and as in previous years provides information on the positioning of the HRA Business Plan as a driver of housing growth to assist in meeting the Council's housing objectives. In essence the overall approach is to make savings where it is feasible to do, so these can be invested in future new affordable housing and to position the housing service, so it is best placed to respond to future challenges that arise.
- 1.2 Since the last update there have been significant policy changes that affect the business plan, specifically relating to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030 following the government's target for the UK to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This creates a significant financial challenge for the HRA Business Plan which will require further consideration even based on the government's 2050 target.
- 1.3 The overall position remains challenging, particularly given the inflationary pressures evident in costs for delivery of the housing growth programme and more generally the cost base of the HRA. As a result of inflationary pressures this will also see rents increased by 4.1% (CPI + 1%) in line with the government's Rent Standard. Whilst this increase may appear significant it is necessary to allow continued investment in housing growth, ongoing investment to improve the Energy Performance Rating of the housing stock, maintain the decent homes standard and sustain current levels of investment in frontline services.
- 1.4 Performance remains strong in key areas of the business resulting in increased income collection and improved value for money for our tenants. Over the short to medium term the Business Plan operating account is at or around the minimum balance; over the longer-term operating balances gradually increase to £34m by Year 30 of the plan.
- 1.5 The policy of Right to Buy and lifting the debt cap are somewhat contradictory as it means there is the potential for an ongoing reduction in cash flow to fund a potential increase in debt. This means the underlying business must continue to become more efficient and new build housing schemes have to at least break even over the long term. This will ensure there are sufficient resources to service the debt to ensure long term viability of the business plan. The overarching strategy for the Business Plan is to promote growth rather than manage decline, going forward new housing growth projects must break even over the life of the business plan.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council currently owns circa 20,019 homes, 572 leasehold homes and 3,335 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £89.111m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties).

2.2 The overall financial strategy for the HRA is focused on:-

- Supporting more new affordable housing (a further £92.36m including grant income will be invested, subject to Cabinet approval of remaining projects).
- Continue investment to meet the government's net zero carbon target of 2050.
- Increasing rents in line with Government guidance of CPI + 1% i.e. 4.1%
- Supporting delivery of the Council's Year Ahead Plan.
- Maintaining a sufficient level of balances, both as a contingency against risks and to ensure that investment can be sustained over the period of the business plan.
- Supporting tenants to maximise income and sustain their tenancy.
- Achieving and maintaining the decent homes standard.
- Keeping tenants safe through robust management of landlord compliance.
- Tackling fuel poverty.
- Providing a customer focused and effective repairs service.
- Supporting housing and neighbourhood management.
- The long-term viability of the HRA Business Plan is maintained.
- No repayment of debt is made.

2.3 Financial Position of the HRA

2.3.1 The HRA currently has a healthy financial position with a general revenue reserve balance forecast to be £8.32m, a forecast major repair reserve of £8.08m and a One for One receipt balance of £1.282m as at 1 April 2022. A summary of the proposed income and expenditure for 2022-23 is below:

Housing Revenue Account	Proposed Budget
	2022/23
	£'000
Expenditure	84,185
Income (including service charges)	-89,111
Net Cost of Service	-4,926
Interest Received	-7
Net Operating Expenditure	-4,933
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	2,896
Transfer to Reserves	2,037
Surplus/Deficit for the Year	0

2.4 It can be seen that based on the 4.1% increase in dwelling rent income and an increase in service charges of 2%, the budgeted income of £89.111m is anticipated to be collected in 2022/23 and that this is reduced by £84.185m of budgeted expenditure, which represents the net cost of delivering the service. As budgeted income is greater than the net cost of delivering the service, there is an overall net income of £4.933m to the service after interest received. The Council are using part of this to fund the Housing Growth programme. The remaining balance will be transferred to reserves to fund capital costs including Housing Growth in the next few years

2.5 Supporting the transition to Net Zero Carbon

- 2.5.1 Since the last update there have been significant policy changes that affect the business plan, specifically relating to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030 following the government's target for the UK to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This creates a significant financial challenge for the HRA Business Plan as it will require an estimated £585m to achieve net zero carbon emissions in Council Housing. Given the scale of the financial challenge the HRA does not have sufficient resources to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. To even achieve net zero carbon by 2050, the government's target, will be a formidable challenge.
- 2.5.2 The Council aims to ensure that all of Rotherham's residents live in healthy, energy efficient homes. Improving the energy efficiency and emissions of existing and new homes will provide an opportunity not only to reduce carbon emissions but also reduce fuel poverty and improve air quality.
- 2.5.3 As a major housing stockholder, the Council is in a position to directly improve the emissions of a significant proportion of the Borough's housing stock. There is also a need to effect change in the majority of Rotherham's housing stock, which is in private ownership, through direct intervention with Government funding and also through providing information and education.
- 2.5.4 A one-year plan was developed that details the first steps to meet the Council's ambitions for a net zero-carbon future for Rotherham's housing. Given the forecast cost to achieve net zero carbon is so high the Council currently does not have the financial resources to achieve this by 2030. Therefore, the Council will continue to look for opportunities to invest in stock where the EPC rating can be improved to a minimum of C and external grant funding is available to be matched with HRA resources.
- 2.5.5 The four key areas of action in the one-year plan are:
1. Delivery of schemes under Local Authority Delivery (LAD) funding
 2. Develop a "road map" to zero carbon for council housing
 3. Establish energy efficiency specifications for new Council homes
 4. Establish housing stock emission baseline
- 2.5.6 The Council aims to ensure that all of Rotherham's residents live in healthy, energy efficient homes. Improving the energy efficiency and emissions of existing and new homes will be a priority and provide an opportunity not only to reduce carbon emissions but also reduce fuel poverty and improve air quality.
- 2.5.7 As a major housing stockholder, the Council is in a position to directly improve the emissions of a significant proportion of the Borough's housing stock. There is also a need to effect change in the majority of Rotherham's housing stock, which is in private ownership, through direct intervention with Government funding and also through providing information and education.

2.5.8 Given the scale of the financial challenge, the importance of the carbon reduction agenda and benefits to health and fuel poverty the Council will continue to lobby government for a national funding strategy to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

2.6 Supporting Housing Growth

2.6.1 The Council in recent years has been very successful in using HRA land and finances to build and acquire new council homes. Rother Living is the Council's brand for these new homes, and this has become a well-known and trusted name for building high quality homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and outright sale.

2.6.2 Going forward the financial position of the HRA continues to improve due to the return of rent increases following four years of reductions which ceased in 2020-21.

2.6.3 The key achievements of the housing growth programme include:

- Completed the Broom Hayes development, delivering 44 high quality new homes for council rent and council shared ownership
- 177 homes delivered as a result of council intervention in 2020/21 despite unprecedented challenges
- Achieved excellent sales performance for the new Council Shared Ownership tenure with 62 homes already either sold or reserved
- Started to build 171 new homes for council rent, council shared ownership and open market sale in Rotherham town centre
- Started to build 14 new council bungalows in Treeton and Ravenfield

2.7 Two scenarios have been modelled in arriving at the recommended base case.

2.7.1 **2022-23 Base Option 1 (recommended)**

This assumes:

- Social rent will increase by 4.1% for 2022-23 and then increase by CPI + 1% for a further two years (in line with Government rent formula) then CPI only for the remainder of the plan.
- Service charges will increase by 2% in 2022-23 and then CPI for the rest of the plan.
- CPI has been refreshed to the latest forecasts by the Office for Budgetary Responsibility.
- It is proposed a further £92.3m will be invested to achieve the Council's ambition to create a 1,000 new homes by 2025-26.
- There is a borrowing requirement of £30.4m over the life of the plan.
- Right to Buy sales reduce over the life of the plan. These reductions are staged as below:

Year	Number of Right to Buy's
1	172
2	162
3	170
4	194
5 onwards	25

- To accommodate the reduction in income as a result of RTB forecasts there will be a reduction of expenditure in proportion to RTB sales. This will be done by reducing expenditure in supervision and management by 50% and repairs and maintenance by 75% for each property taken out of the asset data base through RTB sales.
- Repairs and maintenance revenue expenditure will remain as in the 2021-22 HRA Business Plan and then increase by £1.2m from Year 5 onwards.
- Investment in Capital works (excluding housing growth) will be relatively unchanged at £1,124m (including inflation) following an increase of £157m over the life of the plan in 2019-20.
- Ongoing investment of £1.6m per year will be made enhancing Housing support services contained in the General Fund.
- Bad debt provision of 1.2% per annum.
- Void loss and allowance of 1.3%.

2.7.2 2021-22 Base Option 2

All assumptions are as in Base Option 1 but rent increases are limited to 3.1% in 2022-23. This means there is an additional borrowing requirement of £7.694m over the life of the plan and borrowing is required to fund investment and repairs and maintenance activity in later years of the plan. For this reason, this option is unsustainable and not recommended.

2.8 The recommended Base Case Option 1 results in an Operating Surplus at Year 30 of £34m and ensures expenditure is affordable throughout the life of the business plan.

2.9 Base Case Option 1 has been chosen because it provides opportunities to contribute to the housing growth agenda and allows incremental progression to meet net zero carbon. Furthermore, it sets out the Council's ambition to build new homes and in doing so creates a long-term new homes programme allowing for longer term planning and greater buying power. Whilst the 2022-23 Business Plan only provides for a housing growth programme for the next four

years it is intended to explore further opportunities to extend the housing growth programme post 2025 in future iterations of plan.

2.10 Key assumptions include:

- There is a borrowing requirement of £30.4m.
- Debt will not be repaid over the life of the plan.
- Ongoing investment of £1.6m per year will be made enhancing Housing support services contained in the General Fund.
- Expenditure is reduced proportionately to stock size, so mitigating the effect of increasing Right to Buys. There will be a net reduction in stock as RTB's are forecast to continue after the end of the current housing growth plan.
- Rent increases are kept in line with CPI following expiry of the Government's new social rent formula which has three years remaining from 2022-23 to increase rents by CPI + 1%.

2.11 Impact on the Housing Growth agenda

2.11.1 The Council in recent years has been very successful in using HRA land and finances to build and also strategically acquire new council homes. Rother Living is the Council's brand for new build homes, and this has become a well-known and trusted name for building high quality homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and outright sale.

2.11.2 The Business Plan supports delivery of multiple housing schemes throughout the borough across a variety of tenures as detailed below:

Financial year	Council rent (social)	Shared ownership	Council rent (affordable)	Open market sale	Total
2017/18	0	0	0	0	0
2018/19	4	0	0	3	7
2019/20	0	1	14	43	58
2020/21	6	35	108	32	181
2021/22	9	29	53	7	98
2022/23	43	62	133	23	261
2023/24	61	69	32	17	179
2024/25	53	39	0	0	92
2025/26	20	18	0	0	38
Total	196	253	340	125	914

2.11.3 The overall number of homes intended to be delivered remains at previous levels. However, some figures have been revised, compared with the 2021/22 version, to ensure affordability within the Business Plan and also to reflect some changes between the different tenures. These changes are summarised in the table below:

Change in no. units compared with 2021/22	Council rent (social)	Shared ownership	Council rent (affordable)	Open market sale	Total
	-281	+76	+83	0	-122

2.11.4 Changes between tenures are because many of the homes previously forecast to be let on the basis of social rent have been re-categorised as affordable rent

in line with the expected grant funding terms which will apply to the Council's future delivery, whilst other adjustments to tenure forecasts have also generated an increase in the number of potential shared ownership homes.

2.11.5 The reduction in overall delivery numbers by 122 is primarily due to the increased cost of housing development (due to factors such as general inflation, supply chain shortages resulting from the pandemic and EU exit, the need for higher specifications and the increased cost of acquiring Section 106 homes due to general house price rises), meaning that in order to achieve affordability within the Business Plan, fewer homes can be modelled. However, the housing development pipeline includes enough schemes and units to achieve the original levels of delivery, and the Housing Service continues to explore all opportunities to increase efficiency and deliver against the Council's commitments. This will be explained further in the 2022/23 Annual Housing Development report next spring.

2.11.6 The benefits of the Council developing and enabling new housing include:

- Generation of income to the General Fund via Council tax.
- Ensuring new homes meet changing local needs, particularly the needs of older people, people with support needs and single person households.
- Regenerating neighbourhoods.
- Wider economic benefits including employment and training opportunities.
- Access to grant funding from Homes England and the Sheffield City Region.
- Replacement of Council homes sold through the Right to Buy.
- Improved quality and energy efficiency of housing stock, which improves health and wellbeing and reduces fuel poverty.

2.11.7 The priorities in the housing growth programme over the next five years are:

- Complete the Rotherham town centre housing programme and identify a number of other residential opportunities in the town centre
- Continue to build bungalows and other accessible accommodation to enable older people and people with support needs to live independently
- Purchase more homes from private developments through the Council's strategic acquisitions programme
- Deliver new, high quality affordable homes on council-owned sites in Eastwood
- Continue to release council owned sites for development by the private sector and housing associations and secure council nomination rights wherever possible, for example on the Chesterhill Avenue and Whinney Hill partnership project

2.12 **Impact on Revenue Repairs and Maintenance**

2.12.1 Given the level of historic investment in existing stock, circa £51.225m over the past three years, that the stock is overwhelmingly traditional build, and its condition is at or beyond the decent homes' standard, a decision was taken in 2018-19 to reallocate investment from this area to further increase the Council

new build programme. This decision has been reviewed again for this iteration of the business plan and the re-allocation of resources to prioritise housing growth is maintained. This means that additional housing assets could be created, generating greater rental income and meeting housing need in the borough.

- 2.12.2 Following the re-procurement of the repairs and maintenance contract new pricing suggests the previous budget savings target of 10% will be achieved over the longer term. As a result, the previous budget reduction's to repairs and maintenance have been retained in the updated 2022-23 Business Plan until Year 5 after which there will be an increase of £1.2m per year thereafter.

2.13 **Impact on Capital Investment**

- 2.13.1 During 2018-19 there was a comprehensive review of the capital investment programme to determine the work needed in our stock over the next 30 years. This resulted in an increasing capital investment from £577m to £734m (current prices) over the life of the plan, as a result no further updates to the long-term investment requirements have been included in the 2021-22 Business Plan although it is recognised that a detailed review of the 30-year asset management plan is required over the next year to inform the 2023-24 Business Plan. The short-term investment has been reviewed and matched to the approved 3-year capital programme. The same principles have been used where peaks in demand in some years has meant smoothing of the programme by delaying some stock investment and replacements to later years as necessary. This will not affect the ability to meet the Decent Homes standard.

2.14 **The transition to Net Zero Carbon**

- 2.14.1 The current iteration of the Business Plan does not take account of any costs associated with the Council achieving net zero carbon by 2030. The Business Plan is currently focused on the importance of continuing investment in new affordable homes and supporting regeneration of the Town Centre alongside maintaining commitments to housing management and stock investment.
- 2.14.2 Given the declaration of a 'climate emergency' in autumn 2020 and the subsequent activity developing the first steps towards a zero-carbon future for Rotherham housing it is only right that the refresh of the HRA business plan takes account of the likely costs associated with delivering this ambition.
- 2.14.3 Based on the likely costs of £585m required for the Council to achieve its aspiration of all Council housing being net zero carbon by 2030 it is clear that this is unaffordable based on projected income and the funding requirements of other investment priorities such as day to day housing management, housing growth and maintaining properties to a decent standard through kitchen and bathroom replacements etc.
- 2.14.4 Over the short to medium term forecast, the Business Plan is operating at or around the minimum balance; however, over the longer term there is a significant squeeze on resources due to inflationary pressures even before the costs of achieving net zero carbon are factored in. As a result, this creates a

need to a comprehensive review of all investment priorities which it is proposed will be undertaken prior to the 2023-24 iteration of the business plan.

2.15 **Supporting tenants with Financial Pressures**

2.15.1 A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the effects of the pandemic and general financial pressures tenants face following the spike in inflation which is predicted to last for the next two years. The Council is committed to supporting tenants and will do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention. Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to pay their rent; by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice.

2.15.2 The Council and its partners provide a comprehensive package of support to tenants and residents facing crisis. Current support offered in Rotherham includes:

- RMBC Tenancy Support Service – provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/ electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service – provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age-related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/ home insulation etc.
- RMBC DHP Fund- residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
- ESF/RMBC Pathways and Inspire Employment Projects – provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/ heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- RMBC Household Support Fund – still in development it is believed the fund will be used to support vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, help with energy costs and financial support to buy essential items such as cookers/fridge freezers etc.
- RMBC Advocacy and Appeals Team – providing people with practical support to maximise their income by claiming any benefits they are entitled too. The Team can assist with application and also with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/ tribunals.
- Foodbanks – provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis. Referrals have historically been made through the RMBC Community Hub

- Social Supermarket – Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills
- Rotherfed 'Making your money go further' project – This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
- Citizens Advice Rotherham – providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt. They also provide support to residents with energy issues through seasonal funded projects such as energy best deal. Historically they have been able to support vulnerable residents through the provision of fuel vouchers. This year's energy campaign is yet to be announced however the Winter Energy Fund will provide up to £10 million which will be distributed through eligible charities this winter. It is dedicated to pre-payment meter customers who are at risk of self-disconnection

2.15.3 Universal Credit roll out continues throughout Rotherham which has seen over 6,000 tenants now receiving Universal Credit with over 1,700 tenants in receipt of an Alternate Payment Arrangement where housing costs are paid direct to the Council.

2.15.4 Given average arrears balances have reduced significantly over the past 4 years the impact of Universal Credit has been minimal. That said a tenant in receipt of Universal Credit will still have a higher arrears balance than other tenants. As at end of September 2021 the average arrears balance for a tenant on Universal Credit was £142.23 compared to £27.02 for other tenants. As a result, the Tenancy Support team continue to work intensively with tenants on Universal Credit to mitigate any potential arrears.

2.16 Investment in other Council Housing Services

2.16.1 An ongoing investment of £1.6m per year will be maintained in enhancing Housing support services contained in the General Fund over the period. In addition, it is proposed to work in partnership with Adult Care to help customers to maintain independence within their own home for as long as possible.

2.17 Impact of the proposed scenario

2.17.1 The impact of the changes to the Business Plan are summarised below:-

- There will be a further £92.36m spent on housing growth over the next five years.
- There will be a borrowing requirement of £30.4m over the next 30 years.
- The General Fund will receive continued funding for HRA support services of £1.6m per year for the life of the plan.

- The 10% reduction to day-to-day revenue repairs over the next three years is retained as per the 2021-22 plan. From year 5 onwards there will be an increase of £1.2m per year.
- There will be surpluses of £34m by year 30.

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 A series of options were considered as part of scenario modelling, these are detailed at Appendix 2 of the report. Details of the HRA Business Plan Base Case Option 1 (preferred) are set out in the main body of the report. This will result in the HRA having an Operating Surplus of £34m by year 30 and provide support to the housing growth agenda and the Council's General Fund position.

4. **Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The Council has a strong track record for tenant engagement and has recently been recognised by the Tenant Participation and Accreditation Service for the excellent framework that is in place to consult and work with tenants on how services are developed and improved. The Housing Involvement Panel is made up of Area Tenant Panel Chairs and was consulted on 24th November 2021.

4.2 The Housing Service undertook a survey of tenant's views in 2018, referred to as the Star (Standard Tenant Assessment Response) Survey which supports how resources are targeted and allows the Council to benchmark satisfaction with other social housing providers. The most recent survey found:-

- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided.
- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home.
- 78% of tenants believe their rent provides value for money.
- 48% of tenants were satisfied that their views were listened to and acted upon.
- Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate services were varied across the borough.

4.3 The HRA Business Plan has responded to some of the above concerns by increasing investment in Tenant Involvement Services and increasing capacity in the housing management teams.

4.4 Members have been consulted on various aspects of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Seminars and Workshops have been held on Housing Growth, Repairs and Maintenance and Housing Policy updates. This has helped inform the proposed Business Plan.

4.5 The HRA Business Plan also supports housing growth, which is important for a wide range of reasons including supporting people's health, wellbeing and independence, contributing to Rotherham's economic growth through employment and training opportunities / investment in local businesses, and helping to meet the increasing demand for affordable housing. Targets have been set for the number of homes delivered as a result of council intervention, and delivery has increased year on year since the introduction of the target, from 109 in 2018/19 to 177 in 2020/21. The Council is therefore making a

significant contribution to the borough’s overall housing delivery targets, which were established as a result of the Rotherham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was completed by the University of Sheffield in 2019 and indicated a requirement of between 550 and 600 homes per year.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The table below shows the approval timeline:

Date	Meeting
15/12/21	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Meeting
20/12/21	Cabinet decision making meeting
12/01/22	Council

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 In developing the HRA Business Plan the CIPFA / CIH code of practice for a self- financed housing revenue account; the Financial Viability principle has been taken into account which states that:-

- The housing authority has arrangements in place to monitor the viability of the housing business and take appropriate actions to maintain viability.

6.2 The HRA Business Plan is reviewed and updated annually to take account of changes to all income streams and the revenue and capital costs of managing and maintaining HRA properties and tenancies. It also considers Capital investment in new build and housing acquisitions for affordability.

6.3 The HRA Business Plan includes assumptions on rent levels as dictated by legislation. The HRA BP assumes that rents will be increased by CPI plus 1% for a further three years from April 2022 and increases by CPI thereafter. In 2022/23 the rent increase will be 4.1%. As the HRA is self-financing, the rental income stream makes up most of the funding available to the HRA.

6.4 The HRA operating balance is forecast to reduce to the minimum sustainable level for years 4-6 in the BP. The minimum balance is £3.7m in year one and uplifted by CPI annually and is the minimum level required to manage financial risk. The forecast is revised each year for the actual income and expenditure incurred.

6.5 Due to the anticipated level of the operating balance future investment in Housing Growth will need to at least breakeven (generate sufficient net revenue income to fund the cost of borrowing). This will support the overarching strategy for the Business Plan to promote growth rather than manage decline.

6.6 The forecast level and cost of borrowing is significant, but the Business Plan modelling demonstrates that this is affordable within the current assumptions for Option 1.

6.7 Option 2 results in a requirement to borrow to fund existing stock maintenance. This is unsustainable without reducing other costs (or services) to reduce the borrowing requirement.

6.8 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

7. **Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 It is vital that the Council has and maintains a robust HRA Business plan, which is subject to regular review and scrutiny to enable the Council to comply with the duties placed upon it. The HRA provisions in the 1989 Act include the duty in January or February each year to formulate proposals relating to HRA income and expenditure. Those proposals are contained in this report.

7.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is designed for management of income-based collection finance generated by housing stock falling under the remit of section 74 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

7.3 Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) the Council has a broad discretion in setting such reasonable rents and other charges as it may determine, and the Council must from time-to-time review rents and make such changes as circumstances may require.

7.4 The duty to review rents and make changes is itself subject to the requirements for notice of a variation set out in Section 103 of the 1985 Act. This will follow any Council decision following a recommendation from Cabinet.

8. **Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no immediate human resource implications.

9. **Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 There are no implications for CYPS or Vulnerable Adults.

10. **Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 The Local Authority is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality, diversity, cohesion and integration and has ensured that the HRA Business Plan is compliant with that duty. An initial equalities screening has been carried out to assess the impact of these proposals and due to the scale of investment and nature of households affected the Council will need put in place an Equality Impact Assessment for this plan. This will ensure the Council continues to promote positive impact and reduce or remove negative impact as a result of the proposed investments. An Equalities Analysis is attached at Appendix 3.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 The HRA Business Plan sets out the proposed value of investment in the housing service for the next 30 years. Given the government's commitment for the UK to be achieve net zero carbon by 2050 this will require substantial investment in the Council's housing stock over the life of the business plan. Initial estimates put the cost of this at circa £585m which represents a formidable challenge to the HRA. It is acknowledged that the Housing Service must now develop a Green Investment Strategy. This will detail how the Housing Service will meet this ambition over the life of the business plan and reduce carbon emissions from the Council's housing stock to net zero by 2050. This will be developed over the next year and investment proposals fed into the 2023-24 HRA Business Plan.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 This proposal is about making effective use of Council assets and managing them to best effect. It contributes to the sustainable neighbourhood's agenda by addressing future investment needs and will help deliver a better quality of affordable housing to the community.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Self-financing involved a significant transfer of risk from Central Government to the Council. Variables such as interest rates, cost inflation, number of homes owned etc. are all risks managed by the Council.

13.2 Any adverse changes in rental income (for example as a result of welfare reform or changes in the number of Right to Buy sales) must be managed locally.

13.3 The risk management plan follows the Council's risk management methodology and approach. It includes a clear description of the risk, an assessment of probability and impact of the risk, a summary of controls and information on when the risk will be reviewed. Risks are monitored monthly at Housing Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings.

13.4 Significant risks will be placed on the Corporate Risk Register and risk issues will be escalated through the Council to Directorate Leadership Team and Strategic Leadership Team as necessary.

13.5 The Council has risk-based reserves to ensure that HRA reserves are maintained at the appropriate level. The reserves will be maintained at the appropriate level to fund potential future financial pressures from risks such as welfare reform and investment requirements.

14. Accountable Officers

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Paul Walsh, Interim Assistant Director of Housing

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	09.12.21
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	30.11.21
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	30.11.21

*Report Author: Paul Elliott, Interim Head of Housing Operational Services.
01709 822494*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

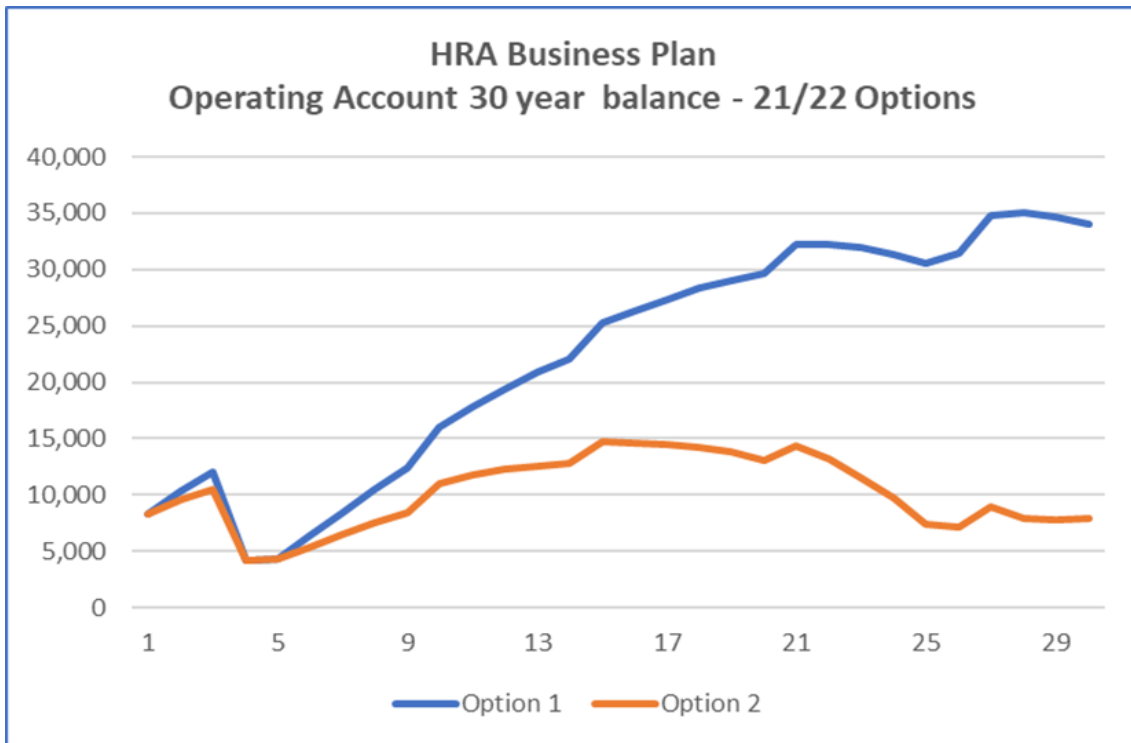
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Appendix 1 – 30 Year Operating Statement – Option 1

Rotherham MBC HRA Business Plan Operating Account (expressed in money terms)																						
		Income				Expenditure																
Year	Year	Net rent	Inc	Other inc	Misc Inc	Total Income	Managt.	Depreciati	Responsiv	Other Rev	Misc expe	Total expe	Capital Charges	Net Opera	Repaymen	Transfer t	Transfer fr	RCCO	Surplus (D	Surplus (D	Interest	Surplus (D
		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
1	2021.22	77,388	0	6,834	84,222	(25,492)	(21,311)	(19,147)	0	(347)	(66,297)	(13,805)	4,121	0	0	0	(6,519)	(2,398)	10,598	63	8,264	
2	2022.23	80,638	0	7,257	87,895	(26,703)	(22,266)	(20,099)	0	(364)	(69,432)	(13,752)	4,711	0	0	0	(2,726)	1,985	8,264	57	10,306	
3	2023.24	84,383	0	7,652	92,035	(27,761)	(23,286)	(20,914)	0	(379)	(72,340)	(13,496)	6,199	0	0	0	(4,527)	1,672	10,306	36	12,013	
4	2024.25	88,454	0	7,935	96,389	(28,356)	(23,860)	(21,355)	0	(389)	(73,960)	(13,330)	9,099	0	0	0	(16,939)	(7,840)	12,013	13	4,186	
5	2025.26	88,420	0	8,219	96,640	(28,997)	(24,334)	(22,948)	0	(399)	(76,678)	(13,826)	6,135	0	0	0	(6,044)	91	4,186	7	4,284	
6	2026.27	90,193	0	8,512	98,705	(29,704)	(24,959)	(23,499)	0	(409)	(78,571)	(13,910)	6,225	0	0	0	(4,137)	2,087	4,284	9	6,380	
7	2027.28	91,895	0	8,805	100,700	(30,427)	(25,551)	(24,064)	0	(419)	(80,461)	(13,910)	6,329	0	0	0	(4,286)	2,043	6,380	12	8,435	
8	2028.29	93,629	0	9,099	102,728	(31,168)	(26,157)	(24,643)	0	(429)	(82,398)	(13,910)	6,421	0	0	0	(4,438)	1,983	8,435	15	10,433	
9	2029.30	95,396	0	9,401	104,797	(31,928)	(26,778)	(25,235)	0	(440)	(84,380)	(13,910)	6,507	0	0	0	(4,592)	1,914	10,433	18	12,366	
10	2030.31	99,066	0	9,702	108,768	(32,705)	(27,413)	(25,841)	0	(451)	(86,411)	(13,910)	8,447	0	0	0	(4,750)	3,697	12,366	23	16,085	
11	2031.32	99,031	0	9,999	109,030	(33,502)	(28,063)	(26,463)	0	(462)	(88,490)	(13,937)	6,603	0	0	0	(4,911)	1,692	16,085	27	17,804	
12	2032.33	100,900	0	10,295	111,194	(34,318)	(28,729)	(27,098)	0	(474)	(90,619)	(13,937)	6,639	0	0	0	(5,075)	1,563	17,804	30	19,398	
13	2033.34	102,804	0	10,594	113,398	(35,154)	(29,410)	(27,750)	0	(486)	(92,799)	(13,937)	6,662	0	0	0	(5,243)	1,419	19,398	32	20,849	
14	2034.35	104,744	0	10,901	115,645	(36,010)	(30,108)	(28,417)	0	(498)	(95,032)	(13,958)	6,655	0	0	0	(5,413)	1,242	20,849	34	22,125	
15	2035.36	108,773	0	11,217	119,990	(36,887)	(30,822)	(29,099)	0	(510)	(97,318)	(13,958)	8,714	0	0	0	(5,588)	3,126	22,125	38	25,289	
16	2036.37	108,735	0	11,541	120,276	(37,785)	(31,552)	(29,696)	0	(523)	(99,557)	(13,958)	6,761	0	0	0	(5,766)	995	25,289	41	26,325	
17	2037.38	110,787	0	11,874	122,661	(38,705)	(32,301)	(30,410)	0	(536)	(101,952)	(13,809)	6,900	0	0	0	(5,947)	953	26,325	43	27,321	
18	2038.39	112,878	0	12,216	125,094	(39,648)	(33,066)	(31,140)	0	(549)	(104,404)	(13,618)	7,072	0	0	0	(6,133)	939	27,321	44	28,305	
19	2039.40	115,008	0	12,562	127,570	(40,613)	(33,850)	(31,888)	0	(563)	(106,915)	(13,616)	7,039	0	0	0	(6,322)	717	28,305	46	29,068	
20	2040.41	117,179	0	12,917	130,096	(41,603)	(34,653)	(32,654)	0	(577)	(109,487)	(13,616)	6,993	0	0	0	(6,515)	477	29,068	47	29,592	
21	2041.42	121,686	0	13,287	134,973	(42,616)	(35,474)	(33,439)	0	(592)	(112,120)	(13,616)	9,237	0	0	0	(6,713)	2,524	29,592	49	32,165	
22	2042.43	121,643	0	13,667	135,310	(43,653)	(36,315)	(34,242)	0	(607)	(114,817)	(13,616)	6,877	0	0	0	(6,914)	(37)	32,165	51	32,180	
23	2043.44	123,939	0	14,057	137,996	(44,716)	(37,176)	(35,064)	0	(622)	(117,578)	(13,608)	6,810	0	0	0	(7,120)	(310)	32,180	51	31,921	
24	2044.45	126,279	0	14,457	140,736	(45,805)	(38,057)	(35,907)	0	(637)	(120,406)	(13,597)	6,733	0	0	0	(7,330)	(598)	31,921	51	31,374	
25	2045.46	128,662	0	14,862	143,524	(46,921)	(38,958)	(36,769)	0	(653)	(123,301)	(13,597)	6,626	0	0	0	(7,545)	(919)	31,374	49	30,504	
26	2046.47	131,090	0	15,272	146,362	(48,063)	(39,882)	(37,652)	0	(669)	(126,266)	(13,597)	6,499	0	0	0	(5,560)	938	30,504	50	31,492	
27	2047.48	136,133	0	15,693	151,826	(49,234)	(40,826)	(38,556)	0	(686)	(129,303)	(13,597)	8,926	0	0	0	(5,732)	3,194	31,492	53	34,740	
28	2048.49	136,086	0	16,124	152,210	(50,432)	(41,794)	(39,482)	0	(703)	(132,412)	(13,597)	6,201	0	0	0	(5,907)	295	34,740	56	35,090	
29	2049.50	138,654	0	16,567	155,222	(51,660)	(42,784)	(40,430)	0	(721)	(135,596)	(13,597)	6,029	0	0	0	(6,459)	(430)	35,090	56	34,716	
30	2050.51	141,272	0	17,022	158,293	(52,918)	(43,797)	(41,401)	0	(739)	(138,856)	(13,597)	5,841	0	0	0	(6,651)	(810)	34,716	55	33,960	
		3,275,744		348,540								(412,121)						(181,802)				

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Appendix 2 – Summary of modelled Business Plan Scenarios



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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: HRA Business Plan 2022-23	
Directorate: ACH & PH	Service area: Housing
Lead person: Paul Elliott	Contact number: 822494
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	
2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening	
<p>The annual HRA Business Plan which sets out all proposed income and expenditure for the HRA for the next 30 years as required by HRA self financing.</p> <p>Strategic allocation of resources within the HRA for period of 30 years.</p> <p>Specifically responding to changes in government policy, macro-economic environment and gearing towards housing growth.</p> <p>HRA Business Plan for 2022-23 provides information on the positioning of the HRA Business Plan as a driver of Housing Growth to assist in meeting the Council's housing objectives. In essence the overall approach is to make savings where it is feasible to do so these can be invested in future housing growth and to position the housing service so it is best placed to respond to future challenges that arise.</p>	

Proposals are designed to ensure:

- There is a significant contribution to housing growth and support to the Council Plan.
- Whilst savings are made no action is taken that will undermine the Council's longer-term ability to react to changes.
- Provision is made to ensure there are sufficient resources available to invest in services where there is an identified need.
- The longer-term viability of the HRA business plan is maintained.
- Budgets remain flexible to react to any significant changes in property numbers currently expected or further government policy changes.
- No early repayment of debt is made.
- Commence delivery of work towards achieving net zero carbon.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	x	

<p>Could the proposal affect the Council’s workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i></p>	x	
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If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual’s needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The HRA Business plan reviews the proposed income and expenditure for the HRA over the next 30 years it therefore indirectly influences what services can be delivered for Council tenants.

The HRA Business Plan responds to some of the above concerns by maintaining investment in Tenant Involvement Services and the housing management teams to deal with issues of ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.

The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which allows investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackle fuel poverty agenda.

The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building up to 1000 new properties over the next 6 years. The tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.

The plan continues to invest over £1m in additional resources per year into front line housing services to support the most vulnerable tenants. These tenants will have equality

characteristics. The Business plan itself does not commission services but details how the housing service will be funded and each service area has policies and strategies detailing how service will be delivered which will each have an Equality analysis.

- **Key findings**

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £84m per annum.

Circa 264,000 people live in Rotherham Borough, about half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. The remainder live in smaller towns such as Wath, Dinnington and Maltby, and in numerous large villages and rural communities, all of which have their own distinct identities.

120,600 Rotherham residents are in employment whilst 106,000 people have workplaces in the Borough, giving a net outflow of 14,700 workers. One in five workers who live in Rotherham are employed in Sheffield and another one in five work elsewhere outside Rotherham.

45,259 children attend 117 Rotherham schools.

Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing. Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles.

One in four residents (25.2%) are aged 60 years or over and 22,500 people (8.5%) are aged 75 years or over. Rotherham has 56,900 children aged 0-17 (21.6% of the population).

Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani & Kashmiri (4% of the population), followed by the Slovak & Czech Roma (1.5% of the population). Rotherham also has smaller Black African, Indian, Chinese, Irish and Arab communities, all with between 500 and 2,000 people.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long term health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,306 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

One in six homes is rented from the council and although house prices have risen over the years, they are about half the national average.

Rotherham Borough has 63 councillors representing 21 wards. 43% of councillors are women and 5% are BME.

There are 30 parish councils in Rotherham covering half the population.

Most neighbourhoods in Rotherham offer a good living environment and 78% of adults are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, which showed 19.5% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Central Rotherham forms the main area of high deprivation although there are also pockets in Maltby, Rawmarsh, Dinnington, Thurcroft, Wath, Swinton and Aston. The main forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are low levels of qualification, poor health, high rates of disability and high worklessness, notably long term sickness.

Adult qualification levels in Rotherham are below average, including the proportion of the population with higher qualifications which reflects Rotherham’s industrial legacy. However, most pupils attending Rotherham’s schools have attainment slightly above the national average. Rotherham colleges provide good quality further education and the new University Centre offer higher education courses.

The Housing Service undertook a survey of tenants’ views in 2019, referred to as the Star (Standard Tenant Assessment Response) Survey which supports how resources are targeted and allows the Council to benchmark satisfaction with other social housing providers. The most recent survey found:

- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided.
- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home.
- 78% of tenants believe their rent provides value for money.
- 48% of tenants were satisfied that their views were listened to and acted upon.
- Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate services were varied across the borough.

The HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by continuing to invest in Tenant Involvement Services and capacity in the housing management teams.

Members have been consulted on various aspects of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Seminars and Workshops have been held on Housing Growth, Repairs and Maintenance, Universal Credit and Housing Policy updates. This has helped inform the proposed Business Plan.

• **Actions**

- Monitor the demographics of tenants in rent arrears on a bi-annual basis
- Monitor the impact of the new build houses by analysis the number of lettings according to the tenants protected characteristic.
- Monitor attendance of tenant engagement events.
- Respond to consultation feedback through Planning Applications.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

4/10/21

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	11/10/21	
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Paul Elliott Interim Head of Housing Operational Services	
5. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:		
Name	Job title	Date
Paul Walsh	Interim Assistant Director of Housing	25/11/2021
6. Publishing		
<p>This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.</p> <p>If this screening relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.</p> <p>A copy of all screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.</p>		
Date screening completed	28 September 2021	
Report title and date	HRA Business Plan 2022-23	
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	13 December 2021	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	8 November 2021	

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: HRA Business Plan 2022-23	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 28/09/21	
Directorate: ACH & PH	Service area: Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott, Interim Head of Housing Operational Services	Contact number: 01709 822494
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Paul Elliott	RMBC	Manager
Kath Andrews	RMBC	Finance Manager
Asim Munir	RMBC	Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The annual HRA Business Plan which sets out all proposed income and expenditure for the HRA for the next 30 years as required by HRA Self-financing.

Strategic allocation of resources within the HRA for period of 30 years.

Specifically responding to changes in government policy, macro-economic environment and gearing towards housing growth.

HRA Business Plan for 2022-23 provides information on the positioning of the HRA Business Plan as a driver of housing growth to assist in meeting the Council's housing objectives. In essence the overall approach is to make savings where it is feasible to do so these can be invested in future housing growth and to position the housing service so it is best placed to respond to future challenges that arise.

Proposals are designed to ensure:

There is a significant contribution to housing growth and support to the Council Plan.

Whilst savings are made no action is taken that will undermine the Council's longer term ability to react to changes.

Provision is made to ensure there are sufficient resources available to invest in services where there is an identified need .

The longer term viability of the HRA Business Plan is maintained.

Budgets remain flexible to react to any significant changes in property numbers currently expected or further government policy changes.

No early repayment of debt is made.

Commence delivery toward achieving net zero carbon

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £84m per annum.

Circa 264,000 people live in Rotherham Borough, about half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. The remainder live in smaller towns such as Wath, Dinnington and Maltby, and in numerous large villages and rural communities, all of which have their own distinct identities.

120,600 Rotherham residents are in employment whilst 106,000 people have workplaces in the Borough, giving a net outflow of 14,700 workers. One in five workers who live in Rotherham are employed in Sheffield and another one in five work elsewhere outside Rotherham.

45,259 children attend 117 Rotherham schools.

Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing. Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles.

One in four residents (25.2%) are aged 60 years or over and 22,500 people (8.5%) are aged 75 years or over. Rotherham has 56,900 children aged 0-17 (21.6% of the population).

Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani & Kashmiri (4% of the population), followed by the Slovak & Czech Roma (1.5% of the population). Rotherham also has smaller Black African, Indian, Chinese, Irish and Arab communities, all with between 500 and 2,000 people.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long term health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,306 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

One in six homes is rented from the council and although house prices have risen over the years, they are about half the national average.

Rotherham Borough has 63 councillors representing 21 wards. 43% of councillors are women and 5% are BME.

There are 30 parish councils in Rotherham covering half the population.

Most neighbourhoods in Rotherham offer a good living environment and 78% of adults are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, which showed 19.5% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Central Rotherham forms the main area of high deprivation although there are also pockets in Maltby, Rawmarsh, Dinnington, Thurgroft, Wath, Swinton and Aston. The main forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are low levels of qualification, poor health, high rates of disability and high worklessness, notably long term sickness.

Adult qualification levels in Rotherham are below average, including the proportion of the population with higher qualifications which reflects Rotherham's industrial legacy. However, most pupils attending Rotherham's schools have attainment slightly above the national average. Rotherham colleges provide good quality further education and the new University Centre offer higher education courses

The Housing Service undertook a survey of tenants' views in 2019, referred to as the Star (Standard Tenant Assessment Response) Survey which supports how resources are targeted and allows the Council to benchmark satisfaction with other social housing providers. The most recent survey found:

- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided
- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home
- 78% of tenants believe their rent provides value for money
- 48% of tenants were satisfied that their views were listened to and acted upon
- Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate services were varied across the borough

The HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by continuing to invest in Tenant Involvement Services and capacity in the housing management teams.

Members have been consulted on various aspects of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Seminars and Workshops have been held on Housing Growth, Repairs and Maintenance, Universal Credit and Housing Policy updates. This has helped inform the proposed Business Plan.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

Do not collect data on gender reassignment or religion and belief at sign up.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

Allocation of properties are monitored by protected characteristics.
Rent arrears are monitored by age, gender, disability.

<p>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>A meeting will take place with the Housing Involvement Panel on 24 November 2021 (Housing Involvement Panel) to seek support for proposals to focus on housing growth so improving housing options available to vulnerable groups in need of housing.</p>
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Meeting with M3 managers and email seeking feedback into the business plan throughout August to November 2021.</p> <p>The plan has been developed with support from Council Officers and input from the Strategic Leadership Team.</p> <p>Councillors, staff and partners play a vital role in the review of the business plan.</p> <p>Following approval the will be effectively communicated to staff and members and training will be undertaken in-house.</p>

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The HRA Business Plan responds to some of the above concerns by increasing investment in Supervision and management allowing the service to increase capacity in the housing management teams to deal with issues of ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.

The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which ensures investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackle fuel poverty agenda.

The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building circa 1000 new properties over the next 6 years. The tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

The proposed rent increase of 4.1% may affect low income groups in or out of work as both pay and benefits have increased at or below CPI inflation. This is most likely to be the disabled.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

Vulnerable people are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community. Support available in Rotherham includes:

- RMBC Tenancy Support Service – provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service – provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/home insulation etc
- RMBC DHP Fund- residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
- ESF/RMBC Pathways and Inspire Employment Projects – provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- RMBC Household Support Fund – still in development it is believed the fund will be used to support vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, help with energy costs and financial support to buy essential items such as cookers/fridge freezers etc.
- RMBC Advocacy and Appeals Team – providing people with practical support to maximise their income by claiming any benefits they are entitled too. The Team can assist with application and also with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/tribunals.
- Foodbanks – provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis. Referrals have historically been made through the RMBC Community Hub

- Social Supermarket – Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills
- Rotherfed ‘Making your money go further’ project – This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
- Citizens Advice Rotherham – providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt. They also provide support to residents with energy issues through seasonal funded projects such as energy best deal. Historically they have been able to support vulnerable residents through the provision of fuel vouchers. This year’s energy campaign is yet to be announced however the **Winter Energy Fund** will provide up to £10 million which will be distributed through eligible charities this winter. It is dedicated to pre-payment meter customers who are at risk of self-disconnection.

The increase in funding for new build housing will assist vulnerable groups on the housing register as it will increase the supply of new council housing so reducing the use of temporary accommodation for such groups when they are homeless. It will also increase the number of Disable person units so meeting the needs of disabled tenants.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

It is not envisaged that the HRA Business Plan will negatively impact on community relations.

The Council will closely monitor the viability of the HRA Business Plan; by building a HRA Business Plan monitoring report to monitor key variables such as:

- Number of homes
- Rental income
- Rent arrears and bad debts
- Voids and void rent loss
- Debt levels and repayment
- Reserve levels, and
- Maintenance backlog

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: HRA Business Plan 2022-23
Directorate and service area: ACH & PH – Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott, Interim Head of Housing Operational Services
Summary of findings:
<p>The HRA Business Plan responds to some of the above concerns by increasing investment in Supervision and management allowing the service to increase capacity in the housing management teams to deal with issues of ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.</p> <p>The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which ensures investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackle fuel poverty agenda.</p> <p>The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building circa 1000 new properties over the next 6 years. The tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.</p> <p>The proposes rent increase of 4.1% may affect low income groups in or out of work as both pay and benefits have increased at or below CPI inflation. This is most likely to be the disabled.</p>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor the demographics of tenants in rent arrears on a bi-annual basis	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	30.06.22
Monitor the impact of the build houses by analysis the number of lettings according to the tenants protected characteristic	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	31.03.23
Collect protected characteristics at tenancy sign up	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	30.06.22

*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Paul Walsh	Interim Assistant Director of Housing	25/11/2021

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the

Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.	
Date Equality Analysis completed	29/10/21
Report title and date	HRA Business Plan 2022-23
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

Appendix 4 – Carbon Impact Assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	Impact unknown	Schemes to upgrade District Heating Boiler houses will be funded through the HRA Business Plan and will look to alternate fuels such as biomass.	The introduction of biomass boilers or other net zero carbon district heating schemes will result in net zero carbon emissions for the heating of the buildings heated by the scheme and a reduction in emissions across the Borough.	N / A	This will be monitored through the procurement process for the replacement boilers and the supply of biomass fuel.
Emissions from transport?	Increased emissions / impact unknown	For new residential developments and works on existing council stock vehicle movements to and from the site will be generated during demolition and construction will create emissions. Through the movement of building and waste materials and personnel.	While it is possible that new households will increase vehicle movements, they may also reduce them. Depending where new residents work and access services. We do not know before a development is built where new residents will move from and whether this move will increase or decrease vehicle movements. Some new properties included in the programme, i.e. the homes the Council purchases as strategic acquisitions will be built regardless of whether	Prospective contractors will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise and mitigate emissions from vehicle movements as part of the construction, during the tendering process. All new housing developments are subject to planning controls and the planning process at the plan and policy development and planning application stages takes into account vehicle movements.	Assessment of whether the new households increase or decrease carbon emissions through vehicle movements is not monitored at this time.

			the Council purchases them or not.		
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	Increased emissions	Construction and works on existing Council stock will generate waste materials through demolition, exporting of materials from groundworks and waste construction materials.	Although new households may not necessarily mean more people living in the Borough, they are likely to create a small increase in the overall volume of waste created and in the distance travelled by waste collection vehicles.	Prospective contractors will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise and mitigate vehicle emissions from the movement of waste, during the tendering process. This will include the recycling / re use of materials on site where possible.	Unknown.
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	Impact unknown	<p>Housing refurbishment and new build schemes that may be funded from resources within the HRA Business Plan may contribute to reducing emissions.</p> <p>Council will result in no direct emissions increase for the council.</p>	<p>Housing refurbishment and new build schemes that may be funded from resources within the HRA Business Plan may contribute to reducing emissions.</p> <p>Equally new build housing built as part of the programme will increase emissions from the heating and lighting of the new properties.</p>	<p>In designing refurbishment schemes and new build property the Housing service will use technologies that have lower carbon emissions where cost effective and practicable.</p> <p>Refurbishment which focus on retrofitting for carbon emissions reduction will generally aim to achieve at least EPC level "C"</p> <p>The Council will ensure that the new homes are high quality, energy efficient and able to meet the challenge of climate change, irrespective of</p>	<p>The Housing Service monitor the Energy Performance rating for all its housing stock.</p> <p>The energy performance of new buildings will be monitored once occupied to ensure that the stated performance standards are met.</p>

				<p>tenure. This means aiming to build to net zero standards where economically viable and at least to the Governments proposed 2025 “New Homes Standard” (75% - 80% reduction compared to 2020 standards.</p> <p>The use of modern methods of construction will be considered for all new schemes, where value for money can be demonstrated as well as carbon reduction.</p>	
Emissions from construction and/or development?	Increase in emissions	<p>There would be some emissions from the construction of new build housing and refurbishment works, although the environmental impact of schemes would be monitored through the procurement process and site waste management plans.</p> <p>It is possible that some mature trees will be removed as part of the development of new sites</p>	<p>Some of the building materials will be manufactured within the Borough.</p> <p>Removal of trees without replacement could, depending how they are disposed of, increase carbon emissions.</p>	<p>In designing schemes, the Council service would seek to reduce emissions via contractors using electric vehicles and specific components that have a lower carbon emissions than previous items.</p> <p>For refurbishment schemes, emissions from the construction and refurbishment of properties could be offset by the reduction in carbon emissions from newly installed components having lower or zero carbon emissions.</p>	This will be monitored through the procurement process and site waste management plans.

				<p>For new build schemes the use of modern methods of construction will be considered for all new schemes, where value for money can be demonstrated as well as carbon reduction.</p> <p>Where trees are present on a development site they will be retained where possible. The planning process deals with protection of trees on development sites and where it allows their removal usually requires equivalent or better replacement.</p>	
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	Reduce emissions	The HRA Business plan identifies funding for environmental schemes which may include tree planting that would capture carbon emissions.	Emissions could be reduced by more tree planting across HRA land.	In designing schemes, the Council service would seek to reduce emissions	Ongoing air quality monitoring by highways
<p>Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:</p> <p>N/A</p>					

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

The HRA Business Plan sets out the proposed value of investment in the housing service for the next 30 years. Given the government's commitment for the UK to be achieve net zero carbon by 2050 this will require substantial investment in the Council's housing stock over the life of the business plan. Initial estimates put the cost of this at circa £585m which represents a formidable challenge to the HRA. It is acknowledged that the Housing Service must now develop a Green Investment Strategy. This will detail how the Housing Service will meet this ambition over the life of the business plan and reduce carbon emissions from the Council's housing stock to net zero by 2050. This will be developed over the next year and investment proposals fed into the 2023-24 HRA Business Plan.

Supporting information:

Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Paul Elliott, Interim Head of Housing Operations, Housing Services
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	N/A
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	N/A
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Comment included in document.

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Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 December 2021

Report Title

Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges 2022/23

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

Mark Scarrott, Finance Manager (Adult Care, Housing and Public Health)
mark.scarrott@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the proposed values of the housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating and service charges and the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2022/23.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet note the content of the report and recommends to Council: -

1. That dwelling rents are increased by 4.1% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Consumer Price Index (CPI) (as at September 2021) plus 1%.
2. That shared ownership rents are increased by 5.4% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Retail Price Index (RPI) (as at September 2021) plus 0.5%.
3. That there is a 2% increase in charges for garages and parking spaces, communal facilities, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities, in line with the Council's policy on fees and charges.

4. The charging model for District Heating (as agreed by Full Council, 13th December 2017) is revised to allow for a planned deficit should energy price increases exceed scheme income.
5. The unit charge per Kwh and weekly prepayment charges for District Heating Schemes is increased by 15% in 2022/23 (Option 1) to limit the impact of anticipated market increases in the prices of energy and fuel costs.
6. Agree the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2022/23.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Non Dwelling Rent, Service Charges and Furnished Homes Charges 2022/23

Appendix 2 - Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23

Appendix 3 - Part A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment form

Appendix 4 - Part B – Equality Analysis form

Appendix 5 - Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – Policy Statement on rents for social housing (February 2019).

District Heating Scheme Charges Review – Full Council (13 December 2017).

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 15 December 2021

Council – 12 January 2022

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges 2022/23

1. Background

- 1.1 The former Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system was replaced with a devolved system of council housing finance, called self-financing in April 2012. This gave local authorities the resources, incentives and flexibility needed to manage their own housing stock. It enabled long term financial plans to be developed and gave tenants greater transparency and accountability as to how rent is collected and spent on the services provided.

The Council currently manages approximately 20,019 properties of which 7,651(38%) are currently at formula rent. Government guidance states that where properties have not reached formula rent by April 2015 it is expected that the rent is moved up to formula rent when the property is re-let following vacancy. The average additional rent for re-lets to formula being £2.88 per week. Approximately 600 properties are re-let each year; it is anticipated that this will generate additional income of approximately £45k in 2022/23.

- 1.2 From April 2016, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 required social landlords to reduce their rents by 1% each year for four years, 2019/20 being the final year.

In October 2017, the Government announced its intention to set a long-term rent deal for both local authority landlords and housing associations. This permits annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus 1% from April 2020, for a period of at least five years.

- 1.3 This report also considers the charges in 2022/23 for services including garages, garage plot sites, cooking gas and communal facilities including laundry services where provided, and District Heating charges and summarises the draft HRA budget.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The average rent in 2021/22 is currently £75.45 when aggregated over 52 weeks. The 2022/23 average weekly rent based on the Government policy of CPI (as at September 2021 = 3.1%) plus 1% would be £78.54, an average increase of £3.09 per week.

Rent increases in respect of shared ownership properties are subject to a different formula of RPI (as at September 2021 = 4.9%) plus 0.5%. Currently there are 51 shared ownership properties that would be affected where rents would increase on average by £2.29 per week from £42.41 to £44.70.

This is the maximum that rents could be increased in 2022/23 in line with the Government policy.

The recommended rent increase will be used to fund the Council's ongoing Housing Growth Programme and ensure we maintain properties to the Decent

Homes Standard. It is proposed a further £92.3m will be invested to meet the Council's ambition to create 1,000 new homes between 2018 and 2025-26.

Whilst this is a significant investment of HRA resources into new build housing the vast majority of tenants are protected from the proposed rent increase as 14,262 tenants are in receipt of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit so will see their benefit entitlement increase to cover all or part of the cost.

- 2.2 Total housing rent income generated through the weekly rents is currently £78.4m in 2021/22. If rents were increased in line with the Government policy this would result in an increase in rent income of an estimated £3.278m compared with 2021/22 rent levels based on 52 weeks.
- 2.3 This report also considers the potential increase in HRA non dwelling rent fees and charges for 2022/23 and proposes a 2% increase in line with the overall review of fees and charges across the Council, as part of the annual budget setting process.
- 2.4 Where the Council has been successful in securing grant income from Homes England (HE) to deliver Affordable Rent Properties the new properties will be managed in line with our existing policies e.g. mutual exchange, succession, subletting etc. The main difference for grant funded properties, compared to Social/Formula rent properties, is the method of managing the rent values which is prescribed by Government. These are contained within the Capital Funding Guide for HE grant and the Rent Standard Guidance.
- 2.5 The Council is required to rebase (revalue) the Affordable Rent value on each occasion that a new Affordable Rent tenancy is issued (or renewed) for a particular property; and ensure that the rent remains at no more than 80% of gross market rent (inclusive of service charges) as of the date the property is re-let.

All Affordable Rent properties are revalued in October and March each year to provide a valid rent value for when Affordable Rent properties are re-let. The rebased Affordable Rent will only apply to new tenants or tenancies.

The actual rents for existing tenants in Affordable Rent properties will only be adjusted in April each year as per the existing annual rent and charges review process.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Housing Rents

3.1.1 Option 1 – CPI plus 1% - recommended

In line with the Government policy on rents for social housing this option would increase rents by CPI (as at September 2021) plus 1% in 2022/23, therefore an increase of 4.1%. This would result in an average rent increase of £3.09 per week from £75.45 to £78.54 per week.

Government policy for rent increases in respect of shared ownership properties are subject to a different formula of RPI (as at September 2021 = 4.9%) plus 0.5%. Currently there are 51 shared ownership properties that would be affected where rents would increase on average by £2.29 per week from the current average weekly rent of £42.41 to £44.70.

If approved this would result in an increase in rent income of an estimated £3.278m compared with 2021/22 rent levels based on 52 weeks.

As the HRA is self-financing, the rental income stream makes up the majority of the funding available to the HRA. Option 1 provides the maximum amount of funding to support the ongoing maintenance and management services for Council dwellings

3.1.2 **Option 2: CPI only**

This option would increase social housing rents by 3.1% and would result in an average rent increase of £2.34 per week from £75.45 to £77.79 per week.

For properties under shared ownership, which are subject to a different formula, if rents were increased by 4.9%, this would result in an average rent increase of £2.08 per week from £42.41 to £44.49.

Overall, rent income would increase by approximately £2.5m if this option was approved. However, this option would result in 100% of all rents being below formula rent values.

3.1.3 **Furnished Homes Charges**

The recommended option for dwelling rents will also apply to tenants with a Furnished Tenancy. As such, Furnished Homes charges are subject to the same inflationary increase as standard rents (CPI+1% for Option 1 or CPI for Option 2). If Option 1 is approved these charges will increase by 4.1%. This would generate additional income of £164k in 2022/23. A full list of charges and proposed increase for 2022/23 is included in Appendix 1.

3.2 **Non-Dwelling Rents**

3.2.1 In line with the review of fees and charges across the Council it is proposed to increase non dwelling charges by 2% in 2022/23.

The proposed increase of 2% would generate additional income of approximately £14k in 2022/23 compared with current charges.

3.2.2 There are a number of leasehold management charges that are based on the full recovery of actual costs and these are excluded from this report as they are not standard charges that are subject to an inflationary increase.

3.2.3 Appendix 1 shows the full list of non-dwelling rents and service charges and outlines the recommended increases for 2022/23.

3.3 District Heating charges

3.3.1 There are currently 18 different schemes and approx. 1270 properties which receive heat through the council's District Heating programme.

3.3.2 During 2017/18 there was an extensive review of district heating pricing to ensure that charges are fair and reasonable to all tenants. A revised schedule of charges was approved by the Council on 13th December 2017 and since then District Heating Charges have remained unchanged.

3.3.3 The energy market has recently seen unprecedented increases in prices for gas and electricity and this is expected to have a significant impact on the costs of operating the councils district heating scheme in 2022/23.

3.3.4 The total direct cost of the running the district heating scheme in 2020/21 resulted in an overall deficit of £62k and the latest forecast for 2021/22 is that the scheme will incur a deficit of around £80k.

3.3.5 Based on the latest price estimates for April 2022, if the Council was to pass on the full cost increase then district heating charges would need to increase by up to 50%. This is not deemed a viable proposition given the size of the increase to some of our most vulnerable households.

3.3.6 Most tenants on the district heating scheme pay a fixed weekly charge to the rent account based on the size of their property. Dependant on actual usage the annual cost to the tenant could be higher or lower than these amounts.

3.3.7 The following two options have been considered both of which protect tenants on the District heating scheme from the full effect of increasing gas prices faced by other tenants but also provides additional income to meet the increasing utility costs to the Council with the aim of achieving full cost recovery by year four (2025/26).

3.3.8 Both options are based on current estimates for the prices of gas and electricity in April 2022 and assume no further energy price increases.

3.3.9 Option 1 – Tapered increase over 4 years - recommended

This option recommends a 15% increase to the current unit cost in 2022/23 and further increases of 12%, 9% and 7.3% over the following three years. This would result in a potential deficit on the District heating budget of £207k for 2022/23 based on the latest forecast energy price increases. The total accumulated deficit over the first 3 years would be £394k.

Table 1 below shows the impact of this proposal over the full four-year period in terms of the actual unit charge and both weekly and annual prepayment charges per type of property.

Table 1 : Tapered Charges over 4 years

Tapered increase over 4 years	Current Weekly Charge 2021/22	Increase 15.0% 2022/23	Increase 12.0% 2023/24	Increase 9.0% 2024/25	Increase 7.3% 2025/26
All District Heating Schemes - Unit Cost KWh (inc VAT)	6.28p	7.22p	8.09p	8.82p	9.46p
Pooled Schemes - Pre-payment Charges per week (incl. VAT)	£	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	9.66	11.11	12.44	13.56	14.55
1 Bed	11.25	12.94	14.49	15.79	16.94
2 Bed	12.90	14.84	16.62	18.11	19.43
3/4 Bed	14.93	17.17	19.23	20.96	22.49

Annual Prepayment Charges inc VAT	£	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	502.32	577.72	646.88	705.12	756.60
1 Bed	585.00	672.88	753.48	821.29	880.88
2 Bed	670.80	771.68	864.24	941.72	1010.36
3/4 Bed	776.36	892.84	999.96	1089.92	1169.48

3.3.10 Option 2 – 15% Increase in 2022/23 then flat rate increase

An increase of 15% would increase the unit charge to 7.22p per Kwh (0.94p increase) in 2022/23 as in option 1, however, in the following three years there would be a flat rate increase of 9.4% in order to achieve full cost recovery by the end of 2025/26.

Prepayment charges would increase to between £11.11 per week and £17.17 per week depending on property size.

The potential deficit to the District Heating budget would be still be £207k for 2022/23. However, the total accumulated deficit over the first 3 years would be £427k.

Table 2 : Impact on charges – Option 2

15% Increase then flat rate increase	Current Weekly Charge	Increase 15.0%	Increase 9.4%	Increase 9.4%	Increase 9.4%
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
All District Heating Schemes - Unit Cost KWh (inc VAT)	6.28p	7.22p	7.90p	8.64p	9.46p
Pooled Schemes - Pre-payment Charges per week (incl. VAT)	£	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	9.66	11.11	12.15	13.29	14.54
1 Bed	11.25	12.94	14.16	15.49	16.94
2 Bed	12.9	14.84	16.23	17.76	19.43
3/4 Bed	14.93	17.17	18.78	20.55	22.49

Annual Prepayment Charges inc VAT					
Bedsit	502.32	577.72	631.80	691.08	756.60
1 Bed	585.00	672.88	736.32	805.48	880.88
2 Bed	670.80	771.68	843.96	923.52	1010.36
3/4 Bed	776.36	892.84	976.56	1068.60	1169.48

3.3.11 It should be noted this is the amount a tenant would pay to their rent account on an annual basis. The annual cost to the tenant will depend on their actual usage, therefore the annual cost could be higher or lower than the amounts in tables 1 and 2 above.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The Council has a strong track record for tenant engagement and has recently been recognised by the Tenant Participation and Accreditation Service for the excellent framework that is in place to consult and work with tenants on how services are developed and improved.

4.2 The Housing Involvement Panel is made up of Area Tenant Panel Chairs and was consulted on 24th November 2021.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 This report will be considered by the Council on 12th January 2022 and subject to approval, would be implemented from Monday 4th April 2022.

6. **Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 Appendix 2 of this report presents the 2022/23 detailed Draft Operating Statement which is effectively "The HRA Budget".

6.2 Table 3 below presents an overall summary position of the Income and expenditure budgets based on an increase of 4.1% (Option 1): -

Housing Revenue Account	Proposed Budget
	2022/23
	£'000
Expenditure	84,185
Income (including service charges)	-89,111
Net Cost of Service	-4,926
Interest Received	-7
Net Operating Expenditure	-4,933
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	2,896
Transfer to Reserves	2,037
Surplus/Deficit for the Year	0

6.3 Based on the recommended 4.1% increase (option 1) in dwelling rent income and an increase in service charges of 2%, the budgeted income of £89.111m is anticipated to be collected in 2022/23 and this is reduced by £84.185m of budgeted expenditure, which represents the net cost of delivering the service.

6.4 As budgeted income is greater than the net cost of delivering the service, there is an overall net income of £4.933m to the service after interest received.

6.5 Based on a review of the HRA business plan a Revenue Contribution to Capital of £2.896m has been made towards the approved HRA Capital investment Programme. Therefore, there will be a transfer to the HRA Reserves of £2.037m to provide an overall balanced budget for 2022/23, this is provided for within the revised HRA Business Plan.

6.6 The contribution to reserves will be drawn down in 2024/25 as part of the capital financing requirement for Housing Growth and investment in existing stock.

6.7 There are no direct procurement implications within this report.

7. **Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 allows local authorities to make such reasonable charges as they may determine for a tenancy or occupation of their houses. Further, it requires the Council from time to time to review rents and other charges and make such changes, as circumstances may require. The

changes proposed in the recommendations to this report would fall within the ambit of the Council's discretion as set out in section 24 of the Housing Act 1985.

- 7.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is designed for management of income-based collection finance generated by housing stock falling under the remit of section 74 Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Such income includes, but is not limited to, rent recovery. Clause 2 of the RMBC Tenancy agreement outlines the scope of rent obligations for RMBC Tenants. This includes reference to District Heating charges. It is perceived that there is an intention for District Heating in full or in part to be viewed as a rent. The Government also identifies that matters considered to be "core services" will fall within the scope of the HRA. Communal heating is listed as one of the Government's "Core Services" and is therefore perceived to be an income which can be allocated to the HRA. On this basis, and upon scrutiny of HRA operational rules, there appears to be a legal basis for District Heating to be brought under the HRA as well as any associated deficit arising from the same.
- 7.3 It should be noted that there is no definitive legal position in relation to the above and there therefore still exists a risk of legal challenge. In order to minimise any such risks, the Council must be clear and transparent in relation to its intentions with the HRA.
- 7.4 When setting rents and other charges, the Council must be clear and transparent in doing so and this must also be in line with the Governments rules in respect of rent setting, as well as being in line with rules around fair social housing rent, in order to minimise any risk of legal challenge. Furthermore, the Council should also ensure that it fully considers and takes into account all consultation responses to ensure that its decision is robust.
- 7.5 As with all decisions, the Council should consider all possible impacts taking into account its Public Sector Equality Duty and Human Rights implications, in order to further minimise the risks of legal challenge.

8. **Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

9. **Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 No direct implications.

10. **Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The local authority is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. An initial equalities screening has been carried out to assess the impact of the proposals within the report to increase Housing Rents and services charges for 2022/23 and an Equality Impact Assessment put in place. This will ensure the Council continues to promote positive impact and reduce or remove any negative impact as a result

of the proposed increase in charges. An Equalities Analysis is attached at Appendix 3 and 4.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change Implications for Partners

11.1 This report recommends increases to the unit and prepayment charges for tenants on the Councils District Heating Schemes and this may impact on their future energy usage. A completed Carbon Impact Assessment is attached to this report at Appendix 5.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 No direct implications for partners and other directorates.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1. The greatest risk and uncertainty is the level of rent income received into the Housing Revenue Account. This is dependent upon the number of properties available to generate income.

13.2 The level of properties is directly affected by the level of sales and demolitions which may vary to those used in the budget assumptions. Rules regarding Right to Buy (RTB) receipts were implemented in April 2012 included increasing the discount cap, which is currently £84,600. This has seen the number of RTB sales increase significantly because of the higher discount cap. Total sales in 2020/21 were 90, it is estimated that there will be 245 RTB by the end of 2021/22 and the HRA Business Plan assumes a further increase of 162 sales in 2022/23.

13.3 Strategic Housing Investment plans involve the acquisition or build of 165 new properties for council rent in 2022/23 and 37 new shared ownership properties which will also bring in additional rent income. This will assist in mitigating against lost rental income for RTB sales.

13.4 The changes to the rent formula from 2016/17 has resulted in the Council receiving less income in the last four years, therefore impacting on the 30-year business plan.

13.5 The Government's changes to welfare benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit will also impact on the level of rent income collected including the level of arrears and therefore be reflected in the Housing Revenue Account balances.

13.6 All budgets carry a certain level of risk in that unforeseen circumstances may arise, causing additional pressures on the level of resources applied.

14. Accountable Officers

Anne Marie Lubanski, Assistant Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health annemarie@rotherham.gov.uk

Paul Walsh, Assistant Director of Housing. paul.walsh@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	10/12/21
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	30/11/21
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	26/11/21

*Report Author: Mark Scarrott, Finance Manager - Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
mark.scarrott@rotherham.gov.uk*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

Appendix 1 : Non Dwelling Rents, Service Charges and Furnished Homes Charges

Description of Charge	Current Charge 2021/22	Basis of charge	(+ 2%)		CPI + 1% (+ 4.1%)		Other		Additional Comments
			Proposed Charge 2022/23	Increase	Proposed Charge 2022/23	Increase	Proposed Charge 2022/23	Increase	
Non Dwelling Rents and Service Charges									
Garage rent / Car Parking space - Council Tenant	£5.20	per week	£5.30	£0.10					
Garage rent / Car Parking space - Non Council Tenant or Council tenant with more than one garage	£6.24	per week	£6.36	£0.12					
Garage Plots	£62.70	per annum	£63.95	£1.25					
Unsurfaced Garage Plots	£56.43	per annum	£57.56	£1.13					
Wharnccliffe Flats Parking Space	£6.83	per week	£6.97	£0.14					
Hot Water Supply	£2.03	per week	£2.07	£0.04					
Cooking Gas	£0.93	per week	£0.95	£0.02					
Communal Facility	£4.95	per week	£5.05	£0.10					
Communal Block - additional bedroom charge	£21.26	per week	£21.69	£0.43					
Laundry	£1.66	per week	£1.69	£0.03					
Contents Insurance (average)	£1.28	per week	£1.31	£0.03					
Acquired Ground Rent	£5.71	per week					£6.28	£0.57	Annual increase of 10% as per tenancy agreement
Acquired Estate Fee	£3.34	per week					£3.50	£0.16	Annual increase by RPI (as at September = 4.9%)
Furnished Homes Charges									
Furnished Homes: Carpets only	£9.64	per week			£10.04	£0.40			
Furnished Homes: Washer only	£2.75	per week			£2.86	£0.11			
Furnished Homes: Dryer only	£2.03	per week			£2.11	£0.08			
Furnished Homes: Washer and Dryer	£4.78	per week			£4.98	£0.20			
Furnished Homes: Combi Washer/Dryer	£5.44	per week			£5.66	£0.22			
Furnished Homes: Bronze only	£8.94	per week			£9.31	£0.37			
Furnished Homes: Bronze + carpets	£18.59	per week			£19.35	£0.76			
Furnished Homes: Silver only	£14.13	per week			£14.71	£0.58			
Furnished Homes: Silver + carpets	£23.78	per week			£24.75	£0.97			
Furnished Homes: Gold only	£22.87	per week			£23.81	£0.94			
Furnished Homes: Gold + carpets	£32.51	per week			£33.84	£1.33			
Furnished Homes: Platinum only	£32.27	per week			£33.59	£1.32			
Furnished Homes: Platinum + carpets	£41.92	per week			£43.64	£1.72			

All the above charges include VAT where applicable

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HRA - Draft Budget Operating Statement 2022/23

Option 1 : Increased by 4.1%

Narrative	Full-year Budget 2021/22 £	Full-year Budget 2022/23 £	Year on Year Change £
Contributions to Housing Repairs Account	19,102,140	20,099,170	997,030
Supervision and Management	25,464,950	26,702,960	1,238,010
Rents, Rates, Taxes etc.	347,100	447,520	100,420
Provision for Bad Debts	940,800	980,100	39,300
Cost of Capital Charge	13,606,160	13,773,430	167,270
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	21,311,260	21,982,030	670,770
Debt Management Costs	225,000	200,000	-25,000
Expenditure	80,997,410	84,185,210	3,187,800
Dwelling Rents	-78,396,670	-81,674,840	-3,278,170
Non-dwelling Rents	-780,800	-716,080	64,720
Charges for Services and Facilities	-5,265,520	-5,913,580	-648,060
Other Fees and Charges	-574,600	-559,990	14,610
Leaseholder Income	-171,760	-247,110	-75,350
Income	-85,189,350	-89,111,600	-3,922,250
Net Cost of Services	-4,191,940	-4,926,390	-734,450
Interest Received	-100,000	-7,060	92,940
Net Operating Expenditure	-4,291,940	-4,933,450	-641,510
Appropriations:			
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay	6,518,680	2,896,000	-3,622,680
Transfer to (+)/From (-) Reserves	-2,226,740	2,037,450	4,264,190
Surplus/Deficit for the Year	0	0	0

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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Housing Revenue Account Rents and Services Charges Report 2022-23	
Directorate: Finance & Customer Services	Service area: Finance Business Partnering – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
Lead person: Mark Scarrott	Contact number: Extn 22007
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The impact on existing and future council tenants of increasing housing rents and service charges from April 2022. The proposed increase in housing rents is 4.1% from April 2022, an increase in services charges of 2% in line with the Council's policy on fees and charges and increases to District Heating Charges of 15% in 2022/23. This is a result of the significant rise in energy prices which is expected to

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impact significantly on the direct operating costs of the district heating schemes.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		√
Could the proposal affect service users?	√	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	√	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	√	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	√	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		√

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

--

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

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Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The Council currently owns circa 20,019 homes, 572 leasehold homes and 3,335 garages with a turnover from rents and other income sources approaching £85m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties). This includes approx. 1,270 properties in the Council's District Heating Scheme.

Some of the key elements of the Housing Strategy are to support housing growth, achieve and maintain properties to the decent homes standard, keeping all tenants safe, tackling fuel poverty, providing a customer focus and efficient housing repairs service and provide an effective support service for all neighbourhoods within the borough.

Under Government rent setting rules all social housing providers have had an enforced rent reduction of -1% over 4 years to the end of 2019/20. The Rent Standard is published by Government to ensure all social housing is affordable and follows the same rules and regulations in terms of setting rent. The latest advice published enables Social Housing providers to increase rent by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for inflation + 1% and that this formula is confirmed for the next 5 years. This enables the Council to increase rents for council tenants by up to 4.1% for 2022-23. There are also a number of properties under shared ownership where rents can be increased by up to 5.4% in line with the agreed formula of Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5%.

When re-letting a void property the Council policy to date has been to increase the rent to formula rent (as a result we now have 7,651 homes that are paying rent at the Government's standard).

- **Key findings**

Circa 264,000 people live in Rotherham Borough, about half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing.

Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles. One in four residents (25.2%) are aged 60 years or over and 22,500 people (8.5%) are aged 75 years or over. Rotherham has 56,900 children aged 0-17 (21.6% of the population). Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long-term

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health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,296 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 44th most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, which showed 21.6% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

The Housing Service undertake an annual survey of tenants' views, referred to as the Star (Standard Tenant Assessment Response) Survey which supports how resources are targeted and allows the Council to benchmark satisfaction with other social housing providers. The most recent survey found:

- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided.
- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home.
- 78% of tenants believe their rent provides value for money.
- 48% of tenants were satisfied that their views were listened to and acted upon.
- Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate services were varied across the borough.

One in six homes is rented from the council and although house prices have risen over the years, they are about half the national average.

The Council currently owns circa 20,019 homes, 572 leasehold homes and 3,335 garages with a turnover from rents and other income sources approaching £85m per annum.

There are 14,262 Council tenancies in receipt of Housing benefit/Universal Credit who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent and 5,455 tenancies that would be directly affected by a rent increase as they would pay from their household income. The tenants in receipt of benefit (housing benefit or UC) which would see their benefit entitlement adjusted to meet an increase in rent are:

- 6070 are on Universal Credit
- 4913 tenants are on full HB
- 3279 tenants on part HB

• **Actions**

A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the impact of welfare reform and general financial pressures tenants face. The Council is committed to minimising any effects of welfare reform on tenants and to do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention. Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to pay their rent; by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice; this is being done through our Financial Inclusion team. The past year has seen the Advocacy and Appeals service transfer into the Financial Inclusion team and as such funding for Money Advice Officers to support tenants in rent arrears manage priority debts.

APPENDIX 3

Over the last few years the Housing Service has invested more into front line and general fund services, an additional £1m per year into the front line to provide more support for our most vulnerable tenants and £1.6m per year into housing support services.	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	27/10/2021
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	03/11/2021
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Mark Scarrott – Finance Manager – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Owen Campbell	Head of Finance – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	25.11.21

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	03/11/2021
Report title and date	Housing Revenue Account Rent and Service Charges 2022/23
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	20 December 2021
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

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PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Housing Revenue Account Rents and Services Charges Report 2021-22	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 3 November 2021	
Directorate: Finance & Customer Services	Service area: Finance Business Partnering – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
Lead Manager: Mark Scarrott	Contact number: Extn 22007
Is this a: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

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2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance		
Name	Organisation	Role (e.g. service user, managers, service specialist)
Mark Scarrott	RMBC	Manager
Paul Elliott	RMBC	Manager
Owen Campbell	RMBC	Manager

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

Section 23 of The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 implemented the Government's policy on social housing rents which requires providers of social housing to reduce rents by 1% per year for four years with effect from April 2016 to March 2020.

The policy applied to all registered providers of social housing including local authority landlords, who have a statutory obligation to implement the policy.

This has now been replaced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) – Policy Statement on rents for social housing (February 2019) allowing Councils to increase rents by Consumer Price Index (CPI) (as at September) plus 1% from April 2020 and in respect of shared ownership properties increase rents by Retail Price Index (RPI) (as at September) plus 0.5%.

The report also considers the non-dwelling rent charges for garages, garage plot sites, cooking gas and communal facilities including laundry services where provided recommending an increase of 2% in line with the proposed increase in fees and charges across the Council. Also included are proposals to increase District Heating charges in 2022/23 and the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23.

The report recommends the following proposals: -

1. That dwelling rents are increased by 4.1% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Consumer Price Index (CPI) (as at September 2021) plus 1%.
2. That shared ownership rents are increased by 5.4% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Retail Price Index (RPI) (as at September 2021) plus 0.5%.
3. That there is a 2% increase in charges for garages and parking spaces, communal facilities, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities, in line with the Council's policy on

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fees and charges.

4. The charging model for District Heating (as agreed by Full Council, 13th December 2017) is revised to allow for a planned deficit should energy price increases exceed scheme income.
5. The unit charge per Kwh and weekly prepayment charges for District Heating Schemes is increased by 15% in 2022/23 (Option 1) to limit the impact of anticipated market increases in the prices of energy and fuel costs.
6. Agree the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2022/23.

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

The Council currently owns circa 20,019 homes, 572 leasehold homes and 3,335 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £85m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties). This includes approx.1270 properties in the council's district heating scheme.

Circa 264,000 people live in Rotherham Borough, about half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing.

Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles. One in four residents (25.2%) are aged 60 years or over and 22,500 people (8.5%) are aged 75 years or over. Rotherham has 56,900 children aged 0-17 (21.6% of the population).

Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long-term health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,296 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 44th most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, which showed 21.6% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

The Housing Service undertook a survey of tenants' views referred to as the Star (Standard Tenant Assessment Response) Survey which supports how resources are targeted and allows the Council to benchmark satisfaction with other social housing providers. The most recent survey found:

APPENDIX 4

- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided
- 80% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home
- 78% of tenants believe their rent provides value for money
- 48% of tenants were satisfied that their views were listened to and acted upon
- Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate services were varied across the borough

The HRA Budget has responded to some of the above concerns by increasing investment in Tenant Involvement Services and increasing capacity in the housing management teams.

One in six homes is rented from the council and although house prices have risen over the years, they are about half the national average.

The Housing Rents report complies with Government policy on social housing to increase rents by CPI plus 1% from April 2020. The implementation will be monitored as part of monthly budget monitoring and the collection of rent income from Council tenants; this will include any rent arrears.

Members have been consulted on the proposals for housing rents as part of the review of the HRA Business Plan.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

No data is collected in respect of gender reassignment and religion and belief protected characteristics.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

The allocation of Council properties is monitored by protected characteristics and rent arrears are monitored by age, gender and disability.

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

24 November 2021 (Housing Involvement Panel) – supported proposals to focus on housing growth so improving housing options available to vulnerable groups in need of housing.

Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Engagement has been undertaken with Members and managers within Housing Services in respect of formulating the recommendations within this report.

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

As part of the HRA budget there is increasing investment in Tenant Involvement Services and increasing capacity in the housing management teams to deal with issues of Anti-Social Behaviour, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups through increasing staffing numbers.

The Housing Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through identifying funding towards building new properties of different tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) which has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.

Within the draft HRA budget for 2022/23 there is a contribution to the Housing Capital Programme of £2.896m towards investment in increasing and maintaining existing housing stock.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

The proposed increase in Council Rents and Services Charges may impact on tenants on low income not receiving housing benefit or Universal Credit towards their housing rent.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

Vulnerable people are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community. A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the impact of welfare reform and general financial pressures tenants face. The Council is committed to minimising any effects of welfare reform on tenants and to do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention.

Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to pay their rent; by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice; this is being done through our Financial Inclusion team. The Advocacy and Appeals service is now part of the Financial Inclusion team and as such provides Money Advice Officers to support tenants in rent arrears manage debts.

The increase in funding identified within the Business Plan to increase the supply of new council properties will assist vulnerable groups on the council house register, including reducing the number of temporary accommodation and increasing the support for accommodation for the disabled.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to

APPENDIX 4

consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

It is not envisaged that the HRA Rents and Services Charges report will have any negative impact on community relations.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Housing Revenue Account Rents and Services Charges Report 2022-23
Directorate and service area: Finance and Customer Services – Finance Business Partnering (Adult Care, Housing and Public Health)
Lead Manager: Mark Scarrott
Summary of findings:
The proposed increase in Council Rents and Services Charges may impact on tenants on low income not receiving housing benefit or Universal Credit towards their housing rent. Vulnerable people are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor the demographics of tenants in rent arrears on a bi-annual basis	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	06/2022
Monitor the impact of the 4.1% rent increase, 2% increase in service charges and impact of the increase in District Heating (including fluctuating energy prices) on the HRA budget	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	03/2023

***A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups**

6. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.		
Name	Job title	Date
Paul Walsh	Assistant Director of Housing	

7. Publishing	
The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.	
If this Equality Analysis relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.	
A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.	
Date Equality Analysis completed	05/11/2021
Report title and date	Housing Revenue Account Rents and Services Charges Report 2022-23
Date report sent for publication	10/12/2021
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

Appendix 5 : Carbon Impact Assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	No Impact				
Emissions from transport?	No Impact				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	No Impact				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	Impact unknown	<p>Potential increase in emissions from new Council properties to be funded by the resources to be approved under the recommendations.</p> <p>Increases in district heating charges may potentially reduce emissions by encouraging tenants to be more efficient in their energy usage.</p>	N/A	<p>Increase the use of bio-fuel on Council district heating schemes.</p> <p>Community Energy Support scheme launched in March 2021.</p>	N/A

Emissions from construction and/or development?	No Impact				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	No Impact				

Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

The report focuses on the proposed increases in charges for rents and service charges but also covers the charges for tenants who are part of the Council's District Heating schemes. There are 18 separate District Heating Schemes throughout the borough, 2 of which are currently operate partly with bio-fuel which generates Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) income depending on the amount of heat generated.

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

See impact table

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Mark Scarrott Finance Manager – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 December 2021

Report Title

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

Graham Saxton, Assistant Director of Financial Services
01709 822034 or Graham.Saxton@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The report sets out a review and update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26.

Following the release of the Government's Spending Review 2021, this is an update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, extended to 2025/26. The MTFs will be revised further in advance of the Council Budget setting meeting in March 2022, to take account of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23, when issued, along with budget policy proposals on levels of council tax and fees and charges and any budget investment.

The MTFs review, alongside the latest Financial Monitoring 2021/22 report to Cabinet in November, envisages a balanced financial outturn position being achieved for 2021/22 and makes recommendations on reserving funds and savings from 2021/22 in order to support the budget over the medium term.

The MTFs forecasts identify that a balanced budget for 2022/23 can be set, with a small funding gap for the following two years. This position is subject to review when the Finance Settlement for 2022/23 is received.

Recommendations

1. That the MTFS update is noted.
2. That the proposals to reserve funding and savings from 2021/22 to support the budget across the medium term are supported.
3. That finalisation of the Budget for 2022/23 and MTFS to 2025/26 maintains the approved Budget Strategy.
4. That Cabinet agree to the carry forward of any remaining budget for 2021/22 revenue budget investments into 2022/23 to allow for those investment to be completed.
5. That Cabinet note the delegated officer decision on use of CCG funds as set out in paragraphs 2.37 – 2.39.
6. That the authority to complete an agreement with the DfE within the DSG Safety Valve Intervention Programme is delegated to the Strategic Director – Children & Young People’s Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Initial Equality Screening Assessment
- Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 report to Council 3rd March 2021

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Review and Update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2022/23 was approved at Council in March 2021, noting that the MTFS would be further reviewed and extended when the Government's Spending Review 2021 was published.
- 1.2 The Spending Review was published on 27th October 2021 and provided headline information for local government funding from 2022/23 to 2024/25
- 1.3 This update of the MTFS includes resource forecasts based on the headline information from the Spending Review and will be reviewed again when the Provisional Local Finance Settlement 2022/23 is released in December, which will set out the specific amounts of Government funding to be provided to the Council.
- 1.4 This update of the MTFS also includes the Council's latest financial assumptions, taking into account estimated income from Business Rates and Council Tax, impact of inflation, service cost and demand pressures and the Council's timeline for the delivery of agreed savings across the MTFS. This update will support and inform the detailed budget setting process for 2022/23, alongside taking into account the outcomes of the Finance Settlement and Members' policy choices on budget investment and council tax.

2. Key Issues

Spending Review 2021

- 2.1 The Spending Review set out spending totals for local government across England for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. These are shown in the table below:

Funding	2021/22 Baseline £bn	2022/23 £bn	2023/24 £bn	2024/25 £bn
Resource Total	9.1	10.8	12.1	12.7
This includes:				
Adult Social Care Reform	0	0.2	1.4	2.0
Other Funding	0	1.6	1.6	1.6

- 2.2 These are the headline figures behind the statements in the Spending Review of :
- £3.6bn for Adult Social Care Reform over the next three years
 - £1.6bn per year (£4.8bn over 3 years) extra funding for local government
- 2.3 For the £3.6bn funding for Adult Social Care Reform the Spending Review quotes “£3.6bn of funding will be routed through local authorities in order to implement the charging reforms and support local authorities to better sustain their local care market by moving towards a fairer cost for care. Further details will be set out by the Government in due course.”
- 2.4 A public consultation on proposals is planned by Government in the new year, with the intention of regulations and final guidance on the implementation of Adult Social Care reforms being published in Spring 2022. The reforms in relation to charges for Adult Social Care are planned to commence from October 2023.
- 2.5 Pending these further details to be set out by Government and the Council’s follow-on assessment of cost impact compared with the funding to be provided, the planning assumption in this MTFS update is neutral impact.
- 2.6 The Balance of Resources (£1.6bn extra funding in each year) is the total amount of other additional funding for Local Government which is intended to cover:
- Funding for a range of specific grants and new burdens e.g. the Supporting Families extra funding will be top-sliced from the £1.6bn. It is also anticipated that the funding will need to cover general ongoing cost impact of Covid.
 - Inflation impact, including National Living Wage increases. i.e. existing Core Government Grants won’t be increased for inflation on top of the £1.6bn.
 - Compensation to Local Government for the cost of the 1.25% increase in Employers’ National Insurance contributions from April 2022.
- 2.7 Specific council allocations from this funding won’t be issued until the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23, expected to be announced around mid December. Funding allocations will depend on the grant distribution methodology to be adopted and the extent of top-slicing, but based on a general distribution methodology which the Government uses to distribute Covid funding, a prudent expectation of the Council’s share of the funding is in the order of £7m per year, plus a share of any specific grant funding allocated from top-slicing of the £1.6bn. This estimate has been factored into the MTFS update. The MTFS will then be revised as part of finalising budget proposals for 2022/23 when the actual figure is known in the Settlement.

- 2.8 The Spending Review announced a freeze on business rates for the second successive year and a range of further business rates reliefs. Government has confirmed that councils will be fully compensated for the loss of business rates income associated with the freeze and the reliefs.
- 2.9 The Spending Review also sets out the proposed council tax referendum principles for the next three years which are :
- A maximum 2% annual increase on basic council tax
 - A maximum 1% annual social care precept in addition to the 2% basic i.e. a 3% maximum total increase in council tax in each year
- 2.10 Government has indicated that any unused allowance from the 3% Adult Social Care Precept, which was announced in the 2021/22 Finance Settlement as being able to be used flexibly across 2021/22 and 2022/23, can still be used in 2022/23 and added to the figures above. The Council levied a 1% ASC Precept in 2021/22 and therefore has 2% remaining, which when added to the new 1% allowance for 2022/23 means that the maximum council tax increase that the Council could approve for 2022/23, without a referendum is, 5% (2% basic and 3% ASC precept).

MTFS Update – Planning Assumption

- 2.11 The MTFS update has been done across the four years 2022/23 to 2025/26 and models the following :
- Government Grant forecasts based on the Spending Review.
 - The Council's anticipated resources from Council Tax and Business Rates.
 - The planning assumption for Council tax annual increases remains at 3%.
 - Pay, Contractual, Price and Income inflation estimates including capital projects, National Living Wage and the National Insurance 1.25% increase. This includes maintaining the planning assumption of a 2% increase on fees and charges.
 - Latest estimates of the profile of delivery of agreed budget savings.
 - Service cost and demand pressures.
 - The ongoing costs of decisions made in previous budget rounds including financing costs of capital investment.
- 2.12 The Council's collection rates for council tax and business rates are holding up well during the impact of Covid. In 2021/22 the Council's in-year collection rate of council tax remained above 96% and was the 5th highest in-year rate of all 36 Metropolitan Councils. The in-year rate for business rates was 97%, the 2nd highest of all Metropolitan Councils. Similar collection rates are being maintained in 2022/23 which informs prudent forecasts of future years' income included within the MTFS.
- 2.13 Escalating cost and service demand pressures are being experienced in a

number of service areas, in particular adult care services, home to school transport and waste services. Allowance has been made in the MTFS for additional costs in these services, together with a provision for ongoing Covid costs.

Delivery of Agreed Budget Savings

- 2.14 Delivery of the remaining agreed budget savings are included in the MTFS update based on the current profile of when it is anticipated that remaining savings can be achieved. The Budget and Council Tax Report 2021/22 agreed at Council in March noted that £16m of the total £34m of agreed budget savings and cost reductions had been delivered at that point and that the remaining savings were profiled across the medium term.
- 2.15 A further £2m savings is being delivered in 2021/22 and £11.5m is profiled for delivery from 2022/23 in the updated MTFS. This shows a total of £29.5m savings from the original £34m package will have been delivered by 2024/25. The shortfall is mostly mitigated by additional Corporate savings from Treasury Management.
- 2.16 Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet have indicated the impact of Covid on progressing delivery of budget savings, in particular savings on social care services. Service demand and cost of social care services also continues to increase which has limited to some extent the amount of social care savings that can be delivered and the timescale across which savings that can be achieved are made. This position is expanded upon below.
- 2.17 Savings have been delivered within Adult Care services in previous years with further savings generated by enhancements to the reablement service reflected in the MTFS update. However, Adult Care is now experiencing significant pressures and the service will not be able to deliver the agreed savings in full due to a range of issues which the Council is not in control of. The service has experienced a rise in complexity of people's needs which has been demonstrated by a reduction in the baseline community numbers of people who receive services, but a significant rise for the need to provide two carers to provide care and support due to a deterioration of need. The service now has 79 more people who have a need for two carers, an increase from 257 to 336 and the total amount of double handling hours has increased by one third.
- 2.18 The adult care market has become volatile due the need to meet complexity but also the availability of staff to provide services which is accelerating costs per hour to meet peoples' eligible needs, which is something that the Council is legally required to undertake. This is reflected across all service areas, including mental health where the sector has seen an incremental rise of acute admissions and people experiencing significant high levels of need, requiring mental health support. Due to the challenges in secondary health and community mental health social care, the service is experiencing further demands on the general adult care pathways which again is diverting stretched resources to respond.

- 2.19 There is therefore a need to recognise these escalating demand and market costs within the MTFS, relating in particular to transitions and the upward trend in the costs of adult care.
- 2.20 Within the revised profile of delivery of the remaining agreed budget savings for CYPs, as set out in the Budget and Council 2021/22 Report, £8.9m of agreed savings remaining were profiled across 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 2.21 Whilst the amount of savings to be delivered from management and other cost savings are being achieved according to this profile, those savings which are to be achieved from placement costs have not as yet been materialised.
- 2.22 However, the reductions in activity and changes to service provision which will ultimately drive the delivery of the savings are progressing. The position as at October 2021 shows that the total number of looked after children has reduced from 597 to 569 this financial year and compares favourably with 578 in budget plans for this period. However, escalating costs within the market charged by providers of children's services, together with the current mix of placement types, has meant that savings as yet have not been driven out of the cost base.
- 2.23 Continuing and future actions linked to CYPs transformation plans will reduce demand and costs over the next three years, with a planned reduction of 18 LAC placements year on year over the next three years from a planned number of 568 on 1 April 2022 to 511 by 31 March 2025.
- 2.24 The plans are based on reducing demand for high cost external residential and fostering placements through overall reductions as outlined above and growth of in-house residential and fostering capacity.
- 2.25 In-house residential homes are opening as agreed by Cabinet with capacity projected to increase to 16 places over the 5 new homes by the end of the 23/24 financial year. In-house fostering capacity (places) is planned to grow over the next three financial years from 185 to 245.
- 2.26 The change in placement mix is a key factor in delivery of the budget savings from placements. Confidence remains that the remaining savings can be delivered.
- 2.27 The updated position on delivery of savings as included within the MTFS is summarised below with details of delivery across the MTFS set out in Table 1
- Total savings agreed for delivery £34m
 - Savings delivered to 2021/22 (£18m)
 - Value of savings remaining £16m

2.28 **Table 1 – Delivery of Agreed Budget Savings across MTFS**

Directorate	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 & Total FYE £000
Adult Care, Housing & Public Health	3,300	2,800	2,800
Children & Young People	971	4,739	7,411
Regeneration & Environment	374	762	784
R&E Customer & Digital	200	500	500
Total Directorate Savings	4,845	8,801	11,495

2.29 The information in Table 1 shows delivery of £11.5m of the remaining total of £16m savings, taking the total delivery to £29.5m against the original amount of £34m. The balance of £4.5m is mostly covered by savings from treasury management activity, which is forecast to save £3.8m in 2024/25.

Revenue Budget Position 2021/22

2.30 The Financial Monitoring report to Cabinet in November 2021 sets out the Council's expectation that the Financial Outturn for 2021/22 will be delivered within budget, when the Government's provision of emergency Covid support grants is taken into account.

2.31 This position does not include any use of two amounts of grant funding received in 2021/22 which were described in the Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 report approved at Council in March 2021 :

- Local Council Tax Support Grant (£2.774m) provided to support councils to meet additional costs associated with local council tax support.
- Local Tax Income Guarantee (£668k) provided as compensation based on 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates income in 2020/21. The Council's grant relates to council tax only, no grant was due for business rates.

2.32 It is recommended that the Local Council Tax Support Grant of £2.774m is reserved, pending Cabinet decisions on use of the grant. It is also recommended that the Local Tax Income Guarantee of £668k is reserved for

the specific purposes that it was provided, to mitigate the impact on the budget of losses of council tax income in 2020/21 due to the Covid pandemic.

- 2.33 In addition, savings from treasury management activities over and above the £5m saving included in the 2021/22 budget are being achieved. It is recommended that these savings are also placed into reserve to support the budget over the medium term.

Budget Investment 2021/22

- 2.34 Within the 2021/22 budget, Council agreed £1.864m of revenue budget investment, initially for one year only.
- 2.35 The £1.864m funding won't be spent in full in 2021/22 due to the timing associated with recruitment of staff to implement some of the investments.
- 2.36 It is therefore recommended that the amount of unspent funds is carried forward to 2022/23 to allow for the full 12 months delivery of those investments as agreed by Council. Proposals for any of the investments to continue beyond the initial one-year approval will then be put forward within the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report.

Payment Uplift to Providers of Adult Care

- 2.37 The Council is receiving some one-off funding from Rotherham CCG in order for the Council to give a market uplift to adult care providers for the period 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022. Provision for the funding transfer will be documented within the existing Section 75 agreement between the Council and the CCG.
- 2.38 Cabinet and Council will then consider recommendations within the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report and determine the uplifts to adult social care provider contracts to apply for 2022/23, taking effect from 1st April 2022.
- 2.39 In order to affect the increased payments to providers from 1st December 2021, the Strategic Director – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health made a delegated decision with regard to the use of the funding provided by the CCG, covering the period 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022. Cabinet are asked to note the delegated decision.

DfE Safety Valve Intervention Programme

- 2.40 The Council is working with the DfE as part of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme which is provided to support local authorities which have large DSG deficits. The work with DfE on the Programme aims to achieve a mutually agreeable solution to eliminating the Council's DSG deficit and to secure a sustainable DSG position going forward.
- 2.41 The Council has to submit its proposal within the framework of the Programme to DfE by 7th December 2022, which DfE will put to Ministers. It is

anticipated that if there is DfE agreement to support the Council, then the Council and DfE will need to sign that agreement in early 2022 so that any additional grant payments can be made by Government in March 2022.

- 2.42 The Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services will advise on the financial proposals from DfE within an agreement and the acceptability of proposals within the Council's overall financial strategies.
- 2.43 In order to enable the Council to meet the deadline for signing an agreement, Cabinet are recommended to delegate the authority for the Council to enter into an agreement with DfE to the Strategic Director – Children & Young People's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People's Services, the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services.

Summary MTFS 2022/23 to 2025/26

- 2.44 The MTFS in summary, taking into account the issues described in this report is summarised in Table 2 below :

Table 2 – Summary MTFS 2022/23 to 2025/26

	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
<u>Resources</u>				
Council Tax and Business Rates	166,785	174,502	180,258	186,820
Government Grant	87,656	88,975	89,996	91,639
Total Resources	254,441	263,477	270,254	278,459
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Base Budget Requirement	247,586	251,262	252,666	252,421
Inflation Provision	8,500	16,250	23,100	29,700
Service Costs and Demand	6,700	9,300	10,300	11,300
Directorate	(4,845)	(8,801)	(11,495)	(11,495)

Savings				
Use of CYPS reserve	(2,000)	0	0	0
Use of Treasury Management Savings	(1,500)	(4,000)	(3,800)	0
Total Expenditure	254,441	264,011	270,711	281,926
Funding Gap (Pre-Settlement)	0	534	517	3,467

- 2.45 Following this initial update of the MTFs, the summary position shows a balanced budget position for 2022/23 with relatively small estimated funding gaps thereafter.
- 2.46 It is important to note that this position is before the exact amount of Government grant funding for councils is provided within the Finance Settlement. This is also a technical update of the MTFs before Members' policy proposals on budget investment and levels of council tax.
- 2.47 Updated MTFs information will therefore form part of the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report to Cabinet in February 2022 and Council in March 2022 which will set out the full details of budget and council tax proposals for 2022/23 alongside the final MTFs estimates for the medium term.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 As detailed in the report.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Council consulted on budget proposals for 2021/22 ahead of the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 report at Council in March 2021. Consultation on the 2022/23 budget is planned to be undertaken across December 2021 and January 2022

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The information, proposals and recommendations will feed into the development of specific budget proposals for 2022/23 within the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report to Cabinet in February 2022 and Council in March 2022

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications are set out in the report.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The implications are as set out in the report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no implications arising from the recommendation in the report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendation in the report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. There are no direct implications arising from the recommendation in the report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Risks and mitigation are described in the report

14. Accountable Officers

Graham Saxton, Assistant Director – Financial Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	03/12/21
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	03/12/21

Report Author: Graham Saxton, Assistant Director of Financial Services
01709 822034 or Graham.Saxton@rotherham.gov.uk
This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Medium Term Financial Strategy	
Directorate: Finance and Customer Services	Service area: Financial Services
Lead person: Graham Saxton	Contact number: 01709 822064
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The report sets out a technical update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26.
The information within the report will support the development of detailed budget proposals for 2022/23. No changes to the Council's approved budget and financial strategy are proposed within the report.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		✓
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		✓
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>		✓
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		✓
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		✓
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		✓

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

- **Key findings**

- **Actions**

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:

Lead person for your Equality Analysis
(Include name and job title):

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Graham Saxton	Assistant Director – Financial Services	29/11/21

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other**

committee or a significant operational decision a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	29/11/21
Report title and date	Medium Term Financial Strategy Cabinet 20 th December 2021
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

User guidance:

- The first section of this form guides users through considering major areas where emissions are likely to occur. If emissions are impacted in a way not covered by these categories, please identify this at the bottom of the section
- The first section should be filled as such:
 - **Impact:** identify, in relation to each area, whether the decision of the proposal does the following: *reduces emissions, increases emissions, or has no impact on emissions*. If it is uncertain this section can be labelled *impact unknown*
 - If **no impact on emissions** is identified: no further detail is needed for this area, but can be added if relevant (e.g. if efforts have been made to mitigate emissions in this area.)
 - **Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions:** two sections deal respectively with emissions from the Council (including those of contractors), and emissions across Rotherham as a whole. In both sections please explain any factors that are likely to reduce or increase emissions. If **impact unknown** has been selected, then identify the area of uncertainty and outline known variables that may affect impacts.
 - In most cases there is no need to quantify the emission impact of an area after outlining the factors that may reduce or increase emissions. In some cases, however, this may be desirable if factors can be reduced to a small number of known variables (e.g. if an emission impact is attached to a known or estimated quantity of fuel consumed).
 - **Describe any measures to mitigate emission impact:** regardless of the emission impact, in many cases steps should be taken in order to reduce mitigate all emissions associated with each area as far as possible; these steps can be outlined here (For example: if a proposal is likely to increase emissions but practices or materials have been adopted in order to reduce this overall impact, this would be described here).
 - **Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out:** in this section outline any steps taken to monitor emission levels, or steps taken to monitor the factors that are expected to increase or reduce emission levels (for example, if waste or transport levels are being monitored this would be described here)
- A **summary paragraph** outlining the likely overall impacts of the proposal/decision on emissions should then be completed - this is not required if the proposal/decision has no impact across all areas.
- The supporting information section should be filled as followed:
 - Author/completing officer
 - **Research, data, or information** may refer to datasets, background documents, literature, consultations, or other data-gathering exercise. These should also be added to the **supporting documents** section of the cabinet report

-
- Carbon Impact Assessments are to be appended to the associated cabinet reports
 - Prior to publishing reports, Carbon Impact Assessments should be sent to climate@rotherham.gov.uk for feedback
 - Report authors may also use the above email address to direct any further queries or to access further support regarding completing the assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from transport?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	<i>no impact</i>				

Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

As this report is a technical financial update and doesn't approve anything directly to happen, it does not have any carbon implications.

Supporting information:

Completed by:
(Name, title, and service area/directorate).

Graham Saxton, Assistant Director – Financial Services.

Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].

If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.

Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]

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Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 December 2021

Report Title

Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Simon Dennis, Acting Head of Policy, Performance, and Intelligence
simon.dennis@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

In September 2020, the Council adopted a Year Ahead Plan as the Council Plan for operating within the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim was to support residents, communities and businesses through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, helping to build resilience whilst also continuing to drive ambitious plans for Rotherham. The plan was extended in March 2021 and it finished at the end of November 2021.

Informed by public consultation, a new Council Plan has been developed for 2022-25 (see Appendix 1). The plan is a key document which sets out the Council's vision for the borough and priorities for serving residents and communities. This plan provides the medium-term basis for targeting resources, informing the budget-setting process and planning cycles, and ensuring that residents can hold the Council to account for delivery. The plan includes a suite of performance measures and targets for monitoring purposes.

To enable the Council to work towards the Council Plan outcomes and achieve the commitments, a Year Ahead Delivery Plan (see Appendix 2) has been developed, setting out the key activities to be delivered over the next year (January 2022 – March 2023).

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Recommend the Council Plan 2022-2025 to Council for approval.
2. Recommend the Year Ahead Delivery Plan to Council for approval.
3. Recommend that the first quarterly progress update is provided in June 2022.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Council Plan 2022 - 25

Appendix 2 – Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022

Appendix 3 – Our Rotherham, Our Borough consultation

Appendix 4 – Equality Analysis

Appendix 5 – Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Council Plan 2019-20

The Year Ahead Plan 2020-21

Extended Year Ahead Plan up to November 2021

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council Plan is a key document which sets out the Council's vision for the borough and priorities for serving residents and communities. This plan provides the medium-term basis for targeting resources, informing the budget-setting process and planning cycles, and ensuring that residents can hold the Council to account for delivery.
- 1.2 In September 2020, the Council adopted a Year Ahead Plan as the Council Plan for operating within the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim was to support residents, communities and businesses through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, helping to build resilience whilst also continuing to drive forward ambitious plans for Rotherham.
- 1.3 The Year Ahead Plan originally ran from September 2020 to June 2021. In March 2021, it was agreed that the Year Ahead Plan would be extended until November 2021 to allow time to engage with members and the public post-election on the development of a new, longer-term Council Plan. It was agreed that the new Council Plan would run from 2022, with the recommendation for the plan to be adopted at the full Council meeting in January 2022.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Throughout August and September 2021, a programme of public consultation and engagement (Our Rotherham, Our Borough) took place to support the development of the Council Plan. This included online and postal surveys, focus groups, a series of short interactions and engagement at the Rotherham Show. There were 350 online and postal surveys returned and over 1,000 other interactions in total across all methods of engagement. A summary of the consultation and key findings is attached (see Appendix 3) and is available on the Council website.
- 2.2 In addition to the public consultation, engagement took place with key stakeholders, including work with Cabinet members and officers across all directorates, a session with Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and a session that was open to all elected members.
- 2.3 Informed by this programme of public and stakeholder engagement, the new Council Plan sets out medium-term priorities and actions, building on and taking forward commitments made by members to the Rotherham community. The plan is framed around five themes:
 - Every neighbourhood thriving
 - People are safe, healthy, and live well
 - Every child able to fulfil their potential
 - Expanding economic opportunity
 - A cleaner, greener local environment.

These five themes are underpinned by a cross-cutting strand - 'One Council' - which sets out how the Council will operate to achieve the vision.

- 2.4 The Council Plan is a high-level document which sets out the outcomes that the Council will work towards over the next three years. There are 26 outcomes and 47 commitments in total. To ensure delivery against these, an annual Year Ahead Delivery Plan has been produced, which includes 91 priority actions/milestones (see Appendix 2). This initial Year Ahead Delivery Plan will run until March 2023 and will be reviewed and updated each year thereafter.
- 2.5 The Council Plan will be monitored through both the delivery of the milestones and activities within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan and a suite of performance measures (as outlined in the Council Plan document). The performance measures include a mixture of output measures and longer-term outcome measures.
- 2.6 To ensure that the Council Plan is managed effectively, quarterly progress reports will be produced for Cabinet and made publicly available. The reports will include progress in relation to the actions in the Year Ahead Delivery Plan, performance data relating to associated performance measures, and case studies. It is proposed that the first Council Plan progress report, covering the period January 2022 to March 2022, is reported to Cabinet in June 2022.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The Council Plan 2022-25 has been developed in consultation with Cabinet members and officers across all directorates, as well as being informed by public consultation.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Council Plan for 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan are referred by Cabinet to Council for approval. Progress reports will continue to be presented on a quarterly basis to the public Cabinet meetings, with the first report in June 2022.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 A programme of public consultation and engagement to support the development of the Council Plan took place throughout August and September 2021. This included online and postal surveys, focus groups, a series of short interactions and engagement at the Rotherham Show. There were 350 online and postal surveys returned and over 1,000 other interactions in total across all methods of engagement.
- 4.2 In addition to the public consultation, engagement took place with key stakeholders, including work with Cabinet members and officers across all directorates, a session with OSMB and a session that was open to all elected members.

The consultation is part of an ongoing dialog between the Council and

- 4.3 members of the public. Feedback will continue to be sought to feed into the Year Ahead Delivery Plan, Rotherham Partnership Plan, equalities review and the refresh of the Equalities Strategy.

- 4.4 A summary of the consultation and key findings is attached (see Appendix 3) and is available on the Council website.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 It is proposed in paragraph 2.6 above that the first quarterly progress report is presented to Cabinet in June 2022.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Council Plan is designed to help steer the use of Council finances, balanced against the wider funding backdrop for the Council and the broader context of national local government finance and policy. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report and the delivery of the Council Plan will be managed within the Councils available budgets.

- 6.2 The Council operates in a constantly changing environment. It will be important to ensure that ambitions and performance targets remain realistic in the context of central government policy, forthcoming legislation, and the financial position of the authority.

- 6.3 Whilst there are no direct procurement implications in this report the Year Ahead Delivery Plan includes some activities which will require the need to procure goods, services or works to achieve the Council Plan outcomes. All projects will need to be procured in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules, giving clear consideration and application of social value, the real Living Wage and other ethical factors.

- 6.4 The Council Plan progress/performance reports will include information regarding the Council's financial position and, where possible, will be aligned to the financial reporting timelines.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 Whilst there is no specific statutory requirement for the Council to have a Performance Management Framework and Council Plan, being clear about the Council's ambitions gives staff, partners, residents, and central Government a clear understanding of what it seeks to achieve and how it will prioritise its spending decisions.

- 7.2 An effective and embedded Council Plan is also a key part of the Council's ongoing improvement journey.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resources (HR) implications as a result of this report, though the contribution HR makes to an engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customers is set out within the 'One Council' theme.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Council Plan has a core focus on the needs of children and young people and vulnerable adults and this is embedded throughout all themes of the plan, particularly in theme three (Every child able to fulfil their potential).

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Equalities is cross cutting throughout the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan.

- 10.2 Of the five guiding principles, two in particular aim to meet residents' and communities' differentiated needs:

- Expanding opportunities for all
- Working with our communities

- 10.3 'Expanding opportunities for all' encompasses the Council's essential priority to tackle inequality, striving to ensure that the health and life chances of the most disadvantaged communities are improving the fastest. To complement this approach, 'working with our communities' ensures that to achieve the best outcomes for local people, residents are involved in the things that matter to them and services are designed based on input from those who use them.

- 10.4 There is also an outcome focussed on addressing inequalities and leaving no one behind within the 'people are safe, healthy and live well' theme. This will involve providing support to our communities at a level that is proportionate to the degree of need – taking a universal approach where appropriate whilst also providing targeted support to those who most need it.

- 10.5 In addition, the underlying 'One Council' theme encompasses two specific areas which ensure different needs are met:

- Effective customer services
- Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customer

- 10.6 The Council's commitment to place all customers at the heart of service delivery includes a strengthened approach to equalities and being inclusive. The commitment to an engaged, diverse and skilled workforce is expected to

improve the council's response to diverse customer needs, by bringing a more differentiated understanding of equality and diversity considerations and barriers.

10.7 A detailed Equality Analysis is attached (see Appendix 4).

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 A cleaner, greener local environment is a theme within the plan, focused around reducing harmful levels of carbon emissions to limit the impacts on communities and the environment. Actions within this theme encompass plans for the reduction of emissions in housing, through a Green Housing Strategy, and transport, such as through cycleway improvements, and public transports improvements, as well as improving data on waste and single-use plastic.

11.2 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been produced based on the Year Ahead Delivery Plan (see Appendix 5). The impact assessment will continue to be reviewed and updated each quarter.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1. Working with partners across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors will be integral to the delivery of the Council Plan, and partners have been consulted as part of its development. All the themes will require multi-agency approaches to some degree and the Council will continue to show effective leadership, operating through a range of strategic partnership bodies.

12.2 The Rotherham Plan 2017-25, the overarching partnership plan for the borough, will be refreshed in 2022. The Rotherham Plan will align with and complement the Council Plan, setting out partners' joint ambitions to improve outcomes for local people.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The Corporate Strategic Risk Register will be realigned to the new Council Plan themes and the process of updating and identifying strategic risks is already designed to manage risks connected to the plan.

13.2 The new quarterly progress reports will flag risks associated to actions at risk of not being delivered or those that have missed the deadline, as well as performance measures which have not progressed in accordance with the target set.

13.3 Directorates are also responsible for ensuring that any significant risks are addressed via directorate and corporate risk registers.

14. Accountable Officers

Simon Dennis, Acting Head of Policy, Performance & Intelligence
Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

Simon.dennis@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	10/12/21
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	01/12/21
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	02/12/21

Report Author:

Simon Dennis, Acting Head of Policy, Performance, and Intelligence
simon.dennis@rotherham.gov.uk

Tanya, Lound, Acting Corporate Improvement and Risk Officer,
tanya.lound@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

ROTHERHAM COUNCIL PLAN 2022 / 2025



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I FOREWORD

Rotherham is a borough with its sights set on the future.

We've come through the global pandemic in the best Rotherham traditions; working hard, looking out for each other, protecting those who need it the most. And as we face up to the coming years, the Council's role in our community should live up to that ethic.

We've come a long way in reforming our social care services, investing in bricks and mortar, staff and provision, to ensure we keep each other safe and secure.

We've started a huge programme of physical regeneration, investing in our roads, libraries, and town and village centres - but we need to see it through to ensure we secure the full benefits in every community.

We've begun to put a floor under low wages as a Living Wage Employer and we're attracting new businesses and higher paid jobs. We're building homes that people can afford to live in, in communities people will aspire to live in.

Everyone benefits from an improving local environment, from better transport, the chance to lower home energy bills or for our young people activities in the community. But because we look out for each other, we also know that some members of our community need more support

than others; with the cost of living, or their personal care needs, or help to stand on their own two feet and get into work.

So our plan is clear about the benefit we will bring to every resident in every corner of the borough, but also that we will focus extra attention where we need to, ensuring that everyone has a platform on which to stand and realise their ambitions.

The Council can't do everything, but working with our partners and our communities, we can and we are delivering real change and improvement. This Council Plan marks the next stage in that journey.

Rotherham is our home, and together we will build a future we can all share.



Chris Read,
Leader of Rotherham Council

2 INTRODUCTION

The Council Plan 2022/25 ('the Plan') builds on the foundations that have been laid in recent years, setting out an ambitious programme to improve the lives of people in Rotherham.

Covid-19 has had a huge impact, but through it all we have worked with our partners and residents to provide support where it is most needed. At the same time, we have not allowed the pandemic to derail our plans:

- We have established local teams that are working with councillors and communities to deliver on local priorities, helping neighbourhoods to thrive;
- We have continued to develop new residential homes for looked after children, meaning that, where appropriate, more children can be supported closer to home;
- Significant regeneration schemes are underway, helping our economy to grow and increasing opportunities for everyone;
- We are providing support to those in crisis, but also trying to build resilience and prevent problems from occurring, helping people to feel safe and live independently;
- And we are taking action to address climate change issues and reduce carbon emissions, helping to create a healthier environment for all of us and for future generations.

The Plan has been shaped by the consultation we carried out during 2021. It reflects the things that people have told us are important to them and it contains clear goals that we will work towards over the next few years.

We know we cannot achieve them alone.

The response to Covid-19, through the Rotherham Heroes volunteer programme and countless acts of kindness and charity across our communities, has been overwhelming. At the same time, the coordinated approach of the Council and our partners across health, the police, education, the voluntary and community sector and local businesses, has emphasised how much we can do when we combine all our resources.

This shows us the way forward. With a joint commitment to reaching shared goals, we can continue to make strides towards building a fairer, stronger and better borough.



3 ROTHERHAM CONTEXT

Rotherham is **one of four metropolitan boroughs** in South Yorkshire with good transport connections including the nearby Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

25 wards covering a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas. 70% of Rotherham is open countryside.

Rotherham's population of **265,000** mostly live in urban areas.

Population is ageing, with over **52,400** people aged **65 years or over**.



Diverse community which includes **20,000** people from **minority ethnic groups** (8.1% of the population). The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group after White British.

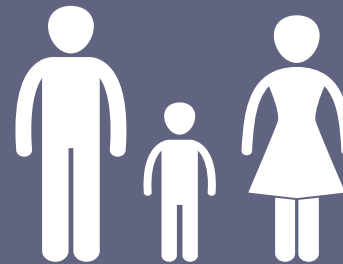
22% of residents live within the 10% most deprived areas of England. 12,667 children were living in "absolute poverty" in 2018/19.

Many local people made an unprecedented offer of support to their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the **Rotherham Heroes programme**.



The Council's children's services have been transformed and are now 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features.

Life expectancy in the most deprived areas of Rotherham is 9.9 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women than in the least deprived. There are significant gaps in healthy life expectancy, meaning those from more deprived communities can expect to live for more years in poor health.



Economic impact of Covid-19 on the national and local economy.

Evidence that young people have been disproportionately affected, due to education disruption and lack of access to jobs.

Since 2010, the Council has **made savings in excess of £200 million** in response to the significant reductions in government funding. Uncertainty over future funding levels, due to a single year financial settlement for 2021/22

The Council has secured significant funding (**over £80 million**) and is seeking more to deliver regeneration schemes in the town centre and across the borough.

High-quality green spaces and assets, including the award-winning Clifton Park, as well as a number of country parks, woodlands and nature reserves.

Adult skills are comparatively low, particularly at degree level, and educational attainment is also low in comparison to our nearest demographically similar neighbours.

4 THE COUNCIL

Rotherham Council is a metropolitan borough council and is responsible for providing a range of services including social care, planning, housing, revenue and benefits support, licensing, business regulation and enforcement, electoral registration, refuse and recycling, leisure, culture, parks and green spaces, economic growth, highways maintenance, education and skills, community safety and public health.

It also has an important role in working with other providers of public services across Rotherham.

The Council's constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that this is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Council has 59 councillors, representing 25 wards inside the Rotherham Borough geographical boundary. The Council is currently led by a Labour Cabinet of nine Members.

Cabinet



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of the Council



Councillor Sarah Allen
Deputy Leader of the Council
and Cabinet Member for
Neighbourhood Working



Councillor Saghir Alam
Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services, Community Safety
and Finance



Councillor Domimic Beck
Cabinet Member for
Transport and Environment



Councillor Amy Brookes
Cabinet Member for
Housing



Councillor Victoria Cusworth
Cabinet Member for
Children and Young People



Councillor Denise Lelliott
Cabinet Member for
Jobs and the Local Economy



Councillor David Roche
Cabinet Member for
Adult Social Care and Health



Councillor David Sheppard
Cabinet Member
for Social Inclusion

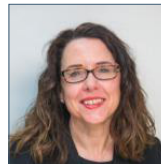
4 THE COUNCIL

A number of committees and panels are responsible for decision making within the Council, including Council, Cabinet, Audit Committee, Standards and Ethics Committee and Scrutiny.

Details of all these, as well as copies of agendas, papers and official minutes of proceedings can be found on the Council's website at: moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk

The Council is split into five directorates and the day-to-day management of the Council and its services is overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team and led by the Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp.

Strategic Leadership Team



Sharon Kemp
Chief Executive



Jo Brown
Assistant
Chief Executive



Judith Badger
Strategic Director
Finance and
Customer Services



Paul Woodcock
Strategic Director
Regeneration and
Environment



Suzanne Joyner
Strategic Director
Children and Young
People's Services



Ian Spicer
Interim Strategic Director
Adult Care, Housing and
Public Health



Ben Anderson
Director of
Public Health

5 OUR APPROACH

Four guiding principles run through the plan, informing our way of working and helping us to achieve better outcomes.

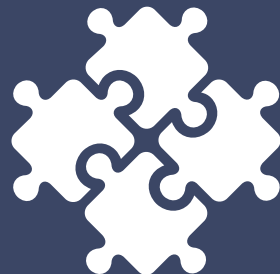
Expanding opportunities for all

As we open up new opportunities we will target the most help at those who need it, so no one is left behind.



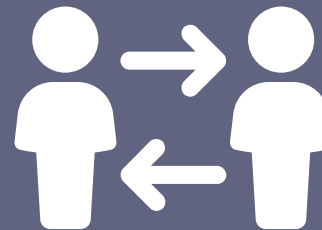
Recognising and building on our strengths to make positive change

This will involve making the best use of local assets, including buildings, parks and public spaces, as well as harnessing the knowledge and skills of community groups and local residents.



Working with our communities

To achieve the best outcomes for local people, we recognise the importance of putting them at the heart of everything we do. That means involving local residents in the things that matter to them and making sure we design our services based on input from those who use them.



Focussing on prevention

We know that prevention is better than cure in achieving positive outcomes for our residents. For this reason, we will focus on reducing the risk of problems arising in the first place, and when they do, we will intervene early to prevent them from worsening.



6 OUR THEMES

Our vision is:

“Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share.

We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind.

To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents.”



7 DELIVERING ON OUR THEMES

The Council's focus is on delivering its priorities whilst also meeting agreed budget savings. This is set against the additional financial pressures of the National Living Wage, inflation and increasing demand for services due to a growing population and changing demographics in Rotherham.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy submitted to Cabinet in December 2021 provides a four-year outlook of the Council's anticipated resources and budget requirement and sets out our approach to delivering a sustainable budget position up to 2025/26.

The Council is also focusing on its leadership role across the borough and particularly where it can have greater influence.

Partnership working is recognised across all services as being essential to the future of the borough; combining knowledge, ideas, expertise and resources to deliver tangible improvements, deliver efficiencies and economies of scale, and helping to strengthen our communities.

All directorates will continue to work together over the next three years to achieve the commitments set out within each of the themes:

Children and Young People's Services

In this directorate we are committed to working with children and their families in a restorative way.

This is done by supporting them at the earliest opportunity to reduce the need for social care intervention, also ensuring that children and young people are in education.

We will do this by refreshing our Early Help strategy and work with partners to ensure that children and young people and their families get the right support at the right time.

We are developing our approach to ensuring that all children and young people get the best possible start by working with families to increase the number of children accessing early education. We are also working with young people that are disengaged to reconnect them to training, further education and employment.

We work with with our partners to provide better access to mental health and wellbeing support programmes for young people and working with our schools to reduce the number of children who are excluded.

Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health

Here the focus is on creating a Rotherham where everyone can live independently, safely and healthily in their community for as long as possible.

We work with health and community partners, to provide accessible, high quality services for adults with care and support needs, including those with disabilities, older people and their carers. Our housing services continue to work with public and private sector partners to deliver improvements in the choice of housing in Rotherham. We are enabling people to access and live in high-quality accommodation which meets their needs, whether in the social rented, private rented or home ownership sector.

In the Public Health service we aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Rotherham residents, reduce health inequalities and protect the population from health harms, including leadership of the pandemic response.

We work with Health and Wellbeing Board partners to prevent ill health and to commission services to support active healthy lifestyles.

Regeneration and Environment

In Regeneration and Environment, our aim is to develop and promote Rotherham as a great place to live, work and visit.

This means more jobs, a vibrant cultural sector, good quality green spaces, and clean, safe, welcoming neighbourhoods.

It is also about working with other council services and, crucially, with partner organisations, including local businesses, to drive forward ambitious plans for regeneration, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, community safety, and culture.

Regeneration and Environment includes vital services such as waste management, transport & highways, licensing, libraries, planning, parks and environmental health.

We are committed to a culture of innovation, exploring new technologies and playing a key role in pursuing net zero goals by reducing emissions from Council buildings and vehicles.

Finance and Customer Services

In this directorate we provide support to the whole organisation and deliver a range of professional support services focussed on financial systems

and controls, ensuring legal duties and responsibilities are being met and supporting the Council in delivering high quality customer services.

The services we provide range from procurement, which focuses on achieving the best possible value when buying goods and services, to customer and digital services, where technology is being utilised to offer customers greater choice whilst increasing efficiency. We also provide revenue and benefit services to households and businesses across the borough. Together with legal, electoral and audit functions, these services ensure that the Council is providing good value for local residents within a sound framework.

Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

In the Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate we work across the council to deliver high-quality 'enabling' services, ensuring that there is a corporate approach to tackling national and local policy agendas, informed by data and intelligence.

We also lead on implementing and monitoring the delivery of the Council Plan and the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

Here we also play a central role in strengthening communication and connections with residents and partners, making sure local communities have a voice and are able to shape priorities and influence services.

In addition, we offer comprehensive support and advice to elected members, enabling them to carry out their roles effectively.

Finally, our HR and Organisational Development service helps to develop a skilled, empowered and motivated workforce that is equipped to meet the needs of our customers and residents.

8 OUR THEMES

8.1 EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD THRIVING

Our vision for Rotherham is for every neighbourhood to be a thriving neighbourhood, where people are able to work together to achieve a good quality of life.

We want to work with local people to find solutions to local issues and to build on our heritage and assets. We will help create vibrant communities in which people feel happy, safe and proud. To do this, we will make it easier to get involved in the local community, work closely with our partners and local voluntary and community groups, enhance our town and village centres, green spaces and libraries, and effectively tackle community issues.

Where we are now

Councillors engage with and work with local people and community groups to produce plans for Rotherham's 25 wards. These ward plans are reviewed annually, and identify priorities at a neighbourhood level, providing a focus for local activity.

Harnessing the community spirit shown during the pandemic response, where a significant number of people offered to volunteer with the Rotherham Community Hub and help those affected, we are providing further opportunities for people to get involved in their local area such as community litter picks and resident speedwatch sessions in partnership with the police

*“My wish would be that the community spirit and neighbourliness that was evident during the pandemic continues in the future, and that willingness to look out for each other that little bit more doesn't go away”
(consultation response)*

We are also making sure that every community has a dedicated team that works alongside local councillors to get the best outcomes for local people. Our street cleansing, grounds maintenance and enforcement staff are being reorganised on a locality basis, working closely with multi-agency partners such as local policing teams.

We know from conversations with residents that feeling safe in the area where they live is important to them, that roads are kept in good condition, and that they value having accessible green spaces that are litter-free. Recognising this, we have:

- Developed a seven-day out of hours response service to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Improved roads and repaired potholes as part of our “£24 million to 2024” roads programme
- Committed £4 million to improve local towns and villages, building on investments in street cleansing and our three-year litter bin programme to keep streets tidy
- Started work to develop masterplans for our three country parks

People also tell us how much they value libraries, which often act as vital hubs of local activity. We are continuing to invest in our library facilities through a programme of refurbishments and upgrades, making sure that they are accessible, welcoming and able to meet the needs of all our communities.

Consultation headlines:

- 36 % of survey respondents do not feel safer in their local neighbourhood compared to 12 months ago (52 % stated no change)
- The most important crime and community safety issue was tackling anti-social behaviour (74 % identified this as a priority)
- Many people stressed the need to feel safe, with safe streets and safe places for families, women, and children to go to

Where we want to be

The community response to the Covid-19, with residents stepping forward to help their friends, families and neighbours, demonstrated the importance of the Council and other agencies working in genuine partnership with local people and organisations.

We will continue to put communities at the heart of everything we do, developing local networks and seeking innovative ways to involve people in the things that matter to them: increasingly ‘doing with’ rather than ‘doing to’.

It will be particularly important to consider how every community is given the chance to have a say on issues that affect them and to influence decisions.

We recognise that everyone has a role in ensuring neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe, clean and green.

Community organisations and local “friends of” groups already make a huge contribution and our aim is to facilitate, nurture and encourage this and other forms of local participation.

This will mean focussing on the following outcomes:

- Work with communities on the things that matter to them
- Residents, organisations and businesses use their skills and resources to help others
- Neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe
- Local people have access to libraries, cultural activities, parks and green spaces
- Local towns and villages are improved

“Spent more time in my local area, discovering local footpaths and trails. I realised how lucky I was to be able to walk from my doorstep” (consultation response)

How we will get there

- Continue to drive local priority setting and activity through ward plans and devolved budgets, with councillors, residents and partner organisations working together
- Work with Rotherham’s voluntary and community sector to support and facilitate local networks and groups
- Further expand and promote a range of volunteering opportunities
- Invest in and develop our library services as neighbourhood hubs, promoting access to books, computers and community events
- Work alongside our partners to ensure Rotherham is a safe, inclusive and welcoming place for local people, including responding effectively to community safety issues such as anti-social behaviour and hate crime
- Deliver improvements to local towns and villages
- Bring our communities together through a range of enjoyable activities, cultural and social events, which inspire hope and pride in Rotherham



8 OUR THEMES

8.2 PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY, AND LIVE WELL

Everyone deserves to feel happy, healthy, and secure. We want to empower everyone to lead fulfilling lives, whilst also keeping them safe from harm.

To do this, we will focus on prevention, working with partners to ensure that local people live in good physical and mental health for as long as possible.

Where we are now

Investing in modern social care services has been a major priority for the Council over the past several years. As part of our improvement journey, children's services have been transformed and are now providing good quality services and improved outcomes for children. At the same time, we have focussed on reforming adult social care, strengthening our focus on supporting older people and adults with learning disabilities to have more control over their lives. This has involved working closely with our health partners.

Strong partnership working has also been central in our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has enabled us to take quick action to protect our residents and to support our most vulnerable children and their families. This has included setting up testing sites, contacting local people to support them to self-isolate when necessary, establishing a befriending service for those experiencing loneliness, and ensuring that our most vulnerable children and young people were in school and being supported to keep them safe.

During this time, the Council has also stepped up to support the most disadvantaged members of our community, which has meant funding free school meal vouchers, during the school holidays, providing uniforms for

*“Need to support to age well, have a good, happy later life”
(consultation response)*

families who needed them, and running activities for children and young people. Working with partners we provided food parcels during 2020/21. We also formed the rough sleeper initiative team to provide support to the homeless community.

It is proposed over £92.3 million will be invested in housing growth by 2025-26, delivering approximately 668 new homes.

The Council has a range of CCTV assets to promote community safety across the borough however as many of the assets are old, capital investment has been prioritised with £420,000 to bring these up to date.

Noise nuisance has been an increasing issue during the pandemic with more people required to stay at home and large scale events having an impact on a number of residents.

Developing seamless domestic abuse services is underway, to ensure that support offered to victims across partners is easy to access and works to address offenders.

Consultation headlines:

- 52 % of respondents stated that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health, citing weight gain, being less active and worrying about the virus
- The most positive effects on mental health (in relation to the pandemic) were having a better work/life balance (25 %) and being more physically active (18 %)
- The key aspiration for most people was the desire for a happy, healthy society or community
- Environmental improvements (21 %) and financial security (20 %) were considered by respondents to be the things that would have the biggest positive impact on their wellbeing and quality of life

Where we want to be

We want people to lead happy and healthy lives. Focussing on preventing problems from arising in the first place and intervening early will not only lead to better outcomes for our residents, but is also vital to ensure a sustainable future for our services. A preventative approach will therefore underpin everything we do – whether that’s promoting positive health and wellbeing, empowering social care users to lead independent and fulfilling lives or preventing people from reaching the point of financial crisis. This will involve drawing on people’s strengths, thinking about what matters to them and the life they want to lead, rather than focussing only on their problems and challenges.

In the issues and challenges that do arise, tackling inequalities across our communities will be central to our approach, in order to improve outcomes for



all. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the gap between Rotherham and the national average is widening, but there are also significant inequalities within the borough itself. As part of our commitment to address inequality, we will provide support to our communities at a level that is proportionate to the degree of need – taking a universal approach where appropriate whilst also providing targeted support to those who most need it.

The Council wants a modern and efficient CCTV system with wider coverage, increased feelings of safety and more capacity to catch and prosecute offenders.

Where residents suffer noise nuisance, the Council wants to ensure that they have access to the right service, including out of hours response, and that enforcement actions are taken where required.

We want a single pathway for domestic abuse victims which provides joined-up services to protect victims and their families alongside changing behaviour or bringing offenders to justice.

This will mean focussing on the following outcomes:

- People have good mental health and physical wellbeing
- People feel empowered, safe, and live independently for as long as possible
- People can access affordable, decent housing
- Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind

How we will get there

- Focus on minimising/tackling the leading risk factors for death and disability in Rotherham, such as tobacco, unhealthy weight, and alcohol

- Promote the best possible mental health for all, building on existing campaigns such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing, the Great Big Rotherham To-do list and Be the One
- Work with people to build on their strengths and resilience, reducing reliance on social care interventions
- Deliver the ‘My Front Door’ programme, providing adults with learning disabilities and autism with increased choice and opportunities for greater independence
- Tackle poverty and financial crisis, including development of a ‘social supermarket’ which will help people to move on from food banks, a new Rothercard that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them, and our Community Energy Scheme, which will enable households to reduce their energy bills
- Work with partners to deliver our domestic abuse strategy, taking a coordinated approach to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence
- Invest in affordable housing and support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- CCTV improvements will be realised through the Capital investment currently agreed (£420,000) alongside improving corporate management of CCTV purchases and assets
- Continuing to focus on promoting access to services, including out of hours alongside a robust performance management framework within enforcement services
- Transformation within Domestic Abuse Services is being delivered through strong partnership working, increased investment and the re-design of both internal and commissioned services

8 OUR THEMES

8.3 EVERY CHILD ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where all children and young people are safe, valued, able to enjoy their lives and achieve their aspirations.

This means children getting the best possible start in life, being safe, receiving a good education, and having access to fun things to do. As a Council, we are also committed to actively involving children and young people in the things that matter to them, ensuring that their voices are driving the way that we deliver our services.

Where we are now

We have 'good' children's and young people's services and have an ambition to have services that ensure outstanding outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham. This means first and foremost that children are kept safe from harm and are supported to be cared for within their family wherever possible.

Children's Social Care colleagues have continued to offer high levels of support throughout the pandemic, working closely with Council staff and multiagency professionals to ensure we appropriately identify where children need help and where children are at risk of harm. We have taken the learning from the specialist child sexual exploitation service Evolve and invested in additional resource to address the growing challenges of child criminal exploitation and do all we can to prevent this. This will enable a strong multiagency response to the risks of Child Exploitation

The Early Help offer has continued to provide support to families through parenting support programmes, our children's centre offer, youth offer and working with our looked after children council and young inspectors amongst other activities.

“Encourage children and young people to design services for themselves and their friends and families”
(consultation response)

Throughout the pandemic our Early Help workers continued to use innovative and imaginative methods to engage and support our children and families including the Holiday activities programme. We have also expanded the Youth Offer to provide 'Places to go and things to do' for young people in Rotherham.

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted education and routes into the job market for children and young people, so the Council has worked closely with partners to mitigate the impacts locally. Most of Rotherham's secondary and special schools held either a summer school or an extended

programme over the summer of 2021, as part of efforts to help pupils catch up after Covid disruptions. Ongoing direct support has been provided to early years, school, and further education leaders to support the continuing challenges of the pandemic including enhanced school leaders' forums, education recovery work focused on disadvantaged students and an Early Years project to increase take up of available early years places to support long term educational outcomes. The Council has offered 89 'Kickstart' job opportunities for young people, paying all placements at the Real Living Wage.

Children and young people have told us that having fun things to do is important to them and this is shaping our approach to regeneration. We have secured a cinema operator to open at Forge Island, the Gulliver's Valley theme resort has opened its doors and building on successful events in recent years, North Star Science School with Professor Brian Cox now happens annually. We have also committed to work with children and young people to deliver the first Children's Capital of Culture, preparing for a year-long festival in 2025 to celebrate our young people.

Where we want to be

We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful. This is not only important for our children and young people, but for the future of our borough. Evidence shows that experiences in childhood have a major influence on outcomes across an individual's life. By supporting children and young people to have the best possible start in life and to develop, flourish and thrive we can prevent future challenges and address inequalities.

Consultation headlines:

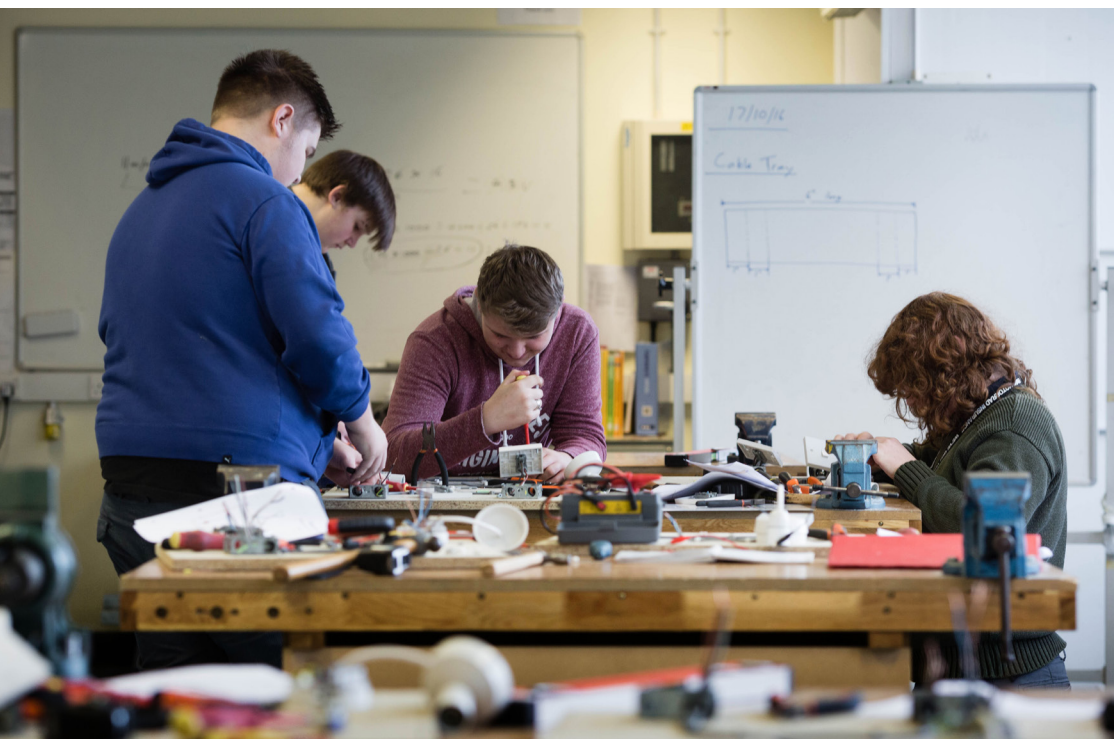
- Only 29 % of respondents felt optimistic about economic opportunities for young people in Rotherham and South Yorkshire
- 63 % thought that more local training opportunities or apprenticeships would make the most difference to improve job prospects and economic opportunities for young people leaving school over the next few years
- Young people often have great aspirations for Rotherham and want to stay here, but generally feel that there is a need for more appropriate and better job opportunities, more apprenticeships at degree level and a better public transport system
- The improvements that respondents most wanted to see for children and young people in their area were better play areas, and cheaper access to sports or activities
- The top priority for encouraging children to feel safer and more resilient was 'access to specific groups and activities for young people'
- Many responses emphasised the need for more safe places and youth clubs or projects, as well as making the town centre more child and young person friendly

“We need stronger links between institutions – libraries, schools, colleges and community services”

(consultation response)

We want to continue to support our children, young people, and their families to wherever possible remain safely together. We want to work with our partners to ensure a shared approach to offer help and support at the earliest stage, and to prevent harm.

We want to support looked after children to be closer to home, as we recognise that this improves their lifelong links to immediate, wider family and friends and we can work through local agencies to get the best support in a timelier way. Local Placement sufficiency continues to be a key area of focus.



We want to build on existing strengths that are found within the wider family network and ensure that community solutions are fully explored and utilised, to sustain long-term positive wellbeing for children and families in Rotherham. We want to develop the notion of the ‘Family Hub’ and have a strong ambition to ensure that the hubs are multi-faceted and have an interface with all aspects of the community as well as the public and voluntary sector. We want to improve the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Inspection judgement from Requires Improvement to Good. We also want to improve the outcomes for children, young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. We want to continue engaging in dialogue with our children, families, schools, and communities to consistently provide the right support at the right time. We want to refresh our Early Help Strategy in 2022.

We know that working with children and young people, listening to what matters most to them and acting on what they tell us, is vital to achieving positive outcomes. We want children and young people to be engaged in our service delivery across the whole Council, so that they are actively involved in decisions that affect them. Young People will take part in engaging and enriching and accredited activities that will feel safe, prevent isolation and this Youth Offer will be published on a regular basis.

We want all children and young people to have the strongest educational opportunity post the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond, and in working in partnership with the education sector in Rotherham, we can support a strong recovery from the pandemic and enhance opportunity for the long term. Collective projects like the 2022 Year of Reading across all areas of education, focus on work to improve early years’ education, and take up in targeted areas of the borough. This collaboration with our secondary education phase to continue to develop a collective drive to improve education outcomes across Maths and English, has a direct impact on shaping the opportunities for our children and young people in the borough.

In addition the Council has secured £19.9 million through the Levelling Up Fund for the leisure economy and skills and from this we will provide £1m for the creation of a new Skills Village at Gulliver's Resort which will provide training, development and accreditation within the hospitality and leisure sector. A further £4.5 million will be invested in the redevelopment of the former Maltby Grammar School bridging the gap between school and employment to create an incubator space for training, apprenticeships and start up support in the leisure and hospitality sectors. These significant investments will directly contribute every child fulfilling their potential.

This will mean focussing on the following outcomes:

- Children get the best start in life
- Children and young people safe from harm
- Young people feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations
- Children and young people have fun things to do and safe places to go

How we will get there

- Further develop our partnership approach to ensuring that all children and young people get the best possible start in life and are ready to attend school and learn
- Continue with the development of residential homes for our looked after children and work with local providers in residential and foster care to access the best local placements
- We will work to improve our YOT inspection judgement through the delivery of our improvement plan
- With our partners, we will address the variability of Education, Health and Care Plans and the quality of provision for children and young people



- Collaborate with partners to embed a multi-agency Family Hub Approach for our children, families, and communities
- Ensure that they Early Help workforce are equipped with the right, most up to date knowledge and tools to effect outstanding outcomes for children and families
- Work with young people that are disengaged to reconnect them to training, further education and employment
- Focus on raising the achievement of KS1 and 2 pupils in reading through the reading fluency project and will support pupils who are currently below the expected standard in reading and/or who may have difficulty accessing reading required in the wider curriculum
- Work in collaboration with schools to narrow the persistent attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils and raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- Deliver on our commitment to become the first Children's Capital of Culture holding a year-long festival in 2025

8 OUR THEMES

8.4 EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Our vision is for a fair and prosperous economy that provides chances for everyone to get a good job, or start and grow a business, and plan confidently for the future.

Working with partner organisations and employers, we will ensure that people can develop their skills and realise their ambitions. This includes tailored support, where required, for those who are disadvantaged in the jobs market.

We will deliver regeneration throughout Rotherham, creating a legacy of high-quality, well-connected places and neighbourhoods. And we will get the most out of the ‘Rotherham pound’ – generating additional value from the money we spend to create opportunities, raise living standards and benefit local communities.

Where we are now

Having channelled over £85 million of grant support to local businesses to help them through the pandemic, we are investing significantly in the borough’s business centres, including the new Century centre at Manvers. The centres provide workspace, enabling start-up and small businesses to develop and grow.

A number of employment schemes are delivering tangible benefits for local people. Pathways Rotherham, for example, targets those who are out of work, offering tailored one-to-one support that helps people to build confidence and tackle specific issues that are preventing them from finding employment. The Advance project, meanwhile, assists those already in employment to progress or retrain.

University Centre Rotherham, a state-of-the-art higher education campus in the heart of Rotherham, is now up and running providing additional learning opportunities for people of all ages.

In addition, we have now been formally accredited as a Real Living Wage employer, reflecting the commitment to pay our staff the national living wage and requiring all companies we work with to do the same.

Significant government funding has been secured to take forward our ambitious regeneration plans. The £31.6 million Town Deal comprises a number of schemes that will complement and enhance the ongoing transformation

“Prevent people from having to travel further away. We need to build a stronger workforce and create more jobs for families and individuals” (consultation response)



Consultation headlines:

- The main barriers to people accessing jobs were: 1. Skills/ education 2. Household circumstances (e.g. childcare) 3. Personal wellbeing
- Job satisfaction (21 %) rated slightly higher than income (20 %) as the most important factor in a job
- Need to invest in the town centre, small businesses, and a need for more jobs to retain skills and reduce commuting to other areas
- 47 % of respondents wanted investment in local centres as a way to improve the number and quality of jobs in the borough (compared to 39 % wanting investment in the town centre)
- People held very strong views on the need for Rotherham town centre to flourish and be vibrant and for it to be “great again!”

Other points:

- “Improve the cultural offer so that the aspirations of all are raised and investors see this as an attractive place to relocate their family to”
- “More apprenticeships [degree level] so people don’t move away - more job opportunities for local people”

of the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods, as well as supporting development of a new mainline station. The redevelopment of the markets complex will help retain it as a cornerstone of the town centre retail offer.

Outside of Rotherham town centre, £4 million has been allocated to a ‘Towns and Villages Fund’ to deliver improvement works across local villages and townships which align to ward priorities.

Our successful bid to the government’s Levelling Up Fund will see £40 million of additional investment in Rotherham town centre, the leisure economy across the borough and enhancing skills.

Although online transactions have become the norm for many people, there are others who are likely to be disadvantaged. These residents are potentially missing out on opportunities to find jobs, learn new skills, save money and socially engage. To address this, a digital inclusion programme has been established for which funding has been secured.

Where we want to be

Rotherham's economy was growing quickly before the pandemic hit, with investment from the likes of Boeing and McLaren propelling the area to the forefront of the new manufacturing economy.

As we support those in our community who have not felt the benefits of this growth, as well as others who have been particularly hit by Covid-19, we need to ensure that the upwards trajectory continues.

We want to remain ambitious and deliver on our package of regeneration across the borough, working with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

The support we provide - with our local and regional partners - to boost skills and overcome barriers, must effectively target those who are in danger of being left behind.

“The retailing element needs to become more localised, smaller businesses...repurpose the space in the town centre, make it about social interactions” (consultation response)

We must also involve our communities in the decisions that affect them and in the development that is taking shape.

For example, we want to work with residents to consider how our new leisure attractions, such as the cinema and hotel at Forge Island, can be made accessible to everyone; how communities can continue to influence the regeneration that takes place in their area; and how we can showcase all the great things that we have to offer.

To successfully deliver a digital inclusion programme, we will work with partners to understand the level and nature of digital exclusion across the borough, identify the barriers that stop people accessing online services and deliver a range of projects in response.



We will work towards the following outcomes:

- A growing economy that provides decent jobs and chances to progress
- Delivering regeneration schemes that bring investment and opportunity, both in Rotherham town centre and in our towns and villages
- Working with partners and suppliers to create more local jobs, paid at the Real Living Wage or above, and apprenticeships
- People having opportunities to learn, develop skills and fulfil their potential
- Strengthening digital infrastructure and skills which enable access for all

How we will get there

- Support people to improve their skills and secure decent work through a range of schemes and initiatives
- Provide a package of support and advice that enables businesses to start up and thrive, including targeted support to those most affected by the pandemic
- Deliver improvements and opportunities for local communities through major regeneration programmes
- Create a vibrant town centre, accessible to everyone, through a range of complementary schemes and major projects, including the flagship leisure development at Forge Island
- Secure further commitments through our social value policy and work with partners to maximise the impact of our collective spending power
- Connect people to economic opportunities through a range of transport schemes and improvements that also offer more environmentally-friendly travel options



8 OUR THEMES

8.5 A CLEANER, GREENER LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Our vision is to create a clean and welcoming environment across our borough, and in turn secure our natural environment for the next generation.

We will do this by supporting more environmentally friendly initiatives such as active travel, and by playing our part in cutting carbon emissions.

Where we are now

We have and will continue to commit significant resources to make the Borough a clean and welcoming environment. In the past two years, we have invested £2.7 million into street cleansing which is providing more operatives, replacing over 600 bins (including 110 solar bins) across the borough and supplying additional cleansing equipment such as three new bulky waste collection vehicles, and six quad bikes to enhance weed spraying activity. As well as this, we are investing in equipment that supports the environment such as smart solar bins, electric handheld trimmers and leaf blowers. This is alongside increasing the number of successful outcomes from fly-tipping investigations and non-payment of fixed penalty notices and publicising this more widely as a deterrent.

Our volunteers who lead the Love Where You Live Campaign are a great asset, devoting their time and energy to litter picking in their local neighbourhoods. Groups are supported by street cleaning teams and operate in all wards of the borough. Not only does this improve the environment for all of our residents, it also creates greater ownership and pride within our neighbourhoods, improving and sustaining high quality environments over time.

“We need to be investing more money into green spaces, not only to maintain a but to create more! We are currently in a biodiversity and climate change crisis and we need to be doing more to protect and promote wildlife!” (consultation response)

We are supporting the efforts of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to secure additional investments into public transport. We want to see new investments that make it easier for all of us to have viable public transport options. The innovative tram-train pilot is continuing to improve public transport options in the borough, providing a sustainable and convenient travel option between Sheffield Rotherham Central and Parkgate.

A cycling strategy has been developed with key projects underway such as the Sheffield Road Scheme which will create dedicated cycle lanes on a main route between Rotherham and Sheffield. We are improving active travel infrastructure across the borough, and have also installed and currently operate 62 Electric Vehicle charging points, of which 50 are powered by renewable energy.

We are also supporting our residents to insulate their homes to improve energy efficiency and reduce the impact of fuel poverty. In 2021, 2,178 households have benefited from insulation projects within the borough.

Following the devastating floods in 2019, work has been taking place to secure funding for the development of six priority flood prevention schemes with initial construction taking place along the River Don corridor in and around Rotherham Town Centre. To date over £5 million has been spent, with a further £5.8 million committed to additional schemes, which includes Kilnhurst, Parkgate, Rawmarsh, Whiston, Laughton Common and Catcliffe, alongside a gully renewal programme across the borough.

The above actions all contribute to our targets of net zero Council emissions by 2030 and net zero across the borough by 2040. We have reduced energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂) emissions in operational buildings by 54% and in streetlighting by 73% (against 2014/15 baseline). We are also delivering a range of projects such as increased tree planting, and pollinator friendly wildflower verges to improve the biodiversity of the borough.

Consultation headlines:

- Climate change, pollution and the state of woodlands were recognised by respondents as the most important environmental issues for the next generation.
- Agreement on the importance of tackling climate change but a feeling that 'net zero' is not yet a well understood idea.
- The importance of access to reliable and frequent public transport across the borough - especially in the south.
- Almost half (42%) of survey respondents were attempting to drive less as an action to reduce their environmental impact; 12% mentioned switching to a hybrid or electric vehicle, although the prohibitive cost was referenced.
- Respondents considered fly-tipping, littering and potholes to be important issues in their local area
- 89% of respondents consider local parks and green spaces to be very important, particularly for their health and wellbeing

Where we want to be

We want to see the investment in people and equipment improving the cleanliness of the borough and the continued success of 'Love Where You Live', increasing pride and ownership within neighbourhoods across the borough, whilst reduce littering and improving the environment for all.

We want our borough to have well-functioning and well-connected cycling and public transport infrastructures, for our residents to enjoy the environmental and health benefits that come with this. We will enhance and extend cycling routes across Rotherham, based on our new cycling strategy, and invest in public transport infrastructure, working through South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to create a more integrated network. The Transforming

Cities programme, together with the Active Travel Fund, will deliver £12 million worth of improvements for public transport, walking and cycling by March 2023.

We will continue to support the development of a new mainline station in Rotherham, improving connectivity in and across the region and we are working with key stakeholders to progress this ambition. We are also continuing to campaign for a new railway station at Waverley and the Advanced Manufacturing Park, a new tram-train station at Magna, and are working with partners on the concept of further extensions to the successful tram-train network.

To reduce the risk of flooding to our communities, we will continue to work with partners to secure the necessary funding to deliver the six major schemes to prevent floods and reduce their impact in the borough. Through the South Yorkshire Catchment Plan, we will also engage with communities at risk of flooding to help build their resilience and ensure that the impact of flooding is reduced as much as possible.

We will explore the options to deliver a renewable energy generation project, allowing the Council to produce its own clean, renewable energy that will further contribute to the borough's net zero targets.

This will mean focussing on the following outcomes:

- Increasing satisfaction with the cleanliness of the borough
- Creating better transport systems for future generations
- Reducing the risk and impact of flooding and other environmental emergencies.
- Contributing to reducing carbon emissions across the borough

How we will get there

- Ensure our streets are clean by providing an effective response to fly-tipping and littering, and continually improving our approach to street cleaning
- To continue to invest in our urban green spaces and country parks,



maintaining our four Green Flag accredited parks, whilst aiming for additional accreditations

- Complete masterplans for the borough's three country parks, with an ambition to enhance services provided at these parks, whilst improving the appearance, cleanliness and welcome of our green spaces
- Work with regional partners to deliver public transport improvements such as a new Tram-train stop at Magna, as well as longer term aims a railway station at Waverley and a new mainline station for Rotherham
- Develop a new Cycling Strategy and invest in new cycleways across Rotherham
- Continue the roll out of public charging points to make electric vehicles a more viable option for residents and visitors
- Deliver flood alleviation projects and work with communities and businesses to develop flood resilience measures in the worst-affected areas.
- Deliver a renewable energy generation project by 2025
- Plant a minimum of 500 new trees every year
- Encourage our suppliers to reduce their emissions through implementation of the Council's Social Value Policy
- Support residents to access nationally available insulation grants to improve energy efficiency

9 ONE COUNCIL

As a Council we have an important part to play in addressing the challenges faced and achieving better outcomes for the people of Rotherham.

Our vision is to work with communities to deliver responsive and modern services that are easily accessible to all.

Where are we now

In recent years, the Council has been focused on rebuilding public trust and delivering high quality services whilst effectively responding to the challenges faced by residents, partners and businesses across the borough. This has been achieved against a backdrop of growing demand and an unprecedented period of budget reductions for local government.

Many of our services have been redesigned to focus on asset-based working, early intervention, and prevention to give communities and citizens more control over the issues that are most important to them. Digital processes have been improved or introduced, making it easier for people to access the services they need.

Since the pandemic, the Council has provided the tools and flexibility to enable staff to work from home and continue to deliver services in a safe way. Staff have embraced new technology and ways of working, allowing us to transition to a new 'hybrid working' model.

*“To listen to residents more and not assume things”
(consultation response)*

Key stats:

- **52% of respondents** in June 2021 were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way the Council runs things
- **40% of respondents** would 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' that Rotherham MBC provides value for money in June 2021
- **48% of respondents** in Rotherham answered positively when asked about the extent to which the Council acts on the concerns of residents ('a great deal' or 'a fair amount') in June 2021
- **50% Rotherham respondents** in June 2021 said that Rotherham Council keeps residents 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed about the services and benefits it provides
- **51% of respondents** said they trusted the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' in June 2021.
- **47% of respondents** in June 2021 stated that they have confidence in the Council (either 'to a great extent' or 'to a moderate extent')
- **79% of respondents** said that the Council had responded very or quite well to the covid crisis in June 2021

The Council has created over 400 online forms since October 2019 to enable customers to self-serve a wide range of services

When a service is made available online an average of 80% of customers digitally self-serve

Where we want to be

Our focus remains on Rotherham residents, building relationships based on trust, and working with people and communities to solve problems and make the most of opportunities.

We will continue to deliver value for money services to the people of Rotherham within the financial resources available to us, whilst continually seeking to improve our approach with more innovative ways of working.

A new programme will ensure that customers receive a consistent, high quality and efficient service from all areas of the Council. This will involve agreeing a new set of customer service standards with Rotherham residents to deliver an excellent customer experience, by improving the quality of our customer contacts.

Our workforce is critical to delivering the Council's priorities and a new workforce strategy will help us to ensure that staff feel valued, supported and empowered as they continue to deliver the best possible services for local people.

This will mean focussing on the following outcomes:

- Effective customer services – residents know we mean what we say, are kept informed and can access the services they need in the way that suits them
- Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customers
- Sound financial management and governance arrangements
- Effective leadership, working with our partners to achieve better outcomes across the whole borough

How we will get there:

- Work with services, partners and communities to promote equality, celebrate diversity and ensure fairness for everyone
- Communicate and engage with residents so that they feel informed about council services and how to access these
- Work in an efficient, open, transparent and accountable way, in partnership with key stakeholders
- Work to improve customer satisfaction, including by developing and implementing a new set of customer service standards



10 MEASURING SUCCESS

The Year Ahead Delivery Plan sets out the key actions required to help us achieve the outcomes and commitments in this plan.

Quarterly reports will be produced to track progress and will be reported to Cabinet. The reports will include progress on the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities, performance against key measures (see page 32 onwards) which are critical to the success of the plan, and a range of case studies.

Each year, directorates will produce service plans which will demonstrate how they contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan and outline wider priorities and responsibilities, which in turn will inform team plans and individual performance and development reviews.

11 GET INVOLVED

We want residents to be at the heart of everything we do. There are lots of different ways for people to get involved, providing views on our services, helping to shape plans and priorities, and keeping up to date on news and views. This includes ward plans, neighbourhood newsletters, social media and consultations.

For further information visit the Council website at www.rotherham.gov.uk

If you would like this information in another language or format, please ask us.

12 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

These measures and targets will be reviewed annually.

EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD THRIVING			
Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with communities on the things that matter to them Residents, organisations and businesses use their skills and resources to help others Neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local people have access to libraries, cultural activities, parks and green spaces Improved local towns and villages are improved 	
NE01a	Satisfaction with the borough and local area: a) Proportion of public satisfied with Rotherham Borough as a place to live	High	Greater than 62 %
NE01b	b) Proportion of the public satisfied with their local area as a place to live	High	Equal to or greater than 80 %
NE02a	Volunteering: a) Number of staff involved in the council employee volunteer scheme to support local communities	High	Baseline to be determined
NE02b	b) Number of volunteering opportunities for local people via the voluntary and community sector	High	80 new volunteering placements
NE03a	Anti-social behaviour a) Number of community protection notices issued (anti-social behaviour, waste and noise)	High	Greater than 350
NE03b	b) Public perception of anti-social behavior (via the 'Your Voice Counts' quality survey)	Low	Less than 43 %
NE04a	Hate crime: a) Number of hate crime incidents	Measure for information	No target

EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD THRIVING

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communities on the things that matter to them • Residents, organisations and businesses use their skills and resources to help others • Neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people have access to libraries, cultural activities, parks and green spaces • Improved local towns and villages are improved
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Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
NE04b	b) Proportion of positive outcomes to hate crime investigations	High	20 %
NE05	Proportion of the local road network classed as 'green status' (do not require repair)	High	a) 81 % classified b) 79 % non-principal c) 60 % unclassified
NE06a	Perceptions of feeling safe: a) Proportion of public that feel safe when outside in their local area during the day	High	Greater than 90 %
NE06b	b) Proportion of public that feel safe when outside in their local area after dark	High	Greater than 56 %
NE07a	Number of visits to culture, sport and tourism facilities (all population)	High	3,500,000 cumulative annual target
NE07b	Customer satisfaction with culture, sport and tourism services	High	Greater than 90 % across all services

PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
PE01	Number of people attending the Make Every Contact Count (MECC) training relating to health and wellbeing issues	High	150
PE02	The proportion of adults involved in a safeguarding enquiry who felt their personal outcomes were at least partially met	High	97 %
PE03	Proportion of new clients who receive short term (reablement) service in year with an outcome of no further requests made for support	High	90 %
PE04	Manage the number of new older adult admissions to long term residential care (aged 64+)	Measure for information	No target
PE05	Proportion of council housing repairs completed 'Right 1st time'	High	97 %
PE06	Number of new homes delivered with Council support, including affordable homes	High	225
PE07	Proportion of council housing stock that meets the "Decent Homes" standard	High	100 %
PE08	Proportion of households prevented or relieved from homelessness	High	85 %
PE09	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Low	95
PE10	Total number of referrals to domestic abuse support services	Measure for information	No target
PE11	Engagement rate with Domestic Abuse support services (all services)	High	60 %
PE12	Processing time of new claims for Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support	Low	24 days

EVERY CHILD ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
CH01	Percentage of eligible children accessing their 2-2.5yr health visitor checks	High	93 %
CH02	Number of Children in Need (rate per 10K population 0-17 as per DfE population)	Low	375.5
CH03	The number of children with a Child Protection plan (rate per 10K population 0-17)	Low	Fewer than 85
CH04	The number of Looked After Children (rate per 10k population 0-17)	Low	95.2
CH05	Open Early Help cases at the end of the reporting period (children)	Measure for information	No target
CH06	Proportion of social care re-referrals in 12 months - in current month	Low	Less than 22 %
CH07	Number of children and young people who are currently assessed as having a medium to high risk of CSE (CSE cohort)	Measure for information	No target
CH08	Proportion of two-year olds taking up an early education place	High	80.0 %
CH09	Proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check in year 1	High	Above Stat Neighbour Average
CH10	Number of children with Education, Health and Care Plan	Measure for information	No target
CH11	Number of universal youth work sessions delivered	High	Additional 800

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growing economy that provides decent jobs and chances to progress Delivering regeneration schemes that bring investment and opportunity, both in Rotherham town centre and in our towns and villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with partners and suppliers to create more local jobs, paid at the Real Living Wage or above, and apprenticeships People having opportunities to learn, develop skills and fulfil their potential Strengthening digital infrastructure and skills which enable access for all
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Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
EC01	Proportion of working age population who are in work (or actively looking for work) in Rotherham	High	Achieve national average
EC02a	Optimistic about the future: a) Proportion optimistic about the future of Rotherham as a place to live	High	Greater than 57 %
EC02b	b) Proportion optimistic about the future of Rotherham town centre	High	Greater than 24 %
EC03	Number of new businesses started with help from the Council	High	60
EC04a	Actions taken in Rotherham to promote progressive and sustainable Economic Development: a) Survival rate of new businesses supported in RiDO Business Centres over the first three trading years	High	81 %
EC04b	b) Provide advice and support to local businesses to help them recover and grow.	High	300 plus
EC05	Number of engagements with libraries' services which help people learn, acquire new skills or get a job	High	75,000 plus
EC06	Proportion of new starter apprenticeships created within the Council	High	1.5 % of workforce
EC07	Number of online customer transactions (digital inclusion measure)	High	3 % increase year on year (2021/22 185,400 for the year (46,350 per quarter)

A CLEANER, GREENER LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

A CLEANER, GREENER LOCAL ENVIRONMENT			
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing satisfaction with the cleanliness of the borough Creating better transport systems for future generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the risk and impact of flooding and other environmental emergencies Contributing to reducing carbon emissions across the borough 	
Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
EN01a	Fly tipping and environmental crime: a) Effective enforcement actions; fly-tipping	High	37 plus
EN01b	b) Effective enforcement actions; other environmental crime	High	2,000 (cumulative)
EN02	Proportion of waste sent for reuse (recycling and composting)	High	45 %
EN03	Number of street cleaning, grounds maintenance and waste official complaints and service requests	Low	190 cumulative for year in the number of official complaints received
EN04	Carbon dioxide emission levels for the Council (for specific areas, for example operational buildings, street lighting)	Low	18 % reduction by 2023
EN05	Number of trees planted by the Council	High	a) 5 Hectares b) 500 Trees
EN06	Proportion of council housing with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated C and above	High	New

ONE COUNCIL

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective customer services – residents know we mean what we say, are kept informed and can access the services they need in the way that suits them • Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound financial management and governance arrangements • Effective leadership, working with our partners to achieve better outcomes across the whole borough
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Ref	Key Performance Indicators	Good is	Target 2022/23
OC01	Proportion of complaints closed within timescales	High	85 %
OC02a	Satisfaction: a) The proportion of residents who feel that the Council keeps them informed	High	Greater than 50 %
OC02b	b) To what extent do you think that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents	High	Greater than 48 %
OC03	Average customer wait time to corporate contact centre	Low	6 minutes
OC03	Number of council working days lost to sickness per full time equivalent post	Low	10.3 days
OC04	The proportion of completed annual staff performance development reviews	High	95 %
OC05a	Diverse workforce: a) Overall proportion of disabled employees	Representative of the borough	Maintain 9 % or above
OC05b	b) Overall proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees	Representative of the borough	6.3 %
OC05c	c) Proportion of workforce under 25	Representative of the borough	4.6 %
OC06a	Council tax and business rates collected: a) Proportion of Council Tax collected in the current financial year compared with other Met Councils	High	Top quartile metropolitan authorities
OC06b	b) Proportion of business rates collected in the current financial year compared with other Met Councils	High	Top quartile metropolitan authorities

Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022

Every neighbourhood thriving						
Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
1.1	Work with communities on the things that matter to them	Produce ward plans with ward priorities informed by local communities.	Martin Hughes <i>Head of Neighbourhoods</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	June 2022	Cllr Allen
1.2		Increase the number of subscribers for the ward bulletins to 9,000 (25% increase).	Chris Burton <i>Head of Communications and Marketing</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	Ongoing - March 2023	Leader
1.3		Increase the number of subscribers for the new 'Rotherham Round up' borough wide email to 9,000.	Chris Burton <i>Head of Communications and Marketing</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	Ongoing – March 2023	Leader
1.4		Evaluate the Controlling Migration Fund programme.	Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	November 2022	Leader
1.5	Residents, organisations and businesses use their skills and resources to help others	Work with VAR to establish 80 new volunteering opportunities across voluntary and community organisations.	Martin Hughes <i>Head of Neighbourhoods</i> Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	March 2022 SLA in place until March 2024, targets reviewed annually	Cllr Sheppard
1.6	Neighbourhoods are	Improve enforcement	Tom Smith,	Regeneration	August 2022	Cllr Alam

	welcoming and safe	outcomes by making greater use of legal powers. This means issuing more than 350 community protection notices.	<i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	and Environment		
1.7		Develop interventions that seek to reduce hate crime and improve community safety by tackling harmful narratives, including via the 'Who is your neighbour' and Remedi projects.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	May 2022	Cllr Alam
1.8		Design and implement new neighbourhood road safety measures, including 20mph zones.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck
1.9		Repair an estimated 595 estate roads (137.7km) (between April 2020- March 23) through the 2024 roads programme.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	Ongoing - March 2023	Cllr Beck
1.10		Work with Councillors to identify hot-spot areas for nuisance pavement parking and develop plans to prevent nuisance pavement parking, including parking restrictions.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck
1.11	Local people have access to libraries, cultural activities, parks and green spaces	Complete the new library at Thurcroft.	Zoe Oxley <i>Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation</i>	Regeneration and Environment	December 2022	Cllr Sheppard
1.12		Hold cultural and sporting events across Rotherham to	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service</i>	Regeneration and		Cllr Sheppard

		<p>appeal to a range of ages and backgrounds, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Euro 2022 • Rotherham Show • Rotherham 10k • Summer reading challenge • Fun palaces. 	<p><i>Creative Programming and Engagement</i></p> <p>Zoe Oxley <i>Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation</i></p>	Environment	<p>Jan-Jul 2022 Sept 2022 May 2022 September 2022</p> <p>October 2022</p>	
1.13		Complete restoration of the grade II listed site Keppels Column.	<p>Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i></p>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 – May 2022	Cllr Sheppard
1.14		Complete feasibility study for a new Rotherham Theatre.	<p>Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i></p>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 – April 2022	Cllr Sheppard
1.15	Local towns and villages are improved	Create a plan of developments across the borough to maximise the impact of the Towns and Villages fund.	<p>Paul Woodcock <i>Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment</i></p>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 – April 2022	Cllr Allen Cllr Lelliott

People are safe, healthy and live well

Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
2.1	People have good mental health and physical wellbeing	Work with partners to develop a prevention and health inequalities strategy and action plan.	Ben Anderson <i>Director Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	October 2021-April 2022	Cllr Roche
2.2		Refresh the partnership Loneliness Action plan and ensure the delivery of Council owned actions.	Ben Anderson <i>Director Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	September 2022	Cllr Roche
2.3		Produce suicide prevention guidance for staff and Members.	Anne Marie Lubanski <i>Strategic Director Adult Care, Housing and Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	May 2022	Cllr Roche
2.4		Create a cultural programme including events, theatre, libraries, music and museums for residents aged 55+ to help with grief, mental wellbeing and physical conditioning.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 - March 2022	Cllr Sheppard
2.5		Deliver £250k investment works in Herringthorpe Stadium, including completion of flood lighting, refurbishment of internal and external pavilion.	Chris Siddall <i>Acting Head of Strategic Projects and Partnerships</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2022	Cllr Sheppard
2.6		Meet national contact tracing weekly target of	Nathan Atkinson <i>Assistant Director</i>	Adult Care, Housing and	March 2022	Cllr Roche

		89% contacts completed successfully.	<i>Strategic Commissioning</i> Ben Anderson <i>Director of Public Health</i>	Public Health		
2.7		Regular and timely review of all clusters of cases in complex settings (care, schools and workplaces) for requirements to hold an Incident Management Team meeting (IMT).	Nathan Atkinson <i>Assistant Director Strategic Commissioning</i> Ben Anderson <i>Director of Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	March 2022	Cllr Roche
2.8		Targeted engagement with communities to promote vaccination take up and dispel myths and fake news.	Nathan Atkinson <i>Assistant Director Strategic Commissioning</i> Ben Anderson <i>Director of Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	June 2022	Cllr Roche
2.9	People feel empowered, safe and live independently for as long as possible.	Develop new day opportunities for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 'day opportunities' consultation regarding REACH services. • Commence building works to improve day facilities. 	Ian Spicer <i>Assistant Director Independent Living and Support</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	May 2022 March 2023	Cllr Roche

2.10		Develop and deliver a programme of consultation and engagement on the future supported accommodation offer for those with learning disabilities and autism.	Ian Spicer <i>Assistant Director Independent Living and Support</i> Scott Matthewman <i>Interim Assistant Director of Commissioning Strategic Adult Care</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	January 2022 – October 2022	Cllr Roche
2.11		Deliver and launch the new Carers Strategy.	Ian Spicer <i>Assistant Director Independent Living and Support</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	June 2022	Cllr Roche
2.12		Recommission domestic abuse services.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2022	Cllr Cusworth
2.13	People can access affordable, decent housing	Refresh the Housing Strategy.	Paul Walsh <i>Interim Assistant Director of Housing</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	May 2022	Cllr Brookes
2.14		Deliver the Council's Housing Growth Programme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre housing programme • Chesterhill Avenue and Whinney Hill 	Paul Walsh <i>Interim Assistant Director of Housing</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Regeneration and Environment	February 2020 - October 2022 First homes by March 2022,	Cllr Brookes Cllr Lelliott

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Council bungalows on sites in Treeton and Ravenfield 			completion by 2023 March 2021 - April 2022	
2.15	Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind	Commission new services to prevent financial exploitation.	Paul Walsh <i>Interim Assistant Director of Housing</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	March 2023	Cllr Brookes
2.16		Complete a review of Rother Card.	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	June 2022	Cllr Sheppard
2.17		Develop three social supermarkets and other measures as part of a preventative approach to help people avoid food crisis.	Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	December 2022	Cllr Sheppard
2.18		Reduce the number of homeless people housed in temporary accommodation.	Paul Walsh <i>Interim Assistant Director of Housing</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	April 2022 onwards	Cllr Sheppard Cllr Brookes
2.19		Provide food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays through to Easter 2022.	Nathan Heath <i>Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills</i>	Children and Young People's Services	To April 2022	Cllr Cusworth
2.20		Provide up to £100 reduction in Council Tax liability for working age households eligible for Local Council Tax Support during 2021/22.	Judith Badger <i>Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services</i>	Finance and Customer Services	March 2022	Cllr Alam

Every child able to fulfil their potential

Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
3.1	Children get the best start in life	Carry out targeted engagement with families to increase take up of early education.	Nathan Heath <i>Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills</i>	Children and Young People's Services	March 2023	Cllr Cusworth
3.2		Work with Health and Wellbeing Board partners to develop a 'Best Start and Beyond' strategy.	Ben Anderson <i>Director Public Health</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Children and Young People's Services	April 2023	Cllr Roche Cllr Cusworth
3.3	Children and young people are safe from harm	Develop and launch the refreshed Early Help Strategy.	David McWilliams <i>Assistant Director Early Help and Family Engagement</i>	Children's and Young People's services	October 2021 - February 2022	Cllr Cusworth
3.4		Implement KOOTH, the online mental health and wellbeing tool and monitor usage by young people.	Helen Sweaton, <i>Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Quality and Performance</i>	Children's and Young People's services	November 2021 - October 2022	Cllr Cusworth
3.5	Young people feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations	Implement the Rotherham inclusion Pathway (a school-led, multi-agency approach to supporting young people at risk of exclusion).	Nathan Heath <i>Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills</i>	Children and Young People's Services	October 2021 - July 2022	Cllr Cusworth
		Evaluate the current 'team around the school' project to establish the impact on the	Nathan Heath <i>Interim Assistant Director</i>	Children's and Young People's services	January 2022 - July 2022	Cllr Cusworth

		sample schools and their pupils.	<i>Education and Skills</i>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health		
3.6		Implement the 'Year of Reading' programme and evaluate its success.	Nathan Heath <i>Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills</i>	Children and Young People's Services	January 2022- July 2023	Cllr Cusworth
3.7		Deliver the Enterprise Adviser Network programme, ensuring 75% of schools and colleges are matched to an adviser from a local business and are demonstrating progress towards achieving the eight Gatsby benchmarks for good quality careers education information, advice and guidance.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Lelliott
3.8		Deliver the Business Education Alliance programme, with 33 SMEs engaging with schools and colleges to help raise aspirations through meaningful employer encounters.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	December 2023	Cllr Lelliott
3.9		Maximise Kickstart placements to provide employment opportunities for local, unemployed, young people'.	Lee Mann Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development	Assistant Chief Executive's	September 2022	Cllr Alam
3.10	Children and young people have fun	Work with children and young people across the borough to	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service</i>	Regeneration and	August 2021 – May 2022	Cllr Sheppard

	things to do and safe places to go	co-design the Children's Capital of Culture 2025 programme.	<i>Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Environment		
3.11		Agree a new universal Youth offer including the contributions of both the Council and voluntary sector partners.	David McWilliams <i>Assistant Director Early Help and Family Engagement</i>	Children and Young People's Services	January 2023	Cllr Cusworth
3.12		Complete delivery of the £100k Play Equipment replacement programme.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Sheppard

Expanding economic opportunity

Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
4.1	A growing economy that provides decent jobs and chances to progress	Delivery of new Century business centre at Manvers.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	January 2022 – July 2023	Cllr Lelliott
4.2		Deliver 'Reload Programme' of sector support for culture and creative industries, including providing 20 microgrants for event organisers and 21 new commissions.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 – March 2022	Cllr Sheppard
4.3	Delivering regeneration schemes that bring investment and opportunity, both in Rotherham town centre and in our towns and villages	Secure planning approval, complete detailed design and appoint contractor for the construction of the market and library project as part of Future High Streets Fund.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i> Zoe Oxley <i>Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation</i>	Regeneration and Environment	February 2022 (Planning Board) – October 2022	Cllr Sheppard Cllr Lelliott
4.4		Develop business cases for the 6 Town Deal projects and submit summaries to government by 27 June 2022.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	January 2022 -June 2022	Cllr Lelliott
4.5		Complete the detailed design prior to construction of the	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director</i>	Regeneration and Environment	January 2022 – October 2022	Cllr Lelliott

		leisure development on Forge Island.	<i>Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>			
<p><i>In addition to the actions outlined above, there are a range of activities within the environment theme (Better transport systems for future generations) which will contribute to connecting people to economic opportunities.</i></p>						
4.6	Working with partners and suppliers to create more local jobs, paid at the Real Living Wage or above, and apprenticeships	Work with partners to identify their local spending profile as well as promoting living wage accreditation.	Graham Saxton <i>Interim Assistant Director Financial Services</i> Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Finance and Customer Services Assistant Chief Executive's	September 2022 (progress review date)	Leader
4.7		Ensure new in scope contracts are in line with Living Wage accreditation.	Graham Saxton <i>Interim Assistant Director Financial Services</i> Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Finance and Customer Services Assistant Chief Executive's	Ongoing - March 2023 (review date)	Leader
4.8		Adopt a local labour policy to encourage and/or enable local people to access job opportunities arising from major development sites.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	Ongoing - March 2023	Cllr Lelliott
4.9	People having	Deliver the European	Paul Walsh	Adult Care,	Ongoing to March	Cllr Sheppard

	opportunities to learn, develop skills and fulfil their potential	Social Fund 'Pathways to Success' employment support programme, to at least 450 residents who qualify, into training and work.	<i>Interim Assistant Director of Housing</i>	Housing and Public Health	2022 (may be further extended to Dec 2023)	
4.10		Commence the delivery of the Advance project and provide assistance to 500 people in employment to enhance their career prospects.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	January 2022 - December 2023	Cllr Lelliott
4.11		<p>Train library staff and work with partners to help people make best use of library resources for job seeking, gaining skills, and supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners from the People and Skills Networking Group to set up work coaches and job seeker support across the library network. • Business and intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) to launch at the Central Library. 	Zoe Oxley <i>Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation</i>	Regeneration and Environment	<p>November 2021 onwards</p> <p>March 2022</p>	Cllr Sheppard
4.12	Strengthening digital infrastructure and skills which enables access for all	Identify measures to improve digital inclusion through consultation with communities.	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	December 2022	Cllr Alam

4.13		Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy.	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	December 2022 - July 2023	Cllr Alam
4.14		Deliver public Wi-Fi to the new town centre library and markets building and investigate the feasibility of delivering Wi-Fi to other Council owned public spaces within the Town centre.	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	March 2023	Cllr Alam

A cleaner, greener local environment

Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
5.1	Increasing satisfaction with the cleanliness of the Borough	Develop first proposals for country park masterplans (Rother Valley and Thrybergh) for public consultation.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Regeneration and Environment	April 2022	Cllr Sheppard
5.2		Increase the number of fines, prosecutions or legal actions for fly tipping.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	August 2022	Cllr Beck
5.3		Implement systems to monitor and assess the environment in local areas and enable improvements in grounds maintenance and street cleansing.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	April 2022	Cllr Beck
5.4		Target an extra 240 local areas for additional cleaning and weed removal.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck
5.5		Creating better transport systems for future generations	Deliver bus, tram and cycle improvements through the Transforming Cities Fund programme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheffield Road Cycleway 	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick Street public realm with cycleway • Forge Island footbridge • Moor Road, Manvers cycle route • Doncaster Road, Dalton • A.631 Maltby bus corridor. 			<p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p>	
5.6		Finalise delivery plan for the approved cycling strategy.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck
5.7		Complete A630 Parkway Improvement Scheme to reduce speeds (50mph), reduce congestion and improve air quality.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	June 2023	Cllr Beck
5.8	Reducing the risk and impact of flooding and other environmental emergencies	Achieve 'shovel ready' status for the six priority flood alleviation schemes and work to secure funding to implement the schemes.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2024	Cllr Beck
5.9		Construct the Forge Island canal barrier.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director</i>	Regeneration and Environment	August 2022	Cllr Lelliott Cllr Beck

			<i>Community Safety and Street Scene</i>			
5.10		Construct the Ickles Lock to Centenary Way flood wall and embankment.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	October 2021 – December 2022	Cllr Beck
5.11		Develop plans to support community resilience and community-led activities in areas at risk of flooding.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene</i>	Regeneration and Environment	September 2022	Cllr Beck
5.12	Contributing to reducing carbon emissions across the Borough	Develop a medium term and long-term Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.	Rob Savage <i>Acting Head of Change and Innovation</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	March 2022	Cllr Lelliott
5.13		Implement heating or energy efficiency measures in Council buildings that reduce CO2 emissions, working towards the target of an 18% reduction by March 2023.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	April 2022 - March 2023	Cllr Lelliott
5.14		Install additional 8 vehicle charging units to complement existing provision, and 2 residential charging hubs.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	April 2022 - March 2023	Cllr Lelliott
5.15		Develop a fleet conversion programme to low carbon fuel.	Tom Smith <i>Assistant Director Community</i>	Regeneration and Environment	November 2022	Cllr Lelliott

			<i>Safety and Street Scene</i>			
5.16		Develop a plan to tackle single use plastics across council buildings and events.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i> Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	May 2022	Cllr Lelliott
5.17		Deliver a communications plan to raise awareness about climate change and influence a positive change in behaviour across the borough.	Rob Savage <i>Acting Head of Change and Innovation</i> Chris Burton <i>Head of Communications and Marketing</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	Ongoing - March 2023	Cllr Lelliott
5.18		Plant 10,000 new trees across the borough working with community groups and schools.	Leanne Buchan <i>Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement</i>	Regeneration and Environment	November 2021 – March 2023	Cllr Sheppard
5.19		Continue to provide direct support to residents to enable them to apply for insulation grants where applicable through the ECO03 and	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck

		ECO04 programmes.	<i>and Transport</i>			
5.20		Find a suitable site for Renewable Energy Generation, obtain planning permission and commence procurement.	Simon Moss <i>Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport</i>	Regeneration and Environment	March 2023	Cllr Beck

One Council

Ref	Outcome	Activity	Lead officer	Lead directorate	Timescales for delivery (from and to)	Lead Cabinet Member
6.1	Effective customer services – residents know we mean what we say, are kept informed and can access the services they need in the way that suits them	Develop and implement a new set of cross organisational customer service standards following consultation with customers (internal and external stakeholders).	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	December 2023	Leader
6.2		Expand and improve the range of services available online and identify ways to reduce unnecessary call demand to improve average customer wait times to a maximum of 6 minutes.	Luke Sayers <i>Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital</i>	Finance and Customer Services	Ongoing – March 2023	Leader
6.3		Refresh the Council’s equality strategy and objectives.	Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive’s	April 2022	Cllr Alam
6.4		Review the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework.	Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive’s	November 2022	Leader
6.5		Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet	Implementation of the Workforce Plan.	Lee Mann <i>Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational</i>	Assistant Chief Executive’s	January 2022

	the needs of all customer		<i>Development</i>			
6.6		Assess and implement a strategic workforce planning approach to attraction and retention for high priority roles such as care and social work, with a focus on encouraging applications from Rotherham residents.	Lee Mann <i>Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	September 2022	Cllr Alam
6.7		Review feedback from the Employee Opinion Survey 2021, identify priority areas and agree corporate and directorate action plans.	Lee Mann <i>Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	June 2022	Cllr Alam
6.8	Sound financial management and governance arrangements	Deliver a balanced budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council.	Graham Saxton <i>Interim Assistant Director Financial Services</i>	Finance and Customer Services	March 2022 (annually)	Leader
6.9	Effective leadership, working with our partners to achieve better outcomes across the whole Borough	Refresh the Member Development Programme.	Emma Hill <i>Acting Head of Democratic Services</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	April 2022	Cllr Allen
6.10		Refresh the Rotherham Together Plan.	Simon Dennis <i>Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence</i>	Assistant Chief Executive's	June 2022	Leader

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Our Rotherham, Our Borough

Consultation Report November 2021



‘Our Rotherham, Our Borough’ Consultation Report

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1. Background and Methodology

The new Council Plan sets out the strategic aims for Rotherham Council for the period 2022 to 2025, providing a foundation on which all council activities are based. To help inform this, a public consultation and engagement exercise took place from 9th August to the 19th September 2021 to seek the views of Rotherham residents and other local stakeholders. The plan will be signed off by Cabinet in December 2021 before being adopted by the Council and launched in January 2022.

The pandemic has presented logistical issues in undertaking consultation and engagement, particularly around engaging with vulnerable groups that were understandably reluctant to meet in person. Other groups were reluctant to engage virtually as they were not comfortable with the virtual platform. Following the Government's gradual easing of restrictions, a combination of virtual and face to face consultation took place. However, consideration was taken to ensure that any face-to-face consultation and engagement was conducted in a Covid-secure manner. Despite the issues posed by the pandemic, over 1,300 interactions took place in total across all methods of engagement.

The consultation was conducted in a semi-structured manner, in that there were set themes that formed the parameters for discussion. The focus then centred around what people thought the issues and priorities were under each theme. The following methodologies were used to capture broad range of views:

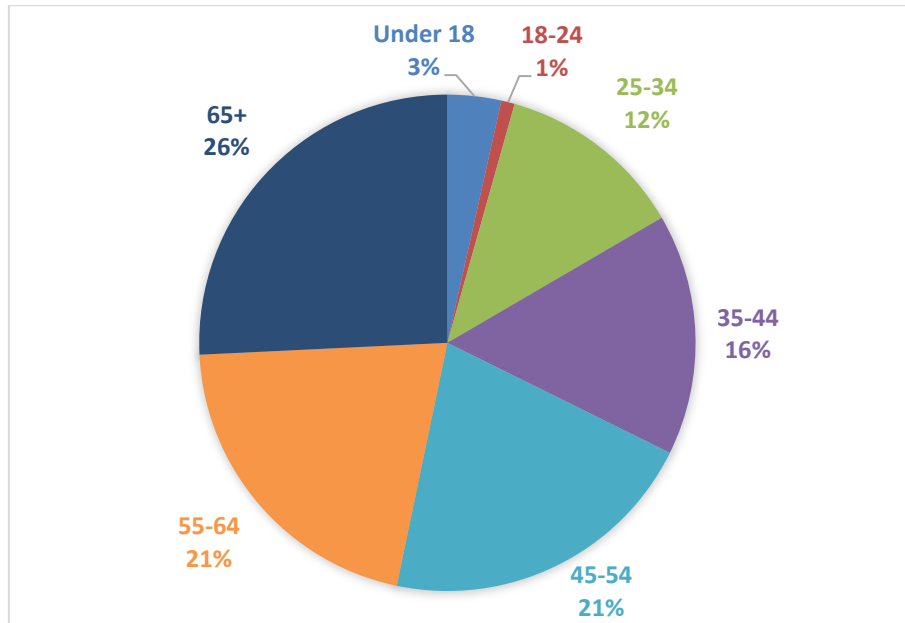
- **Focus Groups** – 4 focus groups took place in August, each on a particular theme. An external facilitator was used for impartiality and attendees included members of the public and staff from voluntary and community sector organisations. 48 people took part in total.
- **Short Interactions** – 3 questions were discussed with groups both virtually and in person with triangular consultation 'towers' and people using sticky notes to answer the questions:
 1. What do you most like about where you live?
 2. What is one thing you would improve?
 3. What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?There were 274 responses across all questions (not including the Rotherham Show).
- **Online and Postal Survey** – An online survey was hosted on the Council website that went 'live' on the 20th August and closed on the 19th September. Questions were based on 4 themes which split the survey into different sections. Residents could then select which sections they want to answer questions on. A postal survey ran concurrent to this which included a paper version of the online survey questions sent out to 500 randomly selected households across the borough with a freepost envelope included. There were 298 respondents in total online, and 52 postal survey responses were received.
- **Rotherham Show** – The 'tower' and questions from the short interactions were used to consult with the public over the 3 days of the show, staffed by the Policy, Performance and Intelligence team in the Assistant Chief Executive's directorate. There were over 700 responses across all the questions.

This consultation is seen as part of an ongoing dialogue between the Council and members of the public. Feedback will continue to be sought and the consultation 'towers' will continue to be used for short interactions to feed into the Year Ahead Delivery Plan, the Rotherham Plan, the equalities review and the refresh of the equalities strategy.

2. Engagement Profile

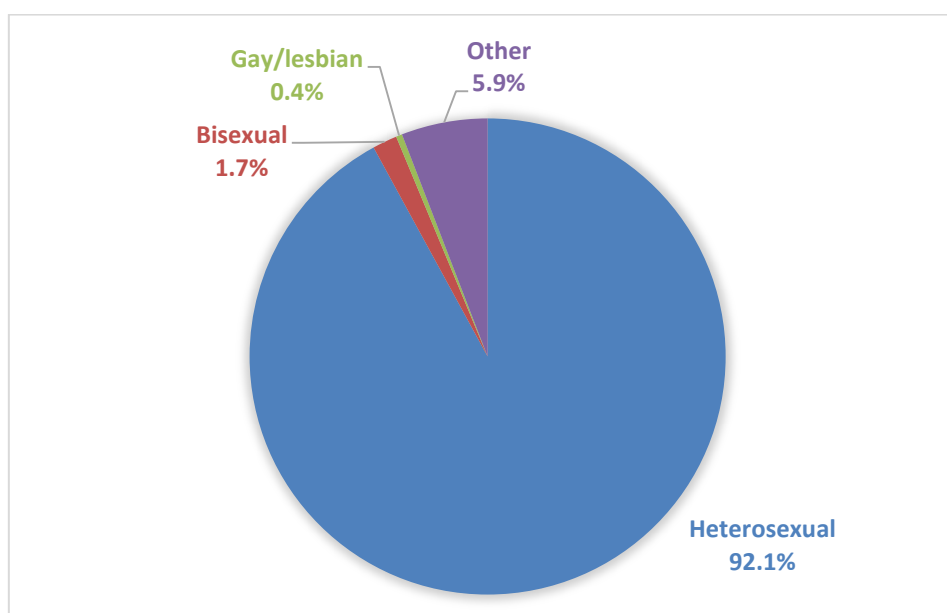
There was a total of 350 responses to the postal and online surveys. Overall, there were more responses from women than from men, with women made up 62% of the respondents, as compared to 34% male respondents.

The age profile of the respondents are as follows:

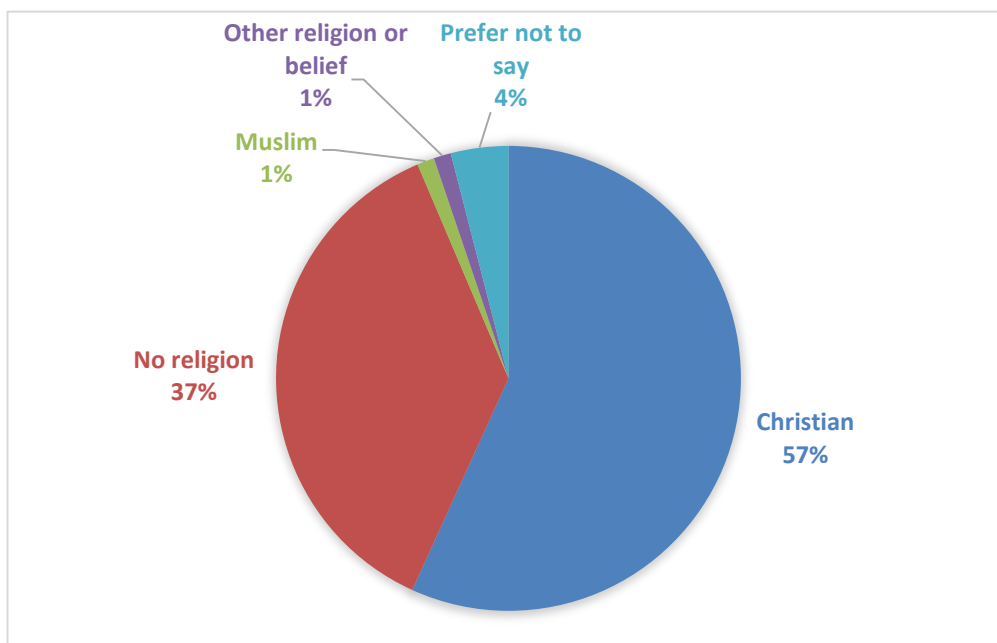


Compared to the age profile of the borough, survey respondents were older – 26% over 65s, as compared to 20% borough-wide – and only 4% of survey respondents were under 24, compared with a borough figure of 29%. There was a good representation of the middle age groups (25-44 year olds), while 45-54 year old were overrepresented, with 21% respondents from that age bracket, as compared to a Rotherham figure of 14%.

In terms of sexuality, respondents largely align with national figures, with 92% identifying as heterosexual, 2% as bisexual, gay or lesbian, and 6% as other.



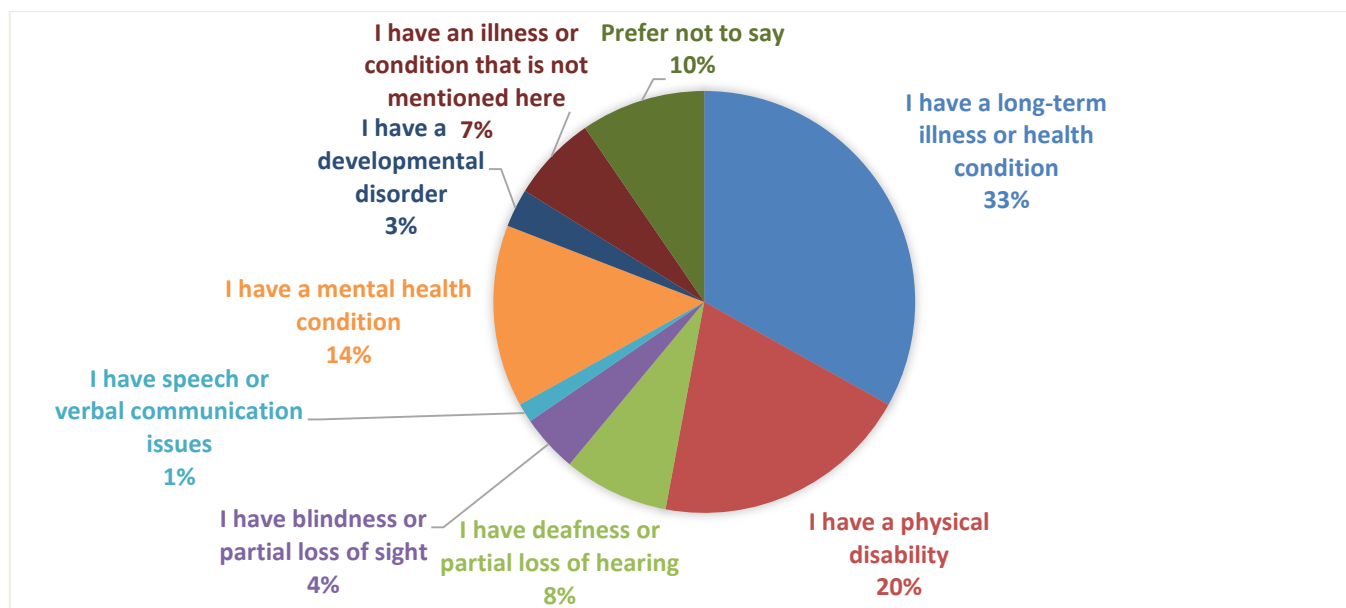
The religious beliefs of respondents are as follows:



These differ from Rotherham figures, with less of the respondents identifying as Christian (57% as compared to 67%), and more stating no religion (37% as compared to 22.5%) – though the borough-wide figures are dated. 1.2% of the respondents identified as Muslim, compared to the dated borough-wide figure of 3.7%, which is expected to have increased.

The ethnic make-up of respondents also differed from borough-wide figures, with more respondents identifying as White British or White Irish and less as BAME, with only 0.8% identifying as Asian/Asian British 0.8%, 0.8% as dual heritage, and a further 0.8% as other, while Rotherham had over 8% BAME residents in 2011, which is expected to have increased since.

Out of the respondents, 29% reported to have a disability. Of the 29% that stated they have a disability, a further breakdown of these is shown in the pie chart below:



This compares with 22% of Rotherham residents who reported a long-term illness or disability in 2011, and an estimate of 18% of residents having common mental disorders in 2017, although the rate is lower in over 65s. 19% of respondents stated they were unpaid carers.

Focus groups aimed to make up some of the engagement gaps, by engaging stakeholders working with some of the groups whose views were underrepresented in the survey, and in particular those sharing protected characteristics. It should be noted that this representation through stakeholders is not sufficient substitute to participation, and for future consultations it would be preferable to aim at equal representation across the protected characteristics (as representative of the population of the borough) within all methods of data collection.

Representatives from the Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance, the Unity Centre, Rotherham Wah Hong Chinese Association aimed to fill some of the gaps in responses from BAME residents and Rotherham Muslim Community Forum for Muslim residents.

Several organisations represented vulnerable residents, such as Victim Support (support for victims of crime), Rotherham Rise, (support for domestic abuse victims), as well as more specialised support: for Black and minority ethnic women experiencing violence (Apna Haq), for those with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities (Nayi Zindagi), a BME & Young People Carers group, Mama Africa (support for Refugees and Asylum seekers), holistic support for BME women (Tassibee), support for those with learning disabilities and autism (Speakup). There were also organisations working with older people, such as Age UK and the Older People's Forum. With support from Rotherham service providers the short interactions engagement method also allowed us to engage with a broad range of people from communities of interest and protected characteristic groups.

Other important voluntary sector organisations represented were Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherfed, and further participating were sports organisations (Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, Active Regen and a grassroots football club), physical activity and health organisations (Pivotal Health and Wellbeing, Rotherham Health Watch, the Rotherham Carers Forum) as well as other organisations such as South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and litter picking groups.

3. Findings from the Consultation and Engagement Methods

Focus Groups

The consultation included four focus groups, each one centred around one of four themes, that were held on the following dates:

- Safe and resilient – 09 August 2021
- Securing a greener future for Rotherham – 09 August 2021
- Improved wellbeing and quality of life – 16 August 2021
- An economy that works for everyone – 16 August 2021

Focus groups were composed of stakeholders including partners, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and members of the public. Stakeholders were invited to participate in a theme corresponding to their area activity; for example stakeholders that support particularly economically vulnerable residents in Rotherham were invited to participate in the “economy that works for everyone” discussion. There was a total of 48 participants across all four focus groups.

Focus group discussions used a semi-structured format; several broad questions and prompts were used to guide the conversation that was otherwise shaped by participants. A third-party facilitator asked these questions and ensured that conversations stayed focused and relevant to the theme whilst allowing participants to independently raise issues from their own perspectives.

Findings

Across all focus groups

As well as specific thematic insight, the following cross-cutting areas of discussion were observed across all focus groups:

1. **Themes are linked to one another:** In all thematic focus group discussions links were made with other themes. For example, conversations about health and wellbeing made links to economic vulnerability, and vice versa.
2. **The need for partnership working:** All groups agreed on the need for more joined-up partnership working to address key issues. This focus is driven by the participants mostly being partners, VCS organisations and similar stakeholders.
3. **Engagement is seen as a key issue:** All focus groups emphasised the need to focus on engagement - communicating information to communities and seeking and acting on their input. An important component of engagement is collaborative and multi-agency work; there were mixed responses on how well this was being done; it was highlighted that the Council needs to play a central role in forming diverse and adaptable networks that can identify and respond to problems faced by residents and communities.
4. **Vulnerability was a key theme across thematic discussions:** The experience of the pandemic has created new vulnerabilities, added new dimensions to existing ones, and made pre-existing issues apparent. There is a need to focus on those that do not appear vulnerable but require support. Consensus that tackling issues requires a comprehensive definition of what vulnerability entails and a joined-up strategy to address its facets. Emphasis was placed on difficulties in accessing support that must be addressed.

Discussions included addressing vulnerability through building positive environment / society rather than solely focusing on vulnerable people.

5. **Equalities emerged as a cross-cutting issue:** Inequalities were both exacerbated and made increasingly apparent by the experience of the pandemic. Equalities was mentioned in all focus groups and linked with the need for services and support to be adaptable and to rely on co-delivery.
6. **All groups expressed uncertainties or concerns around delivering services and activities in a post-covid landscape:** These ranged from how effective online services are, to the practicalities of organising work with communities. From service delivery partners, many questions were raised about shortfalls in funding since the experience of the pandemic.
7. **Digital services:** Concerns were raised about inequalities of access and risk of disengagement from digital services. Conversely, some participants reflected that the digital shift has offered advantages in service delivery.

Focus Group 1: Safe and resilient

This focus group discussion covered a range of vulnerabilities facing residents and communities: mental health, loneliness, hate crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), bullying, and socioeconomic issues were directly raised. It was noted that the definition of vulnerability needed to be re-understood post-pandemic. This was largely framed around understanding the emergence of new issues facing vulnerable residents and new dimensions to existing issues, as well as identifying vulnerability that may be pre-existing but had previously gone unnoticed. The question was also raised by participants as to how we understand vulnerability generally – which led into a discussion of the risk of targeting support based on arbitrary labels or indicators of vulnerability.

This risk was framed in the context of invisible vulnerabilities or support needs that may go unnoticed; respondents reported a focus of support on those who are visibly vulnerable, while others that have a real need for support but do not obviously present as such may go unnoticed.

Health, particularly mental health, was at the centre of this discussion. Participants noted a large increase in service users experiencing mental health issues. These were linked to a holistic set of wider issues (e.g. housing difficulties, socio-economic and family circumstances) as well as general wellbeing issues such as loneliness induced by self-isolation. Loneliness and boredom emerged as significant issues across all groups and may have consequences on general wellbeing as well as wider impacts (such as driving rates of ASB). Difficulties accessing support or long waiting lists exacerbate mental health issues further, while mental health impacts were reportedly significant across the participants' workforce and volunteers. Participants also speculated that the disruption of services and other issues since the pandemic may bring on a "mental wellbeing pandemic".

It was expressed that support offers do not seem to be sufficient in addressing such vulnerabilities in Rotherham: one respondent explained them as "reactive" rather than "proactive" – seeking to address vulnerability where it is apparent, but failing to address the underlying issues that give rise to vulnerability. Mental health was a particular area where respondents expressed concern regarding the level of support available. Participants noted that providers engaging with each other was important to share learning and develop a shared understanding of issues faced by service-users, and that engaging with communities was important to better understand the type of support needed. The need to gather this learning and insight was related to a reported increase in the complexity of emerging support needs. One example reported was the increase in difficulty of

people involved in domestic abuse to remove themselves from these situations due to financial issues or difficulties in leaving the house that have been compounded since the pandemic.

Participants reflected on the experience of adapting their support offers during and since the pandemic, noting the logistical complication of staff working from home and the practicalities of social distancing with services being offered digitally where possible. Strong signs of service adaptation were reported: one example being a participant reporting the use of digital services as a way of monitoring service users "going quiet" as a sign that they are struggling, which can be then tackled with targeted proactive engagement. Participants also positively reported that digitalisation largely allowed services to continue in some form, and even increased accessibility of services in some cases. This was supported by positive collaborative working which the council was frequently involved with. In spite of this, the following consequences were still noted: some support, even where offered online, has still been more limited and some services had unfortunately been halted by necessity. Some groups are still not able to easily access digital services, whereas other groups are increasingly likely to disengage from digital services. It was also noted that the limits of specialist support offers have increased the burden on "generic" services attempting to support individuals.

Given the direct focus of this discussion on vulnerability, the group also covered several key equalities issues while addressing vulnerabilities that may uniquely or disproportionately affect groups of specific characteristics, particularly:

- **Older people** have been uniquely affected by the pandemic; in terms of physical health and the effect of isolation. Restrictions on being unable to see older relatives in residential care is both harmful in terms of mental health and in terms of scrutiny; hoping this should improve. Participants with particular interests in the welfare of older people suggested that the issues faced by older residents have not received proportionate attention and described need to think about how "age-friendly" Rotherham is generally.
- **Younger people** have also been affected significantly by recent changes in their circumstances: loss of friendship groups and social networks, uncertainty around education or (for older groups of young people) employment prospects. Vulnerability of young people linked to exposing them to risks, as well as potentially driving them to be involved in "risky behaviour", including gang culture, knife-crime and joyriding.
- **BAME communities** were also discussed, particularly the disproportionately high Covid death rates in these communities, and wider issues such as increases in hate-crime. Participants noted that certain groups in the BAME community may also experience distance from local institutions and therefore require specific focus in terms of engagement.

Focus Group 2: Securing a greener future for Rotherham

This focus group covered various areas relating to the environment. Firstly, a great deal of concern was raised around littering (as a large proportion of participants in this focus group were involved in litter picking community groups). Conversation around this issue focused around visible but uneven improvements since the aforementioned community group took action, with some areas showing a marked improvement whilst other areas were still full of litter. The group also raised the issue around the difficulties in getting people to take proactive action against littering.

Following from this initial focus on littering, several other environmental issues were raised. Concerns were expressed around increases in flooding, which were linked by respondents to a reduction in drainage, largely arising from uncontrolled housing development. Housing was also

raised as a concern itself, with participants predicting that existing developments will not be “future proofed” to make a positive contribution to carbon reduction. Biodiversity and green spaces were also put forward as important issues by respondents who thought these should be considered priorities due to their positive impacts on mental and physical health. Respondents expressed concern regarding both the extensiveness and maintenance of green spaces, with one respondent suggested many green spaces without function could be better utilised and maintained by being donated to local community groups. Concern was also raised around the limited “green” jobs and industry in Rotherham, one respondent suggesting that this must be the focus of investment priorities, and that this must be based in a clearer idea of what “sustainability” is in industry.

Participants appeared to link the natural environment to pride in one’s community, particularly in narratives around littering. This was most strongly expressed through comparisons between the local environments of other locations and Rotherham’s. Similarly, this link to local pride was articulated by the desire to see Rotherham Council as a “leading light” on environmental issues. The natural environment was also important to participants because of its impact on physical health (e.g. air quality) and mental health. Sustainability was also prioritised by respondents to ensure that the ecological services provided by the local environment could be “enjoyed by future generations”.

Participant discussion of action that could be taken was, reflecting the composition of the focus group, most detailed around waste. Respondents reflected a negative view on the current provision of waste services: participants expressed frustration with the Council’s waste collection offer, and the limited provision of community litter bins which was linked to increases in the level of littering; a desire was expressed for the Council to work more closely with community groups around this area. Similarly, a desire was expressed for improvement in recycling and commercial/residential waste collection with participants identifying these as insufficient and costly for the service user. Participants also noted that the following actions would be beneficial:

- The social implications of action around climate change (the example given was that the legislative shift to electric vehicles and hybrids will have a potentially huge social impact that needs to be accounted for by the local authority)
- Raising awareness and increasing societal understanding of issues, and solutions we can all take. It was particularly emphasised that emissions and "net zero" are not particularly well understood ideas
- Better utilising relevant assets (e.g. unused green spaces could be donated as sites for things like growing food, etc)
- Future-proofing housing and ensuring developers are to as high a standard as possible
- Otherwise shaping the "green" agenda - e.g. setting clear priorities for instance on investment initiatives that prioritise "green business" - clarity from the Council on what "sustainable industry" looks like

Participants also emphasised the importance of engagement in delivering effective action. Firstly, this was around education on relevant issues and the promotion of environmental priorities to communities. Secondly, participants observed a need for greater transparency on “what the Council will and won’t do”. This was linked to an acknowledgement from participants that many issues relating to the environment may be outside the Council’s direct control or subject to competing priorities in the context of limited resources. Greater clarity on how the Council is intending to act, and a clearer understanding of priorities and how these priorities should translate to practical action was perceived as important to fostering collaborative activity with communities and stakeholders.

This discussion of the Council's responsibilities also fed into a wider discussion of responsibility for the environment. Private companies were given a great deal of attention here. In the case of littering, it was noted that the products of private firms largely fuelled littering and other environmental issues, and it was subsequently expressed that companies that extract profit from these products shared responsibility for associated environmental issues. Some respondents suggested that action here, and a wider set of environmental actions, may need to come from central Government (e.g. in the form of taxes or regulations on commodities), however others pointed out that the Council and even smaller community groups could take action. One respondent reported their own experience as part of a small community, pressuring a chain takeaway operating in their area to contribute to litter picking efforts. Participants also noted the responsibility of individuals and groups across Rotherham to "go greener" but expressed significant barriers here: particularly around general understanding (participants expressed that "net zero" and "decarbonisation" are not well understood ideas) and the significant cost that can be attached to environmental measures. Connecting these boundaries of responsibility were related ideas given by respondents of being "joined up" and of "reciprocity" both between national and local government, and between the Council and its residents.

Focus Group 3: Improved wellbeing and quality of life

The focus group on wellbeing and quality of life understood the theme as encompassing personal mental and physical welfare, ranging from the fundamental ability to move around to more complex mental health needs; as well as a wide range of contextual environmental and socioeconomic factors (e.g. neighbourhoods, access to green and open spaces, financial deprivation, etc.). One respondent noted that health and wellbeing may be understood differently by individuals, but will rely on an individual being happy, comfortable, and motivated. Respondents emphasised the "collective" component of health and wellbeing which was linked to the importance of emphasising positive action to create communities that achieve health and wellbeing, rather than simply seeking to promote health provision for those who are not well.

As with Focus Group 1, a significant focus on this theme was on vulnerability. The barriers to achieving good health and wellbeing that were identified included both personal circumstances (such as finances, family circumstances, etc.), and the environment around an individual. The state and relative deprivation of a neighbourhood, and availability of certain features (e.g. open green spaces, local and cultural activities) are linked to the circumstances of individuals within them, particularly around mental health. Additionally, participants noted that significant barriers may exist in accessing support; particularly an awareness and understanding of available services and the confidence to access support were identified. Overall vulnerability was understood as being multi-faceted and as such cannot be addressed with a "one-size fits all approach".

The focus group highlighted the need for joined-up multi-agency work to enable comprehensive support. It was expressed that institutions have not been engaging adequately as providers – frequently working as voices within specific communities rather than across them. Some examples were given of universal initiatives, but it was thought that this was not general practice.

Participants shared their views on the key existing issues in service provision, which included:

- the overall impact of Covid, which had forced some services to be more limited, move online, or cease functioning altogether
- an observed apathy towards Zoom/Teams and declining engagement with services
- the tendency for hidden vulnerability to go unnoticed
- tightening funding streams to carry out services
- the way funding is administered was identified as a barrier to the collaborative multi-agency work that participants prioritised – they reported that this was because funding usually

appeared in silos with rarely there being opportunities for joint bids, and with competitive funding being a barrier to collaboration

As with Focus Group 1, conversations around vulnerability here were wrapped up in equalities' considerations. Firstly, it should be noted that, whilst not a legislated equalities characteristic, levels of personal and community deprivation were considered cross-cutting determinants of one's health and wellbeing. Additionally, participants linked inequality around health and wellbeing to a lack of representation of vulnerable voices in various aspects of life, ranging from the workplace to service provision itself. As noted above, participants emphasised how these inequalities had been exacerbated and became more apparent over the course of the pandemic, particularly with issues such as loneliness.

However, whilst this group did pay attention to inequality between groups, participants also spoke against treating all groups the same. Individuals sharing the same characteristic may face a widely different set of circumstances. For example, there could be significant inequality across disabled people in terms of accessing support, which was in turn linked to confidence and understanding of relevant institutions, as well as awareness of support available, deprivation, education, etc. Participants also emphasised the value of "one whole community voice." One respondent in particular supporting older people noted a desire to open their community group, initially focused on supporting older people, to all members of the community. These considerations for both the differences and connections between groups were again linked to a need for collaborative action to provide comprehensive support. Participants also connected this to the need to better personalise services.

Focus Group 4: An economy that works for everyone

The focus group discussion on the economy theme largely centred around the human experience of the economy and factors that determined economic wellbeing. Within this context, a broad range of economic issues were identified by participants:

- The economic impacts of COVID-19 have driven many people to the point of economic crisis; participants noted an increase in people accessing services at the point of financial crisis, particularly those who have not had to access support/benefits previously
- One participant from the business community noted the difficulties in seeking support as a small business, and particularly expressed frustration over the clarity of information available, while another expressed concern at lengthier timescales required to access funding compared to immediate overheads being faced by businesses
- Rotherham's social care sector will require significant growth, however participants pointed out that it may be difficult to encourage entry into this work force with current rates of pay in the sector
- Impacts on funding streams have put organisations supporting individuals and communities under strain
- Participants noted that small businesses were frequently set up in Rotherham, with a low survival rate
- Concern was expressed that poor opportunities in the local job market may lead to "talent" (i.e. skilled and educated workforce) leaving Rotherham, with negative subsequent results for growth and productivity

These issues were understood as significant because of the human impacts they created. It was felt that the gaps in Rotherham are widening between "haves" and "have-nots", or, a widening gap between those who are relatively well off and those experiencing economic deprivation. Several examples of this were put forward, ranging from digital access driving economic inequality, to inter-generational differences in wellbeing that were pointed out. The perceived impacts of economic deprivation were largely focused around the physical and mental wellbeing of the

individual, again mental health emerged as a strong theme. Participants noted that economic deprivation may additionally perpetuate barriers to accessing support; for example it may be difficult to encourage people to participate even in cost-free training and education when their focus is on seeking and maintaining employment “to put food on the table”.

Given the focus on “haves” and “have-nots,” equality and inequality emerged once again as an important theme in this focus group. As in other focus groups participants emphasised the importance of understanding the specific needs and issues facing each community, whilst also understanding that there is diversity within these communities, and that understanding and addressing the needs of groups “in silos” is not desirable. Particular equalities concerns relating to the economy were raised around older people, younger people, people with disabilities, and the BAME community.

Respondents identified a number of areas where action is needed, expressing the “need to do things differently” and take ambitious action:

- Focus on apprenticeship opportunities for both younger and older people; it was expressed that the Council should take an active role in providing apprenticeship opportunities directly, and working with others to support the provision of opportunities
- An increase in the emphasis of social value in the Council’s spending
- Provide further support to small businesses, particularly around advice. One participant noted this could be done through facilitating mentoring links in the business community
- Participants noted a desire for investment and economic measures be integrated with other priorities, for example stimulating green growth and the social care sector.
- Collaborative action; this both refers to the collaborative multi-agency support identified in other focus groups, as well as ensuring council services themselves are not working in silos (e.g. business support teams and compliance teams)
- The Council should take an active role in facilitating positive networks between agencies and stakeholders, for example developing lines of contact between support providers, the DWP, and businesses to efficiently direct people to opportunities
- The Council should prioritise on proactive communication and engagement with individuals and communities



Photos show Rotherham United FC players Angus MacDonald (above) and Kieran Sadlier (below) taking part in the consultation



Short Interactions

The consultation included a series of short interaction activities which took place with participants in various ways, using the same three questions:

- *What do you like about where you live?*
- *What one thing would you improve?*
- *What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?*

This is a simple engagement exercise, a conversation starter. It has the capacity to collect substantive qualitative data, but due to its informal nature it is difficult to collect monitoring data. Therefore, the analysis is based on number of responses to determine common denominators.

During the time this activity was taking place, many groups were still not meeting face to face, and many didn't feel comfortable using virtual platforms. Therefore, to reach out to as many characteristic groups as possible given the situation, we tailored the activity to encourage people to engage in a way that suited them.

This activity took place with:

- Housing Involvement Panel – held via Microsoft Teams on 15th July with council tenant representatives.
- Rotherham Minster's Social Supermarket – A consultation tower was placed at the Rotherham Minster for 2 days on 18th and 19th August to engage with people visiting the social supermarket (those suffering from financial deprivation, isolation, and hardship).
- Rotherham Youth Cabinet – a hybrid style workshop took place on 24th August at Ferham Children's Centre.
- The Unity Centre - a consultation tower was placed at the Unity Centre throughout September and their staff facilitated the exercise with their users including students from ESOL classes.
- Healthwatch hosted an event held via Zoom on 15th September which allowed for the collection of information concerning disability/sensory matters.

- Deaf Futures Group - with the support of Rotherfed and the help of a British Sign Language interpreter, a face-to-face session took place at Springwell Gardens on 17th September with Rotherham's profoundly deaf community.
- BME Disabled Young People & Parent/Carers Group – the questions were circulated to group members and responses were collated and sent back.

In total there were over 274 individual responses across all questions.

Question 1: What do you like about where you live?

There were 75 responses to this question across all the above events. The most common attribute that featured throughout to this question was that of having good neighbours, welcoming communities, and a willingness to help each other. Of comparatively equal standing was having access to parks and green spaces, with references to the countryside as well. Many also reflected on good local amenities and facilities where they live, and the wealth of places to visit. However, there were also more negative responses where some people said they liked nothing about where they lived.

Question 2: What is one thing you would improve?

There were 135 responses to this question. A diverse range of groups engaged with the activity and each one had their own key headlines for this question. However, a common theme running through all events was a desire to see Rotherham town centre vibrant, flourishing, clean, and safe. There were many suggestions as to how this may be achieved including incentives such as freer parking, reduced rents to encourage a wide range of shops and businesses, plus investments made to attract families with children, and young people into the town centre.

Linking to messages concerned with the town centre, retaining business and encouraging trade and industry into the area, were responses concerned with local jobs for local people. Street scene matters were also frequently mentioned for the town centre and across the borough. Rotherham people would like to see cleaner streets free from litter and fly-tipping stating that this could be achieved by more pro-active measures such as awareness raising and education around these matters, coupled with greater enforcement put in place to encourage prevention. People expressed that they would like to see roads kept in good repair and pavements well maintained and to remain accessible for disabled and young families.

A common theme running through all events, particularly if there was a disability, health condition, and/or from a different culture was on communication, engagement, and access to appropriate services. Many responses from those within these communities are feeling unheard, undervalued, and ignored; this includes carers. Responses received express a want for services to deliver and engage in ways so that these communities feel listened to, included, and informed. Linked to this, some responses alluded to a need for Council services to be more aware, sensitive, and understanding of Rotherham's diverse communities; particularly those that follow other religions. Other issues mentioned referred to better provision for those with mental health issues, those who are isolated, and more things for children and young people to do. Weaving through all these responses were references to be safe and secure and for improved safety and security measures put in place in certain areas and the town centre.

Question 3: What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?

There were 68 responses to this question across all the events. The common theme running across all events for this question was for welcoming and harmonious communities, where everyone comes together to help each other. A wish for a cohesive society was also frequently mentioned.

To complement these responses around neighbourliness and community cohesion, another conversation common across all events was a wish for more community-based action, and activities. Many felt that this would support a range of matters including aiding preventative measures for mental health, providing opportunities to reduce isolation, and break down barriers associated with segregated communities. Responses included an aspiration for action that promotes strong, resilient, and cohesive communities, equality and a respect for diversity, a greater awareness of the needs of those with disabilities and/or special needs, and facilities and activities for families, children, and young people – places where they can go and feel safe and secure.

Aspects of Rotherham Town Centre was also frequently mentioned, and Rotherham people have high aspirations to see the town centre flourish, be vibrant, safe and attractive to all.



Photo from Deaf Futures Group Session

Rotherham Show

The short interactions activity took place at the Rotherham Show held on 3rd - 5th September. Two consultation towers were used. One was situated in the 'Made in Rotherham' area next to Voluntary Acton Rotherham, and the other situated in the Children's and Families area in the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Service marquee.

Across the three days over 700 responses were received for all 3 questions; 152 of these responses were from children and young people and are analysed separately. This was an exercise conducted with the public who attended the Rotherham show. No monitoring data was collected for this informal exercise but from observation it seemed that a diverse range of people engaged with the activity.

Question 1: What do you like about where you live?

There were 144 responses to this question over the three days of the show. The most universal feature was an appreciation of the *beautiful* countryside and woodlands. People adore the views and enjoy the opportunities for out-door recreational activities like walking, site seeing, and visiting historic buildings. This theme continued with many warm references to Clifton Park (this may have been because this consultation was taking place there) and a fondness for Rotherham's green spaces in general.

The second most common feature was that people considered having good neighbours and friendly communities as key aspects of what they liked about where they lived; often associated with the need to feel connected and supported. Often mentioned in the same response was that having clean streets was also a reason why they liked where they live. Many, possibly older people, also reflected on the fact that what they liked about where they lived was the peace and quiet. People also reflected on the good transport networks and having easy access to the motorways and major roads as a positive feature of Rotherham. There were also many comments that expressed a warmth and connection to Rotherham.

Question 2: What is one thing you would improve?

There were 265 responses to this question over the three days of the show. By far, the most common subject mentioned was Rotherham town centre. Many responses related strongly for the need to make the town centre a place that people want to visit, and shops to prosper. There was a passion for Rotherham town centre to be vibrant, for it to succeed and to be prosperous. Common topics raised were concerned with its recovery.

Many comments related to aspects of the public realm and responses included: clean up the streets and buildings; promotion on awareness about littering and keeping the centre clean and tidy; ensuring accessibility for families with young children, and disabled. Linked to these comments were responses relating to the town centre shopping experience. Many expressed a desire for a wider range of "decent" shops, more activities for families with young children, and greater accessibility for disabled and those with sensory impairments.

Concerning borough wide matters, the most common feature referred to be the plea for roads to be repaired and maintained. There were also clear messages for a wish for the pavements to be kept clear and accessible.

Responses on other borough wide matters related to a need for more support for Rotherham's young people to help them to achieve and aspire. There was a consensus for a demand to invest in, and resource more facilities and activities for this age group.

As well as a focus on supporting Rotherham's young people, there was a wider conversation concerned with supporting whole communities. Many responses referred to a wish for more leisure, culture & community-based hubs/activities because respondents feel that this approach can contribute towards alleviating isolation, help combat mental health issues, support those in financial hardship, assist families with young children, and bring people together from diverse communities. People also wanted to see more help and support for those with disabilities. People also wanted to see greater provision for families with young children and comments included a wish for more low-cost childcare, for the children's centres to remain open, and more activities for children of working parents.

Many responses referred to a wish for greater police presence, for anti-social behaviour and crime to reduce, and for more help for the victims. Drugs' awareness was also mentioned frequently. Linked to many of the comments mentioned above there was a desire for better cross sector working between key statutory organisations such as the Council, NHS, Police, and public transport.

There were also some references on caring for the local environment. People wished for good quality housing and buildings that are built to meet the demands of the climate emergency. As well as a desire to respect the environment and wildlife, there was a call for action towards reducing pollution, more cycle ways, and creating areas that can encourage more biodiversity.

Question 3: What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?

There were 184 responses to this question over the three days of the show. There were three key themes that came out of this part of the exercise, all interrelated with a common set of issues running through. The main feature that came out was a strong association with Rotherham town centre and many responses showed a passion for the centre to be prosperous, vibrant, welcoming, and clean. The second most popular theme was an aspiration for harmonious, active, and welcoming communities. Linking to both themes above is the desire to feel safe, secure, and to live in a clean environment.

Several people also highlighted the need for more awareness and sensitivity for those with disabilities and sensory impairments, and a wish for the vulnerable to be protected. As well as the desire for clean streets in local areas, other environmental issues mentioned included the wish for more biodiversity and an overall respect for the environment.

Children and Young People (Rotherham Show and Short Interactions)

As mentioned above, there were 152 responses from children and young people at the Rotherham Show. There are a further 74 responses across all questions from a variety of youth groups including the Looked After Children's Council, as well as the 48 comments from members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet, the latter analysed with the initial data collected for the short interactions. The gathering of this information has been achieved by working with Children's and Young People's Services.

All the children's and young people's responses have been solely gathered for analysis to gain an understanding as to what they like, what their concerns are, and what they wish for the future for Rotherham.

Question 1: What Do you like about where you live?

There were 104 responses to this question across all events. There were two key features that children and young people like about where they live. The first one is about living in a safe and secure environment where there is a sense of community where people are kind and friendly. There were many references to liking where they live because of friends, school, family, and neighbours.

The second most common feature, from the responses received, is that children and young people like where they live because they have access to the parks, green spaces, woodlands, and can explore Rotherham's heritage with references to Roache Abbey and the Wentworth Estate.

Young people also said they liked the easy accessibility to Sheffield and Meadowhall, with good public transport links. There were also some very warming responses on how children and young people associate with Rotherham.

Question 2: What is one thing you would improve?

There were 82 responses to this question across all events. There were three common features that children and young people would like to see improved. The first one being that children and young people want to feel safe and secure when out in their communities and the town centre. Several suggestions were put forward including improve street lighting, more activity that reduces crime and vandalism rates – and to be informed of this, plus a want for a larger police presence. Linking to this, young people and children would like to see action that promotes cleaner streets and parks, and they would like to see less litter.

Third common feature is that children and young people would like to see better facilities and activities for their age groups – music and youth clubs were frequently mentioned, as well as better play areas. Improving the town centre was also mentioned and for it to be more appealing for young people to visit with their friends. Young people also would like to see more local job opportunities, degree apprenticeships to help retain talent and so they do not have to move away from their friends and family.

Question 3: What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?

There were 78 responses to this question across all the events. From these responses the most common feature a wish for harmonious communities with people that support, help, and accept each other for who they are. To also feel safe, and to live in a clean environment. Young people also wished for Rotherham town centre to be a place that people want to visit, for there to be more shops, activities, and places for young people to go.

On a borough wide basis, many young people want to see more creative/arts facilities/hubs, and more leisure and sports activities; music venues and clubs were also mentioned.



Photo from Rotherham Show Consultation

Online and Postal Survey

The online survey went 'live' on the Council website for 4 weeks, from 17th August to 19th September 2021. There were 45 questions in total across the following four themes:

- Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Everyone Safe, Well and Resilient
- An Economy that Works for All
- Improving the Local Environment

Participants could choose whether to fill in questions on each of the themes or just answer certain sections. The majority of respondents answered questions on all four themes. There were 298 responses to the online survey in total.

The postal survey ran concurrent to the online survey. A paper version of the online survey questions was sent out to 500 randomly selected households across the borough with a freepost envelope provided. 52 postal survey responses were received in total, which is an 11% return rate. This was a higher percentage than predicted, as nationally the average return rate on a postal survey is between 1%-2%.

Of the 52 postal survey responses, 96% were White British and mainly from older/retired people with 63% of respondents who provided their age being 65 or older. Only 12% of respondents who provided their age were aged between 18-44 (with no responses received from people aged 18-24).

41% of postal respondents were male and 56% female, with 75% of respondents stating that their religion was Christianity and the remainder stating that they had no religion. No other religions were selected by postal respondents.

Key findings from the postal responses included:

- More respondents feeling that their neighbourhood/community had become more (15%) rather than less (8%) supportive since the start of the pandemic, and 63% feeling that there had been no change. However, when asked 'do you feel safer in your local neighbourhood compared to 12 months ago' more respondents now feel less safe (25%), with 10% feeling safer and 62% citing no change
- Respondents cited road safety issues including increased traffic, parking problems and access to bus services as areas of concern
- Anti-social behaviour was a specific area of concern, with many suggestions that more investment should be made in activities aimed specifically at older children/teens
- 'Feeling safe' was the top response when asked 'what would have the biggest positive impact on your wellbeing and quality of life?'

Aside from the above observations, the postal survey results have been added to the online survey responses and analysed together for the purposes of this report.

Below are the key findings in both the online and postal survey responses combined for each of the four themes:

Neighbourhoods are vibrant and thriving

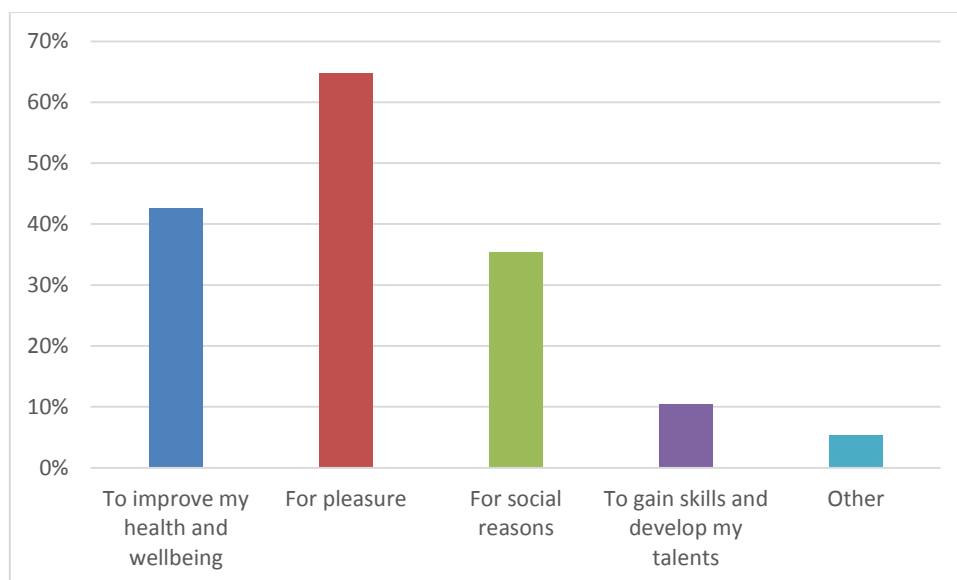
The survey opened with an open text question asking respondents 'what is the best thing about your neighbourhood?'. Many respondents talked positively about the people, their communities and the access to parks and the countryside. In open comments residents listed Rotherham

abundance of green space as the best thing about their neighbourhood. 20% of comments mentioned proximity to green spaces, woodland, and wildlife as the best thing about living in their area. 19% mentioned a strong community spirit helped create a sense of belonging. 13% spoke highly of supportive good neighbours. Other comments included friendliness (12%) and quietness (11%).

The next question was ‘what is the one thing within your neighbourhood / community that you would like to change?’. Most comments on neighbourhood/community improvement were around street cleanliness. 22% highlighted litter and dog fouling as an area for improvements, alongside, more rubbish bins in communities. 20% mentioned anti-social behaviour, especially high-speed motorists being a nuisance. Parking (14%) needed improvement with responses mention motorists parking on kerbsides, blocking driveways and accessibility for disabled road users. Other comments include drug use (10%), public space maintenance (10%) and bus services (7%).

31% of respondents said that they believed that people in their local area were more supportive since the start of the pandemic.

The main reasons given for participating in cultural activities were as follows (respondents could choose more than one option):

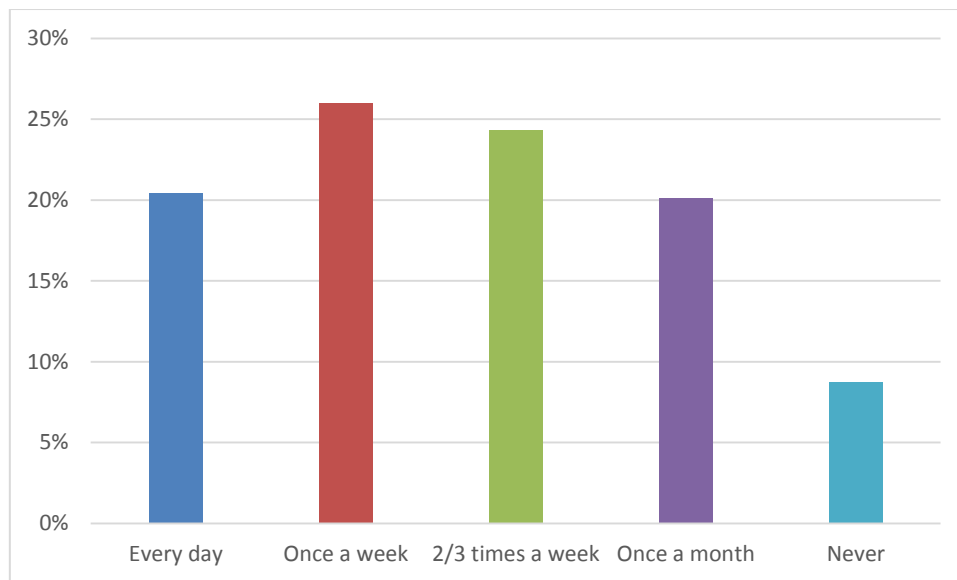


65% said for pleasure, 43% to improve health and wellbeing and for 35% for social reasons.

Prior to lockdown, the most popular visitor venues/activities were parks (81%), events (46%) and museums (40%). The least popular were Herringthorpe Stadium (3%), Civic Theatre (29%) and libraries (33%). When asked what would make cultural venues more appealing, comments included making them easier to get to on public transport, more publicity around events and activities and more historical events.

63% considered facilities for children and young people locally either good or adequate. 59% wanted to see improved play areas and cheaper access to sports/activities for children and young people, and 56% wanted to see more youth work. There were a number of comments linking a lack of things to do for older children/teens and anti-social behaviour, with suggestions that the Council should invest more in youth services and activities specifically aimed at older children.

When asked if they volunteered to help out family, friends or neighbours, the responses are as follows:



20% did so every day, 26% on a weekly basis, 24% did so 2-3 times a week, and 20% monthly. Only 9% said they never volunteered to help.

In terms of more formal volunteering opportunities offered by the Council, the Rotherham Heroes initiative had the highest levels of awareness amongst respondents, with 35% aware of the scheme and 3% volunteering as Heroes. There was a general lack of awareness amongst respondents of all of the Council led initiatives, with awareness levels ranging between 16% and 35%. Around 13% of those who said they were aware of the initiatives actually volunteered or participated in one of the schemes. 62% of respondents said they knew who their local Councillor is.

There was an even split response to the question on whether respondents felt that people are able to buy or rent quality affordable housing in their neighbourhood, with 48% saying yes and 51% saying no.

Improving road safety/speeding, access to busses and tackling problem parking were the three most important priorities for transport investment in local neighbourhoods. 10% of other comments focused on investment in new train stations for Maltby and Waverley.

People are Safe, Well and Resilient

When asked if they felt safer in their local neighbourhood compared to 12 months ago, only 8% said yes and 54% felt that there was no change. For the people that said they felt less safe (38%), the main reasons given were an increase in crime, ASB and an increase in traffic issues.

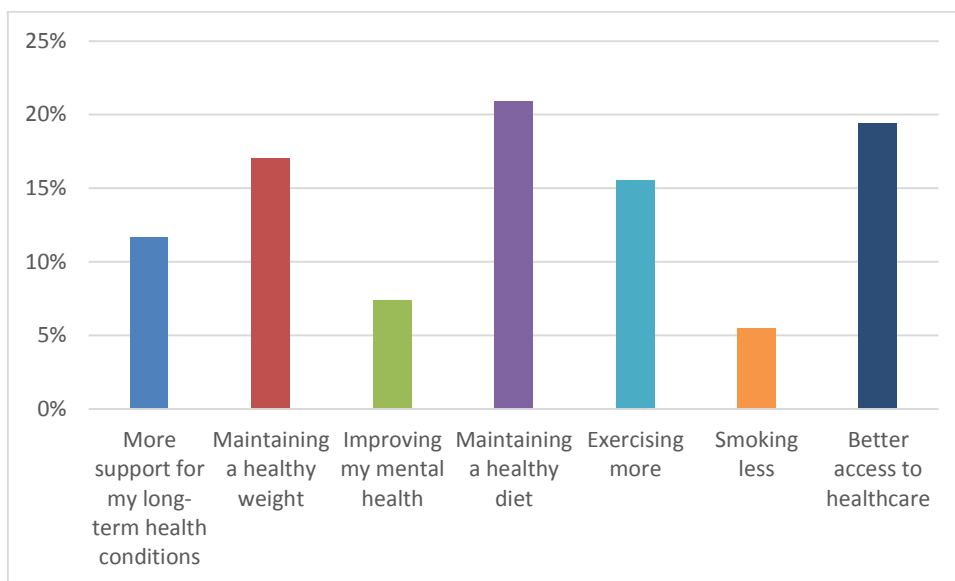
The three most important community safety issues for respondents included tackling ASB (79%), tackling crime (67%) and protecting vulnerable older people (62%). Over a third (34%) of open comments pointed to increased theft, especially pet and car theft, making them feel less safe. 10% said knowing neighbours and having a neighbourhood watch made them feel safer.

Awareness levels around the support available for children and young people to be resilient and safe against the wider challenges of pandemic were low at 14%, with 50% not aware and 30% answering 'don't know'. 64% said that they were aware of how to report a safeguarding concern regarding a child, and 59% were aware of how to report a safeguarding concern regarding an adult. 18% of open comments said children and vulnerable adults knowing their local community support and police officers would help many feel safer.

Access to specific groups and activities for young people was considered top priority (36%) for encouraging children and vulnerable adults to feel safer and more resilient. 25% of open

comments mentioned having more affordable activities and programs for children and vulnerable adults

Specific questions were asked regarding resilience, the impact of the pandemic and leading a healthier life. When asked what is the most important action that you feel would help you to live a healthier life, the answers were as follows:

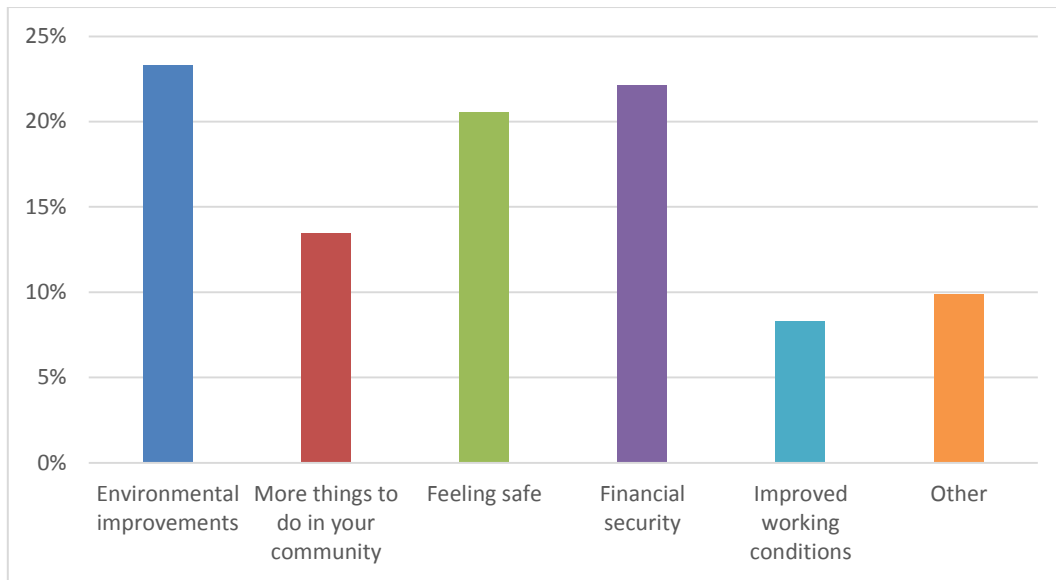


The top three answers were maintaining a healthy diet (21%), better access to healthcare (19%) and maintaining a healthy weight (17%).

57% stated that the pandemic had significantly or slightly negatively impacted on their mental health, 33% had seen no change and 9% had seen their mental health improve slightly or significantly. The top three ways in which the virus had negatively impacted on respondents' mental health were: 44% had gained weight, 37% were less physically active and 35% were worried about contracting the virus.

When asked about the positive effects the pandemic has had on respondents' lives, 27% said they had a better work/life balance and 19% reported being more physically active. 52% said that none of the options applied to them. Respondents were asked how positive they felt about the future, (at this stage of the pandemic) 36% gave a positive response, 34% were negative and 30% were neutral.

Respondents considered environmental improvements (23%), financial security (22%) and feeling safe (21%) the top three things that would have the biggest positive impact on their wellbeing and quality of life (see graph below):



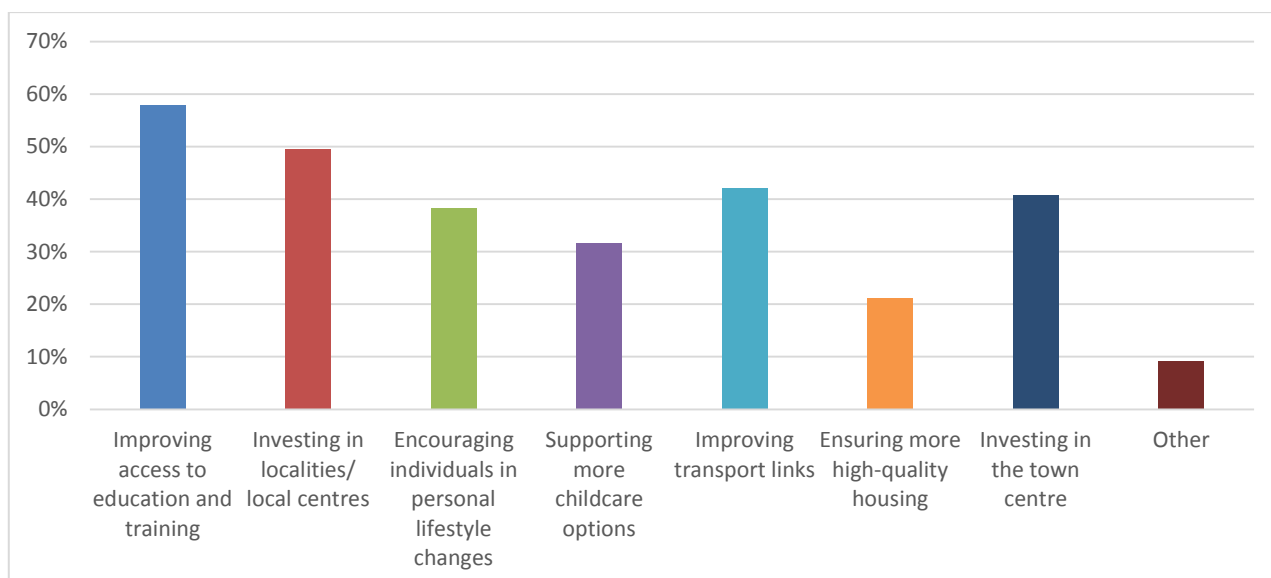
Men (30%) and those without a disability (27%) were more likely to state environmental improvements (23% overall), while more women and those with a disability stated 'More things to do in the community' (16% women, 22% with disability, 13% overall). Male respondents (14%) and those with a disability (12%) were also more likely to state 'improved working conditions' as factors (8% overall).

An Economy that Works for All

25% of respondents were retired, 43% were full time employed, 20% part-time employed, 5% unemployed and 7% self-employed or other.

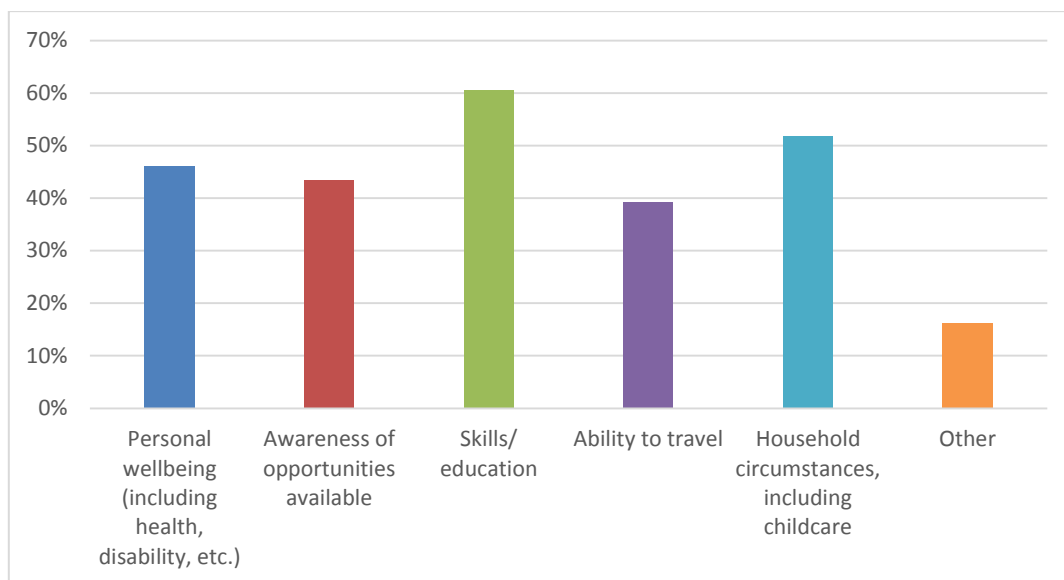
Only 20% of respondents felt that there were enough job opportunities in their area, 45% said there were not enough and 35% were unsure. When asked about the quality of opportunities in their area only 16% agreed that they were good, with 40% disagreeing and 44% giving a neutral response. 69% of respondents were not very/not at all optimistic about economic opportunities for young people in Rotherham and South Yorkshire more widely, with only 31% providing a positive response.

To improve the number/quality of jobs in the area the Council should prioritise the following:



The top 3 responses were improve access to education and training (58%), invest in localities (50%), and improve transport links (42%). The things that were considered to make the most difference and improve job prospects and economic opportunities for young people leaving school over the next few years were more local training opportunities or apprenticeships (76%), creating more jobs in the local economy generally (63%) and more work experience opportunities (48%).

Respondents considered job satisfaction (23%), income (21%), and work/life balance (20%) the most important factors in a job. When asked what they thought the main barriers to people accessing jobs were, the results are as follows:



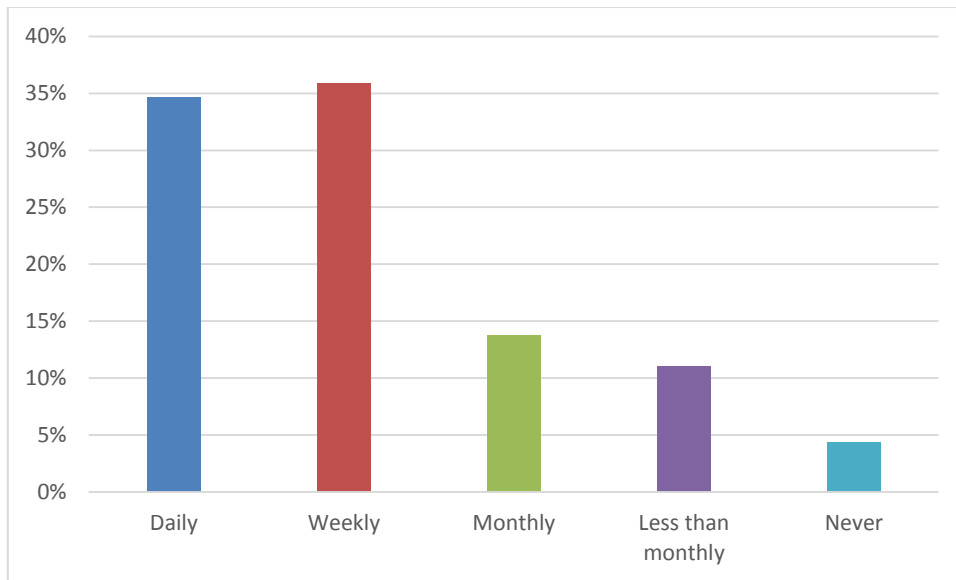
The top 3 answers included skills/education (61%), household circumstances (52%) and personal wellbeing (including health, mental health and disability) (46%).

The pandemic has had some economic impact on respondents, with 30% working from home, 9% furloughed, 6% being made redundant, 3% on reduced hours, 2% undergoing a career change and 44% not impacted at all by any of these measures. 33% stated that family members or friends had been out of work during the past 12 months.

Caring for the Local Environment

The survey revealed a real and deep appreciation for parks and open spaces, particularly during the pandemic and also generally with 86% of respondents saying that since the start of the pandemic they had visited parks and green spaces more often. 98% of respondents considered their local park or open space to be very (91%) or somewhat (7%) important to their local community.

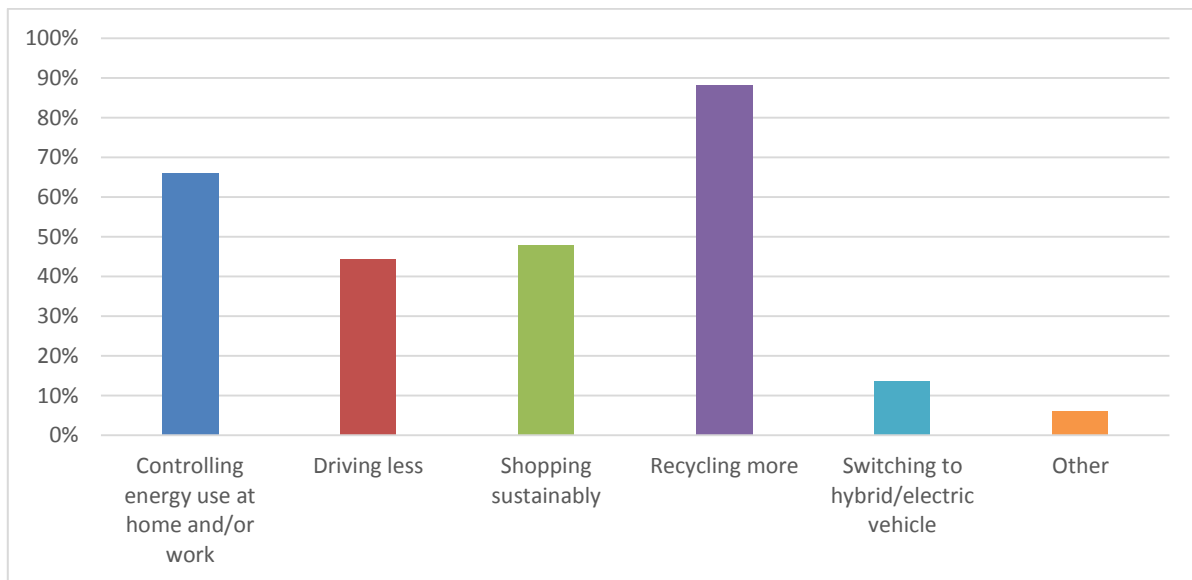
Comments revealed other uses for parks and open spaces included children play (17%), running (13%), bird watching (13%), dog walking (10%), litter picking (10%) and socialising with friends (10%). When asked how often they use their local parks and green spaces, the results are as follows:



70% used their parks or green spaces at least weekly and 50% of respondents felt that their local park or green spaces were important to their community in terms of improving their health and wellbeing. Men were more likely to say they used parks daily (46%) than women (28%), while women were more likely to never use parks at all (7%), than men (1%).

The most important environmental issues in local areas were identified as (first choice ranking) fly-tipping (30%), littering (22%) and potholes (14%), with respondents identifying climate change (53%) and pollution (15%) as the environmental issues that they felt were most important to the next generation.

When asked about how they were taking action to reduce their impact on the environment, the results were as follows (respondents could choose more than one option):



88% were recycling more, 66% were controlling energy use at home and/or work, 48% were shopping sustainably and 44% were driving less.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the consultation was extensive with over 1,300 interactions taking place in total across all methods of engagement. This was despite the issues posed by the pandemic and where the majority of the consultation had to take place over the school summer holidays. Therefore, the consultation was designed to ensure that there were a number of opportunities for people to participate over the course of 6 weeks, both virtually and face to face, digitally and at various locations across the borough.

There was a lot of positive feedback from the focus groups and people were pleased to be involved and asked for further ongoing engagement. In future consultations, the Council will seek to develop ways to ensure wider resident participation; to capture more diverse perspectives and ensure even greater representation from protected groups.

For the short interactions, responses from all three questions correlated well with each other. The initial question "*what do you like about where you live?*" Rotherham people associate neighbourliness, clean, and welcoming communities as being key to what they liked about where they lived, along with good local amenities and access to green spaces and the countryside. The second question, "*what one thing would you improve?*" highlighted Rotherham people's association with the town centre and their aspirations for it to be prosperous, safe, and clean. Closely linked to this is the concern for local jobs for local people and the need to retain local talent.

People would like to see an improvement with Council service communication and engagement in that people want to feel that they are being listened to and kept informed; as well as a need for Council services to be aware and sensitive to Rotherham's diverse communities. There is a concern for mental health, those living in isolation, and a greater awareness of the needs of those living with disabilities is required, along with the needs of carers. The final question, "*What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?*" was a desire to be living in welcoming, diverse, and cohesive communities, where local action takes place, where there are accessible facilities and activities where people feel safe and secure, neighbourhoods are clean and free from crime and anti-social behaviour.

Topics raised at the Rotherham Show were very similar to those mentioned by the groups involved with other short interaction events. From this exercise people in Rotherham associate strongly with the town centre and wish to see it prosper. People want to live in welcoming, clean communities where they know their neighbours, feel safe, where everyone shows respect towards one another, and where there is support no matter what their circumstance is, their background, or where they live.

Children and young people's responses have been analysed separately. The responses correlate well with the replies from adults across all three questions. For the first question many children and young people relate to liking where they live because of their friends, family, and kind people. They feel safe and secure, and where they live is clean. As with adults, this age group also related strongly with being able to access parks, woodlands, and the countryside. For the second question, issues came forward concerned with what improvements would like to be seen associated with the need to feel safe and secure locally and in Rotherham as a whole. As with adult responses there were messages for cleaner streets and parks, appropriate security measures, wishes to accept people for who they are, and better facilities and activities for young people to participate in. On the final question, *a wish for the future for Rotherham*, this age group want to live in harmonious, welcoming communities that are safe, secure, and clean. A place that is filled with opportunities to allow children and young people to succeed.

Overall, the online and postal survey was successful in terms of collecting useful data that could be analysed easily and the results broken down further using the equalities data. On the whole, participants agreed with the proposed themes of the Council plan and more than 72% of people chose to complete each theme section of the online/postal survey. However, there were issues with online survey in terms of pages ‘timing out’ after 10 minutes, which meant that people lost the information they had inputted and had to go back and do it all again. The timeout was a security feature built into the software which couldn’t be changed. Residents reporting this pointed out potential equalities implications for those who may require more time to complete the survey. To address this, users were encouraged to open a ‘Your Account’ with the Council and log in with their email address to fill out the survey so they wouldn’t lose any of the information they had completed. With the postal survey responses, there were a number of forms returned where people had misunderstood the ‘ranking’ of questions (either chosen more options than asked for or ranked all their responses as equally important rather than ranking them numerically based on 1 being the most important etc.). When looking at similar surveys in the future where question responses are ranked, there needs to be consistencies in the questions and possibly example answers given in the first instance.

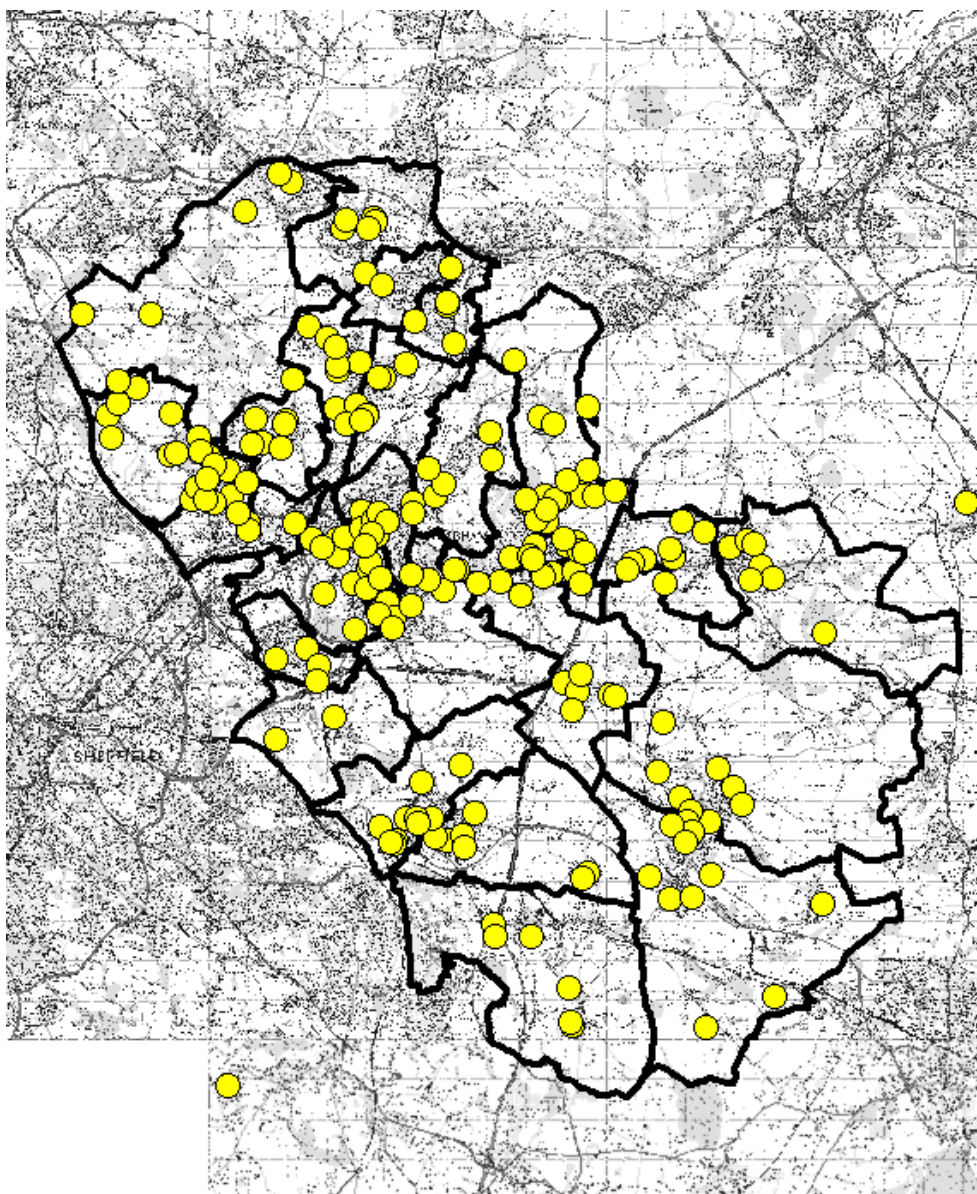
As stated previously, this consultation is part of an ongoing dialogue between the Council and members of the public. Feedback will continue to be sought and the consultation ‘towers’ will continue to be used for short interactions to feed into the year ahead plan, the Rotherham Partnership Plan, the equalities review and the refresh of the equalities strategy.



Photo from Rotherham Show Consultation

Appendix 1 – Respondent map locations

225 full postcodes were given by respondents and 223 were Rotherham based. The map below shows the postcode spread for all survey respondents. All 25 Rotherham wards were represented in both online and postal surveys.



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PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 14 October 2021	
Directorate: Assistant Chief Executive	Service area: Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead Manager: Simon Dennis	Contact: simon.dennis@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Leonie Wieser	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	National Management Trainee
Tanya Lound	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Acting Corporate Improvement and Risk Manager
Steve Eling	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Policy and Equalities Manager

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The Council Plan is a core document that underpins the Council's overall vision and sets out the headline priorities, outcomes and measures that will demonstrate its delivery.

The plan is a key document which sets out the Council's vision for the borough and priorities for serving residents and communities. This plan provides the medium-term basis for targeting resources, informing the budget-setting process and planning cycles, and ensuring that residents can hold the Council to account for delivery.

To help inform the priorities and actions in the Council Plan, various consultation exercises took place between August and September 2021. There were over 1,300 interactions across all engagement methods. The consultation was part of an ongoing dialogue between the Council and members of the public.

The Council Plan for the period 2022-2025 will be approved by Elected Members at the Council meeting in January 2022, along with the Year Ahead Delivery Plan.

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

A mix of contextual equalities information, such as from the 2011 census, and consultation on the Council Plan is provided here.

Population

- Population estimates indicate that the borough is becoming increasingly diverse with significant international migration, mainly from other EU countries. Based on the 2011 census, the proportion of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities increased from 4.1% in 2001 to 8.1% in 2011 and will have grown further since to at least 10% by 2016. Ethnic diversity is most evident amongst young people illustrated by the 17.8% of school pupils who were from BAME groups in 2018. The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after White British, with 3% of residents in 2011 and 6.8% of school

pupils in 2018.

- Rotherham's BAME population is very concentrated in the inner areas of the town whilst the outer areas were 96% White British in 2011. 42% of BAME residents live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country and for some groups the figure is higher. This compares with the Borough average of 19.5%.
- The population is ageing; Rotherham has 52,000 people aged 65 years or over or 19.7% of the population, above the national average of 18.4%. The population aged over 65 is projected to increase to over 21% by 2026, with the largest increase being in the number of people aged over 75.

Economy

- Rotherham has a polarised geography of deprivation and affluence with the most deprived communities concentrated in the central area whilst the most affluent areas are to the south, although the overall pattern is complex.
- Rotherham is one of the 20% most deprived areas in England with 12,667 children living in "absolute poverty" 2018/19.
- The inequality in the pay gap between men and women is substantial, whereby male workers in Rotherham earn £13,409 more than female workers, on average (median gross annual pay). This means women's pay in Rotherham is only 54.6% of men's pay, compared with 64.5% nationally.
- In the consultation for the Council Plan, 45% of respondents stated there were not enough job opportunities in their area, as opposed to 19% who stated there were enough. Those with no disabilities were more likely to state there were enough job opportunities in their area (21%) than those with disabilities (15%), with female respondents more likely to be unsure about the opportunities (37%), than men (32%).

Health and wellbeing

- Rotherham had 56,588 people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability in 2011, with 11.3% saying this limits their activity a lot, compared with the average of 8.3% nationally. Although there have been health improvements, health inequalities remain and in some cases are widening.
- Health inequalities are also significant, both between the borough and the national average and between the most and least deprived communities in Rotherham. In addition to these factors, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the most disadvantaged communities being hit the hardest.
- In the Council Plan consultation, in response to the question on what would have the biggest positive impact on wellbeing and quality of life, men (30%) and those without a disability (27%) were more likely to state environmental improvements (23% overall), while more women and those with a disability stated 'More things to do in the community' (16% women, 22% with disability, 13% overall). Male respondents (14%) and those with a disability (12%) were also more likely to state 'improved working conditions' as factors (8% overall).

Neighbourhoods

- In the survey consultation on the Council Plan, men were more likely to say they used parks daily (46%) than women (28%), while women were more likely to never

use parks at all (7%), than men (1.2%).

- With regards to crime and community safety, tackling anti-social behaviour (79%), tackling crime such as car crime (67%), and protecting vulnerable older people (62%) emerged as respondents' top priorities, over preventing harassment and violence against women and girls (42%), and preventing hate crime (includes disability/ racial/ religious/ homophobic/ transphobic crimes) (35%) – which might partly be due to the age profile and the overrepresentation of older age groups, as well as the underrepresentation of religious and ethnic minorities.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

Consultation Engagement Profile

With regards to the consultation undertaken on the Council Plan, there was a total of 350 responses to the postal and online surveys. Overall, there were more responses from women, than from men, more from older people than from younger people, and more from those identifying as White British than those from BAME backgrounds (as compared to the Rotherham population).

Women made up 62% of the respondents, as compared to 34% male respondents. Compared to the age profile of the borough, respondents were older – 26% over 65s, as compared to 20% - and only 4% of respondents were under 24, compared with a borough figure of 29%. There was a good representation of the middle age groups (25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds), while 45-54 year old were overrepresented, with 21% respondents from that age bracket, as compared to a Rotherham figure of 14%. In terms of sexuality, respondents largely aligned with national figures, with 92% identifying as heterosexual, 2% as bisexual, gay or lesbian, and 6% as other. The religious make-up of respondents differed from Rotherham figures, with less of the respondents identifying as Christian (57% as compared to 67%), and more stating no religion (37% as compared to 22.5%) – though the borough-wide figures are dated. 1.2% of the respondents identified as Muslim, compared to the dated borough-wide figure of 3.7%, which is expected to have increased.

The ethnic make-up of respondents also differed from borough-wide figures, with more respondents identifying as White British or White Irish and less as BAME, with only 0.8% identifying as Asian/Asian British 0.8%, 0.8% as dual heritage, and a further 0.8% as other, while Rotherham had over 8% of BAME residents in 2011, which is expected to have increased again.

Out of the respondents, 29% reported to have a disability, which includes 8% with a mental health condition. This compares with 22% of Rotherham residents who reported a long-term illness or disability in 2011, and an estimate of 18% of residents having common mental disorders in 2017, although the rate is lower in over 65s. 19% of respondents stated they were unpaid carers.

Focus groups aimed to make up some of the engagement gaps, by engaging stakeholders working with some of the groups whose views were underrepresented in the survey, and in particular those sharing protected characteristics. Representatives from the Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance, the Unity Centre, Rotherham Wah Hong Chinese Association aimed to fill some of the gaps in responses from BAME residents and Rotherham Muslim Community Forum for Muslim residents. Several organisations represented vulnerable

residents, such as Victim Support (support for victims of crime), Rotherham Rise, (support for domestic abuse victims), as well as more specialised support: for Black and minoritised women experiencing violence (Apna Haq), for those with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities (Nayi Zindagi), a BME & Young People Carers group, Mama Africa (support for Refugees and Asylum seekers), holistic support for BME women (tassibee), support for those with learning disabilities and autism (Speakup). There were also organisations working with older people, such as Age UK and the older people’s forum. Other important Voluntary sector organisations represented were Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherfed, and further participating were sports organisations (Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, Active Regen and a grassroots football club), physical activity and health organisations (Pivotal Health and Wellbeing, Rotherham Health Watch, the Rotherham Carers Forum) as well as other organisations such as South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Litter picking groups. Ongoing safety issues and anxiety concerning the pandemic meant that some groups were not comfortable meeting on a virtual platform or ready to engage in person at the moment – this included Older People’s Forum, Carers Forum, and the Rainbow Project (LGBTQ). Further, while VCSE sector representatives of various groups with protected characteristics were invited to focus groups, these in many cases were stakeholder and representatives, rather than members of the public themselves.

Furthermore, ongoing consultation is taking place with Children and Young People’s Groups – an Early Help group and a Looked After Children group.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

Progress updates on the Council Plan Year Ahead Delivery Plan will be produced on a quarterly basis. These updates are reviewed by both SLT, Cabinet and Scrutiny and are publicly available online. The update reports will include progress in relation to actions within the plan, as well as performance relating to a suite of key performance measures.

In addition, as the Year Ahead Delivery Plan is implemented, all services will be required to complete an equality screening and/or analysis to ensure due regard has been given and that there is an understanding of the effects of a strategy, policy, service or function on those from a protected characteristic group, where this is applicable to do so.

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Focus groups

48 attendees across 4 focus groups included representatives from (see details on organisations in ‘Engagement Profile’ above):

- Age UK
- The Older People’s Forum
- Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance
- Rotherfed
- Speakup
- Rotherham Carers Forum
- Victim Support
- Unity Centre
- Voluntary Action Rotherham

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wah Hong Chinese Association • Rotherham United Community Sports Trust • Representatives from a number of litter picking groups across the borough • Members of the public <p>Key Findings</p> <p>Safe and Resilient (service providers), 9th August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to improve understanding of vulnerabilities • Rise in mental health issues • Engagement extremely important in enhancing support • Older people uniquely affected by pandemic and isolation • Younger people also affected by significant changes through Covid • BAME communities affected by higher death rates, and other issues, such as hate crime <p>Securing a greener future for Rotherham, 9th August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for better understanding of environmental issues and ‘net zero’ • Responsibility for environment shared by council, central government, businesses and residents • Waste and litter raised as issues <p>Improved wellbeing and quality of life, 16th August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal mental and physical welfare, but community important aspect too • Significant barriers in accessing support • joined-up multi-agency work important • personal and community deprivation as cross-cutting determinants of health and wellbeing <p>Fair and flourishing economy, 16th August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening economic gaps between residents • Economic deprivation linked to mental health • Particular equalities concerns relating to the economy around older people, younger people, people with disabilities, and the BAME community <p>Key findings across groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement and communication with communities key
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on inequality, importance to understand heterogeneity of groups, and similar human needs across groups <p>Key findings from the survey responses included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to lockdown, the most popular visitor venues/activities were parks (81%), events (46%) and museums (40%). • 63% considered facilities for children and young people locally either good or adequate. 59% wanted to see improved play areas and cheaper access to sports/activities for children and young people, and 56% wanted to see more youth work • 20% volunteered to help out family, friends or neighbours every day, 24% did so 2-3 times a week, 26% on a weekly basis and 20% monthly. Only 9% said they never volunteered help. • Most comments on neighbourhood/community improvement were around street cleanliness. • Respondents considered environmental improvements (23%), financial security (22%) and feeling safe (21%) the top three things that would have the biggest positive impact on their wellbeing and quality of life • Only 20% of respondents felt that there were enough job opportunities in their area, 45% said there were not enough and 35% were unsure. • Respondents considered job satisfaction (23%), income (21%), and work/life balance (20%) the most important factors in a job. • The survey revealed a real and deep appreciation for parks and open spaces generally, but particularly during the pandemic. <p>In responses to the postal survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More respondents felt that their neighbourhood/community had become more (15%) rather than less (8%) supportive since the start of the pandemic, and 63% feeling that there had been no change. However, when asked 'do you feel safer in your local neighbourhood compared to 12 months ago' more respondents now feel less safe (25%), with 10% feeling safer and 62% citing no change • Respondents cited road safety issues including increased traffic, parking problems and access
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	<p>to bus services as areas of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour was a specific area of concern, with many suggestions that more investment should be made in activities aimed specifically at older children/teens • 'Feeling safe' was the top response when asked 'what would have the biggest positive impact on your wellbeing and quality of life?'
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Engagement with staff was undertaken through Chief Executive Q&A sessions, wider leadership sessions, managers, SLT/AD sessions, as well as sessions with DLTs and managers throughout August - October 2021.</p> <p>Staff were also encouraged to fill in the online consultation.</p>

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The Council Plan sets out the priorities for the borough over the next three years. It consists of five key themes, one overarching theme and a set of guiding principles.

Equalities is cross cutting throughout the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan. Of the five guiding principles, two in particular aim to meet residents' and communities' differentiated needs:

- Expanding opportunities for all
- Working with our communities

Expanding opportunities encompasses the Council's essential priority to tackle inequality striving to ensure that the health and life chances of the most disadvantaged communities are improving the fastest. To complement this approach, 'working with our communities' ensures that to achieve the best outcomes for local people, local residents are involved in the things that matter to them and services are designed based on input from those who use them. This will enable service users to take an active role in improving access to services, highlighting any barriers for those sharing protected characteristics in designs and services, making sure that specific needs are met.

There is also an outcome focussed on addressing inequalities and leaving no one behind within the 'people are safe, health and live well' theme. This will involve providing support to our communities at a level that is proportionate to the degree of need – taking a

universal approach where appropriate whilst also providing targeted support to those who most need it.

Furthermore, the underlying 'One Council' theme encompasses two specific areas, which ensure different needs are met:

- All customers at the heart of everything we do
- Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customer

The Council's commitment to place all customers at the heart of service delivery includes a strengthened approach to equalities and being inclusive. This will involve working with services and partners to promote equality, celebrate diversity and ensure fairness for everyone. The commitment to an engaged, diverse and skilled workforce is expected to improve the council's response to diverse customer needs, by bringing a more differentiated understanding of equality and diversity considerations and barriers.

The quarterly reports will capture progress in relation to all activities within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan. This will include a suite of key performance measures.

Within **five themes of the Council Plan**, a series of universal offers are aimed at all of Rotherham's residents, while several actions are specifically aimed at tackling inequalities and issues of access. The following expands both on the universal and the targeted offers within each theme.

Neighbourhoods are vibrant and thriving

Activities in this area are aimed at meeting the needs of all residents and ensure they benefit from thriving neighbourhoods. The priorities of making neighbourhoods welcoming and safe, neighbourhoods to be cleaner and greener, local people having access to libraries, cultural activities, parks and green spaces, improved local town and village centres, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving street safety are for the benefit of all residents regardless of protected characteristics. Residents, organisations and businesses are encouraged and enabled to use their skills and resources to help others.

Individual services, such as parks, libraries, cultural offers and neighbourhood working will each undertake an equality analysis, where required to do so, to identify gaps, making sure that any physical, cultural, language or other access barriers are identified, and all residents have offers meeting their needs.

People are safe, healthy and live well

Actions in this area are aimed at protecting everyone's physical and mental health, while focusing on the most vulnerable. Within actions to ensure that people have good mental health and physical wellbeing, programmes to tackle loneliness and isolation will have particular benefits to older people and those living with disabilities. Within the priority for children, families and adults to feel empowered, safe and live independently for as long as possible, actions focus on children in care, people with learning disabilities, independent living and adult social care ensure that the needs of these vulnerable groups are prioritised. Actions further include for everyone to have access to affordable, decent housing.

One specific action within this area focuses on addressing inequalities, ensuring nobody is left behind. This includes the confidence to understand inequalities, and actions in particular tackle financial exclusion, homelessness and domestic abuse.

Ongoing monitoring and improvement of these services contributing to this theme will be key, as the most vulnerable often face the most barriers. Monitoring will identify and address gaps in provision, and in particular ensure that individuals sharing several protected characteristics, and thus potentially facing multiple barriers, can access the support they need.

Children and young people fulfil their potential

Actions under this theme are aimed at children having the best start in life, children and young people having a voice and feeling listened to, young people empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations, and children and young people having fun things to do and safe places to go. Activities in the early years aim to address educational inequalities, collaborative working with schools to give children the opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of ability, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and reconnect those disengaged from education to opportunities and training.

Services contributing to this theme, again, will carry out equality analyses where appropriate and monitor equality data.

Everyone has economic opportunities

Actions under this theme include a growing economy that provides decent jobs and chances to progress, places rejuvenated by regeneration that brings investment and opportunity, people have opportunities to learn, develop skills and fulfil their potential, working with partners and suppliers to create more local jobs, apprenticeships, paid at the living wage or above, strengthened digital infrastructure and skills which enable access for all. Contributing to these actions are programmes supporting vulnerable residents to gain skills and employment, and libraries providing IT and resource support to residents, to improve digital inclusion.

Equality analysis and monitoring will be carried out where appropriate to ensure vulnerable residents sharing protected characteristics benefit from this support. Given the gender pay gap in Rotherham is substantial and above the national average, activities in this area will need to be monitored closely to ensure they do not widen the gap.

The environment is cared for

This theme encompasses reductions in carbon emissions, working towards net zero targets, better transport systems for future generations, reduced risks of flooding and other environmental emergencies. There are no immediate equality implications in this area, although any direct impacts on residents, such as through actions in housing, transport and in work with community organisations, will be monitored.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

No problems or barriers have been identified. The Plan does not make specific reference to any protected characteristics, and ongoing monitoring as detailed above will be key to ensure any barriers are identified and addressed.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

Yes as detailed above.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

No negative impacts expected – any targeted activities are based on known needs and vulnerabilities.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Council Plan
Directorate and service area: Assistant Chief Executive, Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead Manager: Simon Dennis
Summary of findings:
<p>The Council Plan addresses inequalities in several of its key themes, including the overarching theme 'One Council' and guiding principles, with the aim to decrease inequalities and for the council's services to deliver for all residents. Equality and access data will need to be monitored closely, especially in the 'People are safe, healthy and well' and 'Everyone has economic opportunities' themes, as these are areas of considerable existing inequalities, which will make it more difficult for some individuals and groups to access opportunities and services.</p>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor the ongoing equality implications of the Council Plan, in particular with reference to the themes of 'People are safe, healthy and well' and 'Everyone has economic opportunities'.	All	Ongoing
Provide quarterly update reports to Cabinet, including consideration of the equality implications.	All	Quarterly

All services to undertake equality analyses where applicable and monitor	All	Ongoing

*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Lee Mann	Assistant Director HR and OD	
Cllr Chris Read	Leader	

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	20 October 2021
Report title and date	Council Plan 2022-25

Date report sent for publication	8 November 2021
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	