

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

**Date:- Friday, 2 September 2016      Venue:- Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.**

**Time:- 9.00 a.m.**

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from Members of the Public

#### **Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review, the following items are submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 12 September 2016. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the reports.

6. Outcome of the consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of 'Silverwood' and 'Cherry Tree House' Children's Residential Care Homes (Pages 1 - 81)  
  
Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
7. Outcome of Consultation and Proposed Foster Carers Payments Scheme, Support and Development (Pages 82 - 135)  
  
Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
8. Library Strategy and Future Library & Customer Service Offer (Pages 136 - 252)  
  
Report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
9. Date and time of next meeting  
Friday 16 September 2016 at 9.00a.m.

*Sharon Kemp.*

**SHARON KEMP,**

Chief Executive.

**Membership:-**

Chairman – Councillor Steele

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Cowles

Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Clark, M.S. Elliott, Mallinder, Price, Sansome, Julie Turner, Walsh and Wyatt.

## Summary Sheet

### Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 2 September 2016

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 12 September 2016

### Title

Outcome of the consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of 'Silverwood' and 'Cherry Tree House' Children's Residential Care Homes

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

Yes

### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children's and Young People's Services

### Report Author(s)

Brent Lumley – Interim Residential Service Manager & Responsible Individual

Gail Hancock – Consultant Director for Improvement

Linda Harper – Interim Strategic Lead for Children and Young People's Services - Commissioning

### Ward(s) Affected

All

## Summary

- 1.1 Rotherham Council, as a developing 'Child Centred Borough', has a strong resounding ambition to move away from the legacy of poorly performing services to a position of strength and confidence, which is reflected in the intention of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate to be rated as 'outstanding'. In pursuit of this ambition Rotherham Council has reviewed the care offered across the whole of its residential care services for children and young people.
  - 1.2 Rotherham Council's 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018' identified that too many of Rotherham's children in care live in residential care and that more children need to be placed in a family based setting. To this end, it is the aspiration of the Council to reduce the numbers of children placed in residential care.
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- 1.3 On the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, a report was presented to the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting where the Commissioner for Social Care approved a targeted consultation with affected stakeholders regarding the proposed closure of Cherry Tree House and Silverwood Children's Residential Care Homes. The relevant report for the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 is referenced as a background paper.
- 1.4 Silverwood is a children's residential care home that provides long-term care for male and female young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Silverwood is currently vacant after the last resident moved out in May 2016. The home has an adjacent building (formerly referred to as the Annex) and, at the time of the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, this was retained pending a review of the needs and circumstances of its two residents, who have now moved on in accordance with their changing needs.
- 1.5 Cherry Tree House is a children's residential care home that provides long-term care for male and female young people with disabilities. Cherry Tree House is currently vacant following the departure of the last resident in August 2016.
- 1.6 No new residents have been admitted to either residential home pending the outcome of the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting decision following the conclusion of the consultation process.
- 1.7 Further to the decision made to consult, Rotherham Council has ensured that affected stakeholders have been fully engaged during the consultation period. This commenced on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and concluded at 12 noon on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2016.
- 1.8 This report outlines the robust approach to the consultation and the subsequent outcomes and options based on feedback from a range of key affected stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are asked to review the report and recommendations detailed below:

- 2.1 That consideration be given to the outcome of the targeted consultation with affected stakeholders.
  - 2.2 That, in accordance with the options appraisal and giving due regard to the feedback elicited from the consultation, the planned closure of both children's homes by the end of December 2016 be approved.
  - 2.3 That the budget transfers outlined in Section 7 be approved.
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### **List of Appendices Included**

- **Appendix 1:** Key Lines of Enquiry
- **Appendix 2:** Silverwood Consultation Feedback Report from Staff
- **Appendix 3:** Cherry Tree Consultation Feedback Report from Staff
- **Appendix 4:** Silverwood Consultation Summary Feedback Report
- **Appendix 5:** Cherry Tree Consultation Summary Feedback Report
- **Appendix 6:** Feedback from all stakeholders
- **Appendix 7:** Silverwood Equality Analysis
- **Appendix 8:** Cherry Tree Equality Analysis

### **Background Papers**

- RMBC Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting report 'Consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House children's homes and the agreement to the relocation of Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate' (6<sup>th</sup> June 2016)
- RMBC 'Children's Improvement Plan' (updated version May 2016)
- RMBC 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018.'
- Strategic commissioning review of residential care, leaving care services, residential, respite services for children with a disability and homeless provision for young people (redacted version for personal information)
- Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care in England.

### **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisor Panel**

Yes

### **Council Approval Required**

Commissioner decision required

### **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

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**Title: Outcome of the Consultation on the Proposal for a Planned Closure of Cherry Tree House and Silverwood Children's Residential Care Homes**

**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That consideration be given to the outcome of the targeted consultation with affected stakeholders.
- 1.2 That, in accordance with the options appraisal and giving due regard to the feedback elicited from the consultation, the planned closure of both children's homes by the end of December 2016 be approved.
- 1.3 That the budget transfers outlined in Section 7 be approved.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 As part of the Council's ambition to become an outstanding children's services authority, Rotherham Council has reviewed the care offered across the whole of its residential care services for children and young people in order to ensure all those looked after by the Council, who are in need of residential care, receive the best possible care now and in the future. This comprehensive strategic commissioning review of residential care included: leaving care services; residential respite services for children with a disability and homeless provision for vulnerable young people; and was concluded in February 2016. The resultant report outlined a range of recommendations to improve the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people.
  - 2.2 The recent failures of both Woodview and St Edmund's children's homes provided the catalyst; and informed the strategic review of residential care, which gave an opportunity for the re-shaping and transformation of accommodation, care and support services for children and young people in Rotherham.
  - 2.3 Rotherham Council's 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018' identified that too many of Rotherham's children in care live in residential placements and that more children need to be accommodated in a family based setting. To this end it is the aspiration of the Council to reduce the numbers of children placed in residential care.
  - 2.4 There are a number of 'requirements' set out in the new Ofsted inspection framework related to sufficiency of accommodation that local authorities have to meet in order to receive a judgement of at least 'good'. In 2014 the Ofsted Inspection in Rotherham raised concerns around sufficiency. *"Looked After children in Rotherham do not receive enough care and they wait too long for permanent homes. Too many children and young people are placed out of borough because there are not enough local placements"*.
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- 2.5 Moreover, having a sufficient range of placements to meet the needs of looked after children makes good economic sense. As is evidenced later in the report, not having enough high quality residential placements is leading to the placement of children in higher cost provision, which meet their needs less well than cheaper local family placements. Rotherham's Looked After children advised:

*"We need more Foster Carers living in Rotherham... it gives you more chance to see your family".*

*"We need the right kind of foster carer... There shouldn't be too many children in one home... Carers need to have good training to understand children's mental health needs".*

- 2.6 The Council has recruited a number of dedicated managers in 2015 to support improvements across the residential homes. It is clear that this has returned some improvements however; Ofsted's judgement of declined effectiveness in relation to Silverwood in February 2016 was of particular concern.

- 2.7 In August 2015 Ofsted reported that Cherry Tree, *"was judged, 'Requires improvement' at the full inspection. At the interim inspection in March 2016, Ofsted judged that it has improved effectiveness"*. It should be noted that there was significant additional management resource provided in order to support this improvement. Ofsted stated, *"The reduction in numbers of young people residing here and the recruitment of an external consultant is significantly assisting staff to gain knowledge of individual's needs. It is allowing them time to focus on the two young people living here. Positive changes in this home remain in the early stages. New systems need to embed and members of staff need continued support to develop their knowledge"*.

- 2.8 Within the consultation meetings with staff at both Silverwood and Cherry Tree House it was acknowledged by the staff that the quality of managerial support in recent months had been in stark contrast to their previous experience, which they considered a significant factor in the poor quality of services across the wider residential sector.

- 2.9 The Council currently has three remaining children's residential care homes: Silverwood; Cherry Tree and Liberty House:

2.9.1 Silverwood Children's Home is registered to provide long-term accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. No young people are currently resident.

2.9.2 Cherry Tree House Children's Home is registered to provide long term accommodation for up to five young people with disabilities. No young people are currently resident.

2.9.3 Both Silverwood and the Cherry Tree House have been subject

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to a targeted consultation process with affected stakeholders, following the decision taken by Commissioner on 6th June 2016. The consultation period commenced on 9th June 2016 and concluded on 29th July 2016 at 12 noon.

- 2.9.4 Liberty House was judged 'Good' at the full inspection in January 2016. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judged that, *"it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection, the manager and responsible individual have made significant efforts to address the requirements set. The implementation of a robust system for reporting safeguarding issues has clearly defined the process. Additionally, staff training around recording safeguarding incidents has strengthened staff understanding"*.

### 3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The children's residential care consultation in relation to Silverwood and Cherry Tree House coincided with the publication of Sir Martin Narey's report regarding the independent review of children's residential care, 'Residential Care in England' (DfE, July 2016). The inclusion of a reference to Rotherham in the introduction to this important report serves as a stark reminder of the Council's previous widespread and systemic failure to protect vulnerable children and young people and reinforces the importance of the current improvement journey:

*"Residential care in England has had a troubled history. As the historical timeline in my introduction outlines, a number of previous government reviews have been commissioned following the appalling abuse of children in residential settings. Both of the Utting Reports and the Warner report were prompted by revelations about abuse and there have been scandals elsewhere in the UK, including that at the Kincora Home in Belfast - exposed in 1980 - and the abuse of children in North Wales, which prompted the Waterhouse Report of 2000. More recently the inadequacies of children's homes in Rotherham and Rochdale and their failure to protect children from sexual abuse has been laid bare by the Times journalist Andrew Norfolk."* (Sir Martin Narey, July 2016 page. 4 – 5).

- 3.2 When compared to statistical neighbours, Rotherham has a disproportionately high number of children in care placed within residential settings and needs to place more children in its care within a family based placement. This shift in practice, which Sir Martin Narey refers to in his report mentioned above, has already happened in most other well-performing local authorities. Rotherham now needs to make adjustments in order to avoid an inappropriate overuse of residential care. Rotherham will continue to require *some* residential care provision and access this when it is best suited to meet the assessed needs and circumstances of individual children in its care.
- 3.3 The Children and Young People's Commissioning Team continues to identify and develop commercial relationships with private and voluntary
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sector residential providers, who are able to offer quality residential care which is judged to be 'good' and 'outstanding' and offers value for money options for individual children in care. The Children and Young People's Commissioning Team is already party to framework agreements with external providers working alongside other neighbouring local authorities from within the region.

- 3.4 Those consulted wanted to know what would happen to children and young people if the decision was made to close both Cherry Tree House and Silverwood. Some felt that to close both at the same time could put Children's Social Care in a difficult situation. It was acknowledged that whilst there is a concerted effort by the Council to recruit more Foster Carers, there may not be enough to meet future and potential demand for placements which would result in sending children out of the borough. The Council's Sufficiency Strategy and ongoing work with regard to increasing the number of foster care placements is a key piece of work currently underway, to mitigate this legitimate concern.
- 3.5 The Fostering Service is working to increase its pool of in-house Foster Carers through a range of different strategies to ensure that there are sufficient local family based placements available for children in care. These strategies include:
- Ambitious stretch targets to recruit new foster care households to provide a net increase year on year for the next two years;
  - A review of the criteria to encourage Foster Carers to look after a broader range of children in care. For example, broadening the age range of children in care that Foster Carers are approved to care for;
  - Considered use by the 'Agency Decision Maker' to approve 'exemptions' to allow Foster Carers greater flexibility in specific circumstances to look after additional children in care outside of their approval status;
  - Reviewing the packages of allowances and support for Foster Carers.
- 3.6 The report, 'Outcome of Consultation and Proposed Foster Carers Payments Scheme, Support and Development' recommends the approval and implementation of a proposed foster carer payment scheme with a view to that scheme being implemented in October 2016. The Council is of the view that investment in improving the 'offer' to Foster Carers will help attract additional carers to foster for Rotherham and support the retention and development of existing Foster Carers. It is an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked After Children (LAC) and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.
- 3.7 A review of the number of placements within the existing cohort of Foster Carers is underway. It is anticipated that some existing Rotherham foster households will be able to increase the number of children they care for and provide an opportunity to increase placements.
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- 3.8 Investment in improving the 'offer' to Foster Carers will help attract additional carers to foster for Rotherham and support the retention and development of existing Foster Carers. It is an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked After Children (LAC) and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.
- 3.9 The intention is to increase the number of Foster Carers in the local authority, but more importantly, argument placement choice when matching children with fostering families. There are ongoing requirements for the continued supervision of Foster Carers by the fostering service. It is important that this does not diminish, as the proposed scheme will not only rely on increased Foster Carers, but highly skilled Foster Carers, who can access training and development that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children in care.
- 3.10 LAC Council agreed that Cherry Tree House and Silverwood were no longer fit for purpose and should close, but they were concerned as to where the young people would be placed if the homes closed down. The LAC Council didn't want these young people to go away from the Rotherham area as they felt this would be like a punishment for them: *"just because Rotherham doesn't have enough Foster Carers - that isn't the young people's fault"*.
- 3.11 It was suggested that at least one of the homes remains open and is used for very short term and emergency placements and is designed to be like a 'home' environment. One elected member noted *"This home accommodates some of our most vulnerable community members, it is absolutely a necessity that if this closure goes ahead a robust transition is put in place based on the needs of individuals definitely not a financial one"*. Cherry Tree and Silverwood children's homes respond to diverse needs. As there are no young people currently resident transition arrangements do not require consideration.
- 3.12 One Elected Member who responded to the consultation stated, *"that it is the quality of the placement rather than the type of placement that determines successful outcomes for children and young people and on that basis I am opposed to the removal of provision in Rotherham. I am not opposed to the closure of buildings that I have been told are no-longer fit for purpose"*.
- 3.13 Another Elected member stated, *"We need to ensure as a council that services we are offering are fit for purpose, safe and of a standard we would expect for our own family/relatives"*. They added that, *"This children's home [in reference to Silverwood] is totally outdated, not in a safe area and has a very negative reputation. During its history it is seen as a hotspot for ASB, grooming and sadly the young people that reside there are blamed for a lot of the criminal damage in the area. However we should be ensuring that we have alternative services to offer that meet specific needs"*.
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- 3.14 Further consideration about arrangements to undertake initial assessments of older young people at the point of coming into care and for children on the edge of care, will serve to inform important service improvement and development plans within the department. Depending on the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting decision regarding the proposed closure of Silverwood and / or Cherry Tree House, this may then allow for consideration of alternative uses for these homes.
- 3.15 Sir Martin Narey's report is clear with regard to there being a need for residential care; the Council acknowledges the need for outstanding residential care and currently commissions placements from residential providers to meet the needs of those young people who require it. The quality of residential care delivered in Rotherham by the Council has been 'inadequate' and 'failed to protect' as referenced in Sir Martin Narey's report. The performance of Cherry Tree (detailed in Ofsted's finding in August 2015) and Silverwood (detailed in Ofsted's findings in February 2016) challenges the notion that the Council is able to deliver cost effective outstanding residential care at the present time without significant investment. It is of note that both Homes have never been judged 'Outstanding'.

#### **4. Options considered and recommended proposals**

- 4.1 Following the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting's decisions on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the only option considered as part of this report relates to the decision to undertake a targeted and planned consultation on the proposed closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House Children's Residential Homes.
- 4.2 The consultation feedback as summarised below indicates that there is a range of opinions and views about the relative merits of keeping one or both residential homes open. Paragraphs 4.3 to 4.16 summarises some of the themes and provides analysis in response to these.
- 4.3 **Cherry Tree - Summary of Consultation Feedback**  
The consultation feedback provides strong evidence from staff at Cherry Tree that the placing and matching of children has significantly affected the challenges they faced. Within the staff consultation meetings they were clear that they felt that their strengths lay in the delivery of respite care to children with disabilities rather than the provision of longer term care. It is important to note that many of the skills required are transferrable to both settings. The staff's ability to communicate with children who have disabilities and safeguard children effectively was a key issue raised by Ofsted in August 2015 and March 2016.
- 4.4 Cherry Tree staff commented that placing young people in the private sector within the Borough and out of the authority raised a number of concerns, including: maintenance of standards; costs associated with this and; provision for children with disabilities needing to be local and accessible. The needs of children are always a priority and matching these with
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providers who can offer best outcomes whilst delivering outstanding care is of paramount importance.

- 4.5 It was felt by staff that the challenging behaviour by young people that had been seen at Cherry Tree House was due to the inappropriate mixture of placements and this should have been managed better. This issue has been acknowledged by the management; and whilst additional management resource has been allocated, no further admissions have been approved pending improvements. The training of staff members and their ability to meet children's needs was raised as a significant concern in Ofsted's August 2015 report, when the home was judged as 'Requires Improvement'.
- 4.6 Staff from Cherry Tree queried if Cabinet knew the history of Cherry Tree House as a respite centre. Staff felt that the home worked well when operating as a respite service and not a residential home. Staff also identified that they had no training since 2012 to prepare them for the change in purpose and function of Cherry Tree House. Since August 2015, it has been apparent that the focus of support to this team has been to provide training. There remain concerns about the team's ability to internalise this training and transfer this knowledge to be able to meet the needs of up to five young people at any one time. The members of staff within the consultation have overtly acknowledged that they would not feel able to achieve the aspiration of outstanding care to potentially five challenging young people at any one time.
- 4.7 A local resident commented that the home was not in the right place as it was situated in an "undesirable area" and that the building itself looked "*institutionalised and not homely*". An Elected Member noted that they were not against the closure of buildings that were no longer fit for purpose and another stated that Cherry Tree should close as "*we need to ensure as a council that services we are offering are fit for purpose, safe and of a standard we would expect for our own family/relatives.*" Cherry Tree was refurbished in 2012 however, it is evident from the wide and long corridors that this is not a home that was designed or located with children in mind.
- 4.8 **Silverwood - Summary of Consultation Feedback**  
Staff were encouraged to provide a meaningful response during the consultation and felt very strongly that the quality of care delivered by the current team was of a high standard. Their report is attached at appendix 2. Their analysis contrasts with Ofsted's judgment in February 2016.
- 4.9 In February 2016, Ofsted judged the home, 'declined effectiveness', commenting, "*Young people are not kept safe. Although members of staff demonstrate a verbal understanding of child sexual exploitation, they lack the support and experience to transfer this into practice. As a result, the signs of risk are not always identified and acted upon. This does not meet a recommendation set at the last inspection to ensure the home has enough suitably trained staff to meet the needs of young people. Consequently, young people are found in the company of individuals who potentially present a risk. Some young people are often out of the home for significant*
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*periods and visit addresses of concern”.*

- 4.10 Further analysis from Ofsted stated, *“Young people’s risk assessments in relation to child sexual exploitation are not up to date. Staff members do not have the correct information to enable them to understand young people’s levels of risk. This limits the action taken to keep young people safe. A recommendation requiring the analysis of incidents when young people go missing has not been met. As a result, information has not been effectively collated and therefore has not informed staff practice. For example missing from home risk assessments do not detail individual risks arising from the places they visit. This does not provide staff with the information they need to help find a young person quickly when they go missing”*
- 4.11 Staff members have shared their views regarding allocated expenditure for the refurbishment of the Home alongside the deployment of their Registered Manager and Deputy Manager at other Homes during its history. They make a direct correlation between this and some of the comments made about the home’s failings. The Council has acknowledged that historic management decisions have contributed to the findings of the review into its provision and this has informed the recommendations within this report.
- 4.12 **Key themes in relation to both Cherry Tree and Silverwood**  
It was recognised by staff at Cherry Tree and Silverwood that family based placements did benefit young people and there was support for family based provision rather than institutionalised provision for children in care. However, concerns were raised regarding available alternative provision.
- 4.13 As stated at 2.3 of this report, the Council has too many young people placed in residential care. The removal of five placements for children with disabilities and five for children with emotional and behavioural issues is consistent with the Council’s overarching strategy. The imperative to utilise provision when children are in crisis is high and can be counter intuitive to the longer term needs of these young people. Both staff teams within the consultation have made reference to the historic decisions to place young people within the home who have not been suitably matched with other young people already resident. This has resulted in adverse outcomes for all young people resident and often resulted in placement breakdowns.
- 4.14 It is of note that due to the concerns shared by Ofsted and the consequential loss of confidence both homes have been operating at 40% occupancy for a considerable period of time (4 placements). Despite this, the Council has still been able to source alternative provision where needs have arisen.
- 4.15 If the Commissioner agrees to close one or both residential homes, further work would be required to implement a protocol for managing the resulting organisational change in respect of the impact on affected staff. Furthermore it will be important to ensure that future care planning, placement commissioning and service development plans are in place to respond efficiently and effectively to the placement needs of children in care
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going forward.

- 4.16 If the Commissioner resolves to keep one or both residential homes open, a further review would be required to ensure the necessary improvements to deliver an operational model that would provide consistently good leadership, standards of provision, quality of care and value for money. It is anticipated that this would take significant additional time, financial investment and residential leadership and staffing expertise. The future operating models for both Silverwood and / or Cherry Tree House, if they were to remain open, would require a fundamental overhaul, including likely changes to the current 'Statement of Purpose', which would involve consultation with Ofsted.

## 5. Consultation

- 5.1 Following the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 a short life Children's Residential Care Consultation Group was established. The Children's Residential Care Consultation Group, hereinafter referred to as the group, consisted of relevant Council officers including representative from children's social care, commissioning and residential services together with human resources, communications and legal services. The sole aim of the group was to oversee and facilitate the consultation process with affected stakeholders.
- 5.2 The group met on a weekly basis and established a Communication and Engagement Plan which set out a timeline of events and activities for the duration of the consultation process. This included key milestones and consultation messages for all affected stakeholders. Members of the group established links with affected stakeholders offering a liaison and feedback role to receive, log and respond to any queries throughout the consultation process.
- 5.3 In undertaking the consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of 'Silverwood' and 'Cherry Tree House' Children's Residential Care Homes, the Council has ensured compliance with the Government's Consultation Principles 2016.
- 5.4 The following affected stakeholders were identified as part of the Communication and Engagement Strategy:
- 5.4.1 **Children & Young People / Service Users**
- Young people who were recently placed in either of the two units (including the Annex adjacent to Silverwood), including their Parents (and carers with Parental Responsibility) where appropriate
  - Independent Reviewing Officers (specifically in respect of supporting the young people recently placed in either of the residential homes)
  - Parent and Carer Forum
  - Children in Care Council
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- Young Inspectors
- 5.4.2 **Political & Senior Officer Leads:**
- Elected members, including Ward Councillors, and Cabinet
  - Senior Officers of the Council
- 5.4.3 **Statutory & Voluntary Sector Partners:**  
Key partners working with the Council (via Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board)
- 5.4.4 **Local people**  
Near neighbours / local residents living in close proximity to both residential units.
- 5.4.5 **Staff**
- Affected residential staff (including domiciliary staff and any agency staff)
  - Staff representatives (e.g.: Trade Unions)
  - Children and Young People's Services Social Care staff
- 5.5 The group agreed key lines of enquiry which were communicated to all affected stakeholders. A summary of the key lines of enquiry are attached at Appendix 1. The key lines of enquiry informed the details of letters, discussions and meetings that were had with affected stakeholders. A consultation feedback template was provided for affected stakeholders to use.
- 5.6 Young people in care who were placed, or had been placed in recent months in Silverwood or Cherry Tree House were consulted via their identified Independent Reviewing Officers, in order to ensure that their views were conveyed by someone who they could trust.
- 5.7 Officers working with both the Young Inspectors and the Children in Care Council facilitated meetings to explore any specific views, wishes and feelings in relation to the proposed closures.
- 5.8 Affected members of staff from each residential children's home were invited to attend a weekly staff consultation meeting throughout the duration of the consultation period. This meeting was facilitated by the 'Responsible Individual' and also attended by various Unison representatives as the nominated Trade Union for affected staff. A representative from the Human Resources department also attended some of the meetings.
- 5.9 All Trade Unions had previously been notified about the proposal to close one or both residential homes at the regular Staff Liaison Meeting chaired by the Assistant Director for Early Help and Family Engagement, before the publication of Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting papers.
- 5.10 Notes of each weekly meeting with staff and their Unison representatives were taken by the 'Responsible Individual' and provided to staff as a typed
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record of what was discussed. These notes have not been included as both Silverwood and Cherry Tree House staff have submitted reports detailed at Appendices 2 and 3.

- 5.11 All questions and queries arising from the weekly consultation meetings with staff and their Unison representatives at Silverwood and Cherry Tree House were addressed and answered during the course of the consultation period
- 5.12 *\*For full feedback, comments and questions raised can be found at Appendix 6*

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 6.1 The consultation period started on 9th June 2016 and concluded on 29th July 2016 which was a week longer than first proposed. The consultation extension was made to allow officers from the group to consult with multi-agency partners from the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board Executive Group during their scheduled meeting on 28th July 2016.
- 6.2 If the Commissioner resolves to close one or both residential children's homes it is proposed that the closures take place by the end of December 2016. There are no residents currently in occupation so this will not adversely impact on any individual young person.
- 6.3 Additionally, if the Commissioner resolves to close one or both residential children's homes the Responsible Individual, in accordance with Regulation 49 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, will give notice in writing to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Ofsted within one week of the Decision Making Meeting.

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 7.1 If a decision is taken to close both homes a budget realignment will be required to transfer the budget from Silverwood and Cherry Tree to support other looked after children services. The appropriate in-year and full year values will be determined by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services once the timings of implementation have been confirmed.

### **7.2 Do Nothing**

The current in-year LAC budget pressure is £1.554m. This annual pressure is projected to rise to £2.966m by 2020/21 if no further action is taken. Table 1 outlines the financial consequences of not implementing the proposed closures.

*Table 1: The "As Is" Looked After Children Forecast of Expenditure (£m)*

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	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
LAC Budget	16.393	16.393	16.393	16.393	16.393
LAC Forecast	17.947	18.276	18.630	18.991	19.359
Cost Pressure	1.554	1.883	2.237	2.598	2.966

Table 1 assumptions:

- Based on 444 LAC (August 2016).
- LAC numbers / costs increase by 2% from 2017/18 to 2020/21.
- Projected placement distribution i.e. setting split (OOA, IFA, Fostering in-house, Residential in-house) as per August 2016 level.

### 7.3 Approve Closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree Residential Children's Homes

The combined budget for Silverwood and Cherry Tree is £1.221m. This is currently being forecast to be spent in full. If the Commissioner approves the recommendation to close both homes there would be a saving this financial year (from projected costs January to March) and a full year saving of £1.221m in 2017/18. Table 2 outlines the financial consequences of closing Silverwood and Cherry Tree Children's Homes on LAC expenditure.

Table 2: Impact of home closure on LAC Expenditure (£m)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
LAC Budget	16.393	16.393	16.393	16.393	16.393
LAC Forecast	17.947	18.276	18.630	18.991	19.359
Cost Pressure	1.554	1.883	2.237	2.598	2.966

Closure of Homes (Cost Reduction)	-0.305	-1.221	-1.221	-1.221	-1.221
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Revised Cost Pressure	1.249	0.662	1.016	1.377	1.745
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Table 2 assumptions:

- Based on 444 LAC (August 2016).
- LAC numbers / costs increase by 2% from 2017/18 to 2020/21.
- Projected placement distribution i.e. setting split (Out Of Authority (OOA), IFA, Fostering in-house, Residential in-house) as per August 2016 level.
- 2016/17 cost reduction assumes homes close on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

The revised cost pressure is to be addressed as part of the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy which seeks to reduce the number of children in more expensive care settings and allow a realignment of LAC budgets to

secure a balanced budget position by 2020/21 and future financial sustainability.

- 7.4 Any severance costs arising from the recommendations in this report will be funded from Corporate Capital Receipts. Use of Capital Receipts was approved at the Budget Setting Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 for severance payments, due to service reconfiguration to deliver efficiencies and improved outcomes for clients and residents.

## 8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 In addition to the legal requirements for robust consultation, when the Council is considering proposals to close children's homes the Council has to ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under section one of that Act the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition, under section 149 of the Equality Act the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:

8.1.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act

8.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

8.1.3 Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.2 In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

8.2.1 Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic

8.2.3 Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it

8.2.4 Encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

- 8.3 Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief,
-

gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

- 8.4 Children's Homes are registered with Ofsted, and therefore their activities are regulated. Regulation 49 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 requires the responsible individual and/or the registered person, i.e. the children's home registered manager, to give notice in writing to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Ofsted as soon as it is practicable to do so if a registered provider proposes to cease to carry on or manage the Home.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

- 9.1 There are currently 14 members of staff employed on a permanent basis in Silverwood.
- 9.2 There are currently 18 members of staff employed on a permanent basis in Cherry Tree House.
- 9.3 The Council's usual policies and consultations will apply, for example seeking to avoid redundancy through redeployment where possible, if a decision to close one or both of the children's residential homes is taken.

## **10 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 10.1 There are currently no children or young people placed in either Silverwood or Cherry Tree House Residential Children's Homes. The adjoining property to Silverwood, formerly known as the Annex, is also vacant. No children or young people will be directly affected by a decision to close one or both homes at this point in time. Former residents had already moved elsewhere to alternative placements before, during and after the consultation period as a result of decisions arising from a re-assessment of their individual needs and circumstances rather than as a direct result of the consultation process.
- 10.2 There are currently no plans to admit any new children or young people in care to either home pending the outcome of the Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting decision.
- 10.3 Vulnerable adults are not placed in either Silverwood or Cherry Tree House, as these are residential children's homes that are not registered to meet the needs of vulnerable adults.

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

- 11.1 The council must comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, as set out in section 8 above. In addition, the council has a duty to fully consider the human rights implications for residents, staff and future looked after children.
- 11.2 The Council is legally required to demonstrate that it has given 'due regard' to the aims of the general equality duty. In practice this means that equality
-

considerations are embedded into our decision-making processes and that equality is considered when we are developing key policy - so undertaking an equality analysis of decisions and policy before they are implemented. Equality Analyses are attached at Appendix 7 (Silverwood) and Appendix 8 (Cherry Tree)

## **12 Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

- 12.1 Multi-agency partners have been notified and invited to contribute to the consultation process. Two separate electronic communications were disseminated via the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board Business Unit using their communication system which is a well-established way of communicating with partners. Group representatives also attended the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Executive Meeting on 28th July 2016 to address any questions or queries that may have arisen.
- 12.2 Other central services including Legal Services, Human Resources and Communications were fully engaged and represented in the group during the course of the consultation.
- 12.3 Property services have been made aware of the proposal and that one or both properties will need to be secured and that there may be surplus to requirements should the decision be made to close one or both homes. Should the properties be declared surplus they will be transferred into the Land and Property Bank and all property revenue funding relating to these properties will be transferred into this account. Once the future options for the properties have been explored, the vacant property procedure will be followed in order to determine final use.

## **13 Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 To continue of the current provision presents the following risks:
    - 13.1.1 Inadequate care being provided to any future children in care who might be placed in either Silverwood or Cherry Tree House children's homes.
    - 13.1.2 That in the event of a further inadequate inspection there could be a forced closure resulting in young people having to move from the home in distressing circumstances.
    - 13.1.3 The financial burden that would be incurred during the period required to bring the provision up to the necessary standard would risk the investments required to support other key elements of the Sufficiency Strategy such as developing 'Edge of Care' provision and enhancing the therapeutic services needed to support permanent alternatives to care for Rotherham's looked after children, such as Adoption and Special Guardianship.
-

13.2 To end the current provision presents the following risks:

13.2.1 Insufficient family based support placements in borough. This risk will be mitigated by the planned increase in foster care placements.

13.3 The risks associated with the closure of the remaining Council's mainstream residential provision relate to concerns that there will be insufficient placement choice for Rotherham's children in care. This risk is mitigated by the other elements set out in the Sufficiency Strategy, including growing the in-house fostering provision, growing and developing the independent fostering market locally to better meet local needs by enhanced commissioning arrangements and similarly, maximising the potential to work with local and nearby providers of specialist residential care so that bespoke arrangements can be commissioned to meet individual needs.

13.4 The Equality Analyses provides analysis and mitigation with regard to the risks associated with job losses at both Cherry Tree House (18 staff) and Silverwood (14 staff) in the event the decision is taken to close either of the homes.

#### **14 Accountable Officer(s)**

14.1 Ian Thomas, Strategic Director Children and Young People's Services

#### **15 Approvals Obtained from:**

15.1 Mark Chambers, Finance

Luke Ricketts Human Resources

Neil Concannon, Service Manager – Litigation and Social Care, Legal Services

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories>

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## KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY

### Consultation Document - Cherry Tree House

#### Overview

- Rotherham Council is reviewing its residential care service for young people at Cherry Tree House.
- We want all those looked after by the council to receive the best possible care.
- The council's "Looked-After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018" said that too many children in Rotherham live in residential care.
- The Strategy also said that more children need to be in a family-based placement like fostering.
- Cherry Tree House provides long-term care for young people with disabilities.
- Cherry Tree House is able to look after five young people at any one time;
- There is currently one young person living at Cherry Tree House.
- Cherry Tree House was rated as 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted in August 2015 with 'Improved Effectiveness' following an inspection in March 2016.
- Despite action to improve the service, there is evidence that, in terms of Ofsted, Cherry Tree will struggle to deliver outstanding care for 5 young people.
- It has been decided to consult you as to whether we should close Cherry Tree Children's Home on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

#### Timeline

- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016 the staff were told that on
  - 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Commissioners' decided that we will begin formal consultation on closing Cherry Tree House from the 09<sup>th</sup> June to the 21<sup>st</sup> July (6 weeks)
  - All views must be received by 12 noon on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016
  - The Commissioners will consider what everyone says and make a final decision on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2016

#### What happens next?

- An Officer will visit young people and staff at either weekly or two weekly intervals and you can tell the officer what you think or you can put it into an email
  - For the young person resident he will be supported to access an advocate from the Rights2Rights service who can help communicate his views
  - The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will hold a review to make plans with the young person currently resident.
  - Parents, carers and connected persons of the above; Independent Reviewing Officers; Children's Rights Officer will support the young people this proposal is relevant to
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- Key partners such as Health, Education and in particular Special Schools with; Police; and Ward Councillors will be consulted.
- 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2016 all views have to be returned by 12 noon

Timeline regarding Consultation on the Closure of Cherry Tree House Children’s Home.

<b>Cherry Tree House Children’s Home - Timeline</b>	
06/06/2016	Commissioner decision made on whether to begin formal consultation on the closure of Cherry Tree House.
07/06/2016	Meeting scheduled for Staff at 3:00 pm in the Garden Room at the Town Hall to inform them of the decision made by Commissioner on whether to begin formal consultation on the closure of Cherry Tree House.
09/06/16	6 weeks Consultation begins on the closure of Cherry Tree House.
16/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 9:30 am to 11:30am with Staff.
23/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00pm with Staff.
30/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00pm with Staff.
06/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00pm with Staff.
12/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 9:30 am to 11:30 am with Staff.
20/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 9:30 am to 11:30 am with Staff.
26/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 9:30 am to 11:30 am with Staff.
28/07/2016	All views to be with the relevant officer, by 12 noon as the Consultation closes.
12/09/2016	Cabinet and Commissioner Meeting to reach a decision regarding the closure of Cherry Tree House Children’s Home
13/09/2016	Feedback to Staff on Cabinet and Commissioner decision

- If the Commissioners decide to close the home it will close on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

### **Questions for the Consultation to young person resident**

1. What is it about Cherry Tree House that has been good
2. What has not been good
3. Where would you like to live

### **Questions for the Consultation to staff**

1. What are your views regarding the plans around the potential to increase the number of family based placements (such as foster care) for children in care?
2. Given Ofsted’s findings as well as those recorded within reports to Cabinet what is your view about how the Cherry Tree staff and management could improve the quality of service to children within the timescales required.

3. What are your views about the alternatives you would want the Council to consider?
4. What support requirements would you want the Council to consider?
5. Do you have personal employment or other issues that you wish to raise?
6. What are your views about any unintended consequences of the closure?
7. Have you any additional comments or issues?

### **Questions for the Consultation to partners**

1. Questions 1-3 above
2. What do you consider the impact of the closure will be on your ability to deliver your statutory duty in providing services to children

Replies to the consultation must be received by 12.00 noon on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

### **Consultation - Silverwood Children's Home**

#### **Overview**

- Rotherham Council is reviewing its residential care service for young people at Silverwood Children's Home.
- We want all those looked after by the council to receive the best possible care.
- The council's "Looked-After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018" said that too many children in Rotherham live in residential care.
- The strategy also said that more children need to be in a family-based placements like fostering.
- Silverwood Children's Home provides long-term care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Silverwood Children's Home is able to look after five young people at any one time.
- There is currently no young person living at Silverwood Children's Home.
- Silverwood Children's Home was rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in June 2015 with "declined effectiveness" following an inspection in February 2016.
- Despite action to improve the service, there is evidence that, in terms of Ofsted, Silverwood Children's Home will struggle to deliver consistently outstanding care for 5 young people.
- It is important that we consult with you as to whether we should close Silverwood Children's Home on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

#### **Timeline**

- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016 the staff were told that on
    - 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Commissioners' decided that we will begin formal consultation on closing Silverwood Children's Home from the 09<sup>th</sup> June to the 21<sup>st</sup> July (6 weeks)
    - All views must be received by 12 noon on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016
    - The Commissioners will consider what everyone says and make a final decision on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2016
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**What happens next?**

- An Officer will visit staff and young people directly affected at either weekly or two weekly intervals and you can tell the officer what you think or you can put it into an email to Jane Davies.
- For the young people resident in the property adjacent to Silverwood Children’s Home they can access an advocate from the Rights2Rights service who can support them to share their views
- All relevant professionals, will be informed of this proposal in order that a review to make plans with the young people resident in the property adjacent to Silverwood Children’s Home.
- Parents, carers and connected persons of the above; Independent Reviewing Officers; Children’s Rights Officer;
- Key partners such as Health, Education; Police; and Ward Councillors to be consulted regarding the proposal.
- 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2016 all views have to be returned by 12 noon

Timeline regarding Consultation on the Closure of Silverwood Children’s Home.

<b>Silverwood Children’s Home - Timeline</b>	
06/06/2016	Commissioner decision made on whether to begin formal consultation on the closure of Silverwood Children’s Home
07/06/2016	Meeting scheduled for Staff at 2:15 pm in the Garden Room at the Town Hall to inform them of the decision made by Commissioner on whether to begin formal consultation on the closure of Silverwood Children’s Home.
09/06/16	6 weeks Consultation begins on the closure of Silverwood Children’s Home.
14/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
21/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
29/06/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
05/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
12/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
19/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
26/07/2016	Update Meeting scheduled for Staff at 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm with Staff at Silverwood
28/07/2016	All views to be with relevant officer by 12 noon as the Consultation closes.
12/09/2016	Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting to reach a decision regarding the closure of Silverwood Children’s Home.
13/09/2016	Feedback to Staff on Cabinet and Commissioner decision

- If the Commissioners decide to close the home it will close on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

### **Questions for the Consultation to young person resident in the property adjacent to Silverwood.**

1. Do you understand the plans around the potential to close Silverwood?
2. What is it about residential staff supporting you that has been positive
3. What is it about residential staff supporting you that has not been helpful
4. What kind of places would you like to see children in care living in
5. What are your thoughts about where you would like to next live.

### **Questions for the Consultation to staff**

1. What are your views regarding the plans around the potential to increase the number of family based placements (such as foster care) for children in care?
2. Given Ofsted's findings as well as those recorded within reports to Cabinet what is your view about how the Silverwood staff and management could improve the quality of service to children within the timescales required.
3. What support or options would you want the Council to consider?
4. Have you any additional comments or issues?

### **Questions for the Consultation to partners**

1. Questions 1-4 above
2. What do you consider the impact of the closure will be on your ability to deliver your statutory duty in providing services to children

Replies to the consultation must be received by 12.00 noon on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

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**SILVERWOOD CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT FROM STAFF**

This report was submitted for consideration by cabinet by the staff at Silverwood

**SILVERWOOD MAINSTREAM RESIDENTIAL****Purpose of the Report**

This report provides an overview for the purpose of our Mainstream Children Home/Provision and how this holds value to the young people and families of Rotherham. The key focuses in the report underpins and benchmarks rationales of how Silverwoods residential provisions embrace, support and strive to identify positive outcomes for their most vulnerable young people experiencing emotional and challenging behaviours. Factual figure and tables will demonstrate the effectiveness of varied services provided by Silverwood since 2010, including `Respite`, Shared Care`, `12 week Emergency home`, `Out Reach work in the families homes`, `Semi-Independent service` and a `Long Term provision`, all of which have been introduced to meet the demands and the needs of Young People of Rotherham. References are made to Cabinet/commissioners decision making meetings with clear focuses on `Budgets` and `Statistics` of young people accommodated.

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**July 2016 – Sir Martin Narey`s Report**

Martin conducted a report based on the Prime Minister`s comments to “make sure that our residential care homes are doing the best possible job they can” (not to close them, but to identify improvements)

Martin concludes his report with clearly comments around “an unmet demand for the greater use of children`s homes as part of an initial assessment for older children when first coming into care, and for those on the edge of care. So I see very little scope for reducing our reliance on children`s homes and I am quite clear that to do so would not be in the interests of children”

Martin goes on to highlight the importance of homes and how they are misunderstood, referencing to the views, comments and quotes of young people within the report, who believe that residential provisions have been the success stories for them and without the provision they would have failed. It is actually young people, who have asked for investments and value to maintain homes for the older teenagers, who could not sustain foster placements and have the understanding from professional staff who can use the motto “Today is another day” and not give a 28 day notice as foster placements do when they are met with difficult challenges.

Recommendations based on foster care – Recruit the best Foster Carers with sufficient knowledge on emotional and challenging behaviours. (When enquiring to Rotherham`s

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fostering Team for figures for appropriate experienced Foster Carers for young people between the ages of 12yrs and 18yrs, we received silence and a number of 4 was given. This is not sustainable to the immediate needs of young people of Rotherham and a review of residential provision needs to be productive to the needs of the service rather than number crunching)

Martin references to the size of residential homes and recent years recognising reductions to four places. However he goes on to suggest that there's no evidence to suggest a home of three or four places is likely to be any more effective than a home of six or seven and referencing to Lincolnshire county council who is currently supporting Rotherham to make improvements, along with Commissioner Bradwell, they have three 6 bedded properties and one just raised to a seven bedded home all supported by the borough and senior management.

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### **Silverwood Team and Service**

Silverwood have been a part of the local community of East Herringthorpe for many years, building positive relationships with the neighbours and local businesses. The home was purposely built and over the years has received improvements to meet the demands of the service delivered.

2014 brought in another interim consultant who identified the need to conduct further improvements and secured £300,000 with Ian Thomas. However, this was never followed through despite architects and builders being put in place. Maybe this would have had an effect on the personal views of Commissioner Bradwell and other cabinet members, when they made comments of the physical environment not being acceptable for modern use. However, Ofsted have always made reference to how homely Silverwood is. Both the Interim Deputy and Interim Manager of Silverwood have visited homes in Doncaster and Lincolnshire and hold personal views that although there is scope to improve Silverwood, the home is a warm and welcoming provision that has constantly been decorated by the hands of staff and young people residing there at that time.

Silverwood have been consistent with a rating of 'Good' and on the verge of 'outstanding'. It was unfortunate in February 2016, Silverwood achieved a 'Good' with 'declining effectiveness' due to an oversight in academic report writing to evidence the practical safeguarding practice that had been put in place. Since this time, there has been extensive training on report writing and the need to recognise and be accountable for all aspects of providing an effective service that meets both the demands of the service and National Minimum Standards.

The current team has been formed since 2007 and holds an array of qualified social workers and qualified care workers, who have managed several changes of the service over the years to meet the demands of our Rotherham young people. The team have been called upon by team managers to step in at a moment's notice to support within the community and relieve pressures and workloads off social workers, with constant praise for our ongoing support. We have worked with partners to close a gap in the service Rotherham provides to young people and opened up the 'Annexe' provision as a 'semi-independent' provision for two teenagers not quite prepared to enter the 'Hollowgate' service. Although the minutes from 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 indicate that it is part of the 'Leaving Care' provision, it is actually a service grown from Silverwood to support a 'Step Up' programme to encourage every opportunity for better

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outcomes. As stated in Sir Narey's report this 'staying close' provision is something which needs developing and the site of Silverwood would enable this to be done in Rotherham.

Since October 2014, Silverwoods team has been diluted with the removal of the registered manager and one of the deputies to support a sister home and bring them out of an 'Inadequate' rating. During this time, there has been ongoing challenges and changes for both the existing young people and staff which has been managed well with consistent rating from Ofsted of 'Good' and positive outcomes for young people, who have gone on to achieve Apprenticeships, college places, employment, university degrees and successfully had families of their own. Silverwood continue to receive phone calls and visits from ex residents, who all laugh and joke about their experiences within the home, but are all clear with the high level of commitment that was given to them.

When asked if they had been consulted along with existing residents about the consultation, they all have stated that no one has been in contact with them and they were not aware that they could have any form of influence.

Referencing to 'Appendix 1' it is evident that the team embrace the philosophy of the commissioners, that 'children need to be placed in a family base setting' and the table highlights the success of returning young people back to their family home before considering a substitute foster care provision.

Silverwood have worked in partnership with social workers and team managers at times of crisis and have always been held in high esteem and respect when accepting their clients. References made in a recent cabinet meeting suggests that there is lack of confidence from social workers to place young people in Silverwood and the costs are too high. As of the week ending 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, Silverwood have continued to have referrals from team managers and social workers to place their clients and continue to acknowledge that Silverwood is a preferred placement due to the historical positive outcomes of young people previously accommodated. In terms of cost, this is a national issue, which varies from county to county. Silverwood have been disadvantaged and placed into a bracket that indicates individual placements are not cost effective. However, consideration has not been given to senior management's decisions to overrule the registered manager and has blocked the use of beds even in a time of need. Rotherham have seen young people placed outside the 20 mile radius and much further, rather than use empty beds. Thus having further implications on costs and time of social workers, contact arrangements and valuing the six key principles of the 'Child Centred Borough'

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### **Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015/18**

Following conversations with Rotherham and Lincolnshire's placement team, this report is not a true reflection on costings of placements for young people. The reports omits the search process, which can and does exceed a 20 mile radius, which in turn has a huge impact on costings. So where an external home is highlighted as £3,474, this could reach as much as £6,000 plus.

Costing for in house residential is exaggerated due to the decision making of senior managers to close beds and not managing the service to the full potential. Although issues were raised with senior managers in relation to lack of support, inadequate staffing, inappropriate and unsafe placements, no consideration was given to the outcomes and the duty of care to young people placed or staff.

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The recent recruitment in 2016 for foster care has identified that weekly payments will raise, which has not been identified on the table and where there is more than two young people in placement, the cost will exceed £1233, with limit support and safeguarding.

<b>Unit costs</b>	<b>Rotherham per week</b>
<b>In house homes</b>	<b>£2,764</b>
<b>External homes</b>	<b>£3,474</b>
<b>In house foster care</b>	<b>£411</b>
<b>External foster care</b>	<b>£938</b>

<b>composition</b>	
<b>In house homes</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>External homes</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>In house foster care</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>External foster care</b>	<b>31%</b>

Referencing to the composition of the external providers, whether residential or foster care. This is a high percentage and the cost alone for social work visits, arrangements for family contact, meetings, stability of education and social awareness/safeguarding needs to be reviewed as soon as possible, especially when Rotherham have had their own work teams in place with beds available to provide a safe, warm and a caring environment. Rotherham should never place a young person out of authority unless a risk assessment identifies huge risk in the area. Again, this is referenced in the Sufficiency plan, Cabinet meetings, Martin Narey report and on going improvement plans for Rotherham as a whole.

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**Appendix 3** – Identifies costing for a staff team of 10 plus one domestic to manage one sole residential provision at Silverwood. Previous, Silverwood have afforded a staff team of 14, which has been necessary for the varied provisions that have been provided alongside the Annexe provision of semi-independence.

**Directorate Objectives:** The Lifestyle Survey provides insight into the experiences of children and young people and measures the success of plans to become a Child Centred Borough around six principles:

- A focus on the rights and voice of the child;
- Keeping children safe and healthy;
- Ensuring children reach their potential;
- An inclusive Borough;
- Harnessing the resources of communities; and
- A sense of place.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Cabinet Members broadly supported being a Child-Centred Borough, It was also noted that a reduction in funding from central government for public health 'Would' have huge implications and the impact of the already identified budget saving cost of £1.3million required for 2016/17 with potentially further cuts of £423,000 for 2017/18 has already been identified as a measure that needs to be followed up.

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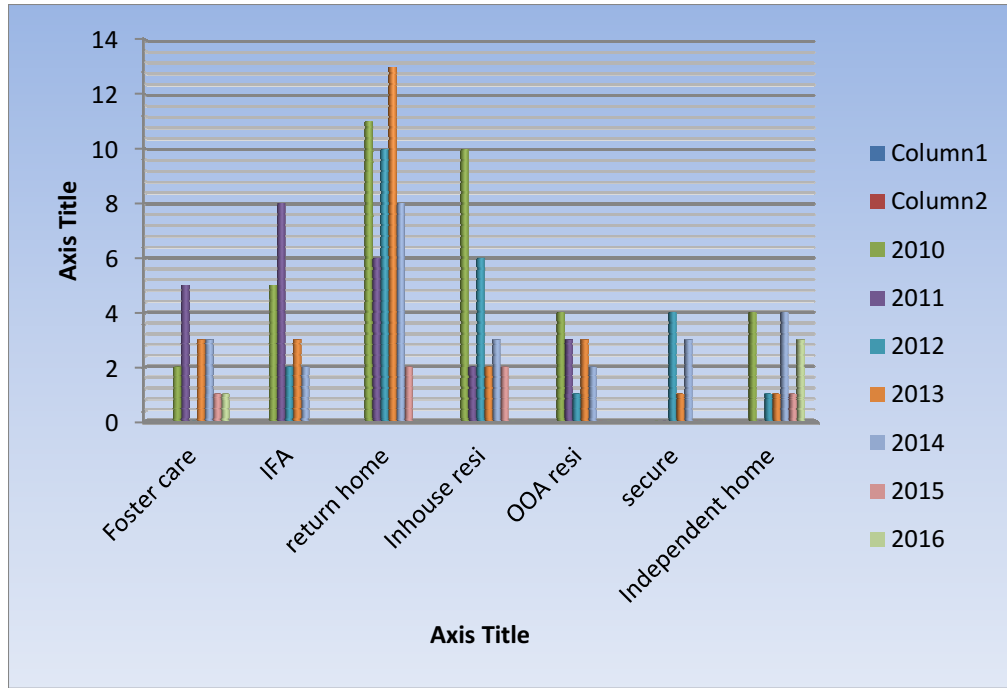
### **Improvement and Developments**

- During consultation, there have been ongoing discussions around the future of Silverwood and there has been actions taken to identify mythology to move to outstanding.
- Visits have taken place to provisions in Doncaster to share working practises and to view varied provisions that are needs led. We have worked with senior managers to collate paperwork on an `Edge of Care` Provision and how this can be effective for Rotherham.
- We have worked closely with Residential homes in Lincolnshire, who have recently achieved `Outstanding` from Ofsted and have been providing support around `Social Pedagogy`, as stated in the Martin Narey report.
- We have reviewed the `No Wrong Door` from North Yorkshire council, where we are open to providing a sign posting provision to support positive moves forward to appropriate placements within a timely period.

During Silverwoods consultation period that all Silverwood staff have been involved in from 07.06.16 to 26.07.16, there have been commitment to work together to produce an effective report that hopefully has an impact on decisions made for the future of the young people of Rotherham and a residential service. Historically, it is clear that Silverwood have always being open to change to meet the needs of the service and will continue to do so as a means to raise the attainment of Rotherham's ratings.

Silverwood are confident that we can and will achieve `Outstanding` within one year.

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	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Foster care	2	5	0	3	3	1	1	15
IFA	5	8	2	3	2	0	0	20
return home	11	6	10	13	8	2	0	50
In house residential	10	2	6	2	3	2	0	25
OOA residential	4	3	1	3	2	0	0	13
secure	0	0	4	1	3	0	0	8
Independent home	4	0	1	1	4	1	3	14
Yearly total	36	24	24	26	25	6	4	
								<b>TOTAL Y/P = 145</b>

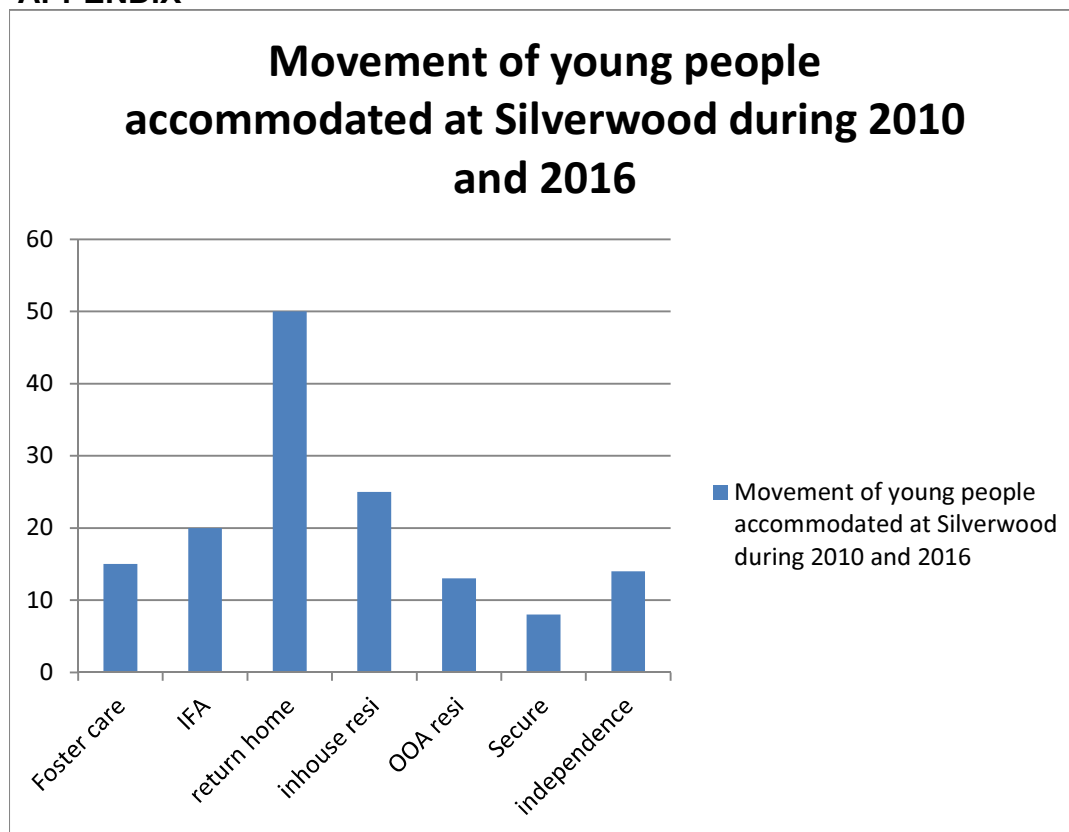
Graph identifying movement of young people for Individual years.

*Caring*



## APPENDIX

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## APPENDIX 3

Costing for staff at Silverwood.				Gross	NI costs	Super Ann
Manager	37hrs	Band J	scale 40	£33,106	£3,456.35	£6,952.26
Deputy	37hrs	Band H	scale 33	£29,033	£2,894.27	£6,096.93
Senior	37hrs	Band G	scale 29	£25,694	£2,433.49	£5,395.74
Senior	37hrs	Band G	scale 29	£25,694	£2,433.49	£5,395.74
Senior	37hrs	Band G	scale 29	£25,694	£2,433.49	£5,395.74
Senior	32hrs	Band G	scale 29	£22,221.84	£1,954.33	£4,666.59
Senior	32hrs	Band G	scale 29	£22,221.84	£1,954.33	£4,666.59
level 2	24hrs	Band F	scale 22	£13,268.76	£718.81	£2,786.44
Level 2	24hrs	Band F	scale 22	£13,268.76	£718.81	£2,786.44
level 2	24hrs	Band F	scale 22	£13,268.76	£718.81	£2,786.44
Domestic	24hrs	Band A	scale 8	£9,581.19	£209.92	£2,012.05
			Total	£233,052	£26,276.72	
10 staff						

## **CHERRY TREE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT FROM STAFF**

### **Introduction**

Cherry Tree House Children's Home provides a permanent home for young people with disabilities between the age of 10 and up until their 18th birthday. The young people will be unable to continue living with parents/carers or extended family for a variety of reasons and a full time residential home will have been assessed as the most positive option to enable the young person to grow and develop to their full potential.

Cherry Tree House can provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of five children, of either gender or aged from 10 to 17 inclusive. Up to five children and young people can be looked after at any one time, although the number of young people in residence will be dictated by their needs and the ability of staff to maintain a safe environment and high quality care.

The home can accommodate children with learning disabilities, physical or sensory disabilities or autism and associated communication or moderate behavioural challenges. This is only provided that the mix of young people can be managed safely following careful matching and a clear impact assessment by the registered manager at the point of admission.

Cherry Tree House will consider an extension of care arrangement in line with 'staying put' arrangements beyond a young person's eighteenth birthday if it is felt this meets the needs of the young person, other young people resident and following a full Risk Assessment and where it is part of a clear transitional plan with a specific end date.

### **Consultation**

Cabinet Report agreed on the 26th of May re consultation in relation to the planned closure of Cherry Tree. Purpose of this weekly meeting is to ensure the consultation process engages staff in a meaningful way to inform Cabinet regarding the future of the Home, which will be made on 12/09/16.

In order to fully understand our past and the journey the CTH has been on over the past few years senior managers should be having conversations with young people and staff working there about the service provided and the importance of residential care to young people and their families. Yet this has failed to happen.

We are aware that there are concerns around staff and the service not meeting young people's needs however we are not the 'specialised service' as is the opinion of senior managers and outside support agencies. Young people who have been placed with us were not appropriately matched and were in some cases inappropriately placed at CTH.

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The senior management team has changed numerous times within the past 2 years and there has been no consistency in work practice which has impacted on the staff team.

CTH as a result of this has been on a huge journey over the past 2 years and staff are continuing to progress and move forward to improve the service provided for young people. We have years of experience within the staff team, we are supportive of one another and have a never give up attitude to supporting our kids. CTH staff team are dynamic and progressive and we are committed to doing better for the young people we support. We have shown this by being adaptable and accepting of advice when it has been given by multi agency support teams and working with experienced managers recently who have come in to support and guide the team.

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## **IMPROVEMENT PLAN TARGETS.**

Undertake a review of the service

Support the Specialist knowledge required to lead and manage the home

Develop a leadership and staff team who are able to interpret and apply the Regulatory and Inspection frameworks

Revise the Homes Statement of Purpose

Review of the staffing arrangements within the home

Develop staff Practice which supports safeguards and protects young people within the home

A review of Staff Training and development to understand skills gaps

Develop a Communications Strategy within the home with all key stakeholders

Increase the visibility and voice of the child

We have shown continuous improvement over the past year and we are continuing to improve our service for children and young people. We received the highest we could at our last interim inspection from Ofsted and it would have been likely that this would have been higher again at the next full inspection.

## **The implications of closure of the service for the wider community of Rotherham.**

- Vulnerable young people who felt safe and secure have been forced to leave their home without being consulted or given a choice of where they go next.
  - Every Child Matters yet Rotherham kids are living out of the Authority.
  - Children will not have continuity of care. May be moved repeatedly if placements breakdown.
  - Children are living away from family out of the Authority and may have reduced contact due to distance. E.g. 1 child has been placed in the Isle of White. This Child is still supported by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and a Social Worker who will be required to visit him. What is the relationship with the worker going to be like? What are the cost implications of this?
  - No other council run residential services in the Borough for young people with additional needs.
  - If foster placements break down, where would the young person be supported? In the past foster placements for our young people have broken down and this support has not been appropriate for our young people who struggle with attachment issues.
  - Parents don't always want their child to be placed in foster care and may struggle with this.
  - Difficulties arranging transport and contact arrangements for families with children out of the Borough.
-

## As a staff team we can offer.

- Every child matters – children come first – child centred approach.
- We are a long standing service staff team ranging from 2 years to 20 years.
- We have years of experience within the service bringing many skills, experiences as well as life experiences to offer e.g. cooks, artists, gardeners, DIY. Staff experience from previous jobs such as Disney, Teaching Assistants, Youth Work, Massage therapy, Activity Co-ordinators, Chefs, Adult Care and Transition Services.
- Staff have undertaken many specific training courses and a willingness to undertake further training for the needs of the young people and service.  
This has included:- Makaton, Theraplay, Attachment, Life story, Autism awareness, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, Breaking the Cycle, Social Pedagogy, Team teach, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Moving and Handling, Distance learning courses in Working with People with Learning disabilities, Safe Handling of Medication, All staff are NVQ Level 3 trained or above.
- Staff are experienced in creating and implementing child centred behaviour plans and routines. Staff have supported family and school to adapt and use the plans in different environment.
- Support to young people who are no longer in full time education. Staff have supported x2 young people back into full time education and have home educated x3 young people with Hilltop and Kelford and the Get Real Team.
- We have a proven record of building up positive relationships and trust with families of young people. In the past staff have supported families of young people within their own home at their request when in a crisis to help keep the family unit together.
- Staff have a good understanding of young people wants and needs and adapt to them. Staff have an understanding of matching young people to ensure a more positive and enjoyable experience for all peers.
- Staff work well as an inter-disciplinary team.
- We have had good feedback from the Young Inspectors. They gave Cherry Tree House the highest score for a service. Within their report they said “Over all there are 138 positives and 27 suggestions/findings/issues identified. The number of positives the Young Inspectors found is OUTSTANDING and the most the inspectors have recorded to date. Well Done”  
“The positive feedback shows that you are providing XX and XX with a safe and nurturing home by excellent and caring staff”  
“This programme manager and the young inspectors co-ordinator commented it’s a shame that only 2 children live at the home when it has a capacity for 5 when there are such excellent facilities and staff”.

Parent of resident Commented “was a different child when with Foster Carers –back to himself now, he is really happy. I can’t speak highly enough of them”

## Implications/ comments by staff

- “I will lose a job I love”
  - “What about our kids”
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- What about the relationships and needs of our children who are being forced to move.
- XX is not happy where he has been made to move too and this is having a negative effect on his behaviour and wellbeing. He has reduced the community activities he does and missed contact with mum.
- RMBC paid for staff to be trained however we are now not being given the opportunity to use these skills to support our children.
- Staff have followed the Ofsted guidelines and have met the requirements set and CTH is now an improving service, yet RMBC are not giving staff the opportunity to continue to improve the service.

### **What alternatives can we offer? IDEAS**

Respite – Short breaks – offered to meet the needs of families to keep family as a unit.

Emergency placement (self-contained flat) for individuals until suitable placement found staffed by Cherry Tree

Transition Unit in the annex CTH for 14 years +,

Transition unit only – 16 – 20 years – no other service currently

Outreach services. Clubs, youth groups, activities

Overnight stays for children who struggle to sleep, to enable families to have a break. Home support and at CTH to help the family unit stay together. Creating support packages and implementing jointly.

Outreach for families and siblings together.

Day respite

Holiday or After school clubs

Maybe as a residential home CTH cannot function due to the size and the needs of children in a long term placement, but as a respite service it could. Matching the young people and the days on a short term basis would be more successful. As has been proven in the past when CTH was a respite service up to 2012? Children were successfully matched together and enjoyed short breaks within a safe and happy environment.

### **Why is Cherry Tree closing?**

Low Bed Usage – Poor or no matching of young people's needs, managers and higher managers not listening to staff concerns over placements, SLT Management changes.

Ofsted Ratings – CTH has not been given the chance to improve. We have met Ofsted requirements in line with their timescales – it is not possible to improve quicker!

Costs – How much does it cost to place a child out of Authority?

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Building restrictions – We acknowledge that CTH is not your normal family home environment. There are Health and safety regulations which need to be followed, for e.g. you wouldn't normally have fire exit signs and extinguishers all over your home or be required to sign in and out each time you leave or enter the building. But we do our best to make it as child focused as we can. Visitors to CTH often comment on the homely feel of the building and the

Move on plans for young people are not considered. It has been the opinion that once a child moves in, they will stay in the residential home until they turn 18 years old. This should not be the case and young people's needs and wants may change and this should be looked at and reviewed regularly to ensure the child needs are being met by the service. The child may outgrow the home or be ready for foster care and it should be ok to encourage this.

## Legislation 2.1.1

The Sufficiency strategy states it is a statutory requirement under section 22G of the Children Act 1989 for local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation for LAC in their local authority area in order to stay at the same school or near to other family where contact can easily take place. This is called "the sufficiency duty."

No's of kids out of borough? Costs?

No's of kids in Care?

Private homes? Costs?

RMBC have to commission and provide short breaks and residential care within Rotherham but where is it if the homes are closing?

## **Why our new proposal will be good for Rotherham. Recommendations.**

We would ask that the commissioners pause their plans, rethink and consider our proposal for the future of Children's services in Rotherham..... Children's homes are crucial to Rotherham children and families in need of support. AS RMBC states Every Child Matters and therefore they should be provided with a safe and secure service to prevent them from sleeping on the sofa's in Council buildings when they no-where else to go.

## **Summary at the End**

We feel we were not given the gift to change. We were not given the training and support from outside agencies to achieve the ratings which were expected from SLT

When the training was provided the staff team were able to achieve improvements required and we feel if we were given a further 12months we would continue to improve to OUTSTANDING

Martin Narey's report quotes

Children's homes are often viewed as an anachronism, to be used only as a last resort. That is significantly to underestimate the contribution they can make, the stability they can deliver, and the

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high quality care they can extend to children who have had terribly fractured lives. I found the children to whom I spoke to be overwhelmingly positive about life in a children's home. Many have a preference for living in a home rather than being fostered. That was the view of the Children's Commissioner, confirmed by the survey she commissioned to support this review.

We as a staff team put the young people at the centre of everything we do and help them to achieve the best outcomes for their future, we hope RMBC feels the same.

Cherry Tree Staff Team

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## **SILVERWOOD CONSULTATION SUMMARY FEEDBACK REPORT**

### **Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Silverwood Key Comments and Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **The Consultation Process**

Staff at Silverwood wanted to know why a public consultation was not taking place.

The question was also raised if the consultation process was meaningful given recent press articles.

This sentiment was echoed by an elected member who commented "I also believe that the decision has all but been taken and I fail to see the purpose of this consultation."

#### **Family Based Placements**

It was recognised that family based placements did benefit young people. However, the following concerns were raised:

- How many Foster Carers had been recruited within the last 12 months who were trained to support young people with challenging behaviour?
- Were there adequately trained Foster Carers recruited to respond to adolescent children in need?
- What would happen to teenagers with emotional and behavioural difficulties who are hard to place?

An elected member noted "Family based placements are an excellent idea if the correct support was given to those family members trying to deal with some of our most at risk and vulnerable children. A raft of support would need to be offered that also includes the right response out of hours."

One young person noted that changing Foster Carers is confusing and frustrating and can be upsetting for children and young people.

It was also thought that by removing all in-house provision this could be a false economy as those children and young people who could not be placed with a family would have to be placed outside of the authority/private care which are more expensive.

Reference was made to the Independent Review into residential care by Sir Martin Narey which acknowledge that foster care was not suitable for all children and young people and that there was still a need for residential care.

#### **Out of Authority/Private Placements**

The financial implications of out of authority placements were raised with the following questions being asked:

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- Do the people of Rotherham know the cost and comparison between out of authority placements and in house residential services?
- What are the costs of residential care for children placed out of authority including the costs associated with social workers visits?
- How realistic is the proposal to close the home given how expensive out of authority placements are and the desire to increase the number of family based placements?

Elected members were (amongst others) also opposed to the complete removal of provision in Rotherham. Whilst it was agreed that family/foster based provision is the best solution for the majority of children and young people it is not appropriate for all and there is still a requirement for Rotherham to provide alternative services that meet specific needs.

These opinions were also shared by the Looked After Children (LAC) Council who agreed that Cherry Tree House and Silverwood were no longer fit for purpose and should close, but they were concerned as to where the young people would be placed if the home closed down. The LAC Council didn't want these young people to go away from the Rotherham area as they felt this would be like a punishment for them: "just because Rotherham doesn't have enough Foster Carers - that isn't the young people's fault."

Staff raised the concern that placing children and young people out of their local environment are at further risk of becoming socially isolated and disassociated.

It was thought that children in care should be placed in/close to Rotherham and sending children out of the borough and away from their families, friends and schools could possibly cause more harm

It was also felt that to remove all provision went against Rotherham becoming a child centred borough and did not take into consideration the Childs Voice where children and young people should be given a choice about where they are placed.

"Rotherham should look to providing residential care as a positive choice for young people in need and ensure that staff are trained, supported and equipped for the task."

The question was also raised around if RMBC had used any lessons learnt from other local authorities who had closed their children's home and if so what were the implications and associated costs? A number of other local authorities had closed and then re-opened their homes

However, one anonymous feedback felt that it was appropriate to close both Cherry Tree House and Silverwood and residential provision should be provided through experienced specialist commissioned or contracted services with a high level of governance and safeguards in place.

### **Transition Period**

Concerns were raised as to what would happen to children and young people if the decision was made to close both Cherry Tree House and Silverwood. It was felt that to close both at the same could put social care in a difficult situation. It was acknowledged that whilst there was a concerted effort by RMBC to recruit more Foster Carers there may not be enough to meet future and potential demand for placements which would result in sending children out of the borough.

Suggestions for alternative provision included:

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- At least one of the homes remains open and is used for very short term and emergency placements and is designed to be like a 'home' environment
- A residential unit with dedicated staff or a number of therapeutic placements in Rotherham for young people who are struggling to cope with some of the risks they are facing/involved in
- Specialised limited provision for LAC who cannot be accommodated in foster homes

## **Silverwood – Fit for Purpose ?**

- The cost effectiveness of the service at Silverwood was raised and it was felt that the decision not to place young people in the home had led to the service not being cost effective.
- Staff at Silverwood were very keen to look into the option of offering an Edge of Care Service. It was thought they had the skills and capacity to offer an interim arrangement and this could be developed into a longer term solution. Questions raised around this included:
  - Had a blueprint be developed regarding a proposed Edge of Care service?
  - Had money being redirected/allocated to the home for the proposed Edge of Care service?
  - Would the staff from Silverwood be used if an Edge of Care Service was developed?
- Staff wanted to know what had happened to the money (£300,000) that had been allocated to the refurbishment of the homes. It was felt that if this money had been received a number of the negative comments made about the décor of the home and it being "fit for purpose" would have been invalid.
- Staff raised the issue that a number of key managers and key staff at Silverwood had been deployed elsewhere and this had had a direct impact on the homes poor judgement from Ofsted.

## **Other**

## **Comments**

- What are the intentions are for using/disposing of the buildings and timescales for this? Empty buildings tend to bring social problems and become targets for fly tipping, anti-social behaviour etc.
  - A child centred borough should be led by the needs of children and young people
  - Given the short timescales is it right to place a young person in the home for such a brief period of time?
  - Will staff be supported to apply for other jobs?
-

**CHERRY TREE CONSULTATION SUMMARY FEEDBACK REPORT****Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Cherry Tree House  
Key Comments and Frequently Asked Questions****The Consultation Process**

Staff at Cherry Tree House and the Trade Union representatives strongly objected to the decision not to go to a full public consultation. It was accepted that families would be consulted but it was felt that in order to ensure a balanced view was reached, the whole community should be consulted. It was felt that media coverage would not be sufficient and could also be inaccurate.

This opinion was also shared by an elected member who commented “I would also expect that as part of this consultation, users, family members and members of the local community have been given an opportunity to participate.”

Cherry Tree House staff also wanted to know why the Young Inspectors report and the work undertaken by ESRO in 2015 had not been included at the Cabinet meeting.

One elected member commented “I also believe that the decision has all but been taken and I fail to see the purpose of this consultation.”

**Family Based Placements**

It was recognised that family based placements did benefit young people and there was support for family based provision rather than institutionalised provision for children in care. However, the following concerns were raised:

- Where would children go who are not suited to be fostered?
- What would happen with regards to those young people who need placements for the future?
- How many current Foster Carers are there and could they meet the current and potential demand for placements?

**Out of Authority/Private Placements**

Placing young people in the private sector within the Borough and out of the authority raised a number of concerns, including:

- Maintenance of standards
- Costs associated with this
- Provision for children with disabilities needs to be local and accessible

These concerns were shared by elected members and the voluntary community sector (VCS) who were opposed to the complete removal of provision in Rotherham. Whilst it was agreed that family/foster based provision is the best solution for the majority of children and young people it is not appropriate for all and there is still a requirement for Rotherham to provide alternative services that meet specific needs.

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“I find it disturbing (unless absolutely necessary) that we ‘ship’ children and young people outside of the borough”

These opinions were also shared by the Looked After Children (LAC) Council who agreed that Cherry Tree House and Silverwood were no longer fit for purpose and should close but they were concerned as to where the young people would be placed if the homes closed. The LAC Council didn’t want these young people to go away from the Rotherham area as they felt this would be like a punishment for them: “just because Rotherham doesn’t have enough Foster Carers - that isn’t the young people’s fault.”

It was thought that children in care should be placed in/close to Rotherham and sending children out of the borough and away from their families, friends and schools could possibly cause more harm.

It was also felt that to remove all provision went against Rotherham becoming a child centred borough and did not take into consideration the Childs Voice where children and young people should be given a choice about where they are placed.

However, one anonymous feedback felt that it was appropriate to close both Cherry Tree House and Silverwood and residential provision should be provided through experienced specialist commissioned or contracted services with a high level of governance and safeguards in place.

## **Transition Period**

Concerns were raised as to what would happen to children and young people if the decision was made to close both Cherry Tree House and Silverwood.

It was felt that to close both at the same could put social care in a difficult situation. It was acknowledged that whilst there was a concerted effort by RMBC to recruit more Foster Carers there may not be enough to meet future and potential demand for placements which would result in sending children out of the borough,

It was suggested that at least one of the homes remains open and is used for very short term and emergency placements and is designed to be like a ‘home’ environment.

One elected member noted “This home accommodates some of our most vulnerable community members, it is absolutely a necessity that if this closure goes ahead a robust transition is put in place based on the needs of individuals definitely not a financial one”.

## **Cherry Tree House – Fit for Purpose ?**

- The cost effectiveness of the service was discussed and whilst it was recognised that Cherry Tree House had been operating under capacity staff wanted to know:
    - How many children could have been placed at Cherry Tree House but was not and why were parents not given this option?
    - How many children were placed out of authority that could have been in RMBC residential homes and how much has this cost?
-

- How many young people are in private residential care in Rotherham and what are the associated costs?
- How many children had been admitted into care due to not being able to access a short break?
- It was felt that a number of the issues that had been seen at Cherry Tree House were due to the inappropriate mixture of placements and this should have been managed better.
- Staff at Cherry Tree House wanted to know what had happened to the money (£300,000) that had been allocated to the refurbishment of the homes. It was felt that if this money had been received a number of the negative comments made about the décor of the home and it being “fit for purpose” would not have been made.
- Staff queried if Cabinet knew the history of Cherry Tree House as a respite centre. It was felt that the home worked well when operating as a respite service and not a residential home. Staff also identified that they had had no training since 2012 to prepare them for the change in purpose and function of Cherry Tree House. Training had been organised but this had been cancelled due to RMBC cutbacks. Staff wanted to know if there was any chance that Cherry Tree House could return back to being a respite service. It was felt that this worked well then and that staff had the skills to operate a successful respite centre as they did 4 years ago. It was also suggested that this would support RMBC’s strategy of increasing family based placements as Cherry Tree House could offer respite care to Foster Carers. It was also noted that a request had been made to use the annexe next door to Cherry Tree House as it was considered that this would have been a useful addition to the home and would have helped to meet the different needs of the young people. It was felt if the service had been able to utilise more parts of the building it would have been of real benefit.
- A local resident commented that the home was not in the right place as it was situated in an undesirable area and that the building itself looked “institutionalised and not homely”
- An elected member noted that they were not against the closure of buildings that were no longer for purpose and another stated that Cherry Tree should close as “we need to ensure as a council that services we are offering are fit for purpose, safe and of a standard we would expect for our own family/relatives.”

### **Other**

### **Comments**

- Had the Rotherham CSE issue and the Jay report had an impact on the decision to consider closing Cherry Tree House?
  - Where are the current residents going to go if the home closes?
  - What are the intentions are for using/disposing of the buildings and timescales for this? Empty buildings tend to bring social problems and become targets for fly tipping, anti-social behaviour etc.
  - Staff wanted to know what would happen to them once the last resident moved out on the 29th August
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**FEEDBACK FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

CHERRY TREE HOUSE				
Category	Feedback Received	Do you think Cherry Tree House should close?		
		Yes	No	Not Definitive
Cherry Tree House Staff	18	0	18	0
Elected Members	2	1	0	1
Local Residents	1	1	0	0
Parent and Carers	0	0	0	0
Staff	3	1	2	0
Young People: LAC	1	1	0	0
Young People: Residents/Former Residents	2	0	0	2
Young People: Young Inspectors	1	1	0	0
Other	4	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>

SILVERWOOD				
Category	Feedback Received	Do you think Silverwood should close?		
		Yes	No	Not Definitive
Silverwood Staff	14	0	14	0
Elected Members	2	1	0	1
Local Residents	0	0	0	0
Parent and Carers	0	0	0	0
Staff	3	0	3	0
Young People: LAC	1	1	0	0
Young People: Residents/Former Residents	1	0	0	1
Young People: Young Inspectors	1	1	0	0
Other	3	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>

Question	Response	Subject	Where Question Raised
Does Cabinet know about Cherry Trees history as a respite centre and were they aware that the remit had changed? It was acknowledged, that due to management changes history of Cherry Trees could have been lost		Change of Use at Cherry Trees	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Was there any chance for Cherry Tree to return to respite care? Staff agreed that the home worked well when operating as a respite service and not residential.		Change of Use at Cherry Trees	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Had staff managed to get any statements from families?	Not yet as family on holiday	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Had the consultation project group made the decision as to whom should be consulted ?	No , this was an internal group which had been set up after the decision had been made to go to consultation and the group was assigned with the task of overseeing the consultation but it had no decision making	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 30 06 2016
Is there a more in depth briefing available?	A project group had been set up to oversee the consultation.	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Objection to the decision not to go to public consultation. Media coverage would not be sufficient and this was further evident in that recent media coverage had been inaccurate.		Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Unison branch secretary would be consulted to see if it would be possible for the union to undertake a public consultation		Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
What about the views of parents whose children accessed Liberty House short breaks service ? Consultation should be extended to include more than just the forum for parent carers.		Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
What are the timescales for the consultation ? Consideration should be given to the length of the consultation. This is a 6 week consultation from 08/07/2016 and should be 6 weeks from that date.	Timescales have not changed as a public consultation will not be taking place.	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
What/how was the decision made not to go to public consultation?		Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 30 06 2016
Who can statements be taken from?	People in the community who have a view can share their testimonies	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Who made decision and when the decision was made to go to public consultation?	There was no decision. This was a communication error associated with the Chief Executive's Staff Briefing dated 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2016. There is no public consultation. The Chief Executive personally clarified the situation at a meeting with Trade Union representatives on the 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2016.	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
Why had the project group decided not to include a public consultation? The public might have a child who does not require residential care now but may require this service in the future	It was felt that all appropriate parties and relevant stakeholders were being consulted	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Why was a public consultation not taking place? Accepted that families would be consulted but in order to ensure a balanced view the whole community should be consulted.	This was a targeted consultation and therefore was not open to a public consultation. Media coverage would enable community members to be kept informed.	Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Would a previous resident be consulted? The resident did not want to leave and didn't understand why he did		Consultation Process	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Had the Rotherham CSE issue and the Jay report had an impact on the decision to consider closing Cherry Tree House ?		CSE and Jay Report	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Could respite care at Cherry Trees be offered to foster parents?	Silverwood did use to provide a service to enable families to go on holiday as respite but RMBC realised that they were paying twice and the service was stopped.	Foster Care/Family Based Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Is it about the home or the building ?	Not down to a single issue	Home or the Building	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Was the decision to close Cherry Trees due to inappropriate matching and the placement of young people into Cherry Tree House ?		Incorrect Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016



Who was responsible for matching children to the home ?	GB replied that they did but the dynamic changed when the home changed their function and became a long term residential home	Incorrect Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Who was responsible for matching children to the home ? Inappropriate mixture of placements had led to the issues seen at Cherry Tree House.		Incorrect Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016

Is Liberty House big enough to support all children with a disability?	There is a waiting list for Liberty House	Liberty House	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What are the plans for Liberty House?	There are currently no proposals with regards to Liberty House	Liberty House	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What is the impact of Cherry Trees being attached to Liberty House?	There are no plans for the building	Liberty House	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 06 07 2016
What happened to the money (£300.00) that had been allocated to the refurbishment of the homes ?		Money for Refurbishment	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
What is the upstairs area in Orchards Centre being used for?	No plans with regards to the use of the building in the event of the home closing	Orchard Centre	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 30 06 2016
How many children are currently placed out of the authority within the private sector?		Out of Authority Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 06 07 2016
How many children could have been placed at Cherry Tree but was not and why were parents not given this option ?		Out of Authority Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
How many children were placed out of authority who could have been in RMBC residential homes and how much has this cost ?		Out of Authority Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
What are the number of young people currently placed in placements outside Rotherham Borough boundary and the associated costs?		Out of Authority Placements	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
What are the number of young people in private residential care in RMBC and the associated costs.	The average cost for independent residential is £3,521 per week and for independent fostering it is currently £890 per week. These figures include placements across all categories. The equivalent for in-house residential provision is £2,889 per week	Private Residential Care	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
Can a petition be started ?	Yes, this would offer additional supporting evidence	Public Response	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Have schools being approached about the closure ?	They will be	Public Response	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What should staff say when asked about closure?	Advised response should be that they are subject to a consultation on the proposed closure of the home	Public Response	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Where are the current residents going to go if the home closes ? Out of borough residential costs is £28,000 per week		Relocation of Current Residents	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
As well as producing a report could staff make a personal representation to Cabinet and Commissioner	There is provision for public questions at the start of the Cabinet and Commissioners Decision making meeting. It is only an opportunity to ask questions, not a formal address to the meeting. Staff attending to ask questions will be regarded as members of the public and will have to the rules on public questions, these rules are set out in the Executive Procedure Rules.	Representation to Cabinet	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
How many children had been admitted into care due to not being able to access a short break?		Respite Care	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Were there any plans to use the space made available due to the disability family support team moving to Kimberworth Place ? This indicated that it looked like a closure was inevitable if services were already moving out of Cherry Trees	There were no plans for Liberty House to move location	Space at Cherry Trees	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Would the annexe next door to Cherry Trees be used ? Staff had previously asked if they could utilise this space as it would be a useful addition to the home and help to meet the different needs of the young people. If the service had been able to utilise more parts of the building it would have been of real benefit and could make a difference to the future.	Staff should pose this question in their official representation and query capacity for growth by using more areas of the building.	Space at Cherry Trees	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What was the letter that had been sent to staff in the post?	Due to the media being in contact with the homes the letter was to remind staff about RMBC's code of conduct.	Staff Code of Conduct	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016

Had staff had any further thoughts on how to progress their case to influence the decision for Cherry Tree to stay open ?	It was agreed that the document need to be balanced and reflective and that it should recognise the areas that they could learn from and offer solutions and ways forward on what could work if the home remained open. It was noted that staff needed to personalise their thoughts to ensure the report was meaningful and that staff needed to find time to pull the report together as the timescales were tight. Any submission needed to include how the team would propose to take the service forward and how they could influence the decision. Proposing that the home stays open on its own merits would not be enough, staff would need to consider how they could deliver an effective service.	Staff Representation	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Did the team think they had the skills to operate a respite home ?	Staff agreed that they did and that 4 years ago this is what they did.	Staffing	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What training had staff had since 2012 to prepare them for the change in purpose and function of Cherry Trees?	Nothing, a lot of training had been cancelled due to cutbacks.	Staffing	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What will happen to staff once the last resident moves out on the 29th August 2016?	Specific plans will be developed in order that there is clarity about roles whilst the home has no young person resident	Staffing	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 20 07 2017

What other services would the Council offer if a decision is made to close Cherry Trees?	Information on RMBC finding the right place at the right time for young people is included in the Sufficiency Strategy which is available online. This identifies an increased focus on families and foster care and keeping young people at home.	The Future	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
What would happen with regards to those young people who need placements for the future? There is evidence of young peoples placements breaking down when in foster care		The Future	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Where would children go who are not suited to be fostered?	They would still go to children's homes, these would be in the private sector but it was agreed that RMBC would need to ensure that standards are still maintained	The Future	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Why doesn't RMBC use council houses which are boarded up instead of using the private sector?		The Future	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 23 06 2016
Request to change timeline of consultation. Unison would be request a change to the timescales due to the lack of Trade Union involvement.		Trade Union Consultation	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Why had Unions not being invited to the consultation? Unions had not been given the opportunity to be consulted prior to the paper being submitted and RMBC should now go back a step as it does not meet the requirements of how Unison should be involved	Unite, Unison and GMB were informed of the Councils decision to go to consultation at a meeting on the 07/06/2016 and that a union representative had been in attendance at a meeting with Shokat Lal on the 07/07/2016 when staff were informed. A list of stakeholders who were in scope for the consultation had also been provided at this	Trade Union Consultation	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016
Why hadn't the Young Inspectors report and the work undertaken by ESRO in 2015 being included at the Cabinet meeting?	Unison responded that it would be their role to ensure these reports would be highlighted.	Young Inspectors Visit/ESRO	Cherry Tree Staff Consultation 16 06 2016

Question	Response	Subject	Where Question Raised
What date will the report be published?	The report will be published on the RMBC Intranet on the 04/08/2016	Cabinet Report	Silverwood Staff Consultation 26 07 2017
Who would be presenting the report to Cabinet and Commissioner and would they be adding their own views?		Cabinet Report	Silverwood Staff Consultation 26 07 2017
Will staff be able to see the report before it is issued to DLT/SLT/Commissioners?	The final report on the consultation to Cabinet and the Commissioner would not be available to staff prior to it being published	Cabinet Report	Silverwood Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
Will the report be public or private?	The report will be Public	Cabinet Report	Silverwood Staff Consultation 26 07 2017
Will the report cover both Cherry Trees and Silverwood? Staff felt that the homes were very different with different facilities and should not be lumped together	The final report on the consultation to Cabinet and the Commissioner would combine the findings from the consultation on both Cherry Tree and Silverwood but the report will ensure that there is explicit reference to each home within the same report.	Cabinet Report	Silverwood Staff Consultation 12 07 2016
Can staff have a private meeting with Commissioner	Union representation would need to approach Democratic Services to request this	Commissioner Meeting	Silverwood Staff Consultation 20 07 2017
Have social workers been consulted?	How many Foster Carers had been recruited within the last 12 months who were trained to support young people with challenging behaviour?	Consultation Process	Silverwood Staff Consultation 26 07 2017
Is the consultation meaningful given the reports in the press that the home was closing?	Were there adequately trained Foster Carers recruited to respond to adolescent children in need ?	Consultation Process	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Why was a public consultation not taking place?	There is no public consultation. The Chief Executive personally clarified the situation at a meeting with Trade Union representatives on the 14th July 2016.	Consultation Process	Silverwood Staff Consultation 05 07 2016
Would the report submitted to the Cabinet and Commissioner Bradwell include the cost effectiveness of the service? It was felt that the decision not to place young people in the home had led to the service not being cost effective	Financial Information is contained within the final report	Cost Effectiveness of Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Given the short timescales is it right to place a young person in the home for such a brief period of time ?	Some young people could still benefit from a short term placement at Silverwood. Silverwood had been used to provide emergency placements to cover short term arrangements and was also a good place to support young people to a position to transition into foster care.	Current Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Could Silverwood offer an interim arrangement to deliver an edge of care service?	Young people still remain within the property adjacent to Silverwood and limited staffing numbers meant that the team would be unable to deliver an interim Edge of Care service at the present time.	Edge of Care Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Had a blueprint be developed regarding a proposed Edge of Care service?	No	Edge of Care Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Had money being redirected/allocated to the home for the proposed Edge of Care service?	No	Edge of Care Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Would Ian Walker be visiting as he had supported Doncaster to develop an Edge of Care service?	The Head of Service for Children in Care met with both Silverwood and Cherry Tree Staff at one of the Consultation Meetings scheduled	Edge of Care Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Would the staff from Silverwood be used if an Edge of Care Service was developed?	In the event that an Edge of Care service was operational the Council would recruit staff as per its policy and procedures	Edge of Care Service	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
How many Foster Carers had been recruited within the last 12 months who were trained to support young people with challenging behaviour?		Foster Care/Family Based Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Were there adequately trained Foster Carers recruited to respond to adolescent children in need ?		Foster Care/Family Based Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 05 07 2016

Had RMBC used any lessons learnt from other local authorities who had closed their children's home and if so what were the implications and associated costs? A number of other local authorities had closed and then re-opened their homes	No	Lessons Learnt	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
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When would the head of service (CiC) be visiting the home	The Head of Service for Children in Care met with both Silverwood and Cherry Tree Staff at one of the Consultation Meetings scheduled	Management Visit	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Would senior managers be visiting the team?	No, delegated responsibility was given to the Service Manager or Residential who was supported at one of the Consultation Meetings by the Head of Service for Children in Care	Management Visit	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
What happened to the money (£300.00) that had been allocated to the refurbishment of the homes ? If this had been invested then the negative comments about the home being unfit for purpose would be invalid		Money for Refurbishment	Silverwood Staff Consultation 26 07 2017
What happened to the money that had been allocated to the refurbishment of the homes?		Money for Refurbishment	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Are the Ofsted reports available online?	Yes they available online but reports from June 2015 and February 2016 would be distributed via email	Ofsted Reports	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Do the people of Rotherham know the cost and comparison between out of authority placements and in house residential services?	Financial Information has been provided to staff, the public are able to access Council reports on the relevant web site	Out of Authority Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
How many children in care were placed out of the authority and where were they?	This information was provided to staff and the Union on the 27/07/2016	Out of Authority Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 05 07 2016
How realistic is the proposal to close the home given how expensive out of authority placements are and the desire to increase the number of family based placements?		Out of Authority Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
What are the costs of residential care for children placed out of authority including the costs associated with social workers visits ?	This information was provided to staff and the Union on the 27/07/2016	Out of Authority Placements	Silverwood Staff Consultation 05 07 2016
Will RMBC be commissioning the private sector to provide residential care?	This would depend on the outcome of the Commissioner decision	Private Residential Care	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
As well as producing a report could staff make a personal representation to Cabinet and Commissioner Bradwell?	Information has been provided to staff on raising questions to Cabinet, also Officers have explained that speaking to the Commissioner	Representation to Cabinet	Silverwood Staff Consultation 05 07 2016
Can staff be retrained in Social Pedagogy? This had been agreed in the past but had never taken place	Following the outcome of the Commissioner decision the service manager will review the training arrangements for all staff	Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 20 07 2017
Could staff compile a report that could be used as part of the final representation to Cabinet?	Yes	Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Was the strategic director of children and young peoples services aware that managers and key staff had been deployed elsewhere? Staff felt that this had had a direct impact on the homes poor judgement from Ofsted.	There are clear reporting lines with regard to staffing	Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 14 06 2016
Were staff looking at the outcomes of former residents in order to evidence the success they had? Evidencing positive outcomes for young people is information that should be highlighted.		Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Were staff seeking the views from social workers who had placed children at the home in the past?	Positive comments from 3 social workers about the quality of the home had been received	Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 21 06 2016
Will staff be supported to apply for other jobs?	Staff would be expected to discuss with managers arrangements for taking time off to attend interviews for other jobs. The Head of Service confirmed he would support attendance and HR agreed that staff would not be expected to take annual leave	Staffing	Silverwood Staff Consultation 29 06 2016

Councillor	Home	Feedback	Subject
	Cherry Tree House and Silverwood	What are the intentions are for using/disposing of the buildings and timescales for this. Empty building tend to bring social problems and become targets for fly tipping, anti-social behaviour etc.	Use of Building
		It is the quality of the placement rather than the type of placement that determines successful outcomes for children and young people and on that basis I am opposed to the removal of provision in Rotherham, I am not opposed to the closure of buildings that I have been told are no-longer fit for purpose	Out of Authority Placements
		Foster/family based provision is not appropriate for all children and I would like to see quality residential provision in Rotherham, I find it disturbing (unless absolutely necessary) that we 'ship' children and young people outside of the borough.	Foster Care
		A child centred borough should be led by the needs of children and young people	Child Centred Borough
		I also believe that the decision has all but been taken and I fail to see the purpose of this consultation	Consultation Process
	Cherry Tree House	Cherry Tree should close. We need to ensure as a council that services we are offering are fit for purpose, safe and of a standard we would expect for our own family/relatives. However we should be ensuring that we have alternative services to offer that meet specific needs.	The Future
		I would also expect that as part of this consultation, users, family members and members of the local community have been given an opportunity to participate	Consultation Process
		This home accommodates some of our most vulnerable community members, it is absolutely a necessity that if this closure goes ahead a robust transition is put in place based on the needs of individuals definitely not a financial one.	The Future

Silverwood	<p>Silverwood should close. This children's home is totally outdated, not in a safe area and has a very negative reputation. During its history it is seen as a hotspot for ASB, grooming and sadly the young people that reside there are blamed for a lot of the criminal damage in the area.</p>	Pro Closure
	<p>I totally feel there needs to be a residential unit with dedicated staff or a number of therapeutic placements in Rotherham for young people who are struggling to cope with some of the risks they are facing/involved in.</p>	The Future
	<p>Family based placements are an excellent idea if the correct support was given to those family members trying to deal with some of our most at risk and vulnerable children. A raft of support would need to be offered that also includes the right response out of hours</p>	Foster Care/Family Based Placements



Name	Home	Feedback	Subject
	Cherry Tree House	Cherry Tree did not look like a Home fit for children, it looked too institutional and not homely. Work could be done to improve the grounds and make them more child friendly such as increasing the garden and adding a sand pit, a little more effort would improve the environment for the children a lot.	Cherry Tree House Negatives
The play area for the children was small and was too close to the nearby road.		Cherry Tree House Negatives	
You spoke about your experience of being adopted and said that you thought children were better in families.		Family Based Placements	
The home was not located in the right place as it was situated next to an undesirable area. A number of the residents living locally had difficulties with managing their alcohol use and had poor mental health.		Local Environment	
The whole area was the wrong mix of needs explaining that there was a lot of illegal drugs being used in the area and needles had been seen by the fencing which could be dangerous to children		Local Environment	
What would happen if the Home were to close		Use of Building	

Name	Home	Feedback	Subject
Residential Care Worker	Cherry Tree House	No to closure. I feel there is a need for the service and I am concerned what other provisions are available for the young people	Against Closure
Children's Social Care: Team Manager	Cherry Tree House	No to closure. I think that provision for children with disabilities needs to be local and accessible to families. These children are particularly vulnerable.	Local Provision for Children with Disabilities
Children's Social Worker	Cherry Tree House	Yes to closure. Children and young people can be looked after in a family environment and feel less institutionalised	Family Based Placements
Children's Social Care: Team Manager	Silverwood	No to closure. I believe strongly that local authorities should have some, specialised albeit limited, residential provision for LAC children who cannot be accommodated in foster homes. I further believe that children accommodated in residential care are some of the most vulnerable children in our society, research would support this view and rather than reactive closing of local establishments, I think the LA should have a strategic response.	Local Authority Residential Provision for LAC
		Many inherent problems with residential care is that the staff are often not 'qualified' for the immensely difficult task of caring for groups of traumatised and usually challenging young people. Children moved to out of city placements are at further risk of becoming socially isolated and disassociated. It is my view that RMBC should look to providing residential care as a positive choice for young people in need and ensure that the staff are trained, supported and equipped for the task.	Staff Support and Training
		Could RMBC do its own research into what has worked for LAC children in residential care?	Benchmarking
Children's Social Worker	Silverwood	No to closure. Teenagers with emotional and behavioural difficulties are hard to place. There is no guarantees that should a young person need to be accommodated at short notice that there would be any in-house provision available to them due to a shortage of in-house carers. This would lead to the use of more costly independent placements being used. The young persons behaviours could lead to placement breakdown. In residential units there are more carers to share responsibility.	Family Based Placements
		Where would the placements come from because there is a shortage of in-house Foster Carers. It would create false economy if expensive independent carers are used.	Shortage of Foster Carers

Residential Care Worker	Silverwood	I feel the service is required. if agree foster care should be explored for young people in the first instance but, foster care does not work for all young people. Silverwood have provided an excellent service and are currently rated Good with OFSTED. If Silverwood does close then there will be no mainstream residential provision in Rotherham, therefore meaning if a young person does need Residential then they will be placed out of area.	Out of Authority Placements
		if agree this should be explored in the first instance but as the Independent Review into residential Care by Sir Martin Narey acknowledges, Foster care does not work for all young people and there is a role for residential homes.	Family Based Placements

Name	Home	Feedback	Subject
A	Cherry Tree House	<p>A' liked the following at Cherry Tree House:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Ball pool".</li> <li>• "TV in lounge, dining room and bedrooms".</li> <li>• "Staff in general".</li> <li>• "Cooking / baking".</li> <li>• "Arts and crafts".</li> <li>• "Den".</li> <li>• "Sensory room".</li> <li>• "Rabbits – what is going to happen to them?"</li> <li>• "Went on trips – Cleethorpes and Filey".</li> <li>• "Allotment".</li> </ul>	Cherry Tree House Positives
		<p>'A' thinks Cherry Tree House should close because of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The serving hatch - we should have cooked our own meals"</li> <li>• "Could have improved on the garden because of the ramp leading to the decking."</li> <li>• "The decking could have been taken up and made into a flower bed".</li> <li>• "Playground equipment needed changing".</li> <li>• "Weren't much fun stuff to play with".</li> <li>• "The fencing should be taken down".</li> <li>• "Quite small." (The placement is quite small in relation to where Ryan is living now).</li> </ul> <p>If the above changes were made, 'A' feels that Cherry Tree House should remain open.</p>	Cherry Tree House Negatives

B	Cherry Tree House	<p>B' is a young person who lives at Cherry tree. Information was shared with him that Cherry tree may close and that the plan for him was to live elsewhere. 'B' communicates using alternative methods. He was unable to express a view directly about the proposal to close, but he expressed a level of anxiety and manifested through anxiety base behaviours after this was discussed with him by his SW on 20.7.16. He did express he was willing to go and view his new placement with a key worker. 'B' was visibly affected by the news that Cherry tree may close, and he has displayed a level of distress and anxiety around this as he has become upset when he leaves cherry Tree and needs lots or reassurance that he will return. For 'B' why is very focused on what happens in the now and immediate next this will continue and support is being offered by staff. Significantly while 'B' struggled to engage with his SW and myself, perhaps due to the intensity of the subject matter, he reacted well to staff in the home, who clearly knew him well and he saw as key people who could interpret what he needed, at a time of distress. This highlights that 'B' will struggle with the loss of key relationships he has developed with staff and therefore the closure of Cherry tree.</p>	N/A
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C	Silverwood	C' declined to share her clear view, but felt that she had been placed at Silverwood, because she had to be and that things were set up quickly without clear planning or matching her with other young people. 'C' expressed she was placed with a young person, with whom she did not know well and she was expected to live with but they were then effectively never there. When the other young person was there he was destructive of the home, making her feel that she did not want to be there. 'C' also expressed that she felt she had mixed messages from staff, some said she had to do certain things for herself focused around being more independent, but other staff then said differently and did them for her and this was really frustrating and in the end she let them get on with it and 'they muddled through'. 'C' stated that she had expected the Annex to close, because Silverwood was closing and her main focus was moving on anyway, as she has a college course in place. 'C' wants to move before the 31.7.16 to support her transition to college out of borough.	Declined to say
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LAC Council	Cherry Tree House	The young people collectively felt that this type of accommodation was not in the best interest for individual young people with disabilities living in the care of the local authority and agreed that these young people should ALL be living in a family environment with long term Foster Carers. The LAC Council did not feel that Cherry Tree should remain open to care for young people with disabilities.	Pro Closure
	Silverwood	The LAC Council did not feel that Silverwood should remain open to care for young people with emotional and behavioural issue	Pro Closure
		The LAC Council said they wouldn't want to live there with other young people with problems as they felt they would not get the support and care they needed individually.	Pro Closure
		The young people collectively felt that placing a number of young people in care with emotional and behavioural problems together in Residential Accommodation was not good practice as there were more negatives than positives for the young people living there.	Pro Closure
		However, in addition, concerns were voiced by the group as to where the young people would be placed if the home closed down? The LAC Council didn't want these young people to go away from the Rotherham area as they felt this would be like a punishment for them saying – 'just because Rotherham doesn't have enough Foster Carers - that isn't the young people's fault'	Out of Authority Placements
	Cherry Tree House	If the home is not very good then yes it should close	Pro Closure
		If it's not suitable it should close	
If it is not up to standard it should close			
If young people get something better then it would be ok			
When I visited they had tried to make it homely		Cherry Tree House Positives	
What will happen to the young people in the homes?		The Future	
What will happen to the buildings?		The Future	
The garden area is not very good they could make it a lot better		Cherry Tree House Negatives	
	If the home is not very good then yes it should close		

Young Inspectors		If it's not suitable it should close	Pro Closure	
		If it is not up to standard it should close		
Silverwood		If young people get something better then it would be ok	Family Based Placements	
		What will happen to the young people in the homes?		The Future
		What will happen to the buildings?		The Future
		If I was in care I would want freedom and independence		
		I wouldn't want too many rules		
		I would want to be allowed to go out		
		I would not want to be passed around in homes or foster care		
		Changing Foster Carers is confusing and frustrating, my friend got upset about changing carers		
		There needs to be trust built up		



Name and Organisation	Home	Feedback	Subject
LSCB Exec Meeting	Cherry Tree House and Silverwood	Supports the principle of family based provision rather than institutionalised provision for children in care	Family Based Provision
		Trusts that the sufficiency / placements commissioning strategies will ensure that CYP in care will be placed in / close to Rotherham	Local Placements
		Trusts that the CYP's care planning will deal appropriately with any additional vulnerabilities	Care Planning for the Vulnerable
RUSH House (RLSCB board member)	Cherry Tree House and Silverwood	I do feel to close both at the same time could put social care in a difficult situation when trying to find accommodation and foster placements. I understand there is a concerted effort by RMBC at the minute to recruit more Foster Carers and I agree that for most children foster placements do work better but there will be some children who do not want to go to a foster care placement and some for who it won't be suitable straight away. It would also be interesting to know how many Foster Carers we have and if they can meet the current and potential demand for placements before any of the residential places are closed. If not will we be sending our children out of the borough and away from their families, friends and schools and possibly causing more harm?	The Future
		I would suggest that at least one of the homes remains open and is used for very short term & emergency placements and is designed to be like a 'home' environment.	The Future

		We also need to consider the 'Childs voice' and should we be giving them a choice about where they go?	The Future
Anonymous	Cherry Tree House	The children need a safe place to live and feel welcome. The staff have always been very good with the youngpeople in their care and always have a smile for everyone.	Against Closure
Anonymous	Cherry Tree House and Silverwood	I have discussed this matter with a senior colleague from the National Crime Agency. I am also sighted on a number of investigations being conducted by the NCA that relate to historical alleged behaviours in residential units. It is my professional judgement that over the next few years ourcommunities will witness criminal proceedings that include serious allegations of sexual exploitation, which will cause our communities to question whether collectively we areable to offer children a safe and secure residential experience. Any loss of confidence will affect the likelihood of families engaging with statutory services when residential placements are an option and will in my opinion, increase the distress of young people who may be placed in such units.	Pro Closure

I am a foster carer and believe that young people's experiences of care are better in the majority of cases through being placed in a foster environment.

I therefore believe that it is appropriate to close these homes and such residential provision that is required is provided through experienced specialist commissioned or contracted services with a high level of governance and safeguards in place.

**Appendix 7****SILVERWOOD EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

<b>Under the Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics</b> are age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity. Page 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1	
<b>Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:</b>	Proposed Closure of Silverwood Residential Service for Looked After Children
<b>Name of service and Directorate</b>	Children & Young People Service
<b>Lead manager</b>	Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA)</b>	April 2016
<b>Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)</b>	Mel Meggs, Ian Walker, Sue Wilson, Bev Pepperdine, Annette Marshall, Brent Lumley, Luke Ricketts.
<b>Aim/Scope</b> (who the Policy /Service affects and intended outcomes if known) See page 7 of guidance step 1	
<p>The aim of this analysis is to consider the impact of the closure of Silverwood Children's Home.</p> <p>Silverwood Children's home has been open as a residential service for looked after children in Rotherham for over 30 years and was a purpose built brick building from the 1960's with 2 properties being merged into one to accommodate young looked after children in Rotherham</p> <p>The current Net Revenue Budget for the home £564k. This includes a premises budget of £21k. The current forecast outturn position for the 2015/16 financial year is an over-spend of £44k.</p> <p>Silverwood provides long-term care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The maximum number of placements is five. There is currently no young people presently living there.</p> <p>An Ofsted Inspection of the service on the 30/06/2015 graded the service as 'Good'. At the Interim inspection undertaken on the 15/02/2016 the service was graded 'declined effectiveness'.</p> <p>The service aims to provide a safe, nurturing, caring and homely environment for up to five young people aged between 10 to 18 years, and of either gender.</p> <p>The key objective of the service is to work with the young people and their families, with the support of partner agencies, with an overall aim of providing the stability and support they need to prepare them for transition to the responsibilities of adulthood.</p> <p>There are 14 members of staff (12.3 FTE) at Silverwood Children's Home who may be</p>	

affected by the proposal, and the council's policy and consultation process will apply i.e. seeking to avoid redundancy through redeployment where possible. It is noted that the current workforce profile indicates that a large number of the current staff group are female. However this is a typical profile when comparing with other similar services.

### **Privacy**

All young people who are placed in Silverwood have their own room; and a key to their home room, to respect their privacy.

Staff, do not enter a young person's bedroom without consent unless there are serious health and safety concerns. A policy statement is in place regarding this principle and contracts agreed with the young people.

### **Dignity**

Staff, are made aware of each child's racial, cultural, religious and dietary needs. Information is available about the various cultural, religious, dietary and ethnic provisions in the local area.

There is currently no young people placed at Silverwood. Silverwood's Statement of Purpose was last revised and updated 18/02/16 (Appendix A)

**What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics? See page 7 of guidance step 2**

Equality and cultural information is captured as part of the assessment of all children who have been placed at Silverwood.

The recipients of this service are looked after children, living in residential care. The service reports that this service is running at 0% capacity.

Silverwood is committed to promoting and upholding the rights of the young people at the home. These commitments are underpinned by the United Nations Rights of The Child and through the five outcomes from Care Matters Agenda

- Health – Young people have the right to good health and living a healthy lifestyle.
- Safe – Young people have the right to be protected from harm and neglect.
- Enjoy and achieve: young people have the right to education and leisure
- Making a positive contribution: young people have the right to participate in positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote well-being and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk
- Economic well-being: young people have the right to a standard of living that meets their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social needs

### **Engagement & Consultation**

As a matter of public law and council policy, any proposal to close a facility will require a reasonable period of engagement and consultation with those affected by such a proposal. This has been undertaken. The latest government guidance on consultation principles confirms that the governing principle is proportional of the type and scale of

consultation to the potential impacts of the proposal or decision being taken, and though needs to be given to achieving real engagement rather than merely following a bureaucratic process. The guidance indicates that the period of consultation will usually last between 2 and 12 weeks, the consultation lasted 7 weeks. The amount of time required for a consultation exercise should be decided on a case by case basis, and depends on the nature of the proposal, for example the diversity of interested parties or the complexity of the issue, the capacity of groups being consulted to respond or external events. With this in mind officers will be consulted with the following stakeholders and interested persons:

- Children and young people who are resident at the home (assisted by an independent advocate, if required)
- Parents, carers and connected persons of the above
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Staff employed within the home and their Trade Unions
- Close geographical neighbours to the home
- Ward Councillors

The purpose of the consultation was to gather the views and preferences of the consulted on the proposal and its implementation, and to understand where there are any possible unintended consequences of the proposal. In all the circumstances, and taking into account the holiday period, a period of 7 weeks consultation was agreed as proportionate and reasonable in this matter. The engagement/consultation undertaken is outline below

<p><b>Engagement/consultation undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b> See page 7 of guidance step 3</p>	<p>There were no young people resident within the service during the consultation, therefore young people who had recently been resident were consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young person to be advised of the intention and dates to seek Commissioner’s approval on the formal consultation on the closure of Silverwood Children’s Home</li> <li>• Parents, close family members, Independent Reviewing Officers and advocates for the young person recently resident in the home to be informed of the intention to seek Commissioner’s approval to being formal consultation</li> <li>• The young person’s allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will support those recently resident to share their views about the proposal.</li> <li>• For the consultation the young person to be given opportunity to share their views about the proposal.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff about the implications on service users (date and group(s)consulted and key findings)</b> See page 7 of guidance step 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff employed in the home and their Trade Unions to be informed of the intention to seek Commissioner’s approval to beginning a formal consultation</li> <li>• Letters sent to all staff to inform them of the consultation around the closure of Silverwood</li> </ul>

	<p>Children's Home and offered the opportunity to provide their views on the consultation in writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff to have the opportunity to submit their views via their union representatives</li> <li>• staff will be offered seven individual consultation meetings.</li> <li>• staff to be offered the opportunity to attend a group consultation session with the Head of Service for Children In Care.</li> <li>• Letters sent to neighbours of the property, explain the potential of the closure of Silverwood Children's Home.</li> <li>• Representatives from RMBC Human Resources to support staff</li> </ul>
<b>The Analysis</b>	
<p><b>How do you think the Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?</b></p> <p>This service is in place to meet the needs of children who have become looked after. The age range for this service is ages 10 to 18 years. Young people at Silverwood are provided with the opportunity for regular sporting, cultural or recreational activity. Where young people are already active members or attenders of an activity, staff at the home will do everything within reason to maintain this. Silverwood is located in East Herringthorpe in the Central area of Rotherham.</p>	
<p><b>Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Service:</b>  <i>See page 8 of guidance step 4 and 5</i></p> <p>There are no young people currently placed at Silverwood, recent residents were given the opportunity to share their views.</p> <p><b>Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Group?</b> <i>Identify by protected characteristics.</i>  No</p> <p><b>Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers to Service Users and their families/extended family?</b>  <i>Identify by protected characteristics</i>  No as there are no current young people resident</p> <p><b>What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?</b> <i>Identify by protected characteristics</i></p> <p>We don't envisage that there will be any impact on community relations or impact on community cohesion.</p> <p>The local community will want to know what are the future plans for the building, therefore there needs to be clear communication with the local community on the plans to close the building, timescales and what will happen to the building</p> <p>The building will need to be made safe and kept in good state of repair to ensure that the</p>	

building is not used for unsatisfactory purposes, which could lead to community complaints.

Please list any **actions and targets** by Protected Characteristic that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment and ensure that they are added into your service plan.

**Website Key Findings Summary:** To meet legislative requirements a summary of the Equality Analysis needs to be completed and published.



## Equality Analysis Action Plan

**Time Period 09/06/16 to 30/12/2016**

Manager: Mel Meggs Service Area: Children & Young People Service – Looked After Children Tel:.....

### **Title of Equality Analysis:**

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.

List all the Actions and Equality Targets identified

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics (A,D,RE,RoB,G,GI O, SO, PM,CPM, C or All)*	Target date (MM/YY)
Consult with staff employed within the home and their Trade Unions in relation to the potential impact of the proposal on staff groups. There is a disproportionate of women employed within the Silverwood Children's Home Staff Team, the impact and remedial action required will need to be reviewed	All	12/09/2016
Communicate with the adjoining services regarding the closure of Silverwood. The plans for usage to be explored with relevant parties.	All	30/09/2016
Name Of Director who approved Plan	lan to check and signature to be placed	Date

**Website Summary – Please complete for publishing on our website and append to any reports to Elected Members, SLT or Directorate Management Teams**

<b>Completed equality analysis</b>	<b>Key findings</b>	<b>Future actions</b>
<p>Directorate: Children &amp; Young People Service</p> <p>Proposal name: Closure of Silverwood</p> <p>Function: Looked After Children Service</p> <p>Name of lead officer completing the assessment: Brent Lumley</p> <p>Date of assessment: 28/07/2016</p>	<p>Decision to close Silverwood based on findings from Ofsted Graded by Ofsted 15/02/16 – declined effectiveness. Poor safeguarding practice</p> <p><b>Consultation Outcomes</b></p> <p>The consultation feedback will identify any issues that the council will need to take into account in planning for closure and future service delivery. The key themes in relation to the consultation feedback will be recorded for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Young People</b></li> <li>• <b>Staff</b></li> <li>• <b>Relevant Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<p>Support staff with future employment choices</p> <p>Building to be made safe and kept in good state of repair</p> <p>Communication to community/public on proposal for building</p>

**Appendix 8****CHERRY TREE EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

<b>Under the Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics</b> are age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity. Page 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1	
<b>Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:</b>	Proposed Closure of Cherry Tree House Residential Service for Looked After Children with Disabilities
<b>Name of service and Directorate</b>	Children & Young People Service
<b>Lead Manager</b>	Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA)</b>	28/07/2016
<b>Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)</b>	Mel Meggs, Ian Walker, Sue Wilson, Rebecca Wall, Bev Pepperdine, Brent Lumley, Luke Ricketts.
<b>Aim/Scope</b> (who the Policy /Service affects and intended outcomes if known) See page 7 of guidance step 1	
<p>The aim of this analysis is to consider the impact of the closure of Cherry Tree House Children's Home.</p> <p>Cherry Tree Children's home has been open as a residential service for young people with disabilities. It was refurbished in 2012 and forms part of a complex of buildings, which include Liberty House Short Breaks Children Home and The Disability Family Support Service. This was previously known as the Orchard Centre.</p> <p>The current Net Revenue Budget for the home is £644k This includes a premises budget of £26k. The current forecast outturn position for the 2015/16 financial year (at March 2016) is a total overspend of £130k, attributable to additional agency staffing and additional management support.</p> <p>Cherry Tree House is intended to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of five children, of either gender, who may have learning disabilities, physical or sensory disabilities or autism and associated communication or moderate behavioural challenges. There is currently one young person living there, this young person is over the age of 14.</p> <p>The Ofsted Inspection of the service on the 18/08/2015 graded the service as 'Requires Improvement'. At the Interim inspection undertaken on the 23/03/2016 the service was graded 'improved effectiveness'.</p> <p>The key objective of the service is to provide a safe and nurturing homely environment for disabled children who are unable to live at home with their birth parents or other family members. It includes work with the young people and their families, with the support of partner agencies, to provide the stability and support they need to prepare them for transition to young adulthood and beyond.</p> <p>There are 18 staff member (16.3 FTE) at Cherry Tree House Children's home who may be affected by the proposal, and the council's policy and consultation process will apply i.e. seeking to avoid redundancy through redeployment where possible. It is noted that the</p>	

current workforce profile indicates that a large number of the current staff group are female. This is a typical profile when comparing with other similar services.

The provision of placements for children with disabilities and complex needs within the locality will require consideration by the commissioning team when developing services in the future.

### **Privacy**

All young people who are placed in Cherry Tree House have their own room; and a key to their home room, to respect their privacy.

Staff, do not enter a young person's bedroom without consent unless there are serious health and safety concerns. A policy statement is in place regarding this principle and contracts agreed with the young people.

### **Dignity**

Staff, are made aware of each child's racial, cultural, religious and dietary needs. Information is available about the various cultural, religious, dietary and ethnic provisions in the local area.

There is currently one young person placed at Cherry Tree House Children's Home who is scheduled to move to an alternative placement on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Cherry Tree House Children's Home Statement of Purpose was last revised and updated on the 31/03/2016.

**What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics? See page 7 of guidance step 2**

Equality and cultural information is captured as part of the assessment of all children who have been placed at Cherry Tree House Children's Home.

The recipients of this service are looked after children, living in residential care. The service is running at 20% capacity.

The current resident is not from an ethnic minority group.

Cherry Tree House Children's Home is committed to promoting and upholding the rights of the young people at the home. These commitments are underpinned by the United Nations Rights of The Child and through the five outcomes from Care Matters Agenda

- Health – Young people have the right to good health and living a healthy lifestyle.
- Safe – Young people have the right to be protected from harm and neglect.
- Enjoy and achieve: young people have the right to education and leisure
- Making a positive contribution: young people have the right to participate in positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote well-being and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk.
- Economic well-being: young people have the right to a standard of living that meets their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social needs

**Engagement & Consultation**

As a matter of public law and council policy, any proposal to close a facility will require a reasonable period of engagement and consultation with those affected by such a proposal. This has been undertaken. The latest government guidance on consultation principles confirms that the governing principle is proportional of the type and scale of consultation to the potential impacts of the proposal or decision being taken, and though needs to be given to achieving real engagement rather than merely following a bureaucratic process.

The guidance indicates that the period of consultation will usually last between 2 and 12 weeks, the consultation lasted 7 weeks. The amount of time required for a consultation exercise should be decided on a case by case basis, and depends on the nature of the proposal, for example the diversity of interested parties or the complexity of the issue, the capacity of groups being consulted to respond or external events. With this in mind officers will be consulted with the following stakeholders and interested persons:

- Children and young people who are resident at the home (assisted by an independent advocate, if required)
- Parents, carers and connected persons of the above
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Staff employed within the home and their trade unions
- Close geographical neighbours to the home
- Ward Councillors

The purpose of the consultation would be to gather the views and preferences of the consulted on the proposal and its implementation, and to understand where there are any possible unintended consequences of the proposal. In all the circumstances, and taking into account holiday period, a period of 6 weeks consultation would be agreed as proportionate and reasonable in this matter. The engagement/consultation undertaken is outline below

**Engagement/consultation undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)** See page 7 of guidance step 3

- Engagement and consultation with the one young person resident at the home will need to be informed by their disability and level of understanding. A bespoke package of support which enables meaningful contributions from the young people will be necessary. Premature disclosure with regard to any potential placement move has the potential to provoke an avoidable level of anxiety for these young people and therefore sensitive and skilled management of this work will be required.
- Allocation of an advocate from Rights to Rights service who can assist the young people to express their views.
- For the consultation young people to be given questions in a form and style that allows them to give their responses to, potential closure, asking

	<p>for their objections, asking where they would like to live, what support they will require?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, close family members, Independent Reviewing Officers and advocates for the two young people resident in the home to be informed of the intention to seek Commissioner's approval to undertaking a formal consultation.</li> <li>• Clear timeline of events communicated with the relevant stakeholders, so they know when consultation commences, closes and when a decision will be made</li> <li>• The young person has an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who will carry out a review and make plans with them, where issues and concerns can be raised. Each young person to be involved in the planning for the future. The IRO has a statutory duty to ensure that the young person's needs are taken into account.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff about the implications on service users (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b> See page 7 of guidance step 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff employed in the home and their Trade Unions will be informed of the intention to seek Commissioner's approval on there being a formal consultation</li> <li>• Letters will be sent to all staff to inform them of the consultation around the closure of Cherry Tree Children's Home and offered the opportunity to provide their views on the consultation in writing by an agreed date.</li> <li>• Staff to have the opportunity to submit their views via their union representatives by an agreed date.</li> <li>• Staff will be offered individual consultation meetings.</li> <li>• Staff to be offered the opportunity to attend a group consultation session with the Head of Service for Children In Care.</li> <li>• Letters sent to relevant stakeholders to explain the potential of the closure of Cherry Tree House Children's Home.</li> <li>• Representatives from RMBC Human Resources to support staff.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>The Analysis</p>	
<p><b>How do you think the Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?</b></p> <p>This service is in place to meet the needs of children with disabilities who have become looked after. The age range for this service is ages 10 to 18 years.</p>	

Young people at Cherry Tree Children's Home are provided with the opportunity for regular sporting, cultural or recreational activity. Where young people are already active members or attenders of an activity, staff at the home will do everything within reason to maintain this.

Cherry Tree Children's Home is in Masborough in the central area of Rotherham.

**Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Service:**

*See page 8 of guidance step 4 and 5*

The young person currently placed at Cherry Tree Children's Home is scheduled to move to an alternative placement on the 29/08/2016 in order to meet his developing needs

**Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Group? Identify by protected characteristics. Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers? Identify by protected characteristics**

**Barrier**

**Service Users** – If this service provision is closed, this will not affect any young people as there will be no residents at the time the Commissioner and Cabinet make a decision regarding the future.

**Service Users**

- Will need to be involved in their review.
- Their wishes and feelings will need to be captured.
- Their voice will need to be listened to and acted upon.

**Parents/Carers/Extended Family**

- Will need to be consulted with and the impact of any move in location taken into consideration. The council, being the Corporate Parent has a responsibility to encourage and support young people to maintain contact with their parents and siblings in a manner consistent with their care plan.

**What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? Identify by protected characteristics**

We don't envisage that there will be any impact on community relations or impact on community cohesion.

The local community will want to know what are the future plans for the building, therefore there needs to be clear communication with the local community on the plans to close the building, timescales and what will happen to the building

The building will need to be made safe and kept in good state of repair to ensure that the building is not used for unsatisfactory purposes, which could lead to community complaints.

Please list any **actions and targets** by Protected Characteristic that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment and ensure that they are added into your service plan.

**Website Key Findings Summary:** To meet legislative requirements a summary of the Equality Analysis needs to be completed and published.



## Equality Analysis Action Plan

**Time Period 09/06/2016 to 12/09/2016**

Manager: Mel Meggs Service Area: Children & Young People Service – Looked After Children Tel:.....

### **Title of Equality Analysis:**

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.

List all the Actions and Equality Targets identified

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics (A,D,RE,RoB,G,GI O, SO, PM,CPM, C or All)*	Target date (MM/YY)
<b>Prior to closure of this provision, a bespoke consultation which responds to the young people’s disability and level of understanding will need to be carried out with children and young people who are resident at the home (they will be supported by an independent advocate from the Rights to Rights Advocacy Service).</b>	All	28/07/2016
<b>Assessment and review of young people currently resident at Cherry Tree Children’s Home regarding alternative placements. Service Manager &amp; workers to monitor and carry out regular reviews after provision closes and alternative placement made.</b>	All	28/07/2016
<b>Consult with parents, carers, family members and connected persons of any of the young people who are residents.</b>	All	28/07/2016
<b>Consult with staff employed within the home and their Trade Unions in relation to the potential impact of the proposal on the staff group.</b>	All	28/07/2016
<b>Communicate with local community and relevant stakeholders on the closure of the home and the impact on the physically connected services.</b>	All	28/07/2016

Name Of Director who approved Plan	Ian Thomas to sign	Date	
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**Website Summary – Please complete for publishing on our website and append to any reports to Elected Members, SLT or Directorate Management Teams**

<b>Completed equality analysis</b>	<b>Key findings</b>	<b>Future actions</b>
<p>Directorate: Children &amp; Young People Service</p> <p>Proposal name: Closure of Cherry Tree House Children’s Home</p> <p>Function: Looked After Children Service</p> <p>Name of lead officer completing the assessment: Brent Lumley</p> <p>Date of assessment: 28/07/16</p>	<p>Decision to close Cherry Tree Children’s Home based on findings from Ofsted Graded by Ofsted 18/08/2015 – Requires Improvement. Poor safeguarding practice. Capacity of the staff to deliver effective and safe care for 5 young people</p> <p><b>Consultation Outcomes</b></p> <p>The consultation feedback will identify issues that the council will need to take into account in planning for closure and future service delivery. The key themes in relation to the consultation feedback will be recorded</p>	<p>Support staff with future employment choices</p> <p>Building to be made safe and kept in good state of repair</p> <p>Communication to community/public on proposal for building</p>



## Summary Sheet

### Council Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 2 September 2016  
Cabinet and Commissioner Decision Making Meeting – 12 September 2016

### Title:

Outcome of Consultation and Proposed Foster Carers Payments Scheme, Support and Development

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

Yes

### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

### Report Author(s)

Anne-Marie Banks – Service Manager; Fostering and Adoption

### Ward(s) Affected

All

## Summary

- 1.1 Rotherham Council, as a developing 'Child Centred Borough', has a strong resounding ambition to move away from the legacy of poorly performing services to a position of strength and confidence, which is reflected in the intention of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate to be rated 'outstanding'. In pursuit of this ambition the in-house Foster Care service for children and young people has worked to co-produce a revised 'offer' for Foster Carers.
- 1.2 This report seeks to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a foster family environment.
- 1.3 Rotherham has a shortage of all foster care placements, but particularly foster care placements for adolescents and larger sibling groups. The Council places too many young people in residential care. This was commented on in the 2014 Ofsted inspection report when Children Social Care was judged to be 'inadequate' and the following recommendation was made: "*Improve the sufficiency of placements within the borough to meet current needs and strengthen the strategy so that good planning ensures enough places for the future.*"

- 1.4 In July 2016 Commissioners and Cabinet approved a formal consultation for a period of six weeks with Foster Carers regarding the rationale and options for a revised scheme, with a view to that scheme being implemented in October 2016. This has been undertaken and this report proposes a revised scheme for Rotherham based on providing financial incentive, good quality support, and training.
- 1.5 Investment in improving the 'offer' to Foster Carers will help attract additional carers to foster for Rotherham and support the retention and development of existing Foster Carers. It is an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked after Children (LAC) and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.
- 1.6 Alongside other initiatives, this will enable the reduction of overall placement costs and avoid use of more expensive Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and residential placements.

## **Recommendations**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to consider the report and recommendations detailed below:

1. That the proposed foster carer payment scheme, including short break Foster Carers fees be approved.
2. That the amended relevant policy as set out in Appendix 1 be implemented.
3. That the implementation of quality support and training as part of the improved offer for Foster Carers be approved.

## **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 – Revised Fees and Allowances for Foster Carers (Separate Document)  
Appendix 2 - Current Skill Fees & Revised Skill Fees  
Appendix 3 - Estimate of National Minimum Payments  
Appendix 4 - Estimate of Skills & Placement Premium Payments  
Appendix 5 - Estimate of Costs of the Revised In-House Foster Care Programme in Relation to Estimated Costs of Other Forms of LAC Provision 2017/18 to 2020/21

## **Background Papers**

Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018  
Child Centred Borough Strategy

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
Corporate Parenting Panel

**Council Approval Required:**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

**Title:**

Outcome of Consultation and Proposed Foster Carers Payments Scheme, Support and Development

**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the proposed foster carer payment scheme, including short break Foster Carers fees be approved.
- 1.2 That the amended relevant policy as set out in Appendix 1 be implemented.
- 1.3 That the implementation of quality support and training as part of the improved offer for Foster Carers be approved.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 This report seeks to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a foster family environment. This is in accordance with the authority's ambition to become an outstanding children's services authority.
- 2.2 It is well understood that the needs of children and young people can only be met effectively if they live in an environment that provides a high quality of care and support. In general this is located within a family home setting, which additionally is also the most cost effective placement. It also follows that, wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, thus promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.
- 2.3 Rotherham Borough Council has 444 children in care. Around 188 are placed with Rotherham Borough Foster Carers. This is a lower proportion than the majority of local authorities of a similar size. Rotherham has a shortage of all foster placements but particularly of placements for adolescents and for larger siblings groups. There are too many children and young people placed out of borough because there are not enough local placements.
- 2.4 The lack of sufficient foster placements means that Rotherham relies on the use of independent fostering agencies or residential provision, all of which are more costly. This has led to a position where there is significant pressure on the external placement budget.

**3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 In response to the current sufficiency position work has begun to transform the local authority's in-house fostering agency 'offer'. This includes a review of Rotherham's fostering provision, including a review of the payments to Foster Carers. A review of the number of placements within the existing cohort of Foster Carers is underway. It is anticipated that some existing Rotherham foster households will be able to increase the number of children they care for and provide an opportunity to increase placements.

- 3.2 However, the Council will not meet its sufficiency of placement provision for 'Looked After Children' without attracting additional carers to foster for Rotherham and ensuring existing Foster Carers are retained and developed. Working with Foster Carers to understand what factors within an 'offer' would attract and retain Foster Carers has been undertaken.
- 3.3 In July 2016, commissioners and cabinet approved a formal consultation for a period of 6 weeks with Foster Carers regarding the rationale and options for a revised scheme, with a view to that scheme being implemented in October 2016.
- 3.4 The consultation with Foster Carers considered the elements of the current scheme, namely:
- A weekly allowance, to cover the expense involved in caring for a child (in line with National Minimum Rates) e.g. school meals etc.
  - A payment to cover expenses and miscellaneous payments, e.g. mileage
  - A fee paid to the foster carer for caring for a child on behalf of the Council – in Rotherham known as the 'Skills Level Payment'
  - A 'Foster Plus' scheme for carers, which is targeted at 'difficult to place children'/ children with complex needs.
- 3.5 The Foster Carers commented on the type of remuneration model that would best suit the Rotherham Borough Fostering Community. Foster Carers were positive about retaining the structure of the current scheme, liking the concept of the current skills level framework as it is easy to understand and transparent in operation. Foster Carers said that there has been no incremental increase in either fees or allowances since 2014. Carers wanted a skills level payment that reflected a fair scale and felt that the incremental increases were too steep and a higher starting level would be more attractive to newly approved Foster Carers, or prospective Foster Carers.
- 3.6 Whilst financial incentives are a consideration, Foster Carers have said that they regard the level of support received from their fostering social worker as being critical to their fostering experience. This was also true when managing complex placements. They identified the wrap around support provided in such circumstances makes the difference to their commitment to foster for Rotherham. It was also clear that the current support is at times patchy and at others, unresponsive to the needs of Foster Carers at the time that it is needed.
- 3.7 In reviewing the fee rate and developing the 'offer' it is essential to ensure the fostering service remains financially competitive, whilst supporting the recruitment and retention of more locally based Foster Carers.
- 3.8 A comparison of schemes in the Yorkshire and Humber region shows that the 'offer' to Foster Carers includes the allowance (national minimum rates regulated by government), expenses, and an additional discretionary fee element. A sample of allowances and expenses paid by authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region evidences that the Rotherham figures are



broadly in line with neighbouring authority rates. The discretionary element of the schemes reviewed was found to take the form of a higher rate paid on a case by case basis and reflects the needs of the young person and a skills level payment. Rotherham's current higher rate scheme is the 'Fostering' Plus scheme which is targeted at 'difficult to place children'/ children with complex needs. Rotherham has a skills level payment scheme and analysis shows that it is this fee that falls short of those compared against neighbouring authorities.

- 3.9 There are only four fostering households in Rotherham's 'Fostering Plus' Scheme. This is because the criteria for acceptance onto the scheme are restrictive e.g. the carers cannot work and there can be no other children who live in or who regularly visit the household. Indeed, very few fostering schemes now use 'difficulty of the child' as a criterion as it sets up a perverse incentive for carers to label children as 'difficult'. In this respect, the 'Foster Plus' Scheme could be phased out over time if a more appropriate product took its place.
- 3.10 Foster Carer skill payments are not regulated in any way resulting in some variation in what is paid by different foster care providers. Skills payments are used within a number of neighbouring and regional Local Authorities and an understanding of the rates paid is important in ensuring that Rotherham's 'offer' is competitive and sustainable.
- 3.11 The most recent national research on fee levels was undertaken by The Fostering Network in 2010 and levels are shown in appendix 2 table 2. This showed that most Skills Payments (45% nationally) were up to £200 per week. It would be the intention that any changes to the skills payments would not exceed this. In most instances, the highest fee payments were generally paid to those who were caring for complex and challenging adolescents. This demonstrates that an incentive has been required to attract Foster Carers to care for this cohort.
- 3.12 Rotherham's existing skills level payment scheme when contrasted against research on other Local Authority appears to offer little incentive to attract new Foster Carers and this was confirmed during the foster carer consultation. Appendix 2 table 1 shows Rotherham current skills payments falling well below other neighbouring authorities, especially at entry level.
- 3.13 It is a requirement of local authorities to provide "breaks from caring, for carers of disabled children, to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively," (The Children Act 1989). Rotherham's Short Break Care Scheme is known as 'Families Together for Short Break Care,' and within the Fostering Service, there are 15 Short Break Foster Carers. Foster Carers within this scheme receive an hourly payment, and when applicable a sleeping night rate. The rates for this cohort have been considered and are lower than similar Foster Carers in neighbouring local authorities whose rates are in line with the national minimum wage (Appendix 2 – Table 4). Opportunity to redress this should be taken within the proposals.

- 3.14 The outcome of the consultation and review is that the proposed 'offer' incorporates financial incentive, good quality support, training and development for Rotherham's Foster Carers.

#### 4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Option One: Take no action. This is likely to result in a continuation of the current position where an unacceptable number of children and young people are placed in residential care, and with independent providers and/or away from the borough and 'at a distance' from their family, schools and support networks. This would have an adverse impact on outcomes for children and costs would continue to remain high.
- 4.2 Option Two: **(recommended option)**: To develop a foster carer 'offer' that incorporates the following: competitive financial incentives, good quality support and training and development. This will require some investment, but an increase in the number of these placements will be a key enabler in improving outcomes and reducing the overall cost of placement provision.
- 4.2.1 **The Proposal**: The proposal is to revise the current 'offer' in the following way:
- Increase the 'Skills Level Payment' in line with the revised scheme shown at (Appendix 1).
  - Introduce a placement premium which will apply to Foster Carers taking 'harder to place' children in line with the proposed criteria (Appendix 2 Table 3).
  - Provide a consistent and responsive range of support open to the Foster Carers and children in their care.
  - Provide good quality training and development for fostering families, and provide for membership to the Fostering Network
  - Introduce a new model of recruiting for Foster Carers.
  - Increase the payments to Short Break Foster Carers in line with the revised scheme shown at (Appendix 1)
- 4.2.2 The proposal would increase all three of the skills levels payment fees, with a more competitive starting payment at Level 1 to attract new Foster Carers with the skills to care for vulnerable children. It will be possible for Foster Carers to progress to level 2 and 3, through a good quality training and development package. This will reward Foster Carers for demonstrating the skills and abilities to care for a range of children who become children in care, and for having a positive impact on the child's behaviours, outcomes and aspirations.
- 4.2.3 The proposed skills payment has been based on a level in keeping with the rate paid by neighbouring local authorities. The payment for Skills level 1 responds to points made during foster care consultation.
- 4.2.4 It is also proposed that a 'Placement Premium' is paid in exceptional circumstances, which is reflective of any additional complexities that would need to be considered at the time of placement. The criteria and process for

the new premium is described in the proposed revised foster care scheme policy document at Appendix 1. The criteria are not designed to pathologise the child as 'difficult', rather the Placement Premium will be linked to clear expectations placed upon the foster carer and will contribute to placement provision for adolescents and for larger siblings groups. The proposal is in line with national research, which points to the necessity of an incentive to care for this challenging cohort.

4.2.5 This proposal requests that the Short Break Carer payment is increased in-line with neighbouring authorities. This does not directly affect the Foster Carers Payment for Skills Scheme but redresses an outstanding issue with regard to the fees being remunerated for both hourly and sleeping night rates for this group of foster carers.

4.2.6 Finally, the development of a responsive range of support to Foster Carers will benefit the Council by increasing placement availability, better matching considerations and placement stability thus avoiding disruption and change for children in care.

This will include:

- A permanent support worker to provide a quick response to fostering families in crisis as part of the team around the placement.
- Dedicated fostering out of hours support comprising fostering social workers who will be contactable by telephone, out of hours in line with Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).
- Recruitment resource to increase recruitment of Foster Carers and to enhance the fostering journey through to approval.
- Dedicated budget to commission foster carer training and development including membership to Fostering Network.

4.2.7 Over the last year the council has launched its recruitment advertising 'Local Hero' campaign. The council now needs to step up its recruitment and retention activity and improve the recruitment journey from the initial enquiry through to approval and placement. The target increase of foster placements is 15 placements year on year, this equates to around 60% of children placed in local authority care. The proposal incorporates a dedicated recruitment resource working alongside Communications and Marketing to develop campaigns to achieve this.

4.2.8 Research indicates that 'word of mouth' and social media are the most successful routes to foster. Gathering intelligence from Rotherham's community of foster carers will be central to the recruitment strategy and advertisement of the revised Rotherham 'offer'.

4.2.9 This proposal requests that the Short Break Carer payment is increased in-line with neighbouring authorities. This does not directly affect the Foster Carers Payment for Skills Scheme but redresses an outstanding issue with regard to the fees being remunerated for both hourly and sleeping night rates for this group of Foster Carers.

4.2.10 Investment in improving the 'offer' to Foster Carers will help attract additional carers to foster for Rotherham and support the retention and development of existing Foster Carers. It is an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked after Children and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.

4.2.11 The intention is to increase the number of Foster Carers in the local authority, but more importantly, more placement choice when matching children with fostering families. There are ongoing requirements for the continued supervision of Foster Carers by the fostering service. It is important that this does not diminish, as the proposed scheme will not only rely on increased Foster Carers, but highly skilled Foster Carers, who can access training and development that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children in care.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 A formal consultation with Foster Carers regarding the rationale and options for a revised scheme was undertaken and has informed this proposal.

5.2 Foster carers were very clear that their motivation to foster was not solely based on finance. However, they felt that a 'fair' increase in payments would reinforce their status as part of the professional team around the child.

5.3 Foster Carers felt that support was equally as important as the payments. One Foster Carer commented that "all the money in the world wouldn't maintain a child in placement"... "it's the support that makes the difference".

5.4 One carer also commented that "Not all teenagers are challenging, some of their behaviour is just normal teenage stuff".

5.5 A number of carers suggested that a range of support should be provided including therapeutic provision, social worker visits and 'Out of Hours' fostering support to "offer better access when you need it".

5.6 The shape of the proposed scheme has been fed back to the Foster Carers who confirmed that they felt this was the right approach and would be attractive to new carers in providing placements for teenagers and sibling groups.

5.7 Foster Carers who have experience of caring for adolescents and larger sibling groups were represented in the consultation groups to ensure that the target group for recruitment was represented.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 Subject to approval, the revised payment structure will be introduced in October 2016. The wrap around support and development will be operational by 31 March 2017.

## 7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The changes to foster carers' allowances are the first of a range of interventions planned as part of the wider Looked after Children (LAC) Sufficiency Strategy. The Strategy seeks to deliver better outcomes for children in care by reducing the number of children in more expensive care settings through an 'invest to save' approach.
- 7.2 The unit costs of the proposed changes to foster carers' payments, including wrap around care and the revised families' together scheme are outlined in Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- 7.3 In summary, the increased costs from these proposals, and an estimated rise in expected LAC placements with Rotherham foster carers of fifteen per year, could have the following effect on the foster carer allowances budget:

*Table 1: Investment required to fund the new foster carer allowances and the expected rise in the number of children placed with in-house foster carers (£m)*

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Foster Carer Allowances Budget (Current)	2.655	2.735	2.817
National Minimum Payment Rate	2.117	2.292	2.488
Skills Level Payment	1.312	1.443	1.577
Placement Premium	0.272	0.486	0.701
Wrap Around Care Offer	0.155	0.155	0.155
Families Together	0.075	0.077	0.079
Total Foster Carer Costs (Proposed)	3.931	4.453	5.000
Investment required over and above budget (Proposed "minus" Current)	1.276	1.718	2.182

- 7.4 The implementation of the allowances offer and the resulting rise in placements with in-house foster carers could lead to long term savings on the overall Looked after Children budget. Assuming overall LAC numbers remain broadly static, there would be a corresponding fall of fifteen in the number of LAC being placed in more expensive settings (Table 2).

Table 2: Indicative savings due to less children being placed in expensive settings (£m)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) "As Is"	7.405	7.553	7.704
Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) "To Be"	6.341	5.726	5.063
Savings (Indicative)	-1.064	-1.828	-2.641
Out of Borough (OOB) Residential "As Is"	6.877	7.015	7.155
Out of Borough (OOB) Residential "To Be"	6.568	6.182	5.816
Savings (Indicative)	-0.309	-0.833	-1.339
Savings IFA and OOB (Indicative)	-1.374	-2.660	-3.980
Additional Investment over and above budget	1.276	1.718	2.182
<b>Overall LAC Savings net of investment</b>	<b>-0.098</b>	<b>-0.942</b>	<b>-1.798</b>

7.5 The modelling undertaken shows that the required budget investment will be offset by a reduction in expenditure on the more expensive independent foster agencies and out of borough placements due to a greater proportion of children being placed with in-house foster carers.

## 8. Legal Implications

8.1 The current proposals demonstrate that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has implemented a fair approach in that it has considered amounts paid by comparative authorities; whilst also taking into account national research to devise proposals which will assist it in improving services and carrying out its statutory duties towards its looked after children.

## 9. Human Resource Implications

9.1. The proposal includes the establishment of a Support Worker (Grade G, subject to evaluation) and a foster carer recruitment resource (Grade G, subject to evaluation) to support recruitment of Foster Carers and to enhance the fostering journey through to their approval.

9.2 The 'out of hours' proposal is based on current fostering social workers working on a rota basis to cover out of hours and is predicated on an on-call payment. The payments will be aligned to the appropriate levels as per current terms and conditions and will become a contractual requirement. This proposal will be consulted upon with employees affected and the trades unions.

## 10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The proposal seeks to attract additional Foster Carers and placements such that wherever possible, children and young people can be placed within their own community. This will enable them to continue to have contact with the

people and community of the most importance to them, promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

- 11.1 The proposed scheme has been developed (appendix 5) following a full consultation with foster carers. The overall assessed impact is concluded to be a positive one in terms of enhanced allowances, additional support, and training. Foster carers felt that scheme changes were positive in terms of future recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 11.2 Protected characteristics identified as part of the analysis show that the majority of main prime carers are white female and over the age of 51. Only a small number of carers are from a BME background. A further equalities analysis will be undertaken in 6 and 12 months respectively in order to more accurately gauge the impact on carers and inform the foster carer recruitment strategy.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

- 12.1 None predicted.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 There is a risk that Foster Carers may receive an increase in payments without increasing the number of children being cared for. If the planned number of Foster Carers does not increase then this could have a negative impact on the Council's budget. This is mitigated by the change in approach and the recruitment resource identified in this proposal, which will include a marketing strategy to specifically attract Foster Carers with the capacity to care for adolescents and children with more complex needs.
- 13.2 The proposal is underpinned by the analysis, research, and consultation to provide assurance that the revised scheme will offer an inducement to potential Foster Carers to offer their services to Rotherham Council.
- 13.3 The impact of the proposal will be tracked through the Children's Improvement Board and the Directorate's performance and budget monitoring.

## **14. Accountable Officer(s):**

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Approvals Obtained from:-

Finance and Corporate Services: - Mark Chambers/ Colin Allen 18.8.2016

Legal Services: - Mary Reilly 17.08.2016

HR Services: - Theresa Caswell, 12.8.2016

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<http://modern.gov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

## Appendix 1

## ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL Fees and Allowances for Foster Carers June 2016 to March 2017

Rotherham Council, as a developing 'Child Centred Borough', has a strong resounding ambition to move away from the legacy of poorly performing services to a position of strength and confidence, which is reflected in the intention of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate to become rated 'outstanding' by 2018.

### 1. Summary of the Scheme

This scheme is designed to offer clarity and be simple and efficient to administer.

#### 2.1 Age Based Child Allowance

All foster carers, at every level, are entitled to this allowance for each of the children they care for. The allowance is designed to meet the costs of caring for a child in care.

The allowance is a weekly amount based on the age of the child, and is above the Government National Minimum payments for foster carers.

Payments are made weekly. This is directly into the foster carer's bank account, and the amount is as follows:

Age Group:	Weekly Allowance Rate
<b>0 to 4</b>	<b>Total £133.54</b> (of which £9.75 is clothing allowance and £1.94 is the child's pocket money) (Basic Rate £121.85)
<b>5 to 10</b>	<b>£152.12</b> (of which £9.75 is clothing allowance and £4.39 is the child's pocket money) (Basic Rate £137.98)
<b>11 to 15</b>	<b>£189.37</b> (of which £12.65 is clothing allowance and £8.64 is the young person's pocket money) (Basic Rate £168.08)
<b>16+</b>	<b>£230.30</b> (of which £12.65 is clothing allowance and £11.39 is the young person's pocket money) (Basic Rate £206.25)



The following is a breakdown of how what the child's allowance should be used to cover:

- Food
- Toiletries, including medication, the majority of which is available at no additional cost
- Toys and play equipment
- School trips, some residential trips. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker or with the school in respect of use of pupil premium)
- Activities – the cost should not be a barrier to child undertaking a regular activity as agreed in their care plan. Funding would be agreed as part of the care planning process. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker)
- Clothing – see section 3
- Pocket money – see section 5
- Mobile phone top ups
- Bus fares and mileage to school within a 3 mile roundtrip
- Contribution to household costs, for example, heating, lighting
- Day to day transport, either by car or public transport
- Family day trips
- Personal allowance for social activities e.g. cinema, bowling, swimming
- General appointments local to the placement. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker due to complex health needs )

***This list is not exhaustive. Further guidance can be obtained from your supervising social worker.***

**2.2. In addition, foster carers receive the following one-off allowances for each child/ young person in your care on an annual basis:**

Age:	Birthday Allowance	Cultural Celebration	Holiday Allowance
<b>0 to 4</b>	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>5 to 10</b>	137.98	206.97	275.96
<b>11 to 15</b>	168.08	252.13	336.17
<b>16+</b>	206.25	309.39	412.51

These payments are paid in relation to the (child) holiday payments which will be made in June this is in relation to the child. The holiday payment is used to fund a holiday for the child or pay for alternative extra curriculum activities e.g. over the summer holidays.

Any additional payment to be made for the child to have a holiday is to be agreed by the Service Manager before any booking is made.

Birthday payments will be paid within 1 month prior to the child's birthday Cultural celebration payments will be made on 1<sup>st</sup> December or as agreed with the team manager. These payments cover the additional expenditure at birthdays or cultural celebrations.

### **3 Clothing Allowance**

An initial clothing allowance is **not** paid automatically. This is subject to the needs of the child and is discussed with the supervising social worker and child's social worker when a child is first placed.

Expenditure is subject to fostering team manager and family placements and residential service manager approval.

When an agreement has been made to pay an initial clothing grant this will be subject to the needs of the child and in exceptional circumstances the full initial clothing allowance will be made. In any event the initial clothing grant cannot exceed the amounts listed below

The following figures should **not** be considered as an amount of payment that the child is entitled to.

Clothing	
Age	Amount
<b>0 to 11</b>	<b>£75</b>
<b>11+</b>	<b>£200</b>

***This payment is only paid when the child is first admitted in to care. The purchasing of additional clothes is then to be budgeted from the weekly allowance.***

## **School Uniform**

Allowances for school uniform can be negotiated when a child is first accommodated and if they change schools and require a different uniform. This will need discussion with the supervising social worker and is not automatically paid. If receipts are not provided the payment will not be made and will not be reimbursed by the Fostering Service.

An initial cost of up to £50 will be considered for a child aged up to 10 years and £70 for a child aged 10 plus

Funding the further replacement and purchasing of school uniform should be discussed with the fostering social worker as the weekly clothing monies should contribute towards replacement school uniforms and is the responsibility of the foster carer and should be budgeted from the weekly allowance.

### **Recommended Weekly Pocket Money Rates**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Weekly Pocket Money</b>
	<b>£</b>
0 - 4 years	1.94
5 -10 Years	4.39
11 - 15 years	8.64
16 +	11.39

All children should receive the weekly pocket money payment. This should either be given to the child or placed in their savings account. Pocket money is not to be confused with other expenditure given to the child for activities. For any child in a placement of more than 16 weeks the foster carer is expected to open a bank account for savings. For children in short term placements any money not given in hand will be saved and recorded. This will be handed to the child or new foster carer when the child moves.

## **Activities**

It is expected that foster carers encourage all children and young people to take part in a range of regular activities such as music and sports. Foster carers are expected to fund these from the weekly child allowance. Where a child's activity is significantly more expensive than the norm, a past example was where a young person was in

the UK national team and required significant more transport and equipment than is usual this should be discussed with the supervising social worker before committing to expenditure.

***All foster carers are expected to promote these activities.***

### **Transport Costs**

It is expected that the child's allowance will cover transport of up to 40 miles a week for journeys specific to the child. Where the child's transport requirements exceed this amount this should be discussed and agreed with the supervising social worker. Mileage over the 40 miles per week should be claimed at 40 pence per mile.

#### **Exceptions to this could include:**

- Regular contact with family / significant others
- Daily school journeys over and above the 3 mile round trip
- Other excessive journeys as agreed by the supervising social worker e.g. daily hospital visits, long distance journeys for contact.
- Introductions to a child that is not yet placed with the foster carer
- Training / support groups / consultations events
- Taking a child to respite
- Provision of family support

**The above should be agreed through care planning process and discussions with the child's social worker, within foster carers supervision and professional development plan. Any expenditure would be agreed beforehand**

### **Holiday, Birthday and Cultural Celebration Days**

<b>Age:</b>	<b>Birthday Allowance</b>	<b>Cultural Celebration</b>	<b>Holiday Allowance</b>
<b>0 to 4</b>	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>5 to 10</b>	137.98	206.97	275.96
<b>11 to 15</b>	168.08	252.13	336.17
<b>16+</b>	206.25	309.39	412.51

### **Holiday Payments for Foster Carers**

***It is expected that foster carers, wherever possible, include their foster children on their family holidays which must be taken during the school holidays if the child is of school age.***

Foster carers are currently entitled to 2 weeks basic allowance. This excludes pocket money and clothing. This is paid during 2<sup>nd</sup> week in June or by request from fostering social worker. This money is to be used to take the child away or to arrange activities and day trips if a holiday is not planned.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the foster carer take a holiday without the child and the child has to be placed with an alternative foster carer. If you are planning a holiday without the child, you must speak with the child's social worker and your fostering social worker, so that a clear plan can be put in place.

If a Rotherham Borough Council respite carer is used, the primary carer will receive up to a maximum 14 days payment which includes basic rate, skills payment clothing and pocket money. The foster carer will not receive the basic allowance if they take a holiday that extends beyond the 14 day period. In effect this is the equivalent of two weeks paid holiday.

The respite carer will get basic rate in this period and the primary foster carer will be expected to ensure that the child or respite carer receives the child's pocket money. The respite carer will receive a skills level payment for this period if this is not already being paid to them as they are already caring for another child.

#### **4. Support, Respite and Day Care**

Respite care needs to be agreed with your fostering social worker and child's social worker prior to it taking place. Respite care is paid daily at the rate of one seventh of the task rate plus the skills level payment pro rata. Foster carers who provide day care for other foster children will receive a standard payment this is currently being paid at £3.50 per hour.

**Setting up allowance** (furniture and equipment) up to £500 discretionary payment to be approved by fostering team manager.

**Setting up allowance** (child) up to £500 discretionary payment to be approved by fostering team manager.

Receipts must be provided to the Fostering Service. Equipment purchased needs to be agreed with either the assessing social worker or the allocated supervising social worker. No grants will exceed the maximum allowance. The replacement of equipment is to be discussed with the SSW, team manager and ultimately any agreement for funding is at service manager level.

In the case of babies – it is expected that a new mattresses will be purchased for each new placement and the foster carer will be reimbursed.

Payment for items should not be made by credit card / debit card as the local authority is unable to claim back VAT. Generally any equipment would be bought through purchase to pay arrangements through contracted suppliers

### **13 Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

This welfare benefit can be claimed for any child with a disability. The foster carer is expected to use the DLA to promote the welfare of the child and to assist them in the child's care. This should be paid in to a dedicated bank account in the name of the child with the agreement of the child's social worker.

The child's social worker is responsible for the oversight of its use in partnership with the foster carer.

Any surplus that is built up remains the property of the child and goes with the child when they leave the placement.

Any mobility allowances should be spent to promote the child's mobility.

It is best practice to keep good records within daily logs of expenditure of DLA and ensure that this is agreed with the child's social worker and supervising social worker

### **14 Overpayments**

On occasion a foster carer may mistakenly be overpaid. It is the foster carer's responsibility to notify Fostering Business Support as soon as possible. An agreement will then be made in regard to repaying the overpayment.

## **7. Tax**

All carers are responsible for all or any tax due by them to HM revenue and Customs and should ensure that they contact their local tax office to clarify their particular circumstances. Foster Carers should be registered with the tax office as self-employed.

## **4. Insurance Claims**

Foster carers will be expected to have the relevant insurance cover for any damage. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that an insurance claim can be made against Rotherham's public liability insurance. Such claims will be considered by the Fostering Service Manager.

All foster carers, where applicable, are expected to have a full driving licence and fully comprehensive car insurance. The insurance certificate needs to state the car is used for business use or as a foster carer. It is the foster carer's responsibility to

ensure all documentation is kept up to date in relation to cars, e.g. MOT certificate, renewal of insurance.

***These documents must be available for the supervising social worker to check as part of the Annual Health & Safety Check.***

### 3. Skills Level: Carer Fees:

The Carer Fees for 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017 are summarised in the table below:

Level:	Weekly Payment fee:	Carer category
1	£ 100	Foster carer (who have had full foster to adopt training)
2	£ 125	Foster carer
3	£ 175	Foster carer
4	£ 360	Specialist foster carers ( <i>*Empower and Protect/** Foster Plus</i> )
	Hourly rate	Families Together ( <i>short break care for disabled children</i> )
	£ 100	Placement Premium

**3.1 Fostering skills level one:** This is for foster carers who have completed the ‘Skills to Foster’ programme and who have been approved as foster carers.

Within their induction year, newly approved foster carers are expected to attend the induction support group to further develop their fostering learning and development and complete 4 of the 7 modules of learning identified below, the aim of which is to enable foster carers to complete the ‘Department for Education Training, Support and Development Standards Foster Carers 2012,’ (TSDS)

- Attachment training
- First Aid
- Education for looked after children
- Child abuse and safe care

- Equality and diversity
- Record keeping
- Understanding behaviour

***For full expectations of the learning and development requirements of skills level 1, please see the 'Foster Carer Job Description' attached to the back of this protocol.***

**3.2 Fostering skills level two:** Foster carers **must have completed** and be on track to pass the TSDS, the minimum benchmark for what foster carers are expected to aspire to know and undertake within the first 12 to 18 months of being approved. This must be evidenced and recommended within the foster carer review.

Foster carers must have completed **all** of the training requirements set out above.

In addition foster carers must show a commitment to the development of themselves by attending and contributing to support groups.

***For full expectations of the learning and development expected of skills level 2, please see the 'Foster Carer Job Description' attached to the back of this protocol.***

**3.3 Fostering skills level three:** Foster carers have the TSDS qualification, have a minimum of two years of fostering and placement experience completed **all** of the core training requirement, and additional training, which may include:

- The role of the foster carer
- Cultural awareness
- Welcoming the child into placement
- Attachment training
- NVQ3

In addition foster carers must show a commitment to the development of the service, by being able to evidence as set out in the examples below:

- Attending and contributing to support groups
- Supporting recruitment activities
- Attend and contribute to consultation events
- Encourage children to participate in involvement activities
- Offer support to other carers



The foster carer must also be able to evidence how they have used their training within their fostering experience by completing a foster carer skills progression report. The progression must be agreed by the supervising social worker, and recommended with the foster carer review.

***For full expectations of the learning and development expected of skills level 3, please see the 'Foster Carer Job Description' attached to the back of this protocol.***

Progression must be agreed by the supervising social worker, in consultation with the foster carer, and agreed within the foster carer review process.

**3.4 Placement Premium:** This premium is in recognition of a foster carers skills and abilities in enabling a child or young person to build family connections and a sense of belonging by encouraging them to care for children and young people, who may currently be in 'out of authority' placements, or residential care.

**This could include:**

- Children with significant or life limiting disabilities should this be children with a formal assessment of being severely disabled
- Sick children requiring invasive treatment as part of their daily care
- Parent & baby placements
- Larger sibling groups of 3 + children
- Children entering the care system aged 14+
- Children with mental health diagnosis
- Children with significant substance misuse issues
- Children assessed as high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children stepping down from residential care
  
- Emergency duty carers available to take any 0-18 year old child who requires care out of office hours

***The criteria for Placement Premium would be agreed prior to the placement beginning, and should be detailed in the placement referral report, and formally agreed by the Fostering ADM.***

**In addition, foster carers would be required to:**

- Evidence that they have physically and emotionally supported the child/ren to make positive progress, (measured within the child's care plan, child's review and fostering review)
- Demonstrated a commitment to agreed training, and applied this training to support complex needs, e.g. around attachment.
- Demonstrate a commitment to fostering ongoing learning and development by undertaking training within their skills level

In the above circumstances, the foster carer will receive the placement premium whilst caring for a child/children within this category, but will revert to level 1 – 3 (dependant on their skills progression) should the child move on.

Foster Carers who are in receipt of the premium payment would still be expected to progress through the bands as described above, continue to attend support groups, and commit to their ongoing learning and development through training.

**\*\*Empower and Protect Project:** Specially trained foster carers working to a specific clinical programme. Providing family based care for challenging young people aged 13 -17 including those at risk of or suffering from child sexual exploitation in any of the four South Yorkshire local authorities, Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster. These carers are exempt from placement premium. They are exempt from placement premium criteria.

**\*\*Foster Plus:** Carers who were approved on the former scheme and continue to meet the requirements of that scheme. They are exempt from placement premium criteria. The Foster Plus Emergency Carer's are in receipt of a retainer payment regardless of whether there is a child in placement.

*Payments are only made for the period when a child is placed with a foster carer. In exceptional circumstances payments may be made to a foster carer when a child is not placed with them with the agreement of the Head of Service.*

### **Short Breaks are For Disabled Children Scheme**

This is a separate scheme to mainstream fostering and is specifically for children who are not in the looked after system as such, carers are paid at a different rate. This is the support service offered to children with disabilities. Day care payments will be paid at an hourly rate of £7.20 per hour (8am - 8pm).

Carers are also paid a sleeping rate per night of £30. Should the child require medical intervention as part of their care needs from the carer during the night a fee of £7.20 per hour will be made.

### **Other Permanency Pathways**

This includes:-

- i) Regulation 24 Connected Carers will receive the child's allowance from the day of placement. They are expected to undertake checks and assessments and some basic training prior to being approved as Regulation 38 foster carers. Once they have successfully completed the full 'Skills to Foster' programme they will move to fostering skills level 1.
- ii) Foster to Adopt carers (prospective adopters who are approved to foster children prior to the child being freed for adoption). Skills payments will not be made.
- iii) Child Arrangement Orders. This piece of private law enables children to receive care from people whom the court deem appropriate rather than become 'looked after'. Where this is the case the holder of the Child Arrangement Order will receive an allowance from the date of the order, providing the child is placed at that point. Skills payment will not be made.

### **Adopters (excluding foster to adopt and former foster carers)**

It is expected that the majority of adopters are willing and able to financially care for the child/children whom they adopt and no allowance will be made.

### **Exceptional Financial Allowance for Adopters**

It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances such as when adopting a sibling group of 3 or more children, severely disabled children or children with significant medical issues or life limiting condition that ongoing financial support is required. Where the adoption team consider this appropriate, this will be discussed when the child is considered by the prospective adopters prior to matching. The availability of the allowance will be specified in the Post Adoption Support Plan.

These ongoing allowances are subject to a financial assessment if the prospective adopters household income is above £50,000 p a, and is reviewed annually see appendix. They are payable until the child reaches the age of 18 so long as the child continues to live with the adopter. However the Local Authority can choose to waive the financial assessment and where this is agreed it will be specified on the Post Adoption Support Plan.

### **Discretionary Setting up Payments for Adopters**

A discretionary setting up payment of up to £500 per child.

Exceptional one off payments can be made in specific circumstances such as the need for adaptations to care for a disabled child. The reason for these payments together with evidence that the proposal makes the best use of public funding must be presented in writing to the Adoption Decision Maker for consideration.

### **Special Guardianship Orders (non-foster carers) and Child Arrangement Orders**

The Local Authority recognises the importance of the Special Guardians role in supporting children in a permanent family.

**All eligible Special Guardians are paid an age based child allowance in respect of each child for whom they care minus child benefit**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Weekly Basic Rate</b>
	<b>£</b>
0 - 4 years	121.85
5 -10 Years	137.98
11 - 15 years	168.08
16 +	206.25

### **Foster Carers who offer children a permanent family via an Adoption or Special Guardianship Order**

The Local Authority recognises that in many circumstances it is right for children to achieve permanency with their foster carer through an SGO or adoption order.

Foster carers will continue to receive the child age based allowance including birthday and Festival and holiday allowance. The foster carer will continue to receive the same fostering fee they were receiving at the date the Adoption or Special Guardianship Order was made until the child reaches 18 years providing that the child is still living with them. This fee will not change,

NB Children under SGOs who go on to higher education or children who have a disability are also entitled to continuing support beyond the age of 18 years.

**This document is to give you an overview of payments that are made to you as a foster carer. This document and the actual payments will be reviewed annually by Rotherham Fostering Service.**

**Anne-Marie Banks 03.08.16**

## **FOSTER CARER JOB DESCRIPTION**

Rotherham Borough Council is very proud of its Fostering Service and values each individual foster carer. We know that foster carers can make a considerable difference to a child or young person's life. Rotherham Borough Council operates a "Payments for Skills Scheme" which means that foster carers are paid in recognition of their skills and training undertaken.

The information below lists the minimum expectations we have for all our approved foster carers and indicates how these expectations can be evidenced. These expectations are derived from the National Minimum Standards (2011) that are underpinned by the Fostering Service Regulations (2011).

Under the "Skills Level Scheme" foster carers need to evidence the expectations listed below as well as the additional requirements indicated for each fee level.

### **Job Description: All Foster Carers**

#### **Expectations**

- 1. To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment to meet the needs of individual children which take into account their background and experience.**

#### **Evidence**

- To provide an enduring environment which any placed child experiences as being safe and secure.
- To meet the identified needs of children in accordance with their care plan; to understand their background and the impact this has had on them, their development and their behaviour.
- To make written records in the form of daily logs.
- Understand and follow the principles of safer care.
- Have necessary equipment, including toys and opportunity for leisure activities for all children placed.
- To have adequate accommodation for children assessed as suitable by the Fostering Service.
- To complete the Training and Development Standards workbook within 12 months of approval.

**2. To work in partnership with other professionals to deliver the agreed care plan in respect of the placed child.**

**Evidence**

- To attend meetings relating to the child, to understand the care plan and to work with other professionals.

**3. To promote the health and safety of children within the home.**

**Evidence:**

- To ensure the home is maintained to a good standard and to complete the health and safety checklist annually alongside the supervising social worker.
- To ensure children receive appropriate medical attention, emergency, specific or routine.
- To make appropriate records of accidents and medication given.
- To undertake First Aid training within the first year of approval and a refresher course undertaken every three years.
- To undertake safeguarding training within the first year of approval and a refresher course undertaken every three years.
- To have a child specific safer caring policy in place for each child looked after which is updated and reviewed regularly, at least once every 12 months.
- To be a non-smoker if a child to be placed is under 5 years old.

**4. To help children cope with separation and loss and come to terms with past life experience.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate in assessment that they have knowledge of the reasons children are looked after and to access training to assist them to help children cope.
- To undertake attachment training within the first year of approval.
- To assist in life work undertaken with the child.

**5. To provide children with consistent boundaries and to manage behaviour appropriately.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate an understanding of why children may behave in certain ways.
- To be able to work on strategies alongside other professionals to moderate and change that behaviour where this is an agreed plan.
- To have attended Skills to Foster training.

**6. To help children maintain a positive view of their family as appropriate and in accordance with the care plan. To support and facilitate contact as agreed at the placement planning meeting.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate understanding of why some parents are unable to look after their children and to be non-judgemental in attitude towards them.
- To support children to have meaningful contact with parents and other family members.
- To help children keep alive their connection with their families.

**7. To support and facilitate children in education by ensuring attendance at school and improving educational outcomes for them.**

**Evidence:**

- Transport children to and from school where identified in the placement planning meeting, or to support other arrangements as identified.
- Access a range of resources to support learning and access learning opportunities beyond the school day.
- Attend meetings at school where required.
- Liaise and co-operate with the Virtual School Service.
- Attend the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting for each child in placement.
- Support the targets identified at the PEP.

**8. To help and encourage children/young people grow in confidence and self-esteem and to develop a positive identity.**

**Evidence:**

- Engage the child in activities outside of the home which develop their skills, abilities and interests.
- See the child as a child first, as looked after secondly.
- Evidence understanding of providing a secure base for a child.
- Ensure the child is encouraged and supported to make choices.

**9. To keep the child's social worker informed of any significant events or issues.**

**Evidence**

- Follow procedures and guidance in accordance with requirements regarding information to be given to the child's social worker.
- Make required notifications as detailed in the handbook.
- Maintain written records of a good standard as required and to make these available to relevant professionals.

**10. To follow guidance from the supervising social worker and to work in partnership with all professionals involved.**

**Evidence:**

- Meet regularly with the supervising social worker and share their knowledge of the child looked after, to seek advice where necessary and to put this into practice.
- Understand delegated authority and be clear about what they can authorise and what they need permission for.
- Be available and prepared for supervision, which will happen at least four times a year or as required.



**11. To contribute to reviews for children in placement.**

**Evidence:**

- To complete paperwork in the timescales given, in a professional and coherent manner.
- To attend reviews for the children in placement and support children as necessary.
- Involve older birth children if living at home

**12.To attend training as identified by the Fostering Team and to be proactive in identifying own training and development needs.**

**Evidence:**

- Attend training as recommended by the supervising social worker, either during supervisory visits or at annual review
- Recognise their own developmental needs and discuss these with the supervising social worker
- Participate in their Personal Development Plan

**13.To actively participate in and attend foster carer reviews.**

**Evidence:**

- To contribute both written and verbal material regarding their own reviews.
- Complete paperwork provided by supervising social worker prior to review and return as requested.

**14.To work with other foster carers, the fostering team and promote the aims and objectives of the department in relation to development**

**Evidence**

- Be willing to participate in recruitment events and training events if requested
- Give positive messages to those interested in fostering and encourage potential applicants to contact the recruitment team

- To act in a professional manner at all times as a representative of Rotherham's fostering workforce.

**Job Description: Foster Carer Level 1**

1. To be aged over 21 years
2. To have a ratified DBS
3. To be healthy enough to care for looked after children
4. To be able to demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team
5. To have met, and evidenced, all expectations as outlined above
6. To have some experience of caring for a child/young person
7. To have identified support networks available to assist you in the fostering task
8. To support and facilitate contact with the child's family, as appropriate to the child's care plan
9. To have basic IT and computer skills
10. To attend foster carer support groups
11. To put agreed strategies into place to manage behaviour
12. To have completed the Skills to Foster pre-approval training and the pre-approval assessment portfolio as evidence of your skills and knowledge, and this is to include
  - Equality and Diversity
  - Safe Care (part one)
  - Record Keeping

**Essential**

1. To live within Rotherham or be able to travel to Rotherham
2. To have sufficient space in the home to accommodate a child/young person

**Job Description: Foster Carer Level 2**

**Additional requirements to above expectations for all foster carers**

1. All requirements as listed in Level 1, with the following additional:
2. It is a requirement of the national minimum standards to complete the TSD workbook, experience should be evidenced through this method, it should not be given as an alternative.

3. To have completed your TSDS Standards workbook **and** complete all mandatory training as identified by the Fostering service and listed below:
  - a) Safer Care (Intermediate) Training for Foster Carer
  - b) Attachment Theory and Child Development
  - c) Introduction to Paediatric First Aid
  - d) LAC Education
  - e) Child Sexual Exploitation Training
4. To be able to identify your own further learning needs with encouragement from your SSW, and to be able to take responsibility to ensuring that you have completed your foster carer training
5. To help develop strategies to manage behaviour
6. To be able to evidence that your carer logs are up to date
7. **Essential**
  1. As per Level 1

**Job Description: Foster Carer Level 3**

**Additional requirements to above expectations for all foster carers**

1. All requirements as listed in levels 1 & 2, with the following additional:
2. Therapeutic parenting
3. Dealing with challenging behaviour / SHADES training
4. To be able to evidence the ability to care for a child or young person with particularly risky and/or challenging behaviour
5. In a joint fostering household where both carers work outside the home, for one carer to ensure they only work hours that will not have an impact on the needs of the child/children looked after, this is likely to be no more than 20 hrs per week. In the case of a single carer the same consideration will need to be given to the impact of other paid employment on the carers' capacity to prioritise the fostering task.
6. To have support networks that are able to offer practical help, e.g. overnight care, collect from school in emergency etc.
7. To act as a mentor to other foster carers

8. To be actively involved in the recruitment of new foster carers, or to be able to evidence other ways that you contribute to the fostering service

### **Essential**

1. As per Level 1

### **Placement Premium**

This is a new incentive for foster carer's for having a positive impact on children's lives and outcomes. This premium is in recognition of a foster carers skills and abilities in enabling a child or young person to build family connections and a sense of belonging for children and young people, who may have otherwise been placed in out of authority placements, or residential care.

#### **This could include:**

- Children with significant or life limiting disabilities should this be children with a formal assessment of being severely disabled
- Sick children requiring invasive treatment as part of their daily care
- Parent & baby placements
- Larger sibling groups of 3 + children
- Children entering the care system aged 14+
- Children with mental health diagnosis
- Children with significant substance misuse issues
- Children assessed as high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children stepping down from residential care
- Emergency duty carers available to take any 0-18 year old child who requires care out of office hours

The criteria for Placement Premium would be agreed prior to the placement beginning, made and detailed in the placement referral report, and formally agreed by the Fostering ADM.

#### **In addition, foster carers would be required to:**

- Evidence that they have physically and emotionally supported the child/ren to make positive progress, (measured within the child's care plan, child's review and fostering review)

- Demonstrated a commitment to agreed training, and applied this training to support complex needs, e.g. around attachment.
- Demonstrate a commitment to fostering ongoing learning and development by undertaking training within their skills level

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

**Foster Carer Agreement**

**The Fostering Services Regulations, 2002 - Regulation 28(5)(b)**

This Foster Carer Agreement is made on .....

Between

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE

And

**Terms of Approval**

## Part 1

### Obligations of the Local Authority

#### 1. Training

The Social Services Programme Area is committed to providing ongoing training to Foster Carers. As an approved Foster Carer you will have already been involved in a three day training and preparation programme. Further training courses are regularly available on Child Protection, Child Development and Behaviour Management, details of which are circulated to all Foster Carers at intervals throughout the year. Foster carers are encouraged to participate in training programmes in order that children looked after in foster homes can receive the best possible care. Foster carers with more than two years' experience in fostering may be able to register for the N.V.Q. Level 3 award in Caring for Children and Young People.

#### 2. Support

The Department's support to Foster Carers is provided in the following ways:-

- (a) By your designated Fostering Social Worker who will ensure that visits are made to see you in your home on a six weekly basis and when reasonably requested by the Foster Carer to do so. Every second visit the worker will visit at a time when the child is present. Regular ongoing contact will also be maintained by telephone.
- (b) By the child's Locality Social Worker, who will visit both the child and the Foster Carers within a week of placement, and then at a minimum of every 6 weeks up to a year, then every three months and also when reasonably requested to do so either by the Foster Carer or the child. The locality Social Worker will need to see the child alone during the visit and see their bedroom. Ongoing contact can also be maintained by telephone.
- (c) By the provision of support groups - your Fostering Social Worker will provide you with details of the support group of which you are a member. Such groups normally meet monthly and it is expected that Foster Carers will make every effort to attend these meetings. Any babysitting expenses incurred by the Foster Carers in attending these groups will be reimbursed by the Department.
- (d) The provision of a duty service from 8.30-5.30 pm, where Foster Carers can receive information and support in the absence of their designated Support Worker.
- (e) Foster Carers may drop in at the Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Centre during opening hours, to access written information and books and, also, to discuss any general issues with the Social Worker on duty.

- (f) Foster Carer Support Plan – at regular periods during long term/ permanent placements or at commencement of a placement the Fostering Social Worker should discuss with the Foster Carer what particular support they require. This should be recorded as an individual Foster Carer's Support Plan.

In situations where placements are being made where children have experienced multiple placement moves a Placement Support Package meeting should be held and a package of support should be developed and recorded.

### 3. **Approval and Changes to Terms of Approval**

Following the assessment of a potential Foster Carer, or Review request to change the category of approval, the Fostering Social Worker's report is presented to Fostering Panel. The Panel makes a recommendation, which is then presented to the Agency Decision Maker, who then makes the decision.

If a Foster Carer is unhappy with the decision, they have 28 days to make a representation and this would be presented to the next available Panel. Again, a recommendation would be made and the Agency Decision Maker would make the decision. Foster carers are able to attend Panel and to take a supporter with them.

The Fostering Team will notify Foster Carers of changes in Terms/categories of Approval in writing.

### 4. **Reviews**

All Foster Carers are reviewed at a minimum of once a year. The purpose of this review is to determine whether the Foster Carer remains suitable to act as a Foster Carer and to address any areas of concern. The review will also amend, if necessary, the terms and conditions of the approval (i.e. the number of children who can be placed and their age ranges). The written views of the Foster Carer are taken into account before this review takes place. Written contributions will be sought from children placed with carers, children previously placed and the carers birth children. Also, written comments will be sought from the children's locality Social Workers. When the outcome of the review has been determined, a letter will be sent to the Foster Carer explaining the outcome of this process.



## 6. **Case Planning Meeting**

If a child is placed in an emergency, the Locality Social Worker should arrange a care planning meeting within 72 hours, where the plan for the child is discussed. This is an opportunity for the Foster Carer to gain more information about the child and ensure that all the documentation is available. Where possible the Fostering Social Worker should attend the Case Planning Meeting.

## 7. **Placements**

The Department, in placing any child with a Foster Carer, will participate in a Foster Placement Agreement which sets out the purpose of the placement and other particular matters in relation to the care of the child in the foster home. This document must be signed by the Foster Carer and by the Locality Social Worker before any placement may proceed. The Department will also provide, at the beginning of any placement, written information about the child to be placed. In situations where a child is placed at short notice, this written information will be provided within 14 days of the beginning of the placement. The Locality Social Worker should provide initial information.

## 8. **Short Breaks**

If carers wish to have a short break or holiday without their foster child, they must plan ahead and give at least 6 weeks' notice. Unless part of an individual Foster Carers support plan, carers may have a **total** of no more than two weeks short breaks or holiday within the year.

Weekend breaks from Friday to Sunday will not affect the Foster Placement Allowance but breaks of four or more days will mean a reduction in the Foster Placement Allowance.

Number and frequency of the breaks are to be included in the Foster Carer's support plan and discussed with the child's Social Worker.

## 9. **Indemnity**

Foster carers are required to inform their household and property insurance company that they are approved Foster Carers. In the event of loss or damage to the Foster Carer's home or property caused by a foster child, for which the Foster Carer's insurance company is unable to indemnify, the Department's own insurers may cover such loss and damage.

## 10. **Foster Carer's Manual**

All approved Foster Carers are provided with a copy of the Foster Carers Manual. This document explains in detail the procedures referred to in this agreement together with explanations of other issues concerned with the provision of foster care. Foster carers should discuss with their support Social Worker any matter arising from the manual about which they are unsure.

## 11. **Complaints and Representations**

Should a Foster Carer be dissatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by the Department, they should feel free to make their views known. If the complaint is connected with a foster child in your care, the child's locality Social Worker should be contacted. In the event of the complaint being about matters with regard to foster care, the Foster Carer should contact their Fostering Social Worker. Should the issue not be resolved by these means, both workers have a Team Manager who would consider issues of disagreement and complaint, in the first instance. The Foster Carer may choose to use the Council's complaints procedure. The details of this procedure are contained in the Foster Carer's Manual.

## **General Conditions:**

### **Other Agencies**

- The Foster Carer shall not enter into any agreement with another agency while this Agreement remains in force.

### **Termination of the Foster Care Agreement**

- This agreement can be ended by either/both parties on giving notice in writing. If RMBC wish to terminate the agreement then a decision by the Agency Decision Maker is required, prior to the notification.
- Ending this agreement will not affect liability for any payments due to either party before or following the termination date. However, no further regular payments will be made following the termination notification.

### **Termination of Placements**

- Foster Carers should give 28 days' notice with reasons, in writing, should they wish to terminate a placement outside of the terms of the Placement Agreement.
- Where it appears to RMBC that the continuation of a placement would be detrimental to the welfare of the child concerned, RMBC may remove the child forthwith.

- Where a Foster Carer or RMBC feel that a placement has completely broken down and the child's needs are not being met or where there is potential significant harm to the child, the carer, or member of the carer's household, the placement can be terminated with the agreement of both parties.
- In case of Long Term sickness, where a Foster Carer or a member of their family is ill, they can after 14 days sickness apply to the Manager Fostering Team for termination of the placement.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Status: .....

Worksite Address: Fostering Team, Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham  
S60 1AE

Telephone No: Rotherham 01709 254917 or 823975

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

Fostering Service

**Foster Carer Learning & Development Agreement**

I, ..... (Foster Carer) and .....  
(Foster Carer) agree:

- To participate in mandatory learning & development (including refresher courses) and learning activities as determined in the Learning & Development Policy for Foster Carers
- To complete a minimum of 3 development activities during each review period
- To be responsible for meeting the training requirements and understanding that failure to maintain appropriate skills will result in a reduction skills level payment
- To develop and review my Personal Development Plan together with my Fostering Supervising Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- To maintain a continual Personal Development Portfolio and Reflective Learning Log.

I, (Fostering Supervising Social Worker) agree:

- To assess the Foster carer's learning needs and develop their Personal Development Plan
- To record Learning & Development Activities on Foster Carer's files (including any non-attendance/non-participation)
- To ensure that Certificates of Attendance, Participation or completion are issued for all courses and workshops to provide evidence of learning; a copy to be provided to the Foster Carer and a copy for the Foster Carer's File Records
- To review the Personal Development together with the Foster Carer and IRO.

I, (Fostering Team Manager) agree:

- To work with the Fostering Supervising Social Workers to manage, monitor and facilitate learning & development of Foster Carers approved by RMBC in line with the National Minimum Standards
- To ensure that Foster Carer learning & Development maintains a high profile within the Fostering Service
- To ensure that the learning & development provided is reflective, responsible, proactive and reactive to Foster Carer and child needs.

**Foster Carer**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

**Foster Carer**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

**Fostering Supervising Social Worker**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

**Fostering Team Manager**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....



**Table 1 - Current Skill Fees**

Authority	Skill Level 1	Skill Level 2	Skill Level 3	Discretionary Payments
Bradford	£133	£188	£268	Discretionary higher rate available
Calderdale	£85	£138	£277	Discretionary higher rate available
Leeds	£120	£170	£220	Discretionary higher rate available
Doncaster	£115	£135	£175	£200 max. Discretionary payment
*Sheffield	£85	£185		Discretionary higher rate available
Barnsley	£50	£100	£190	£250 - £350 Higher rates
<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>£25</b>	<b>£75</b>	<b>£150</b>	<b>£350 Fostering Plus</b>

\*Sheffield only advertises 2 skill levels

**Table 2 - Comparison with Foster Care Network national research on fee levels**

Skills Payment to Foster Carer per week	%
up to £200	45%
between £201 and £300	25%
between £301 and £450	20%
over £450	10%

**Table 3 – Proposed Skill Fees**

Basic Skill Level	Amount Per Week	Based On
Skill Level 1	£100	Per Carer
Skill Level 2	£125	Per Carer
Skill Level 3	£175	Per Carer

**Payment for Children with complex needs**

Placement Premium	£100	Per Child
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**Table 4 – Short Break Care Scheme Rates**

Authority	Day Costs	Evening/ Overnight Respite
<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>£5.42 per hour</b>	<b>£2.71 per hour</b>
Barnsley	£7.20 per hour	£7.20 per hour
Doncaster	£7.20 per hour *direct payment	* residential provision
Sheffield	£62.29 per day *dependant of carers skills levels and age of child	£15 subject to manger approval

**Proposed**

Authority	Day Costs	Evening/ Overnight Respite
Rotherham	£7.20	£30 per night

<b>Wrap Around Care for Carers Offer</b>	
Support Worker	£35,000
Support Worker Travel	£500
Recruitment Resource	£35,000
Out of Hours Support	£54,750
Training and fostering network membership	£30,000
<b>TOTAL WRAP AROUND COST PER YEAR</b>	<b>£155,250</b>



**Estimate of National Minimum Payments**

2016/17 National Minimum	National Minimum Rate Base (Weekly)	RMBC Base (Weekly)	Difference	%	Birthday (Annual)	Cultural Celebrations (Annual)	Holiday (Annual)
<b>Babies</b>	123.00	133.54	10.54	8.57%	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>Pre-Primary</b>	126.00	133.54	7.54	5.98%	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>Primary</b>	139.00	152.12	13.12	9.44%	137.98	206.97	275.96
<b>Secondary 11-15</b>	159.00	189.37	30.37	19.10%	168.09	252.13	336.17
<b>Secondary 16-17</b>	185.00	230.30	45.30	24.49%	206.25	309.39	412.51

Comparisons are at a base rate level. (Rotherham equivalent is Basic + pocket money + clothing)

**Estimate of Skills & Placement Premium Payments**

Skills Level	No of Carers 2017-18	Cost 2017-18	No of Carers 2018-19	Cost 2018-19	No of Carers 2019-20	Cost 2019-20
Skill Level 1	22	£114,400	22	£114,400	22	£114,400
Skill Level 2	26	£169,000	28	£182,000	29	£188,500
Skill Level 3	113	£1,028,300	126	£1,146,600	140	£1,274,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>£1,311,700</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>£1,443,000</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>£1,576,900</b>

Additions Per Child	Number of Children 2017-18	Cost 2017-18	Number of Children 2018-19	Cost 2018-19	Number of Children 2019-20	Cost 2019-20
Placement Premium	19	£271,700	34	£486,200	49	£700,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>£271,700</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>£486,200</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>£700,700</b>
<b>TOTAL SKILLS &amp; ADDITIONAL PAY</b>		<b>£1,583,400</b>		<b>£1,929,200</b>		<b>£2,277,600</b>

## APPENDIX 5

**RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning, Decommissioning, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSSF)**

<p><b>Under the Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics</b> are age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity. Page 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1</p>	
<p><b>Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:</b></p>	<p>Foster Carer Payment Support and Development</p>
<p><b>Name of service and Directorate</b></p>	<p>Children &amp; Young People Service</p>
<p><b>Lead manager</b></p>	<p>Ian Walker</p>
<p><b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA)</b></p>	<p>August 2016</p>
<p><b>Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)</b></p>	<p>Ian Walker, Anne-Marie Banks, Luke Ricketts</p>
<p><b>Aim/Scope</b></p> <p>The aim of this analysis is to consider the impact of the proposed revised scheme of Foster Payments, Support and Development on those existing and potential carers with protected characteristics.</p> <p>This scheme seeks to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a family environment.</p> <p>Rotherham has a shortage of all foster care placements but particularly foster care placements for adolescents and larger sibling groups. As a result there are too many young people in placed in residential care and outside of the Borough boundary. This was commented upon in the Ofsted (2014) inspection when Children’s Social Care was judged to be ‘Inadequate’ and the following recommendation was made:</p> <p>“Improve the sufficiency of placements within the borough to meet current needs and strengthen the strategy so that good planning ensures enough places for the future.”</p> <p>In July 2016 Commissioners and Cabinet approved a formal consultation for a period of six weeks with foster carers regarding the rationale and options for a revised scheme with a view to that scheme being</p>	

implemented in October 2016. This consultation has been undertaken and the resulting report proposes a revised scheme for Rotherham based on providing financial incentive, good quality support and training to support the recruitment of new carers and the retention of existing ones. The proposals contained in the report will be an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked After Children and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.

Alongside other initiatives, this will enable the reduction of overall placement costs and avoid use of more expensive Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and residential placements, through enhancing the support available to foster carers there should also be a reduction in placement disruptions and an improvement in outcomes achieved by young people given that placement stability is a key factor in enabling young people to achieve those good outcomes. It also follows that, wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, thus promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

Rotherham Borough Council has 442 children in care. Around 188 are placed with Rotherham Borough foster carers in 163 placements. This is a lower proportion than the majority of local authorities of a similar size. Rotherham has a shortage of all foster placements but particularly of placements for adolescents and for larger siblings groups. There are too many children and young people placed out of borough because there are not enough local placements.

The lack of sufficient foster placements means that Rotherham relies on the use of independent fostering agencies or residential provision, all of which are more costly with no guarantee of better outcomes being achieved.

**What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?**

The recipients of this service are looked after children, living in foster care or with a care plan to move from residential care to foster care. As highlighted above there is a general shortfall of foster placements available but this is even more marked in respect of placements for adolescents. As a result a high number of these young people are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) which can be some distance from the RMBC area.

In terms of the protected characteristics the following data is of some relevance :-

*Age Range	Number	Gender	Number	Ethnicity	Number
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20-30 yrs	7.00	Female	157.00	Asian - Indian	1.00
31-40 yrs	17.00	Male	6.00	Asian - Pakistani	2.00
41-50 yrs	54.00	<b>Sum:</b>	<b>163.00</b>	Black - African	1.00
51-60 yrs	54.00			Dual Heritage - White And Black Caribbean	1.00
61-70 yrs	26.00			White - British	158.00
70+ yrs	5.00			<b>Sum:</b>	<b>163.00</b>
<b>Sum:</b>	<b>163.00</b>				

Thus it can be seen that women are more likely to be affected by this proposed scheme than men and older people more likely to be affected than the younger age range. There are only 5 carers from a BME background who will be affected but this may actually be at least partially the result of shortfalls in the existing scheme and in the previous marketing strategy. There is now data held in respect of the disability, sexuality or religion of existing carers although none of these characteristics would automatically preclude a person from being approved as a foster carer.

Given that most of the foster carers are older and female then this protected characteristic stands to benefit the most from the scheme. In addition because people from a BME background are more likely to be economically disadvantaged than their peers the enhanced remuneration this proposed scheme offers may not only increase the interest in fostering from the BME community but it may also contribute to addressing the economic disadvantage in that community. This in turn may ensure that the cultural, religious and racial needs of looked after children from minority ethnic groups are better met.

Should it be approved the proposed scheme will become a core part of the foster carer marketing campaign and be included in all recruitment materials including on the RMBC website. This should ensure that all relevant people will be able to understand how they will benefit from the scheme.

### **Engagement & Consultation**

It would be impractical to consult with each of the young people individually regarding the proposed revised scheme. However, their views regarding their placement location can be discerned via the Care Planning process. It is also a reasonable assumption to make that the significant majority of these young people would, given the choice, express a preference to have a foster placement in the Rotherham area from where they could maintain consistency in terms of contact with their birth family, education, peer friendships and social networks.

However, there have been three full consultation events with foster carers held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015, 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2016. In total 121 foster carers attended these events although some carers may have attended more than one event. These events were held in a variety of locations across the Borough to ensure maximum attendance and an accurate reflection of the views of the in-house foster carer population. Once the first draft of the proposed scheme had been formulated there was a further focus group convened on the 11<sup>th</sup> August consisting of 10 carers in which the proposed model was reviewed and refined. As a result the proposed scheme has been very much framed with the input of the foster carers themselves

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

The foster carers consulted expressed some dissatisfaction with the existing Foster Carer Allowance Scheme which had not been reviewed since 2014. In terms of a revised scheme they expressed that it should be:-

- Easy to understand and transparent to implement.
- In addition to the financial incentives there should be a focus on the less tangible benefits including good quality support and relevant training and development.
- A scheme that promoted both the retention of existing carers but also the recruitment of new carers.
- They also liked the *concept* of the existing skills based payments scheme as they felt that this promoted the notion of a career development within fostering and encouraged access to training.
- However, they felt the current skills based scheme had incremental increases in the payment levels that were too steep at the higher levels and they requested that the starting level was proportionally increased so as to increase the attraction for prospective new foster carers.
- They also requested that there was some additional financial recognition for those foster carers who looked after those young people who presented some increased challenges including large sibling groups, adolescents, children with a disability or young people who had had a number of previous placement disruptions. This has been included in the report and referred to as the 'Placement Premium'

#### The Analysis

**How do you think the Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?**

The aim of the fostering service is to provide as many foster placements as possible for the 442 looked after young people currently in the care of Rotherham MBC. However, there continues to be a significant shortfall in that at present there are only 188 such placements available. This has significant financial

implications for RMBC given that the IFA placements can cost more than twice as much as in-house placements. In addition, by being placed outside of the RMBC area it can be more challenging to ensure that the health, education, therapeutic and social needs of these young people are best met. This can often be dependent on the prioritisation criteria in other local authorities which can mean our young people having to wait for a service.

Despite the increased costs that these placements incur there is no evidence to indicate that they are any less likely to disrupt than in-house placements. Further to that most of the looked after young people gravitate back to their home area as they approach adulthood which can present additional challenges in terms of developing social networks from scratch and in terms of supporting them to access employment, education or training opportunities.

All of these factors would indicate that the needs of our looked after young people would be better met by an enhanced and increased in-house fostering provision.

Given the significant shortfall in the number of in-house foster carers and the lack of any significant increase despite the existing marketing campaigns it is reasonable to assume that the existing scheme fails to some extent to meet the needs of those people living in Rotherham who may be considering becoming a foster carer . In addition through the consultation events it has become increasingly clear that it also fails to meet the needs of the existing fostering community.

**Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Service:**

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

**Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers?**

It is not envisaged that the proposed scheme will present any barriers or problems to any particular community or group. In fact the scheme has been designed to encourage and facilitate access. By increasing the allowances, training and support available to all foster carers the barriers to becoming a foster carer should be reduced to some degree.

The proposed scheme has been fully communicated with the foster carer community via a number of consultation sessions, a review focus group and via the newsletters sent to all carers on a quarterly basis by the Fostering Service. There will be a further discussion of the proposals with carers at the Foster Carer Forum on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016.

**What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? Identify by protected characteristics**

It is not envisaged that there will be any impact on community relations or impact on community cohesion. However, in terms of the specific foster carers community there may in fact be greater cohesion given that the proposed scheme has been deemed by them to be fairer and more equitable than the existing scheme. The Ward location of existing carers is set out below:-

Hoover	2
Wath	4
Swinton	3
Rawmarsh	8
Silverwood	9
Valley	6
Boston Castle	8
Rotherham East	9
Rotherham West	9
Keppel	5
Wingfield	8
Wickersley	8
Hellaby	3
Maltby	7
Dinnington	11
Anston and Woodsetts	5
Wales	4
Holderness	10
Rother Vale	12
Sitwell	8



Brinsworth and Catcliffe	6
<b>Rotherham Borough</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Borough:</b>	
Barnsley	2
Doncaster	10
Sheffield	5
Windsor	1
<b>Borough Total</b>	<b>18</b>

As can be seen there is a reasonable spread of foster carers across the Borough with Dinnington, Holderness and Rother Vale having the most foster carers in their Wards. The low numbers involved would suggest that the impact of the proposed scheme on any particular Ward above the other Wards will not be significant.

By increasing the allowances paid to all existing and new foster carers there is a projected increase in costs amounting to £1.3m in 2016/17 to £1.6m in 2019/20. However, over this period the number of available carers is anticipated to rise from 146 to 191 and the differential in costs between in-house and IFA payments will significantly reduce this projected increase.

There are only two possible alternative options to the proposed scheme; either the existing scheme can remain in place or an alternative scheme needs to be developed and consulted upon. However, the consultations that have already taken place would indicate that the proposed scheme is broadly in line with the expressed wishes and feelings of the community it has been designed to support. As a result there seems to be little value in proposing an alternative scheme at this stage.

## Summary Sheet

### Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 2 September 2016

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 12 September 2016

### Title

Library Strategy and future service offer for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs

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

Yes

### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Damien Wilson, Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment

### Report Author(s)

Elenore Fisher: Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager; Culture, Sport & Tourism

### Ward(s) Affected

ALL

### Executive Summary

The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide “a comprehensive and efficient” public library service “for all persons desiring to make use thereof” (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964). The Act states that the local authority has a duty to provide facilities for borrowing books and other materials and that it should encourage both adults and children to make full use of the service.

This report summarises consultation undertaken on the Library Strategy 2016-19, the future service offer for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs, and a range of savings proposals connected to the implementation of the Strategy and service offer.

The Strategy sets out the vision, key principles and core offer for the Service. It has been developed following an analysis of local need for the service and informed by feedback received during recent consultation.

The assessment of local need identifies a role for the Service in supporting employment opportunities, developing and improving key skills, including literacy, improving mental health, community cohesion and enabling access to digital information and services.

The report gives details of the feedback received and proposed revisions to the original savings proposals. It recommends adoption of the Strategy and core service offer and implementation of revised savings proposals. The 2016-17 revenue budget

related to the area of Libraries and Customer Services considered by this report is £5,034,590. This includes property budgets of £1,220,333. Proposed reductions in expenditure across the review area total £474,000 across 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Specific proposals include the retention of library provision in all existing static locations, the implementation of further self service, online and assisted digital options for service delivery and changes to the Mobile Library and Book Link services.

## **Recommendations**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to review the report and recommendations below:

1. That the results of the public consultation on the draft Library Strategy, future service offer for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs and associated savings proposals be noted.
2. That the Library Strategy 2016-19 and future service offer be endorsed and recommended for approval by Council on 19 October 2016
3. That implementation of the revised savings proposals be endorsed and recommended for approval by Council on 19 October 2016, including the adjustment to the MTFs as described in paragraph 7.5.
4. That it be noted that further and more detailed analysis of local need will continue to inform and drive the future service offer.

## **List of Appendices Included**

1. Library Strategy 2016-19
2. Assessment of local need 2016

## **Background Papers**

1. Consultation questionnaire – Library Strategy and core service offer
2. Consultation questionnaire – Mobile Library
3. Consultation questionnaire – Book Link Service
4. Consultation questionnaire – Customer Services
5. Consultation questionnaire – Maltby Library
6. Consultation questionnaire – Children and Young People
7. Consultation questionnaire – Non-users
8. Consultation feedback – Library Strategy and core service offer
9. Consultation feedback – Withdrawal of Mobile Library
10. Consultation feedback – Removal of Book Link walk on service
11. Consultation feedback – Customer Services
12. Consultation feedback – Relocation of Maltby Library
13. Consultation feedback – Children and Young People's views
14. Consultation feedback – Non-users
15. Equality Analysis – Library Strategy and core service offer
16. Equality Analysis – Mobile Library Service
17. Equality Analysis – Book Link Service
18. Equality Analysis – Closure of the face to face cashiering service at Riverside House
19. Equality Analysis – Appointments Booking System
20. Equality Analysis – Electronic Claims and Risk Based Verification

21. Equality Analysis – Merger of Maltby Library and Customer Service Centre

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 2 September 2016

**Council Approval Required**

Yes

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

**Title:**

**Library Strategy and future service offer for Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs**

**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the results of the public consultation on the draft Library Strategy, future service offer for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs and associated savings proposals be noted.
- 1.2 That the Library Strategy 2016-19 and future service offer be endorsed and recommended for approval by Council on 19 October 2016
- 1.3 That implementation of the revised savings proposals be endorsed and recommended for approval by Council on 19 October 2016, including the adjustment to the MTFs as described in paragraph 7.5.
- 1.4 That it be noted that further and more detailed analysis of local need will continue to inform and drive the future service offer.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Library Service has recently undertaken consultation on:
  - The Library Strategy 2016-19
  - The future service offer for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs
  - A range of savings proposals connected to the implementation of the Strategy and service offer
- 2.2 Rotherham's existing Library Strategy ended in 2015 and the Service has developed a draft Library Strategy for the period 2016-19, which now requires consideration by Council. The Strategy shapes how the Library Service will be delivered, taking account of reductions in local government funding; the changing expectations of current service users and non-users; the changing nature of reading and information delivery; Rotherham's local demographic profile and the continuing role of libraries in enabling local delivery of a range of Council and partner services. It has been developed following an analysis of local need for the service and informed by feedback received during the consultation.
- 2.3 The Council completed public consultation to enable its overall budget to be set in March 2016. This included a range of savings proposals (EDS5) relating to the future service offer for Libraries and face to face Customer Services delivery.
- 2.4 Those proposals were approved, subject to a requirement to undertake further consultation in order to allow an informed decision to be made. (Report to Council: Revenue Budget Setting Process 2016-17, Section 5.6, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016).

- 2.5 In line with the Council's emerging Digital Strategy, the proposals include the implementation of further self service, online and assisted digital options for service delivery.
- 2.6 The adoption of a Risk Based Verification Policy and Electronic Claims Policy was approved by Cabinet on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016. This will support a more efficient, streamlined and customer centric Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims process and is related to two specific savings proposals included in this report (Section 4.6, items 5e and 5f).
- 2.7 A report to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016 gained approval to consult publicly on the Library Strategy, future service offer and associated savings proposals. Consultation on the Library Strategy and future service offer began on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Consultation on the Library Strategy, changes to Customer Services, the proposed closure of the Mobile Library Service and changes to the Book Link Service ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Consultation on the merger of Maltby Library and Customer Service Centre ended on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

### **3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide "a comprehensive and efficient" public library service "for all persons desiring to make use thereof" (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964). The Act states that the local authority has a duty to provide facilities for borrowing books and other materials and that it should encourage both adults and children to make full use of the service.
- 3.2 Other than the statutory duty, there are no longer national standards for library provision. As a result, library services across the country are being delivered in different ways and services are being shaped by local policy, customer need and available resources. The definition of the statutory responsibility is being challenged and explored nationally. In the meantime, authorities considering making changes to the provision of their library service are advised to notify the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Locally, there is a requirement to ensure that the decision making process is clear, transparent and robust, that decisions are based on an approved Library Strategy and that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in terms of service delivery.

### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 The draft Library Strategy, service offer and associated savings proposals have been considered on a number of occasions, firstly during the budget setting process for 2016-17, at Members' seminars (March and May 2016) and at Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (May 2016).
- 4.2 The Library Strategy 2016-19 (Appendix 1) sets out the vision, key principles and core offer for the Service and includes an initial action plan

covering the period 2016-18. The overarching vision for the Service is that:

- Our libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham's communities;
- We will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential;
- Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our libraries will be recognised neighbourhood hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology;
- Our staff will bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get on line and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

4.3 The Strategy and core service offer have been developed following an analysis of local need for the Service (Appendix 2) and take account of the recent consultation.

4.4 The assessment of local need identifies a role for the Service in supporting employment opportunities, developing and improving key skills, including literacy, improving mental health, community cohesion and supporting the growing digital agenda.

4.5 A range of savings proposals related to the Service were approved in principle by Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, subject to a requirement to undertake further consultation in order to allow an informed decision to be made.

4.6 Table 1 provides details of these original savings proposals:

<b>Table 1: EDS5</b>				
	<b>16/17 £'000</b>	<b>17/18 £'000</b>	<b>18/19 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
<b>5a: Creation of a centralised team</b> - merger of Schools Loan Service, Stock, Libraries on the Go and the Customer Access team to gain economies of scale	37			37
<b>5b: Closure of mobile library service:</b> Estimated potential number of affected customers = 473 (274 aged 0-17, 40 aged 18-49 and 159 aged 50+). Service could be replaced with a range of alternative service delivery models, including "deposit collections" within communities, "click and collect/click and delivery" services, home delivery service, e-readers for loan.	57	25		82
<b>5c: Consolidation of Book Link service and delivery van:</b> Changes to services delivered to nursing homes, residential homes, sheltered accommodation, day care and customers in their own homes who are unable to access services in other ways. Customers would no longer be able to visit the Book Link vehicle, but would receive items chosen by/for them	23			23

based on preferences. Would implement alternative service delivery models, including e-readers for loan. Impact on the frequency of delivery.				
<b>5d: Replace face to face cashiering service with payment kiosks at Riverside House:</b> Closure of the cashiering facility at Riverside House and move to alternative service offer of payment kiosks, in line with locality services at Aston, Rawmarsh, Swinton, Dinnington and Maltby. Provide "floor walker" to assist customers in making payments via the kiosks. Continuation of paypoint, post office, direct debit, recurring card payments and online payment methods.	22	22		44
<b>5e: Introduction of online benefit claims and Risk Based Verification at Riverside House:</b> Will reduce the need for face to face interaction with many customers. Will simplify the benefit application process, removing the need to see original verification evidence for approximately 50% of customers. An appointment based service will be introduced for those customers who do need to speak to a customer service officer face to face. An assisted digital process will be implemented to support those customers who need extra help.	21	80		101
<b>5f: Introduction of online benefit claims and Risk Based Verification - Joint Service Centres:</b> As above	31	22		53
<b>5g: Relocation of services from Maltby library:</b> Relocation of library services from the current building into the adjacent Joint Service Centre, offering a revised service and merged staffing in line with locality services at Aston, Dinnington, Swinton and Rawmarsh. Relocation of Schools Loan Service to Bailey House. Relocation of Library vehicle parking to Bailey House. Dependent upon overall property business case.		29		29
<b>5h: Alternative service delivery - community supported model:</b> Retains library provision in all existing static locations. Moves to single staffing in 7 libraries across the borough. Would extend library self service facilities. Would extend some customer service provision to Mowbray Gardens and Wath libraries. Would encourage and support further community/partner involvement in services, including internships, student placements, apprentices and volunteers and Parish & Town Councils.	59		46	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>474</b>

4.7 Table 2 gives details of proposed revisions to the savings proposals, taking into account consultation, suggested mitigation, revised service offer and timeline.

<b>Table 2: EDS5 (revised)</b>				
	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>



<b>5a: Creation of a centralised team – no change to original proposal</b>	3	34		37
<b>5b: Closure of mobile library service:</b> Customers who live more than a 2 mile radius from a static site to receive a limited service from the replacement Book Link vehicle. Customers unable to use those services to be offered delivery to their home, or assisted to use community transport to access a static site. Deposit collections placed within communities	5	77		82
<b>5c: Consolidation of Book Link service and delivery van:</b> Replacement of current Book Link and delivery vehicles with a multi-purpose vehicle which would retain the “walk on” service, make deliveries to libraries and to customers unable to visit static sites, as well as providing a limited mobile service to those customers more than a 2 mile radius from a static site. Reduced frequencies of deliveries to customers and to library sites	3	9		12
<b>5d: Replace face to face cashiering service with payment kiosks at Riverside House:</b> No change to original proposal	4	40		44
<b>5e: Introduction of online benefit claims and Risk Based Verification at Riverside House:</b> No change to original proposal	8	93		101
<b>5f: Introduction of online benefit claims and Risk Based Verification - Joint Service Centres:</b> No change to original proposal	5	48		53
<b>5g: Relocation of services from Maltby library:</b> No change to original proposal. <i>Dependent upon overall property business case from Asset Management.</i>		29		29
<b>5h: Alternative service delivery - community supported model:</b> Retains library provision in all existing static locations. Make more effective use of staffing resource across the borough, reducing or increasing staffing levels as appropriate, dependent upon the core service offer. Implement single staffing where appropriate and safe to do so. Would encourage and support further community/partner involvement in services, including internships, student placements, apprentices and volunteers and Parish & Town Councils.	9	107		116
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>437</b>		<b>474</b>
Note: the total amount of savings remains the same but is profiled over a reduced period of time. The savings in 2016-17 are predicated on the implementation of any necessary changes to the staffing structure being implemented by the end of February 2017				

## 5. Consultation

### 5.1 Prior to consultation the Service:

- assessed the Service's contribution to corporate outcomes and priorities;
  - took into account key national, regional and local strategies;
  - benchmarked services against other local authorities taking account of innovation, good practice and lessons learned;
  - examined usage, performance and demand for the service
  - reviewed available resources, including staff, buildings and stock.
- 5.2 Following approval by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, extensive consultation on the Library Strategy, Customer Services, the proposed closure of the Mobile Library Service and changes to Book Link commenced on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 and closed on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. Consultation on the proposed merger of Maltby Library and Customer Services closed on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.
- 5.3 A wide variety of methods were used to gauge user and non-user opinions, including:
- An online survey and dedicated email address which was available on the RMBC website;
  - Paper copies of the survey were made available in all 6 Joint Service Centres and 9 Community Libraries;
  - Informal consultation drop in sessions were held at each Customer Service Centre/Community Library to speak with customers about the proposal;
  - Staff and other Service Directorates across the Council were actively encouraged to take part in the consultation;
  - Attendance at Members' seminars and meetings with individual Members in order to provide detail of the proposals and capture feedback;
  - Letters issued to Town and Parish Councils, Unions, communities of interest and hard to reach groups informing them of the proposals. Meetings have taken place with many of these stakeholders to discuss the proposals in more detail and capture views;
  - Engaged with children and young people, the Youth Cabinet, Children's Centres and the Looked After Children's Council in order to ask for their views;
  - Captured the views of non-users of the service by undertaking surveys in high footfall areas across the Borough;
  - Issued letters to all schools in the Borough informing them of the consultation and encouraging students and teachers to take part. Workshops have taken place at a number of schools;
  - Questions on Library usage were included in the recent consultation undertaken by the Early Help and Family Engagement Service on the future youth offer.
  - Rotherham UNISON also conducted their own surveys relating to the Library Strategy and customer services, one which was distributed electronically to households in the Rotherham area and the second a survey at the outside market place in Rotherham Town Centre.
- 5.4 A summary of each questionnaire along with recommended actions is provided below.

5.5 1475 responses to the consultation have been received, made up of 1194 from paper based and online questionnaires and 281 non –user questionnaires. The Unison consultation received a total of 275 responses.

#### 5.6 Library Strategy and core service offer

5.6.1 The survey asked for views on the strategy and core service offer:

- The Library Strategy sets out the future plans for the development of the Library Service over the next 3 years taking account of reductions in local government funding. The consultation questionnaires focused on the following themes; the vision for the service, the core offer and more efficient service delivery.

5.6.2 Responses:

- 606 people completed the questionnaire providing their views on the proposed strategy; 97% (587) were current library users. These customers cited a number of reasons for using the service, but borrowing books came out as the main reason for visiting the library at 45%.
- 85% (517) of respondents were in agreement with the principles outlined in the vision. 94% (571) of respondents also agreed with the proposal to keep all 15 static sites open, many commenting that libraries are essential community hubs. Those who disagreed with the proposal suggested that there should be fewer, but better resourced, libraries.
- 87% (525) of people agreed with the core service offer, with 89% (538) agreeing with the proposal to work with volunteers, partners and community groups to help deliver additional services and activities in libraries. 21% (130) of those who agreed with the proposal would be willing to volunteer in some way. 59% (68) of those who disagreed with the proposal said that volunteers should not replace paid staff.
- 64% (390) of respondents disagreed with the proposal to operate libraries with fewer staff during certain times of the day.
- 82% (496) of respondents agreed with proposals to generate income within libraries.
- Respondents were asked when they would prefer to visit the library. Mornings were identified as the most convenient time, particularly on a Monday and Saturday.
- Rotherham UNISON received 275 responses to the two surveys which they carried out. The results showed that:  
When going into a library 92% (252) of people preferred a face to face service.  
82% (224) of people did not agree with opening libraries with fewer staff.  
88% (241) of people do not believe the Council should be using voluntary services to cover experienced librarians.

5.6.3 Outcome:

- The consultation feedback on the strategy demonstrated that Libraries are a well loved, much appreciated service and seen as the hub of the community.
- The majority of respondents agreed with the principles within the strategy and the core offer. However, a significant number of respondents both within the service and Unison questionnaire disagreed with the proposal to operate libraries with fewer staff. There was a strong feeling that this would impact on customer care/service quality.
- In order to address these concerns, whilst the Council will need to reduce the number of staff (where it is safe to do so) in order to reflect the demand for service, attempts to minimise where possible the number of locations and times that single staffing will apply. In addition, the Council will continue to have customer satisfaction measures in place which relate to the quality of service received, these will feed into our monthly Performance Management reports.

## 5.7 Customer Services

5.7.1 The survey asked for views on a range of proposals connected to the delivery of customer services:

- Consultation was carried out with both service users and non-users. Internal stakeholders who regularly use Riverside House cashiering service were also invited to respond.
- Areas for consultation included the withdrawal of the face to face cashiering service, the introduction of appointments and the level of support customers would need following the introduction of an online benefits service.

5.7.2 Responses:

- 313 people gave their views on the proposed changes with the overall result showing the following:
- 43% (134) of people completing the questionnaire currently use the face to face cashiering service. Of these, 40% (57) of people said withdrawing this service would have a major effect on them and 30% (43) said a minor effect.
- When asked what alternative payment methods would you use if the face to face cashiering service was withdrawn, 27% (48) said Paypoint/Post Office, 23% (41) said Payment Kiosk and 24% (42) said Direct Debit.
- 30% (94) of customers said they would require help to use alternative payment methods, the majority of these required help using either payment kiosks or using computers/internet, others required a list of Paypoint/Post Office locations.
- 69% (212) of users would be happy to make an appointment to speak to an advisor. Those who would not be happy expressed their desire to retain a drop in service.
- 54% (79) of people said they would require help to apply for Housing Benefit or Council Tax reduction online. Of these, when asked what help would you need, the majority of comments related to access to

and help with computers and support/advice when completing online forms.

- 72% (104) of people use a Library and Customer Services Centre to access council services, whilst 77% (129) of all respondents said they are able to use the internet.
- Rotherham UNISON received 275 responses to the two surveys which they carried out. The results showed that:  
When making a payment, 75% (206) of people said they would prefer to be served by a member of staff, 21% (58) of people said by using a payment kiosk and 4% (11) of people declined to answer.  
When asked if the face to face cashiering service were to be withdrawn and replaced with alternative ways to pay, what effect it would have, 29% (80) of people said a major effect, 29% (80) also said a minor effect, 39% (106) said none and 3% (8) declined to answer.  
42% (115) of people said they would need help to access council services online.
- The majority of feedback from internal departments was in relation to the cashiering function and how processes such as the reconciliation of payments, cashing and paying in of monies/cheques, petty cash and storage of Departmental monies will be dealt with in future.

#### 5.7.3 Outcome:

- A significant number of those currently using the face to face cashiering service felt that removing it would have a major effect. When investigating why this was the case the majority of comments referred to a preference for face to face contact. It is therefore proposed that the service implement a focused campaign targeting customers who currently use the cashiering service at Riverside to inform them about other methods of payment which involve transactions being carried out face to face i.e. paypoint/post office.
- In order to address the comments raised in relation to support in using alternative payment methods it is proposed that:  
the number of floorwalkers available during the transition period are increased to assist customers who wish to pay via the payment kiosk; support is provided to use the Council's website payment facility or telephone the Contact Centre, as well as Post Office and Paypoint outlets.
- Some concerns were raised by customers that the implementation of the appointment system would mean that it would be less convenient for them to 'drop in'. In order to address this it is proposed that whilst locality Customer Services centres would offer services on an appointment basis only, Riverside House would have a mixture of appointments and "drop ins" available.
- The service will continue to engage with Departments in order to agree alternative methods of delivering the internal cashiering processes within the Council.

#### 5.8 Withdrawal of the Mobile Library

- ##### 5.8.1 The survey asked users and non users for their views on withdrawal of the service:

- The total number of registered users of the service is 337, this figure includes those who use static sites as well as the mobile library. There are approximately 170-180 people who access the mobile service on a regular basis across 14 locations including Woodsetts Primary School. The service operates on a weekly schedule.

#### 5.8.2 Responses:

- 71 responses for the mobile service questionnaire were received with 56 from users of the service. The latter figure represents 16% of the total number of active mobile library borrowers. Of the active borrowers who responded 75% (42) use only the mobile to access library services and 25% (14) visit static sites as well as the mobile.
- The most commonly expressed advantage to the service was convenience. 95% (53) of the active borrowers who responded do not want the service to be withdrawn with 31% (16) of this figure citing social isolation as the main factor to explain this.
- 77% (43) of respondents said that withdrawing the service would have a major impact. Loss of a convenient access point to library services, an adverse impact on health and wellbeing and an inability to access other library services were the major factors influencing this response.
- The mobile library service is used predominantly by females and majority of the respondents are aged 65 or over. 11% (8) of respondents consider themselves to be disabled.
- Within the Library Strategy questionnaire 49% (297) of the 606 responses agreed with the proposal to withdraw the mobile service.

#### 5.8.3 Outcome:

- Static library sites provide coverage for the majority of the borough within a 2 mile radius. It is therefore proposed that the mobile service is removed at all locations within the 2 mile radius, but a smaller mobile vehicle continues to serve the localities which fall outside this distance, including Woodsetts Primary School.
- It is proposed that elderly users are offered the Book Link service, enabling them to still gain access to library material.
- Where there is sufficient interest/demand the service will develop deposit collections in locations where it is proposed that the Mobile Library is removed. Wentworth Village Community Association has shown a keen interest in having a deposit collection: it is proposed that this site is be used as a pilot.

### 5.9 Changes to the Book Link Service

#### 5.9.1 The survey asked users and non users for their views on changes to the service, including the withdrawal of the “walk on” service and change to frequency of visits:

- The service offers a three weekly schedule of visits to care homes, sheltered accommodation units and residents in their own homes. There are over 500 users of the service as well as an additional number in residential care homes. These homes receive a deposit collection of books once every five months.

5.9.2 Responses:

- A total of 122 responses about the Book Link service were received with the majority (86%, or 105) being from users of the service. This latter figure represents about 21% of the total number of users. The proposal incorporated two possible changes to service delivery, the end of the walk on component and alterations to the frequency of the service.
- 62% (65) of respondents select their books directly from the vehicle (walk on) and although 51% (33) of this group said they would be happy to receive books delivered to their home a similar number, 49% (36), said that they did not want home delivery. Twenty nine comments were received from this latter contingent. Three separate themes emerged from the comments with 59% (17) preferring to browse / choose their own books, 31% (9) saying that walk on alleviated social isolation and 10% (3) advising that delivering books to their own homes would be inconvenient.
- The social function of Book Link should not be underestimated as 21% of 112 comments received about the benefits of the service mentioned social / community factors.
- A majority of respondents, 57% (60), said they would accept delivery of books less frequently than at present with 49% (52) preferring a four weekly frequency.
- There was little enthusiasm for additional services which could mitigate the proposed changes with 86 out of 115 respondents declining to answer this question. Of the remainder 21% (6) said they would use community transport to visit a community library and 14% (4) asking for help to use the library service's online service. A further 14% (4) said they would like help with e readers.
- The questionnaire results showed that Book Link is used predominantly by females, 56% (69), with 60% (73) over 65 years of age. 51% (62) consider themselves to be disabled of which 28% (45) have a physical or mobility impairment.

5.9.3 Outcome:

- It is proposed that the current Book Link and Mobile vehicles are replaced by one vehicle, allowing for the walk on service for Book Link to be retained. Continuing the walk on service addresses the many social isolation concerns raised both in the paper based/online questionnaire and consultation meetings. It will contribute to the corporate priority to ensure that every adult is secure, responsible and empowered along with supporting our local Authority's requirement to comply with the Care Act 2014.
- It is proposed to extend the eligibility criteria for the Book link service to all people who would have significant difficulty accessing static libraries. In addition, the Service will look to make available e-book readers/tablets to customers who access the Book Link service.

5.10 Relocation of Maltby Library into Maltby Joint Service Centre

5.10.1 The survey asked users and non users for their views on the relocation of the library service, including the re-design of the layout of the Joint Service Centre.

- Due to the proposed change primarily impacting Maltby and the surrounding area, the Town Council, Rotherham Council ward members and the Local History Society, which regularly uses the library, were also invited to respond.

#### 5.10.2 Responses:

- 74 completed questionnaires were received, of these 60% (43) of people were in favour of the proposed merger.
- Many saw the merger as a sensible approach to making necessary budgetary savings whilst improving access to services by bringing them together in a modern building along with other community facilities. It was also felt by several people that the co-location will attract more library members.
- Those who objected to the move did so primarily on two main grounds. Firstly, there was an affection for the existing building because of previous and often long-standing use of the building and because there was a concern for the future development of the High Street. Secondly, there was a perception that the library was being squeezed into an already busy building, which they felt would lead to a decline in the service offer. Other concerns included noise levels and the lack of privacy in the proposed merger.
- One respondent raised concerns regarding both internal and external disabled access to the Maltby Joint service centre.
- The Local History Society raised a series of concerns in relation to the proposed merger. These related to; the reduction in staffing levels, accessing the Joint service centre particularly for the disabled and infirm, appropriate meeting room availability, noise levels and privacy.

#### 5.10.3 Outcome:

- The state of the fabric of the existing building plus the level of usage, together with the perceived advantages of bringing the library and customer service together in the same building, were persuasive in the majority of people's minds that the move should proceed. There will be clear benefits to the library service from moving into modern new accommodation where there is already a high level of community use.
- Subject to approval of the proposal, at the design stage of the new centre, options will be considered to make the best use of the space ensuring that it is accessible for all, including those with disabilities. Consideration will also be given to reducing noise levels and ensuring that the maximum natural light is available. A private interview room will be included in the design for any customers wishing to make use of it.
- There will be a reduction in the amount of shelf-space within the new library. However, a careful stock management policy will ensure that there is a satisfactory selection of books that people want and the free request service for books will continue. There will continue to be a circulation of stock which helps ensure that customers continue to see a changing and new selection available.
- The Service will liaise with Places for People and Asset Management to look to improve the disabled access in and around the Joint Service Centre.



- The proposal is dependent upon their being an overall property business case related to the wider area. This will be brought forward separately by Asset Management.

5.11 A number of areas for further work have been identified during the consultation period which in turn may impact on future service delivery options and/or lead to additional opportunities for efficiencies. These are detailed within the Library Strategy and its action plan.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 Subject to approval by Cabinet, adoption of the Library Strategy and associated savings proposals will be considered by Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

6.2 The Library Strategy runs between 2016 and 2019. Accountability for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy, core offer and action plan lies with the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager

6.3 The savings in 2016-17 are predicated on the implementation of any necessary changes to the staffing structure being implemented by the end of February 2017

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

7.1 The 2016-17 revenue budget related to the area of Libraries and Customer Services considered by this review is £5,034,590 prior to the approved savings value set out in paragraph 7.4. This includes property budgets of £1,220,333. The cost of the libraries service alone was £3.2m in each of the last two financial years.

7.2 Proposed reductions in expenditure across the review area are detailed in Section 4, table 2. These total £474,000 across 2016/17 and 2017/18.

7.3 The savings approved by Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 were based on an implementation spanning across the current and next two financial years, realising a savings profile as per the table in 7.4 below. Under the proposals within this report, the majority of the budget reductions will now be implemented in 2017-18, rather than 2016-17 and the savings assumed for 2018-19 will be brought forward a year. The profile of savings for these proposals is therefore different.

7.4 The savings in 2016-17 take account of the transfer of a number of staff from the Regeneration and Environment Directorate into Finance and Customer services during 2016-17 and are predicated on the implementation of a revised staffing structure by the end of February 2017. The table below summarises the revised savings profile, compared to the original profile.

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	Total £000
Original Savings Profile	250	178	46	474
Revised Savings Profile	37	437	0	474
Difference	-213	+259	-46	0

The savings pressure of £213,000 for 2016-17 identified above is reflected in the July Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016-17, which is also on this agenda.

- 7.5 Whilst the savings are not being achieved as planned in the current year, the directorate overall is mitigating this financial position. It is therefore proposed that the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan is amended to retain the requirement for the £213k savings value overall this year (by other mitigating actions) and the revised savings profile for 2017-18 and 2018-19 be reflected in future revisions of the MTFs which will assist the financial position of the Council next year.

## 8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The adoption of the “Annual Library Plan” is currently a decision for Council. The Library Strategy fulfils this purpose.
- 8.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes it the duty of every library authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. In fulfilling its duty, the Council must have regard to the desirability of:
- Securing the facilities are available for the borrowing of and reference to books and other printed material, recorded music and pictures and film to meet the general and special requirements of adults and children
  - Encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service and of providing advice as to its use and information as may be required by users of the service
- 8.3 The Council also has to ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under section 1 of that Act, the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition, under section 149 of the Act, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.3.1 In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- Encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

9.1 The implementation of the savings proposals will lead to changes in roles, responsibilities and ways of working across the Service and at all levels. This will also include reductions in staff numbers. Specific proposals will be subject to consultation with staff and unions.

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 The adoption of the Library Strategy and core service offer will impact on services to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10.2 The withdrawal of the Mobile Library and changes to the Book Link Service will affect vulnerable adults. Mitigation to those changes is included in the revised proposals.

10.3 Within the core offer, the Service has included a “Children’s offer”. (Appendix 1, Library Strategy, page 21)

10.4 A number of items within the action plan relate specifically to improving services to children and young people and vulnerable adults. (Appendix 1, Library Strategy, p23-26)

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 An Equality Analysis has been carried out on the overall Library Strategy and core service offer, as well as the proposals relating to the Mobile Library Service; the Book Link Service; the closure of the face to face cashiering service at Riverside House; the introduction of an

appointments booking system for the delivery of customer services; the implementation of electronic claims and a risk based verification approach for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction; and the merger of Maltby Library and Customer Service Centre. These have been reviewed by the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer

- 11.2 In each case specific actions or targets have been identified and detailed in relation to protected characteristics. The summaries of the analyses will be published as appropriate.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

- 12.1 Partners and other Directorates have been consulted on the proposals. There are specific implications for services whose customers use the Riverside House face to face cashiering service.
- 12.2 A wide range of current partners and Council services expressed an interest in working with the Library Service in the future. In addition, a number of individuals and organisations suggested additional opportunities for future partnership working, including co-location and joint delivery of services.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 In order to ensure rigorous and robust decision making, proposals for future service delivery have taken account of the statutory nature of the service, the resources available, existing and projected need for the service, including consideration of vulnerable groups.
- 13.2 The implementation of savings proposals has taken account of the timescales for decision making and any associated staff and union consultation.
- 13.3 Levels of risk associated with implementation of the individual savings proposals were considered by Council as part of the revenue budget setting process on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.
- 13.4 As the Authority continues to face challenging financial circumstances, there will be a need to identify opportunities to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service. These proposals therefore need to be implemented as soon as possible to ensure that the Service is ready to respond positively to further change.

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Jon Baggaley

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- Not applicable

Elenore Fisher: Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>



# Library Strategy

2016-2019



Books &  
Information



Computers



AudioBooks



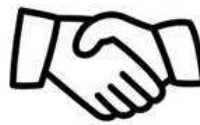
eBooks



Skills



Activities



Meeting  
People



Wellbeing

## Foreword

Rotherham's Libraries provide a wide variety of services to adults and children who live, learn, work in or visit Rotherham and we know that the service is valued by those who use it. This document sets out our future plans for the development of the Library Service. It builds on and replaces the Council's successful Library Strategy 2011 - 2015.

Our vision for Rotherham Libraries is that:

- ❖ Our libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- ❖ The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham communities;
- ❖ We will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential;
- ❖ Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our libraries will be recognised neighbourhood hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology;
- ❖ Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

Our challenge is to deliver good and improving library services across the borough during a period of financial stringency. The Council is committed to providing library services across the borough, but the need for budget reductions means that the service will have to do things differently and will need to continue to adapt to new technologies and ways of working when responding to the needs and aspirations of our customers.

This strategy recommends that the Council reaffirms its commitment to providing library facilities in the heart of our communities.

However, we recognise that in order for us to deliver services whilst facing significantly reduced budgets we will need to use our buildings more effectively and will require continued help from volunteers, community members and our partners to achieve success. Delivery of some aspects of the strategy will therefore be dependent on the public's ongoing commitment to the Library Service.



I would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this Strategy, particularly those who responded to the public consultation during the summer of 2016. Their comments are included throughout this document. I believe this is an ambitious, yet realistic, strategy and core service offer when set in the context of ongoing pressures on public finances.

**Councillor Yasseen, Cabinet Member**



## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

Rotherham's Library Service provides libraries in the heart of communities across the borough. It offers a wide range of books, e-books and other materials for loan, provides free access to computers and to the internet and also provides a

"People should have the right to a local library."

range of activities and events. These activities include helping people to use computers for the first time, helping people to get a job, introducing children to stories and picture books, providing opportunities for children and adults to mix with others and helping families to learn new skills.

The net cost of Rotherham's Library Service was £3,259,184 in 2014/15 and it employed 71.7 full time equivalent staff at the end of March 2015.

### 2.2 The Local Authority Statutory Duty

Rotherham Libraries deliver a statutory service, as directed by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This Act states that the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide a free, comprehensive and efficient library service for all who wish to use it. The Act requires the Council to provide facilities for borrowing books and other material and states that Local Authorities must encourage adults and children to make full use of the service.

The Secretary of State has the power to intervene if he believes that the Local Authority is not providing a 'comprehensive and efficient' service.

Whilst the core library service is free under the Act, the Local Government and Housing Act 1980 and Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations 1991 give Library Authorities the power to make charges for the provision of some library services.

### 2.3 Rotherham's local demographic profile

The needs of those people who live, work and study in Rotherham have been considered when developing the Library Strategy 2016 - 2019 and underpin the principles we will follow.

The Library Service will provide a universal offer to all residents, but will ensure that this offer is flexible to meet the needs of specific Rotherham communities and Rotherham people.

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire, covering an area of 118 square miles. Rotherham is made up of a mix of urban areas, suburbs and rural villages, interspersed with large areas of open countryside. About 70% of the borough is rural with about half of the land used for agriculture. Our libraries will be located across the borough, so that people can obtain the service easily close to their own communities. When people cannot visit one of our static sites we will assist and enable them to access the service in a variety of other ways, including providing services online or in partnership with others.



There is a strong community spirit in Rotherham, with people working together to do their best for families and communities. The Library Service offer provides opportunities for people to mix together in an informal environment and to participate in activities and events which celebrate different neighbourhoods and different communities. Our libraries will act as neighbourhood hubs, bringing communities together and providing a focal point for local service provision.

12% of Rotherham's population lives in rural areas. About half of the Borough's population lives in and around the main urban area of Rotherham and the remainder live in a number of smaller towns - Wath, Swinton, Dinnington and Maltby and in many surrounding villages. All libraries work with partners and other Council services to enable local people to access a range of services close to where they live.

In 2014 Rotherham's population was estimated to be 260,100. The borough comprises a diverse mix of people, cultures and communities and has an ageing population.

Over the next 30 years there will be an additional 20,000 residents over the age of 65, and a relative decline in the younger population. There are approximately 56,100 children and young people living within the borough currently, of whom 16,000 are aged 0 – 4.

The Library Service will provide access to reading in all its many forms, for children, adults and families, delivered in engaging and innovative ways. Our libraries will be welcoming spaces for all and will offer activities which will help to combat social isolation and support the elderly to live well in their local communities.

“[Libraries] are a vital resource for any community, a safe welcoming space for people to access information, to encourage reading and knowledge amongst young and old alike. Also they are a vital resource in this digital age for anyone who needs help with accessing services via the internet.”

In 2015, Rotherham was ranked 52nd most deprived out of 326 English Districts and a third of the population live in deprived areas. The key drivers of deprivation are health and disability, education, training and skills and employment. The Library Service will continue to work with partners to help reduce deprivation levels across the borough.

Libraries will provide opportunities for people to improve their literacy skills, provide access to skills based training which is linked to improving employment, provide access to ICT and access to advice and support from partner services. Our libraries will also provide opportunities for apprenticeships and for people to volunteer.

Rotherham’s Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is relatively small, but has been growing and becoming increasingly diverse. 8.1% of the population belonged to ethnic groups other than White British in the 2011 census. The majority of Rotherham’s BME residents were born abroad (55%) and are far more likely to have limited English language skills.

Within Rotherham, BME communities are particularly concentrated in Eastwood, Ferham, Masborough, Wellgate and Broom Valley, which are mainly deprived areas close to the town centre. These were the early settlement areas for the Kashmiri and Pakistani community and recently for the Roma community. Since 2001, there has been some migration of the Pakistani and Kashmiri community to the more suburban areas of Broom and Moorgate.

The Library Service will provide materials in other languages and will provide support for those people who need help to improve their language skills, or to find out more about their local community.

The 2011 census identified that 21.9% of Rotherham's population had a limiting long term illness. This is higher than the national average of 17.6%. 895 people in Rotherham are on the blind register and 1290 people are on the partially sighted register. The majority of blind and partially sighted people are over 65 years old. There are 265 people living in Rotherham who are on the deaf register and 1,005 people on the hard of hearing register.

Rotherham Libraries will offer a wide range of stock for loan, including large print, spoken word and easy read material and the service will provide information and support to enable people to live well for longer.

Rotherham has an above average number of people providing unpaid care, with 31,001 people identified as carers in the 2011 census. Rotherham Libraries will work with our partners to provide information, activities and support to carers.

There are approximately 46,310 people in Rotherham who do not have access to the internet. This estimate is based on ONS data for South Yorkshire, which indicates that 82% of the population in South Yorkshire has access to the internet.

Our libraries will support these people by providing free access to computers, free public Wi-Fi and activities and support for people to improve their digital skills or access services online.

#### ***2.4 Local context and local policies***

The Library Strategy is aligned to the outcomes from the 'Views of Rotherham' community workshops, held in 2015. It supports delivery of Rotherham's Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan, which focuses on our key priorities:

- ❖ Every child making the best start in life;
- ❖ Every adult secure, responsible and empowered;
- ❖ A strong community in a clean, safe environment;
- ❖ Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future; and
- ❖ Running a modern, efficient Council.

Rotherham Libraries work closely with partners and community groups and this enables us to deliver improved and additional services. There are wide ranging examples of such work - including close working with adult learning groups; working in partnership with teachers; working with Rotherham United Football Club to deliver sports activities; working with Public Health England to deliver health and wellbeing activities; working with the advice sector to provide guidance and support for Rotherham residents and working closely with other local authority services to enhance service delivery for Rotherham's adults, children and young people.

Rotherham's Library Service encourages the use of volunteers and young volunteers and recognises the added value that volunteers bring by offering their time, skills,

"Volunteering was the perfect opportunity for me as it built my confidence and gave me the experience I needed to start off my career. It helped me to apply for jobs as it made me confident in applying and I was able to seek support from the library with applications and was given a glowing reference. I was also introduced to other trained teachers in ESOL that had been teaching for many years so this gave me the opportunities to meet experienced people in the field I wished to start my career in. Through the support I have received I have been able to secure a full time job."

experience and commitment. Our Volunteer Guide provides direction to our volunteers and staff members, enabling them to effectively undertake their duties.

Rotherham's Stock procedures guide the way the local authority buys library books and other library materials. Most of our stock is bought via a North West and Yorkshire book buying consortium comprising 35 authorities. This ensures we are able to buy new material at the best price and we achieve significant discounts on stock purchases. The service buys stock throughout the year, in a wide range of media, and regularly reviews usage so that we can be sure that we are meeting the needs of our service users. In 2015/16, Rotherham Libraries held 270,326 items of stock for public use. The current annual budget available for stock purchases is £277,664. This budget is reviewed annually.

## **2.5 Key Stakeholders**

Rotherham citizens, businesses, councillors, partners of the Library Service, our staff members and our volunteers are key stakeholders in this strategy. The strategy has been developed following feedback from service users, non-users, council staff and our partners.

Research has also been carried out to determine the likely future trends in service provision. This includes both the use of social media and developments in technologies which provide us with opportunities to develop services to new audiences.

## **2.6 National context**

Other than the statutory duty, there are no longer national standards for library provision. As a result, library services across the country are delivered in different ways and services are shaped by local policy, customer need and available resources.

Since the publication of Rotherham’s previous Library Strategy in 2011, a number of national initiatives are guiding and informing national provision of library services.

“Libraries need to have a USP, a brand, a new concept.”

A range of ‘Universal Offers’ have been developed by the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) in partnership with Arts Council England and these were launched in 2013/14. The

offers have been informed by customer research and the service that users should expect to receive relating to the key areas of health, digital, reading, information, learning and children. Rotherham’s Library Strategy takes account of our commitment to implementing the Universal Offers.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for national library policy and works closely with Arts Council England (ACE) on a range of issues and on developing the sector. Libraries are able to access grants and support from Arts Council England. These grants enable authorities to test new approaches to library service delivery, specifically by working together with arts and other cultural organisations.

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) leads and manages public libraries in the United Kingdom. The Society is made up of the heads of service of each library authority. Rotherham Libraries are represented on this body and play an active role in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

In 2012/13, Arts Council England led a programme of research and debate known as 'Envisioning the library of the future'. This programme helped to develop a long term vision for public libraries in England. The findings from this research focused on four priority areas for development, which were:

- ❖ Place the library as the hub of the community;
- ❖ Make the most of digital technology and creative media;
- ❖ Ensure libraries are resilient and sustainable;
- ❖ Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

This research has been used to guide the themes which underpin delivery of Rotherham's Library Strategy 2016 - 2019.

In 2014, central government commissioned William Sieghart to investigate how the public library system could best work in the future. Recommendations from this work have now evolved into the development of a Libraries Task Force, led by Local Government.

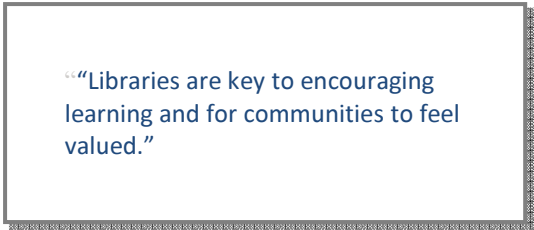
The task force is responsible for providing leadership and nationally reinvigorating public libraries. Rotherham Libraries, in conjunction with the Society of Chief Librarians, will work closely with the task group to implement its priorities, including:

- ❖ Digital enablement – including the provision of universal Wi-Fi access, e-lending, digital shared networks and quality content;
- ❖ Libraries adding value – making stronger, strategic links between libraries and other policies such as Health and Wellbeing, business and economic growth;
- ❖ Best practice – developing a toolkit which will help Local Authorities and library services through sharing and linking to existing and new best practice and building sustainable long term models for libraries;
- ❖ Workforce development – identifying the skills needed to help the library workforce deliver and take on new roles as part of wider service provision;
- ❖ Communications – promoting recognition and support for libraries.

### 3. Rotherham Libraries - Current Position

#### 3.1 Our Service Locations

There are 15 libraries located across the borough. Currently 98% of Rotherham residents are able to access a library within 2 miles of their home.



“Libraries are key to encouraging learning and for communities to feel valued.”

Our largest Library and Customer Service Centre is located at Riverside House in Rotherham’s town centre. The Library @ Riverside holds our biggest collection and range of lending material in the borough, houses heritage and arts items and has indoor and outdoor performance spaces for events and activities, including readings, music recitals, theatre and comedy. Customer Service provision is available here, together with free access to public Wi-Fi, public computers, and a wide range of skills development activities.

There are five Joint Service Centres across the borough, which provide residents with access to a wide range of public sector services, including NHS, leisure and social care facilities. A large library facility is available in four of these Joint Service Centres, located in Aston, Dinnington, Rawmarsh and Swinton. These sites offer free access to computers, public Wi-Fi, digital skills training, supported access to most council services and a community meeting space.

Rotherham has a further ten community libraries, ranging in their size and reach, depending on the make-up of each local community. These are based in Brinsworth, Greasbrough, Kimberworth, Kiveton Park, Maltby, Mowbray Gardens, Thorpe Hesley, Thurcroft, Wath and Wickersley.

These libraries also offer free access to computers, public Wi-Fi, digital skills training and community meeting spaces.

The Service also provides vehicle based services, predominantly to the elderly, and a School Loan Service, which offers resources to support schools.

Rotherham Libraries also provide a digital library service, which enables people to access us online 24/7/365. Users can join the library, download e-books and other digital resources, reserve or renew books online and engage with us through social media.



### 3.2 Our customers – current and future

“Reading is a massive part of my life, and it should be part of everyone’s.”

719,827 visits were made to our libraries in 2015/16. Visitors included people attending courses or clubs; using the library as a space to meet others; using computers to access the internet; accessing council services; using the library as a quiet space to read; do homework or complete research and those wanting to borrow books. 22,472 people borrowed a total of

535,194 books or other material from us in 2015/16 - approximately 9% of Rotherham’s residents.

Customer satisfaction levels have been regularly assessed. In 2015/16, 96.7% of customers told us that they were satisfied with the level of service we provided.

The number of visitors has reduced in some of our libraries. This is due to many factors, including relocating the Central Library away from Rotherham Town Centre, an increase in the availability of low cost e-books, many people using the internet instead of libraries to find information quickly and also significantly because of a reduction in the level of our marketing and outreach.

Usage of libraries is declining nationally. CIPFA statistics indicate that there has been a 14% decline in visits to libraries between 2010 and 2015. In Rotherham, there has been a 24% decline in visits to our libraries over the same period.

However, this is not the case everywhere, as some individual libraries, both locally and nationally, have not seen a decline in usage.

During recent consultation, people who don’t use our libraries were asked questions around why they didn’t use the service and what would encourage them to do so. This identified a lack of awareness related to the services on offer, including free Wi-Fi, e-books and IT classes and a resultant need to improve the profile of the service amongst local residents.

Over the next few years the service will work closely with local authorities, trusts, mutual and community managed sites that are successfully increasing their visitor numbers and book loans. This will enable us to review best practice and improve our ways of working. To have a sustainable future, Rotherham Libraries will continue to focus on the needs of individual local communities, widen our appeal and attract more customers.

### **3.3 The changing face of Rotherham Libraries**

In 2012/13, the Library and Information Service merged with Customer Services to create a larger and more economical service area. The merger of these services has already achieved savings of over £1.25 million from their combined budgets. The new service area is known as Rotherham Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs.

The merger between Libraries and the Council's Customer Services function means that customers can now access more services from one place. Whilst implementing the merger we have restructured our workforce and have greater staff flexibility and a reinforced focus on outcome based service delivery. Our staff members are knowledgeable, skilled, customer orientated and flexible. We have also recruited a number of excellent volunteers who support us in enhancing the services that we offer.

Since the last Strategy was published, in 2011, in full consultation with our customers, we have revised our library opening hours, changed our mobile library routes and have closed Kimberworth Park Library.

We have continued to invest in our library buildings. We have opened our flagship Library @ Riverside and a brand new library and customer services area within our Joint Service Centre at Rawmarsh. We have also modernised Kimberworth, Dinnington and Aston Libraries and have merged the Library and Customer Service Centre into one building at Swinton.

"I feel it is vital for the library service to adapt to customers changing needs and to make good use of the available new technologies and resources."

In common with most libraries nationally, Rotherham Libraries have focused on digital developments which have helped us to improve customer accessibility and modernise our service. We offer free downloadable e books, have begun to actively use social media and have introduced electronic notifications, so that we can be responsive to customer needs and increase our customer reach.

We have also included the library service in the Council's single customer account – 'Your Account', meaning that Rotherham residents have online access to a range of council services using a single user identification and password.

In addition, we have installed self-service kiosks in many of our libraries, eliminating counter queues and releasing staff onto the library floor. We have upgraded our People's Network computer facilities so that our customers have a choice of using tablets and laptops as well as traditional computers and we have recently installed free public Wi-Fi in all our libraries as we are aware that many of our customers wish to utilise their own devices when visiting us.

We have redesigned the ground floor of Riverside House in order to deliver an improved customer experience and support additional services.

Working in partnership with others, we help many people to learn new skills or develop existing ones. Activities such as learning ICT skills, work clubs, English classes for speakers of other languages, family learning and staying healthy sessions are regularly run in our libraries.

In addition we deliver outreach sessions, enabling us to support more customers.

Our local service delivery offer has been revised in line with newly introduced national library offers, as detailed below:



### **3.4 SWOT analysis 2016**

#### **Strengths of the service**

- ❖ There is a network of libraries located in the heart of communities which have free Wi-Fi, internet access and a good range of lending stock;
- ❖ Many libraries are already co-located, creating a one stop shop for public services;
- ❖ Merger of Libraries and Customer Services creates an efficient, economical service;
- ❖ Strong partnership links exist;
- ❖ Universal offers are already embedded within the local service offer;
- ❖ Helpful and knowledgeable Library and Customer Services staff are well positioned to support customers.

#### **Weaknesses in the service**

- ❖ There is a lack of outreach and marketing activity taking place within the service as a result of reduced staffing budgets;
- ❖ Insufficient analysis of the reasons that visitor numbers are in overall decline;
- ❖ Volunteer recruitment is not embedded within the service;
- ❖ Staff training programmes need further development to ensure specialist skills are retained.

#### **Opportunities for the service**

- ❖ A review of all current buildings and locations to identify barriers to access, and potential for relocations and modernisation of buildings in order to improve service delivery and make better use of resources;
- ❖ Work with Children and Young People's Services, schools, academies, children's centres and borough wide partners to contribute to the development of a child centred borough;

- ❖ Work with colleagues in Adult Care and Housing to improve the offer for vulnerable adults and to explore the potential for co-located and co-delivered services;
- ❖ Work with colleagues in Public Health to develop opportunities to improve wellbeing and mental health;
- ❖ Improve access to library services within Rotherham Town Centre;
- ❖ Build on previous investment to develop libraries as digital hubs within Rotherham communities, enabling all Rotherham's residents to access online services;
- ❖ Make creative and innovative use of technology to deliver improved services;
- ❖ Bid for external funding in order to develop new ways of working;
- ❖ Explore alternative delivery models; including the potential to co-locate with others;
- ❖ Work with voluntary, public and private sector colleagues, including neighbouring authorities, to develop new and innovative partnership working and co-delivered or commissioned services,
- ❖ Participate in the review of neighbourhood working in order to identify further potential for libraries to develop their role as neighbourhood hubs and to contribute to social cohesion.
- ❖ Adopt a commercial approach to service delivery, identifying opportunities for working closely with local businesses

### **Threats to the service**

- ❖ Reductions in budgets may compromise the ability to provide a comprehensive service, available to all;
- ❖ Inability to recruit and retain volunteers within the service will impact on the service offer which can be provided;
- ❖ The Service has recently undergone significant change and this is expected to continue over the next few years. The Service must retain the appropriate skills and capacity to deliver this change.

## 4. Consultation

Consultation on this Strategy, vision, and core service offer, took place between the 17<sup>th</sup> March and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. Comments were invited using printed forms in all Libraries and Customer Service Centres, online via the Council's website, via a dedicated email address and in person at a range of meetings and drop in sessions. In addition, consultation took place with non-users of the service. 606 questionnaires were received from individuals, the majority being current library users.

The vast majority of respondents (85%) were in agreement with the principles outlined in the vision. 94% of respondents also agreed with the proposal to keep all current static sites open, many commenting that Libraries are essential community hubs. Those who disagreed with the proposal suggested that there should be fewer, but better resourced, libraries.

87% of respondents agreed with the core service offer, with 89% agreeing with the proposal to work with volunteers, partners and community groups to help deliver additional services and activities in libraries. 21% of those who agreed with the proposal would be willing to volunteer in some way. 59% of those who disagreed with the proposal said that volunteers should not replace paid staff.

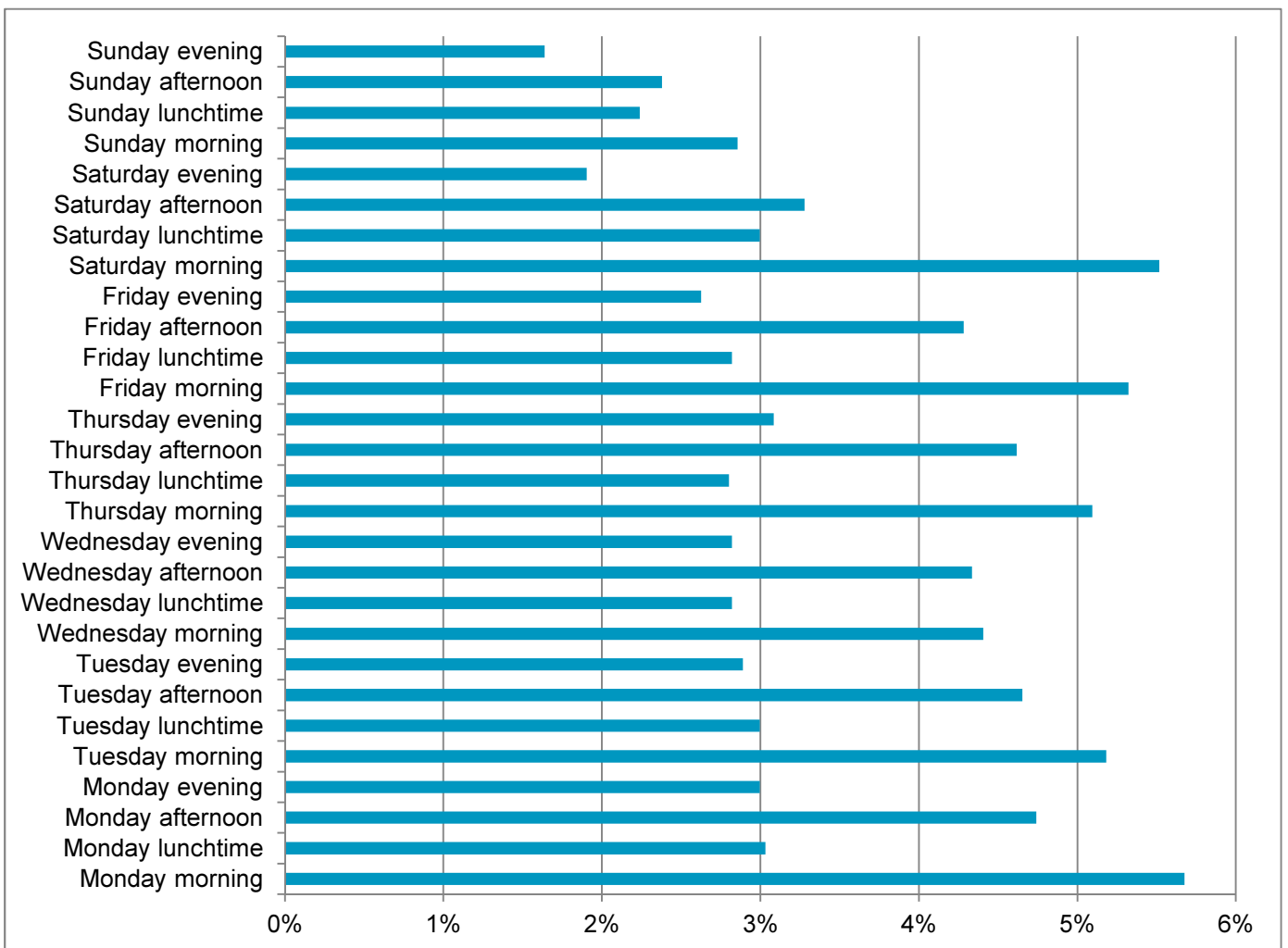
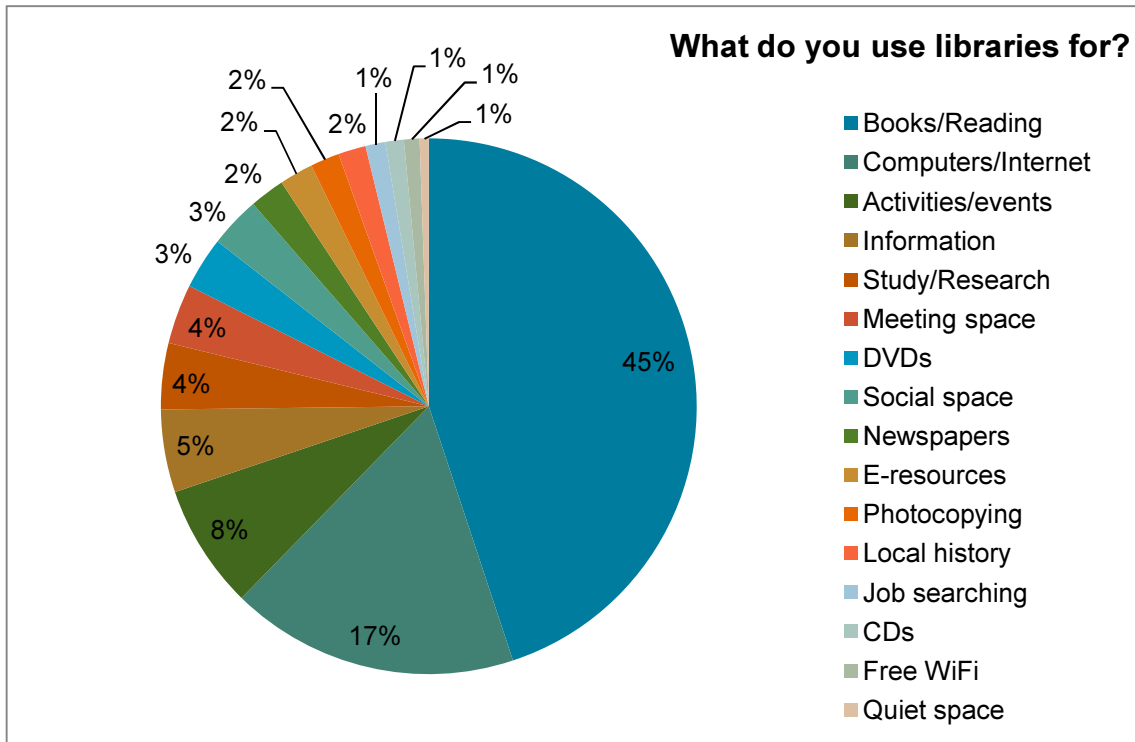
64% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to operate libraries with fewer staff during certain times of the day; the majority were worried about the impact on customer care/service quality.

82% of respondents agreed with our proposal to generate income within libraries, and made suggestions as to how money could be raised.

95% of respondents agreed with the proposal to continue with the redevelopment of libraries as modern, welcoming spaces.

Where appropriate, the Strategy and core offer have been amended in line with consultation feedback. Comments from individual have been included throughout this strategy.

Customers also told us why they use libraries and when they would prefer to use them:



## 5. Our Vision, Key Principles and Core Offer

### 5.1 Our Vision

- ❖ Rotherham Libraries will be well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- ❖ The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham's communities;
- ❖ The service will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and to develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential;
- ❖ Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our libraries will be recognised neighbourhood hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology.
- ❖ Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by helping to support Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

"The vision seeks to maintain as much provision as possible with minimum disruption to people that access the library. I think that there are some good plans afoot that will help the library become more sustainable."

### 5.2 Our Key Principles

- ❖ Our libraries will be modern, vibrant, creative and innovative spaces where everyone is welcome;
- ❖ Rotherham Libraries will provide all members of the community with access to information and library resources from birth and will be free to join;
- ❖ We will lend our books, e-books and audio books to all members of the community for free;
- ❖ We will provide a wide range of high quality resources in a range of formats to suit the needs of the community;
- ❖ We will provide free use of the internet, free public Wi-Fi and public access computers, tablets and e readers in our library buildings;



- ❖ We will use technology to help us become more efficient and enhance our service delivery;
- ❖ We will provide online access to the library service 24/7/365;
- ❖ We will provide welcoming and easily accessible physical spaces which are located in the heart of local communities and, within the resources we have available, open at times to suit local needs;
- ❖ When people cannot visit one of our static sites we will assist and enable them to access the service in a variety of other ways, including providing services online or in partnership with others;
- ❖ We will work with other council services and our partners to enable libraries to play a key role as neighborhood hubs;
- ❖ We will work closely with external partners and build relationships with government and non-government bodies, so that we can maximise funding within the service;
- ❖ We will continue to provide face to face services to local people, prioritising areas of greatest deprivation, services to children and young people and vulnerable adults and services focused on improving health, increasing jobs and employability;
- ❖ We will have a range of skilled, professional staff members who will work in partnership with others to open up access to library resources and deliver added value activities, exciting, inspirational events and learning opportunities;
- ❖ We will provide spaces to deliver activities which support family learning, including support for employment, developing digital skills and improving the confidence and ability of children in reading, vocabulary and writing skills;
- ❖ We will adopt a commercial approach to service delivery, identifying opportunities for working closely with local businesses
- ❖ We will take steps to protect our service users from any harm when accessing Library and Customer Services.

### **5.3 Our Core Offer**

- ❖ We will provide a library service for everyone in Rotherham;
- ❖ We will provide libraries in communities across the borough, giving easy access to the majority of Rotherham residents;
- ❖ Our libraries will be well maintained and welcoming;
- ❖ The opening hours of our libraries will be based on current demand and community needs. Days and times of opening will reflect the requirements of the local community;
- ❖ We will offer a home delivery service for customers who are unable to visit one of our libraries without significant inconvenience;
- ❖ We will provide a digital library service for all to use, meaning that customers can join the library, make reservations, renew books and receive notifications online at any time of the day or night;
- ❖ We will focus resources on promotion and development of the service;

#### **Our Reading Offer**

- ❖ We will offer books and reading resources for loan which reflect local need, in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will annually spend approximately £1 per head of population on new resources and material;
- ❖ We will offer a wide range of material, including audio, e books and magazines, large print, music and material in other languages.
- ❖ We will provide a request service for books and other material.
- ❖ We will provide material to support reading groups in all our libraries.

#### **Our Health Offer**

- ❖ We will offer a range of material to support health and wellbeing

#### **Our Digital Offer**

- ❖ We will provide free access to the internet for every customer in every library;
- ❖ We will provide free Wi-Fi in every library;

- ❖ We will provide an ‘assisted digital’ offer in our Library and Customer Service Centres, so that customers who need help applying for services are supported;
- ❖ We will provide help to use computers in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will provide assistive technology for those customers who need to use it;
- ❖ We will offer photocopying, scanning and print facilities;
- ❖ We will provide a basic ICT course each month; so that we can help people improve their digital skills.

### **Our Children’s Offer**

- ❖ We will deliver a programme of activities for children in each of our libraries. At least 2 children’s reading based activities will be delivered per week in all sites; of which one will be for under 5’s;
- ❖ We will deliver summer reading activities to help maintain literacy skills;
- ❖ We will deliver Bookstart packs;
- ❖ We will use our School’s Loan Service to deliver library services to schools, which is funded via subscriptions.

### **Our Information Offer**

- ❖ We will signpost customers to material and activities which will help them find information, improve their wellbeing, find employment opportunities, increase their skills or improve their knowledge;
- ❖ We will offer access to council customer services at our Library and Customer Service Centres;
- ❖ We will provide support to access essential government online information and services in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will have at least one staff member working in each site to assist with local enquiries;
- ❖ We will provide facilities for research and study in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will provide a range of online resources to support research and help people learn new skills.

### **Our Events and Activities Offer**

- ❖ We will provide space for others to work in partnership with us, so our libraries are seen as community/neighbourhood hubs;

- ❖ We will deliver reading based activities to support the following initiatives, as a minimum:
  - Get online week
  - Summer reading challenge
  - World Book Day & Night
  - National Libraries Day
  - Literature celebrations
  - Culture at Riverside

**We will work with others to help us deliver services:**

- ❖ We will work in partnership with others (including educational facilities, volunteers, public sector and voluntary sector colleagues, grant funding) to deliver further activities and targeted services, based on the needs of communities;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide courses to support people who speak English as another language (ESOL);
- ❖ We will work with others to provide activities and support to increase adult literacy;
- ❖ We will work with others to deliver a celebration of reading for children who are in care;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide performance, music, poetry and art exhibitions;
- ❖ We will work with others to run activities which will improve social isolation;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide family learning activities in our libraries;
- ❖ We will work with others to extend our opening hours, where there is a need and customer demand to do so.
- ❖ We will provide work experience opportunities to those seeking employment or to those wishing to volunteer

“Using volunteers, partners and community groups to deliver extra services and activities is a good idea and helps to offer a wide range of services for users.”

## Appendix 1 – Action Plan 2016-18

The individual projects and actions which are required to achieve the vision are organised around the following key themes:

- ❖ Inspiring a love of reading and providing opportunities to learn skills for life;
- ❖ Developing our libraries as welcoming, easily accessible, attractive places at the heart of Rotherham's communities;
- ❖ Using modern digital solutions to improve service delivery and develop Rotherham libraries as digital hubs;
- ❖ Attracting and retaining our audiences;
- ❖ Delivering excellent services through our employees, partners and volunteers;
- ❖ Developing a range of alternative, resilient and sustainable models of service delivery.

Performance indicators include: the number of people borrowing books and other materials; the number of visits which help people learn something, develop their skills or get a job.

### ***Inspiring a love of reading and providing opportunities to learn skills for life***

- ❖ We will implement, publicise and evaluate a reading and skills based annual events programme for Libraries, working with internal and external colleagues and partners;
- ❖ We will encourage and support children and young people, their families and carers, to develop a life-long love for reading;
- ❖ We will devise and implement a new reader's group offer to create a dynamic reading community in Rotherham.

### ***Developing libraries as welcoming, easily accessible, attractive places at the heart of Rotherham's communities***

- ❖ We will undertake a property review of all static sites, to include identification of access issues, an appropriate maintenance programme and potential for relocations and additional developments;

- ❖ We will improve the offer for vulnerable adults and work with partners to explore the potential for co-delivered and co-located services;
- ❖ We will improve library provision in the town centre;
- ❖ We will explore the potential to work with community transport to enable access to libraries;
- ❖ We will explore the possibility of relocating Maltby Library into Maltby Joint Service Centre;
- ❖ We will carry out further local consultation to identify opportunities to streamline opening hours in line with local need.

***Using modern digital solutions to improve service delivery and develop Rotherham libraries as digital hubs***

- ❖ We will use digital technology to improve services and reduce costs. This will include the implementation of additional opportunities for self service;
- ❖ We will implement an Assisted Digital Offer, supporting customers who need help to access Council services online;
- ❖ We will redesign our online library service. This will include improvements to the library website, library catalogue and the development of downloadable content (eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and other e-resources) We will also trial an online reading group;
- ❖ We will develop and implement a digital activity programme, to include code clubs, ‘try before you buy’ and digital skills training sessions;
- ❖ We will maximise the potential of our public Wi-Fi provision, by providing opportunities and activities for people who wish to use their own devices. This will include the development of a collection of eBooks for Readers Groups to be accessed on their own devices or pre-loaded onto a library eBook reader;
- ❖ We will increase digital take up within digitally excluded groups (e.g. Book Link client base, Visually Impaired Readers Group);
- ❖ In partnership with Heritage Services, we will enable access to local history visual images.

***Attracting and retaining new audiences***

- ❖ We will encourage active library membership by all children;
- ❖ We will increase the number of apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities;
- ❖ We will develop services aimed at improving wellbeing and mental health, including the potential for increased involvement in social prescribing;
- ❖ We will develop an outreach programme for children, older people and those communities under-represented within our user base;
- ❖ We will develop an annual cultural programme within the Library @ Riverside, working closely with Heritage Services, the Civic Theatre, ROAR, Open Minds Theatre Company, Gallery Town, Rotherham Music Hub, the Cultural Education Partnership, City Learning Centres, RCAT ,Thomas Rotherham College and other partners;
- ❖ We will develop and implement a digital communication and marketing plan, enabling us to engage with our online community via Social Media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest);
- ❖ We will continue to develop, publicise and increase usage of Rotherham's e-book service.

***Delivering excellent services through our employees, partners and volunteers***

- ❖ We will review customer insight and satisfaction measures within libraries and implement measures to improve performance;
- ❖ We will implement a workforce development programme to ensure that staff, volunteers, apprentices and interns have relevant, up to date knowledge and skills, including customer care, safeguarding of adults and children, reader development, digital and information literacy skills, internet safety.

***Develop a range of alternative, resilient and sustainable models of service delivery***

- ❖ We will review the use of our resources across the service, ensuring that we deploy the right level of resource, at the right time, in the right place

- ❖ We will implement a revised offer for services delivered using vehicles, making more efficient use of resources to deliver a service across the borough;
- ❖ We will create a service support area by merging teams and gaining economies of scale;
- ❖ We will implement a volunteer, intern and partner recruitment programme;
- ❖ We will identify opportunities to introduce pop up libraries and deposit collections in key areas of the borough;
- ❖ We will work closely with local businesses and investigate further opportunities for income generation

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Tourism is the sponsor and strategy lead and the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager is the operational lead for delivering the Library Strategy 2016 - 2019.

Progress will be monitored by the Regeneration and Environment Directorate Management team and progress against specific actions will be reported within the Council's Corporate Plan.

### **Finances**

Successful implementation of the Action Plan will support a comprehensive and efficient library service, whilst also achieving budgetary reductions. We will regularly evaluate the cost of services and look for opportunities to reduce service costs whilst also continuing to meet customer needs.

We will also work with other partners and services to identify opportunities for us to assist them in making better use of their financial resources.

Resources will need to be allocated to deliver the plan. This includes finance, technology, people and skills. A variety of funding sources have been identified to support its delivery. These include the Council's capital programme, existing service budgets and grants. The funding implications for this Strategy have been incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.



Future additional investment will be required to implement additional self-service functionality and enable a greater shift towards self-service. This investment will support the realisation of longer term savings within the authority. The investments will be determined by clear business cases, which demonstrate improved service delivery and reduced costs.

## Risks

Risk	Mitigation	Responsible Officer
There are insufficient skills or resources to progress the actions at the pace required;	Robust governance, ensuring actions are implemented with necessary resources and slippage is flagged early;	Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism
Budget reductions linked to alternative service delivery models may not be implemented in a timely manner, or may be affected by need for additional investment;	Robust governance and quality control of financial projections;	Budget working group and Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager.
Reductions in service delivery could result in non-compliance with the Council's statutory duty;	Continued consultation and revisions to Assessment of Need to support any further recommended changes;	Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager
Communication is not effective;	Communication plan developed for all key stakeholders and reviewed regularly;	Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager

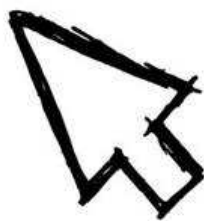
# Rotherham Library and Customer Services

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## Assessment of Local Need 2016



Books &  
Information



Computers



AudioBooks



eBooks



Skills



Activities



Meeting  
People



Wellbeing

## Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016

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## Introduction

### **Background**

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service, “for all persons wishing to make use thereof” (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964). The Act states that the Local Authority has a duty to provide facilities for borrowing books and other material and that it should encourage both adults and children to make full use of the service.

Whilst the statutory library services should remain free under the Act, the Local Government and Housing Act (1980) and Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations (1991) give Library Authorities the power to charge for the provision of specific services.

Libraries have long been recognised as community hubs, and contribute to a range of national priorities, such as:

- Literacy and learning
- Health and wellbeing
- Economic growth
- Community cohesion
- Digital literacy
- Access to cultural activity

The local priorities for Rotherham’s Libraries and Customer Services are explicitly linked to the Council’s corporate objectives, which are:

- Every child making the best start in life
- Every adult secure, responsible and empowered
- A strong community in a clean, safe environment
- Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future
- A modern, efficient Council

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), in partnership with the Arts Council and the Reading Agency has developed a package of Universal Offers which help to underpin these national and local priorities, providing a framework for future service developments around the key areas of reading, health, digital, information and learning.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

The following table details how libraries contribute to a range of local and national priorities:

<b>National priorities</b>	<b>Local government priorities</b>	<b>Libraries contribution</b>
Healthy nation	Health and wellbeing /social care	Libraries contribute to the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the preventative agenda, by providing curated information (Books on Prescription) on dementia and mental health issues, as a well as a range of other materials. Tailored session free for all, include reminiscence and knit and natter groups and memory cafes. Libraries provide a network of local hubs offering non-clinical community space where health and wellbeing groups engage with the community.
Economy	Vibrant economy: economic development/growth	The provision of information and signposting to education, employment and government services. New or refurbished libraries can be the catalyst for regeneration, particularly as part of wider public sector estate rationalisation plans and their role in ensuring a vibrant high street. Libraries can also be the stimulus for new businesses with enterprise hubs and maker spaces.
Tackling social injustice	Community cohesion	Public libraries contribute directly to many of government's social priorities by creating a sense of place for their community and providing an inclusive, free and safe space for all, particularly those in deprived areas.
Digital Literacy	Digital inclusion/digital literacy	Trained staff will help people to get online and access services and information with digital skills training. Libraries provide free WiFi and access to digital devices.
Literacy	Literacy and lifelong learning	Libraries play an important role in supporting the school curriculum with reading for enjoyment, books clubs and homework clubs. They also provide opportunities for adult learning and reading.
Culture	Arts and culture	Taking part in cultural activities provides cross-cutting benefits working with a range of partners, libraries offering writing workshops, drama and musical events. Taking part in cultural activities provides cross-cutting benefits and contributes to a number of priorities; health and wellbeing, developing well/living well and vibrant economy.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-shaping-the-future-good-practice-toolkit/libraries-shaping-the-future-good-practice-toolkit>

***Current Provision***

There are 15 libraries across the borough. The Service also provides two mobile library vehicles and a Schools Loan Service, which offers resources to support schools. Currently 98% of Rotherham residents are able to access a library within 2 miles of their home.

In 2012/13, the Library and Information Service merged with Customer Services to create a larger, more economical and effective service area, which is able to provide and enable access to a greater range of services across the borough. The merger of these Services has already achieved savings of over £1.25million from their combined budgets.

All libraries offer books in various formats (hardback, paperback, large print, spoken word), and several larger sites (Riverside, Dinnington, Maltby, Swinton and Wath) offer DVDs for hire. Riverside also offers Music CDs for hire, as well as sheet music. Riverside and Mowbray Gardens have a range of foreign language material available. A free request service enables customers to order and collect items from any site.

In addition to this the Service also offers several e-Resources (e-Books, e-Audio and e-Magazines) as well as access to online resources such as Find My Past.

Each site has public access computers and Wi-Fi available to use for free.

All sites deliver a variety of events as standard, these include: Rhymetime sessions, class visits, holiday activities, the Summer Reading Challenge and IT classes.

Many sites also run Readers Groups and additional events, working in partnership with external organisations and volunteers to extend the core offer, for example running IT classes and Code Clubs.

***Developing the service***

The revised Library Strategy (2016-2019) outlines our vision for Rotherham Libraries during the next four years:

- Our libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customers' needs, available technologies and resources;
- The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham communities;

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

- We will inspire Rotherham’s communities, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential.
- Located in the heart of Rotherham’s communities, our libraries will be recognised community hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology.
- Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

This assessment of local need and the Library Strategy 2016-19 will together shape a new service model for Rotherham’s libraries. It will also pave the way for ongoing consultation with local residents and key stakeholders.

Any decisions regarding service provision will be based on:

- Assessment of local need
- Consultation with individual communities, partners, stakeholders and staff
- Equality analysis of both current and proposed service delivery
- Statement of resources available
- Quality assurance of any potential savings identified

**The aim of this assessment of local need is therefore to support the Authority to fulfil its requirement to provide a “comprehensive and efficient Library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof” (Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964), whilst taking account of available resources.**

**Assessing need in Rotherham**

The assessment of local need includes the following sections:

***Community Profile***

This section outlines the profile of the borough, its residents and the factors that will help determine the needs that the Library Service should meet in the future. Particular consideration is given to deprivation, population demographics and digital inclusion.

***The Current Service***

This section considers the current position of the Service, and indicates how libraries across the borough are being used. While usage levels do not necessarily indicate need, the pattern of use demonstrated across the borough gives a reliable indication of demand at a local level.

***Benchmarking***

This section provides an overview of how the Library Service performs against other comparative library authorities in order to assess its efficiency and is therefore meeting that element of the statutory duty.

***Community Views – Recent update***

As part of the consultation process, the Service will be talking to users and non-users, partners and key stakeholders to ask for their views on the service. The feedback will indicate whether the Service satisfies the identified local needs it identifies and will give an indication of future expectations.

***Conclusion: need in Rotherham***

This section presents the key findings of the needs assessment. It identifies what the Library Service needs to deliver in order to meet the needs of the various communities across the borough, and how it contributes to the Council's main priorities.

Unless otherwise stated, data has been collated from the following sources:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/jsna/>
- Local Government Association reports from LG Inform Plus (subscription service)



## Community Profile

Rotherham is a diverse borough with a mixture of people, cultures and communities. There are densely populated multi-ethnic inner urban areas, large council built housing estates, leafy private housing suburbs, industrial areas and rural villages. About 70% of the borough's land area is rural so the most widespread feature is extensive areas of open countryside, mainly agricultural with some parkland and woodland. Rotherham is well connected to other areas of the country via the M1 and M18 which run through the borough and by the rail network which links to Sheffield, Doncaster and Leeds. There are five airports within 55 miles of Rotherham, at Doncaster (Robin Hood), Manchester, Leeds & Bradford, East Midlands and Humberside.

Around 70% of land in the borough is classed as rural in nature and half of all land use is for agriculture. The majority of the borough's population live in urban areas, around 50% in the Rotherham Urban Area area and 38% in smaller urban areas such as Wath, Swinton, Maltby and Dinnington. Rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough contain 12% of the population.

Rotherham developed as small market town serving a rural area but became a major industrial centre in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, built around steel making and coal mining. Rotherham attracted workers from other areas, growing most rapidly between 1890 and 1910. The last coal mine closed in 2013 and the steel industry has declined greatly in recent decades. Traditional industries have given way to new industries and the local economy grew rapidly between 1995 and 2005 as new employment sites such as Manvers were developed. After 2007, local employment began to decline and Rotherham was hit hard by recession in 2008-2010. There was a net loss of 14,000 job losses between 2007 and 2013 (12% of local jobs) although the economy has since turned a corner towards renewed growth. Continued redundancies in the steel industry and other sectors mean that recovery will not be straightforward.

## **Deprivation**

### **Why is this an issue?**

- Deprivation refers to problems caused by a general lack of resources and opportunities, not just a lack of money (poverty).
- The overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score combines information from the seven domains of Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education Skills and Training Deprivation; Barriers to Housing and Services; Living Environment Deprivation; and Crime.
- Deprivation in Rotherham has increased, with the borough now ranked 52<sup>nd</sup> most deprived district, within the top 16% most deprived districts in England.
- The key drivers of deprivation in Rotherham are Employment, Education, Skills and Training, and Health and Disability.
- Deprivation has generally stayed the same or reduced in the least deprived areas, whilst it has increased most in those areas with the highest deprivation.
- There is evidence of polarisation between the most and least deprived areas for all deprivation domains, except Living Environment.
- 24.3% of Children are affected by income deprivation compared with 14% of working age adults, the gap being wider in the most deprived areas.
- The Government's welfare reform programme over 2011- 2018 is expected to increase and intensify deprivation in Rotherham by reducing the incomes of the poorest households, particularly people who are disabled or long term sick, and families with children.

### **Note:**

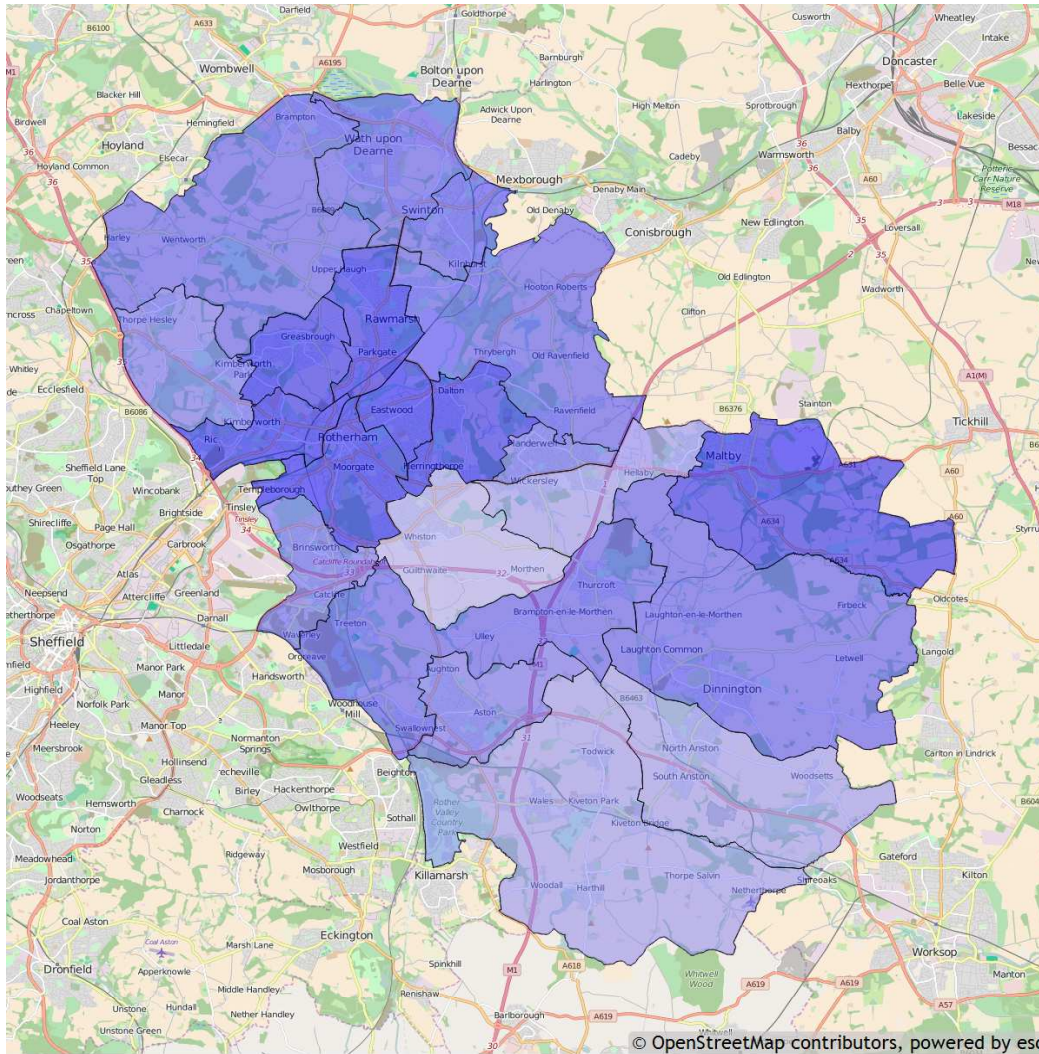
Out of the seven domains listed above, the most challenging forms of deprivation within Rotherham are:

- Employment
- Education, Skills and Training
- Health and Disability.

As these are the key drivers of deprivation in Rotherham, this assessment of need will focus on these areas.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

Each ward in Rotherham has been allocated to one of ten equal groups based on its score across all wards in England. Those shaded darkest are in the 10 % most deprived wards in England and those shaded lightest are in the 10 % least deprived wards:



IMD: Overall (2015) - score (2015)

- 35.619 ≤ 83.417
- 27.603 ≤ 35.619
- 22.417 ≤ 27.603
- 18.688 ≤ 22.417
- 15.674 ≤ 18.688
- 13.374 ≤ 15.674
- 11.337 ≤ 13.374
- 9.306 ≤ 11.337
- 6.966 ≤ 9.306
- 1.269 ≤ 6.966

Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016

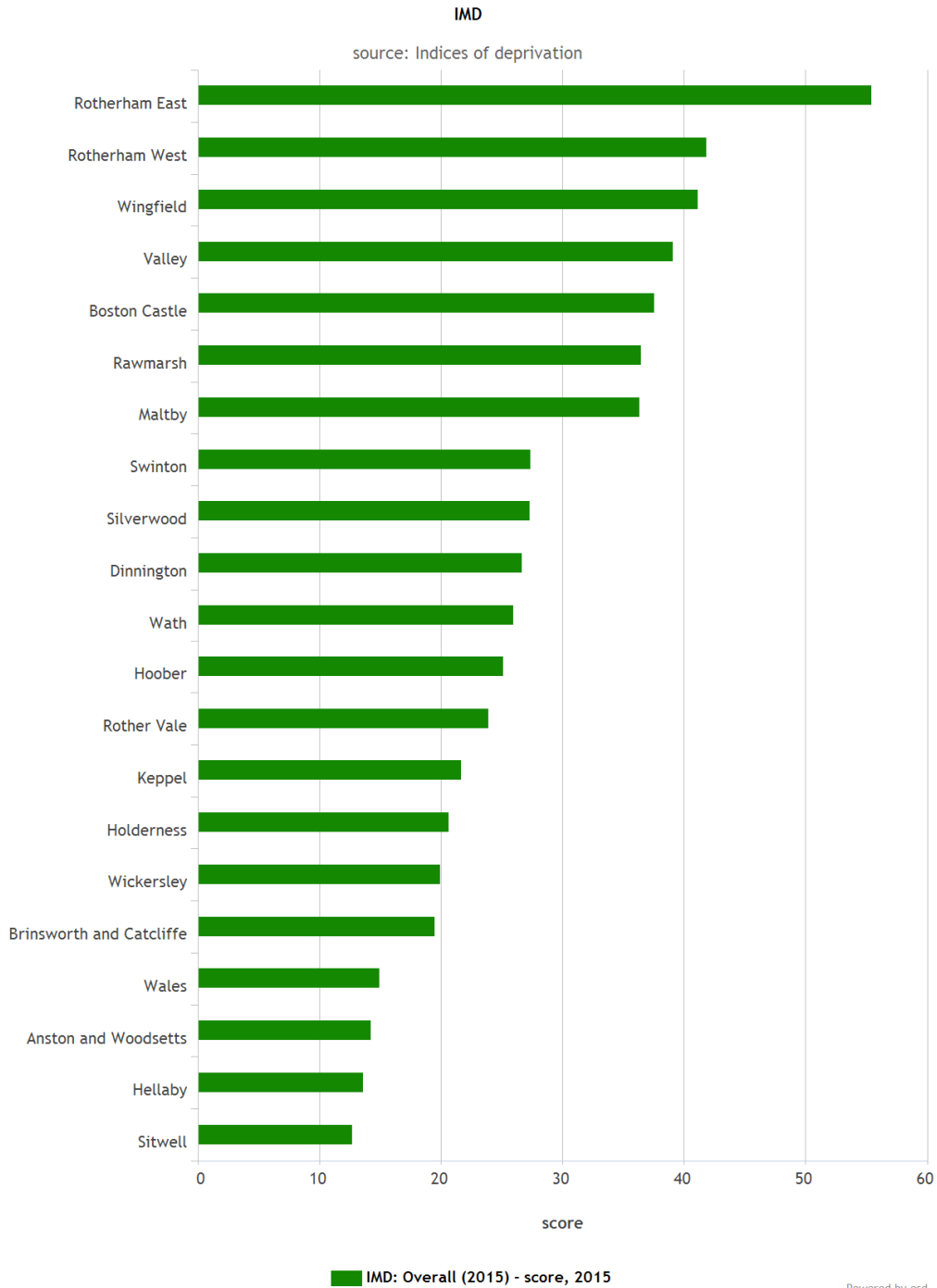
The most deprived wards are:

The least deprived wards are:

- Rotherham East
- Rotherham West
- Wingfield

- Sitwell
- Anston and Woodsetts
- Sitwell

Areas of most deprivation (2015)



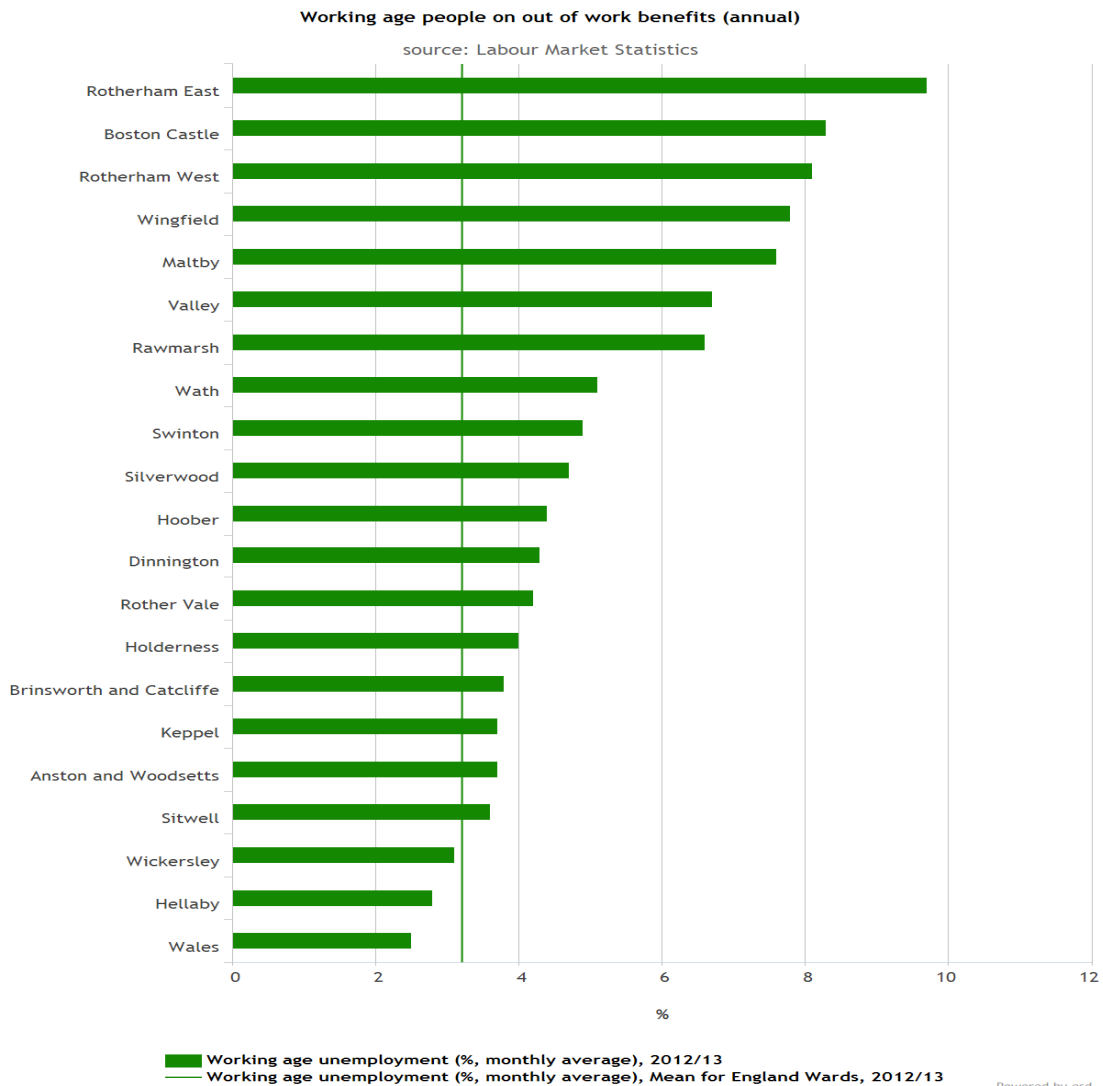
**Employment Deprivation**

The percentage of the working age population in employment is 72.5%, below the 73.6% national rate. The average employment rate in Rotherham Jan 2014 to Sept 2015 was 69.4%, below the 73.1% for England over the same period.

An average of 5.3% of the population of Rotherham claim out of work benefits, with the highest proportion of people residing in Rotherham East Ward at 9.7%. This compares to 3.8% for England overall. 2.6% of the economically active population are claiming Job Seekers, compared to a claimant rate of 1.5% nationally.

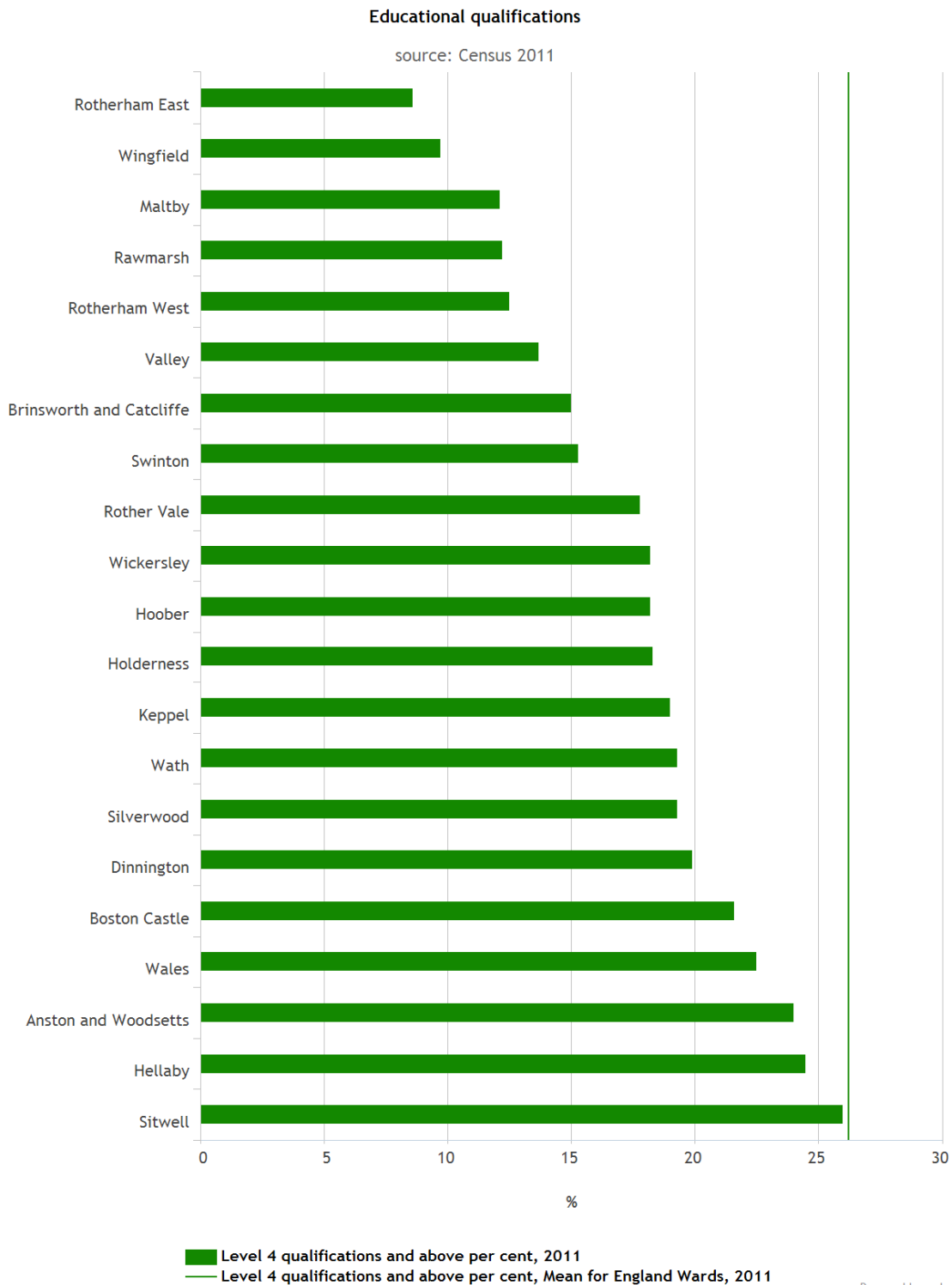
8.0% of working age population claim Incapacity Benefit / Employment Support Allowance above the national rate of 6.3%.

The areas most affected by employment deprivation are: Rotherham East, Wingfield and Valley.



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

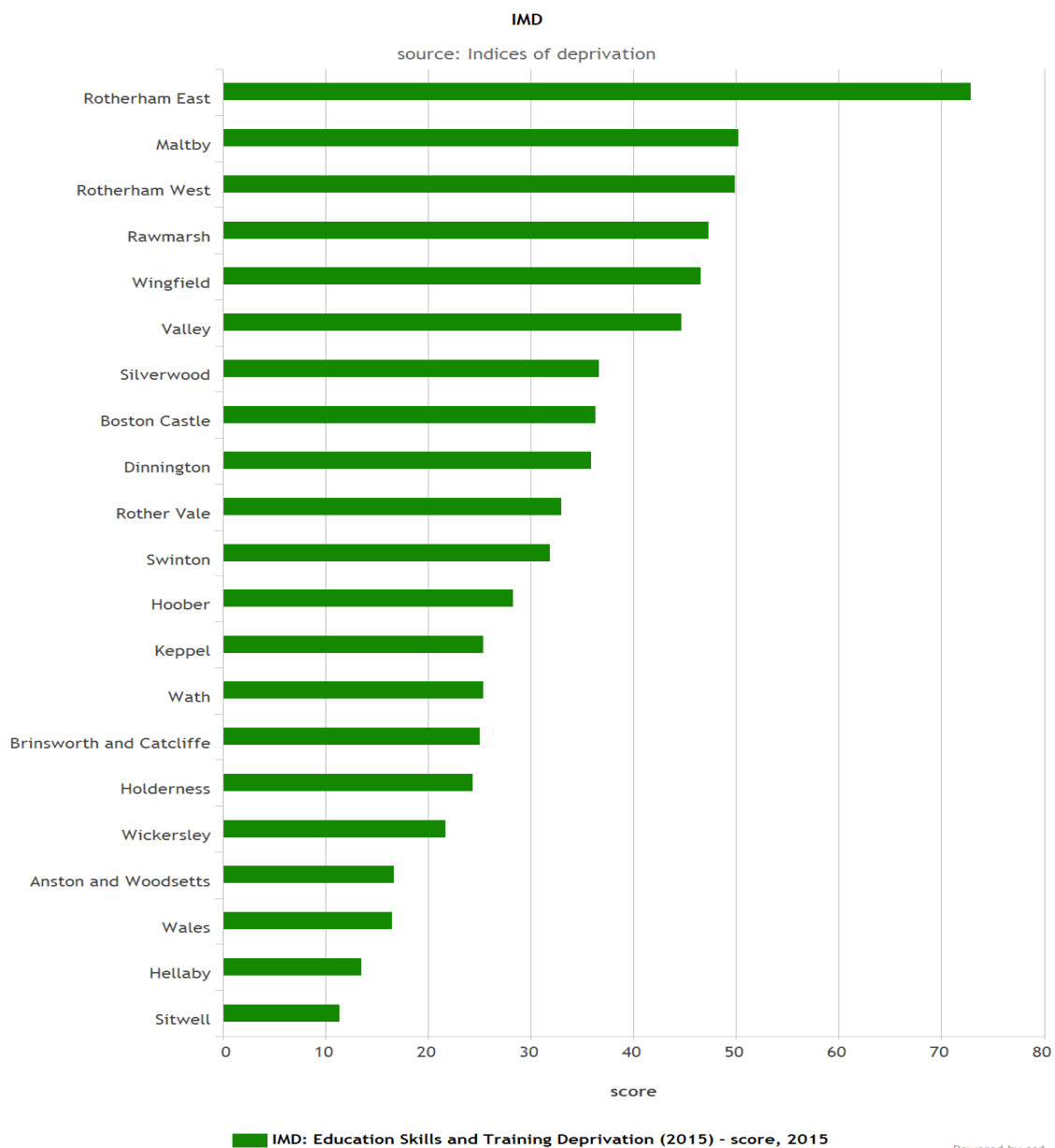
This chart shows the percentage of population educated to NVQ4+. Of the working age population in Rotherham, 15,700 people have no qualifications, a rate of 9.9%, slightly above the regional average and above the national rate of 8.8%. The percentage qualified at the highest levels (NVQ4+ or degree level and above) is just 23.1%, below the regional average and well below the 36% national average. The employment rate of people qualified to NVQ4+ in Rotherham stands at 84% compared to just 27% of those who have no qualifications.



Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016

Education, Skills and Training Deprivation

Rotherham has a long history of low literacy levels which is reflected in the low levels of adult qualifications and in low attainment by children and young people. Relative to England, Education deprivation in Rotherham overall has reduced slightly although the most deprived areas have fallen further behind whilst less deprived areas have advanced. The chart below summarises the Education, Skills and Training Deprivation per ward. The domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population. Rotherham East, Maltby and Rotherham West are the areas most affected by educational, skills and training deprivation.

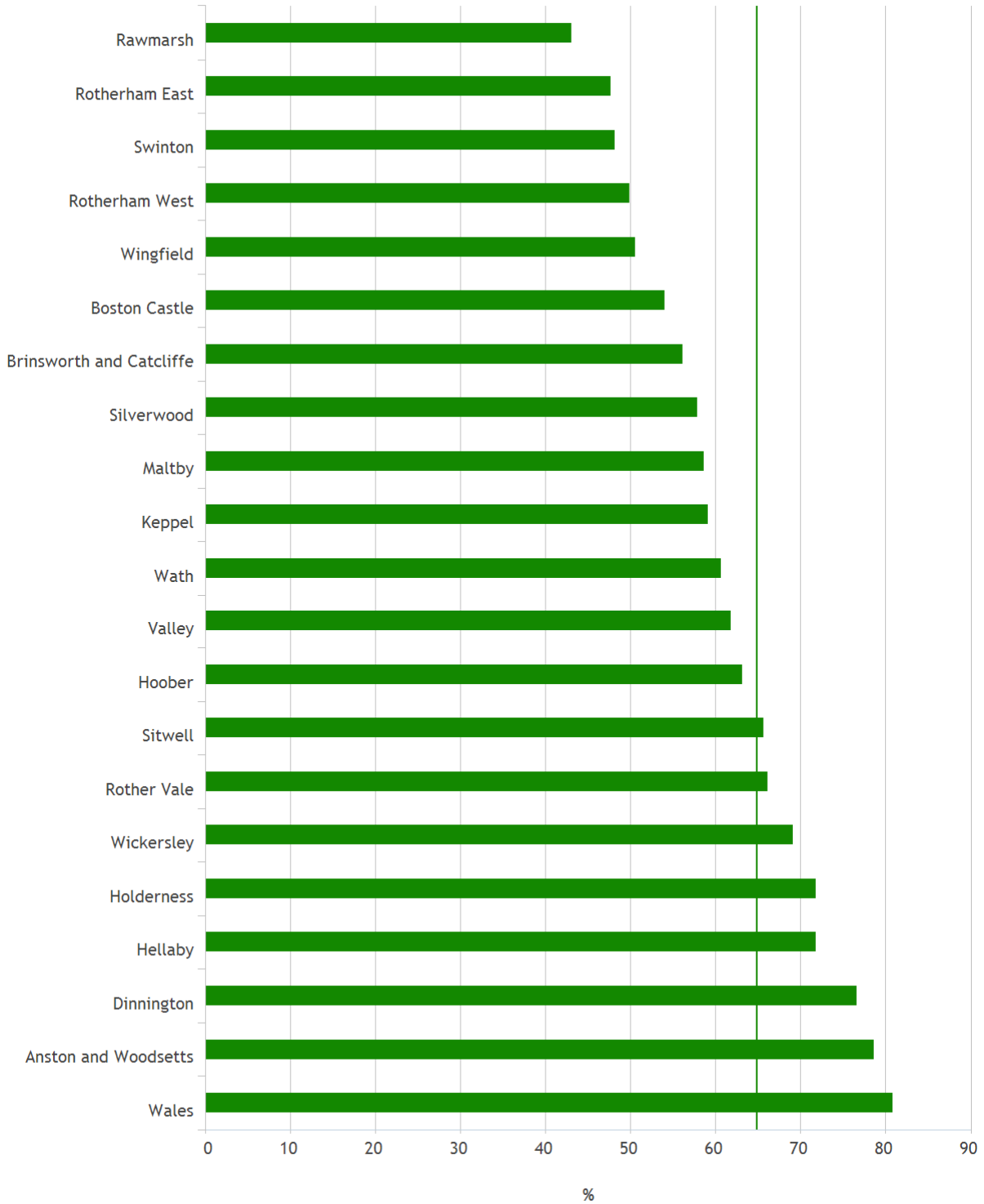


**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

60.5% of pupils in Rotherham achieve a good level of development at the end of reception class, compared to 63.5% nationally. Rawmarsh ward has the lowest achievement rate at 43.1%, followed by Rotherham East and Swinton.

Child development at age 5

source: Based on data from DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results



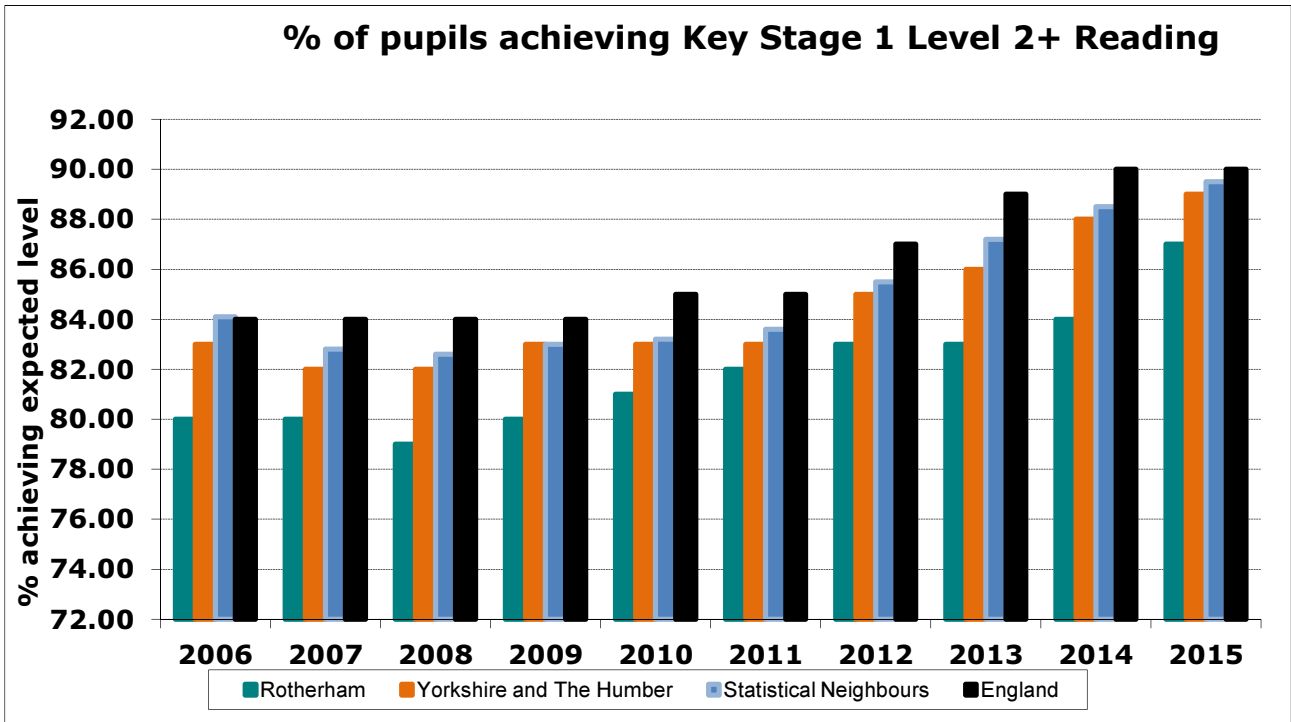
■ Child development at age 5 - per cent (from MSOA), 2011/12 (academic)  
— Child development at age 5 - per cent (from MSOA), Mean for England Wards, 2011/12 (academic)

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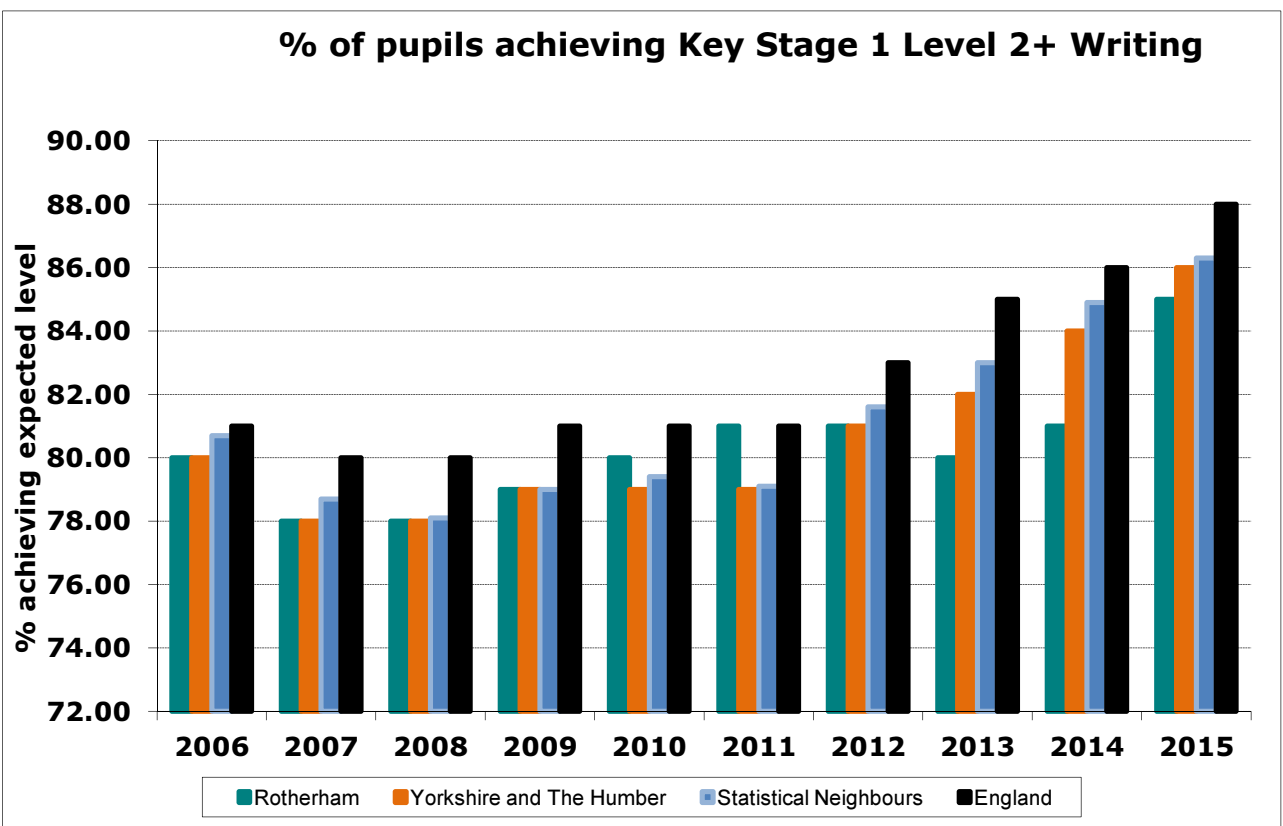


**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

There have been improvements in Key Stage 1 Reading (87% achieving expected level) and Writing (85% achieving expected level), although both are at a lower than the level of performance across the country and of Rotherham’s statistical neighbours:



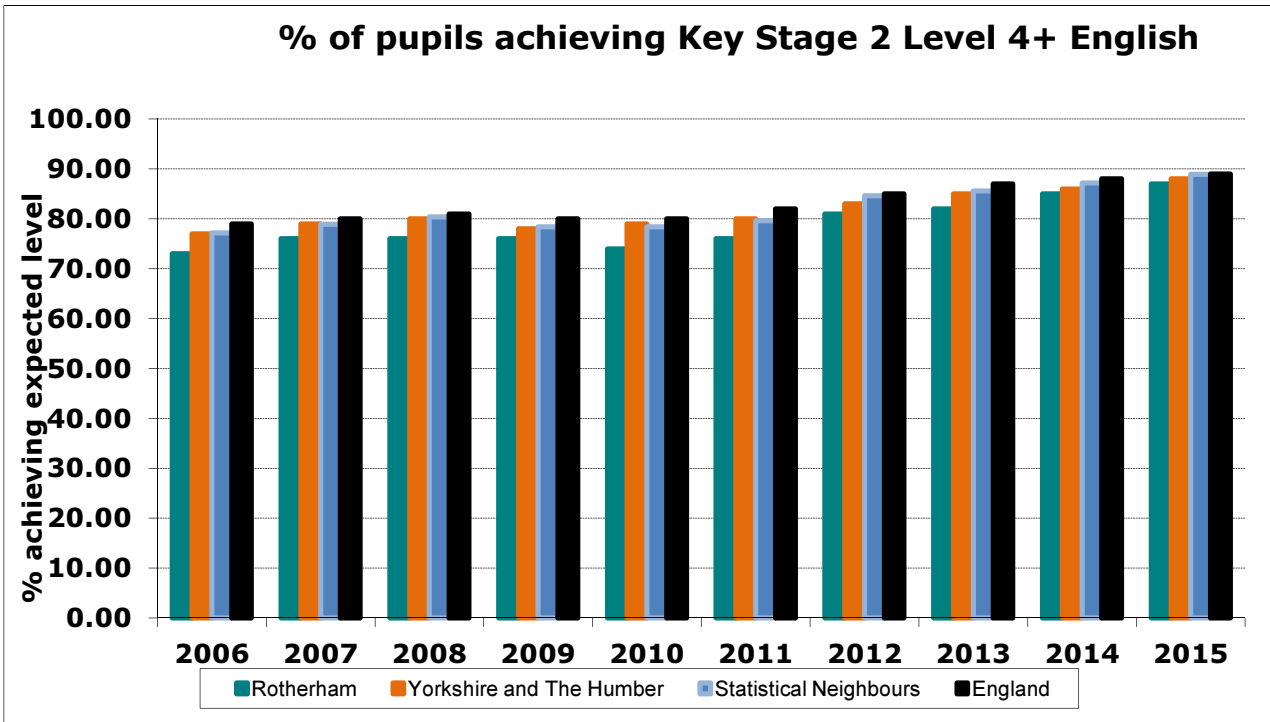
Source: DfE LAIT, August 2015



Source: DfE LAIT, August 2015

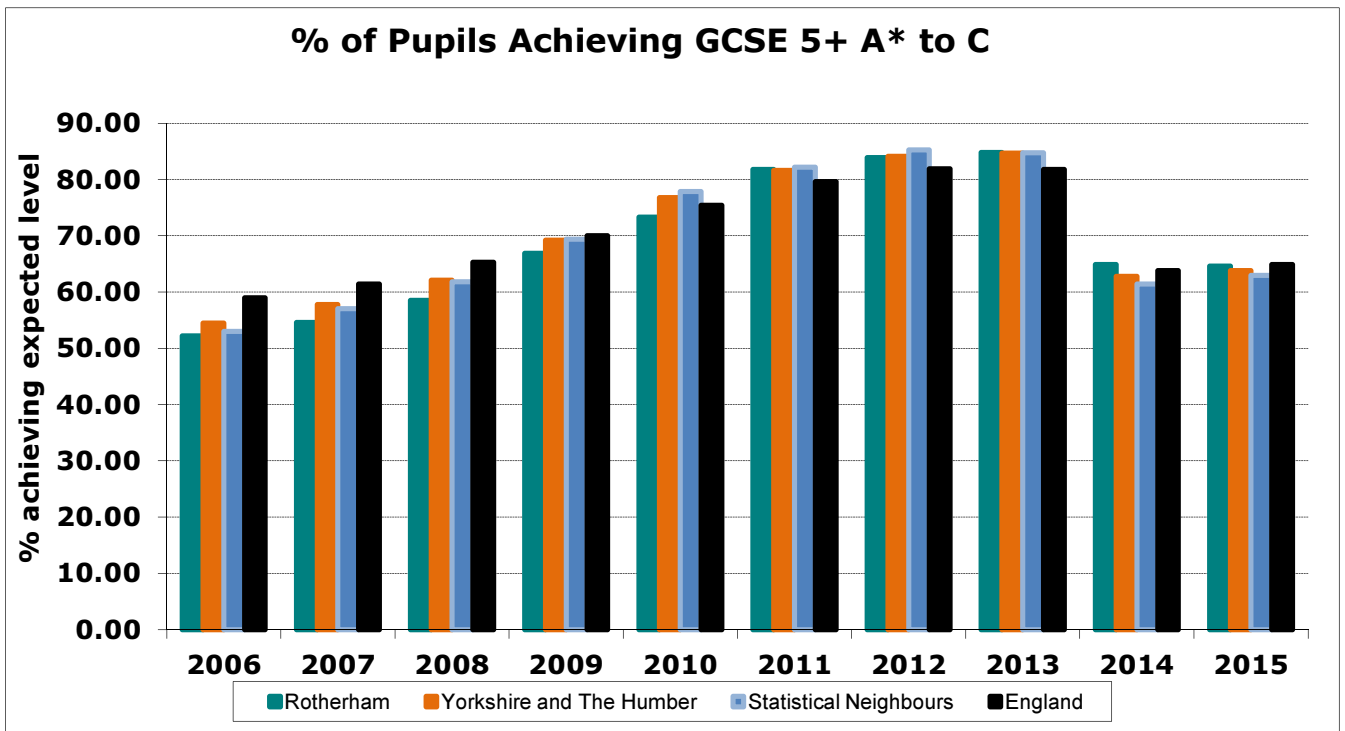
**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

Level 4 English Key Stage 2 attainment in English is at 87% which is an improvement, but still a slightly lower level now than the level of performance across the country and of Rotherham’s statistical neighbours.



Source: DfE LAIT, August 2015

Overall attainment at GCSE level is improving and is better than the regional and neighbourhood average.

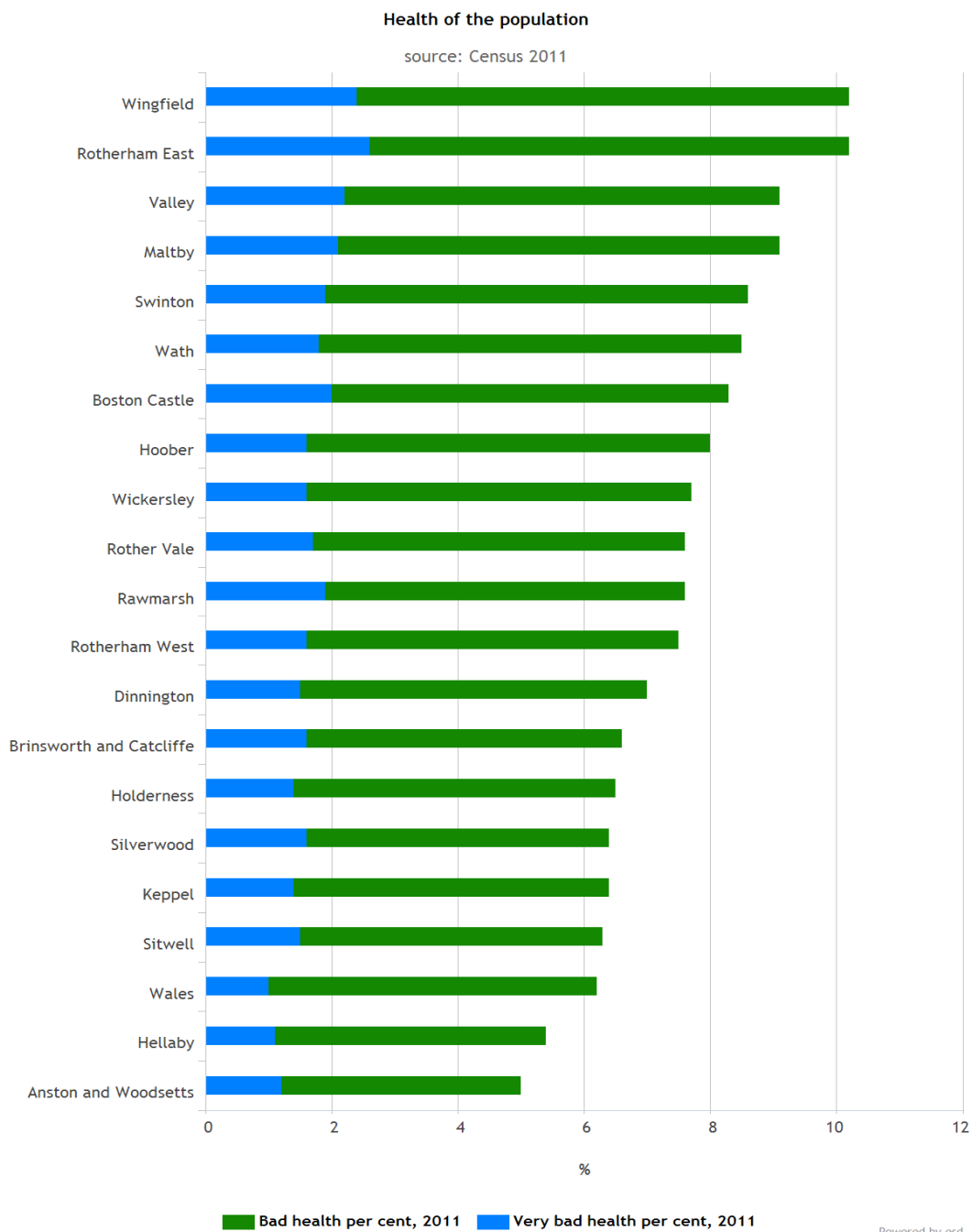


Source: DfE LAIT, August 2015

**Health and Disability Deprivation**

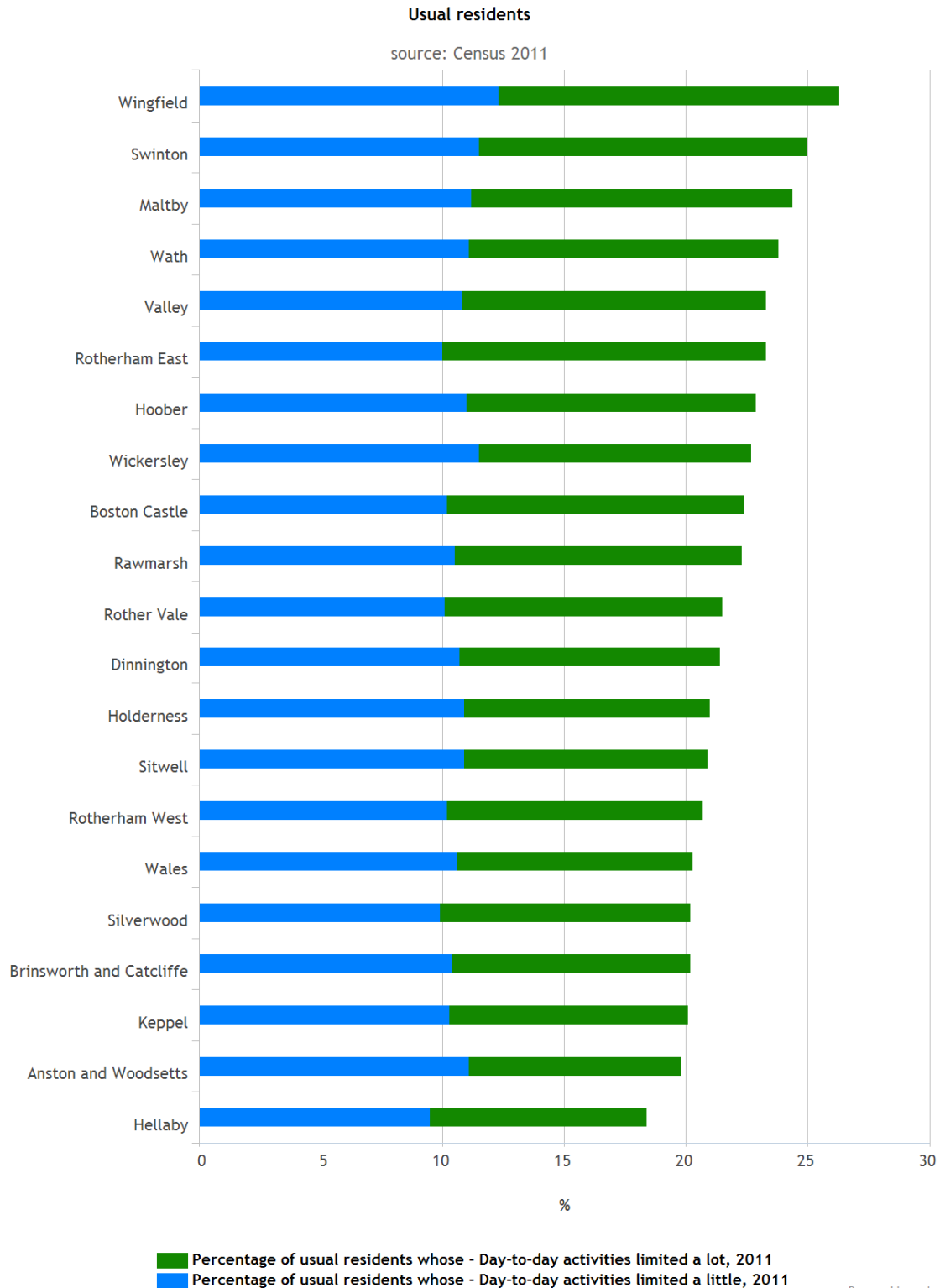
Many factors influence health and wellbeing over the course of a lifetime. The whole system for health and wellbeing is focused around achieving positive health outcomes for the population and reducing inequalities in health.

This chart shows the percentage of people in each ward who reported their general health as bad or very bad. Wingfield has the highest percentage of residents reporting their health as bad or very bad at 10.2%



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

This shows the percentage of people in each ward who reported that their day to day activities are limited by a long term illness or disability. Again, Wingfield has the highest percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited at 26.3%.



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

- The percentage of people in Rotherham reporting their day to day activities as limited a lot is 11.3% (29,067 people).
- In addition, 10.7% (27,521 people) reported that their activities were limited a little. This is 22.0 % of the population of Rotherham who say that their day to day activities are limited due to their health, affecting 56,588 people.
- This compares with 18.8% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region, and 17.6% for England reporting their day to day activities are limited a little or a lot by their health.

Living alone can also impact on the health and wellbeing of a person. Many older customers say that a visit to a library helps to reduce social isolation, so it is worth noting the percentage of pensioners living alone:

- Within Rotherham 31.9% of pensioners live alone, or 14,286 people.
- This compares with 32.2% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region, and 31.5% for England.
- Within Rotherham, Anston and Woodsetts has the lowest proportion of pensioners living alone at 24.4 %. Rotherham East has the highest proportion at 39.8 %. In terms of actual numbers, Anston and Woodsetts has the lowest number of pensioners living alone at 573. Wingfield has the highest at 855.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**  
**Current Library Service: Contribution to reducing deprivation**

**Usage in top 3 areas of deprivation (highlighted)**

Site	Registered users	Active borrowers	% of active borrowers
Aston	8,675	1,715	20%
Book Link	892	472	53%
Brinsworth	2,252	563	25%
Dinnington	11,388	1,688	15%
<b>Greasbrough</b>	<b>3,822</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Kimberworth</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>26%</b>
Kiveton Park	3,799	850	22%
<b>Library @ Riverside</b>	<b>40,807</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>11%</b>
Maltby	9,111	1,687	19%
Mobile	1,771	356	20%
<b>Mowbray Gardens</b>	<b>5,836</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>12%</b>
Rawmarsh	5,251	799	15%
Swinton	7,627	1,302	17%
Thorpe Hesley	1,668	428	26%
Thurcroft	1,875	434	23%
Wath	10,707	2,280	21%
Wickersley	11,033	2,203	20%
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>128,788</b>	<b>21,561</b>	<b>17%</b>

The table below lists Rotherham's most deprived neighbourhoods along with the library covering the area:

Canklow	Brinsworth Library
Eastwood	Mowbray Gardens Library, Riverside
Ferham and Masbrough	Kimberworth, Riverside
East Herringthorpe	Mowbray Gardens Library
Dinnington Central	Dinnington Library and Customer Service Centre
Aston North	Aston Library and Customer Service Centre
Maltby	Maltby Library
East Dene	Mowbray Gardens Library
Dalton and Thrybergh	Mowbray Gardens Library
Town Centre	Riverside

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

Libraries are ideally placed in areas of deprivation to provide residents with free access to books, free access to computers/internet, as well as help, advice and information to help them to improve their life chances.

The Library at Riverside, which serves several of Rotherham's most deprived areas, has the least % of active borrowers (those who have borrowed a book within a given year) Mowbray Gardens also has a low active borrower rate. However, this site has high attendance at skills and development sessions. This demonstrates that any assessment of the service needs to consider all elements within the library "offer", not 'just' books.

***Contribution to reducing employment deprivation***

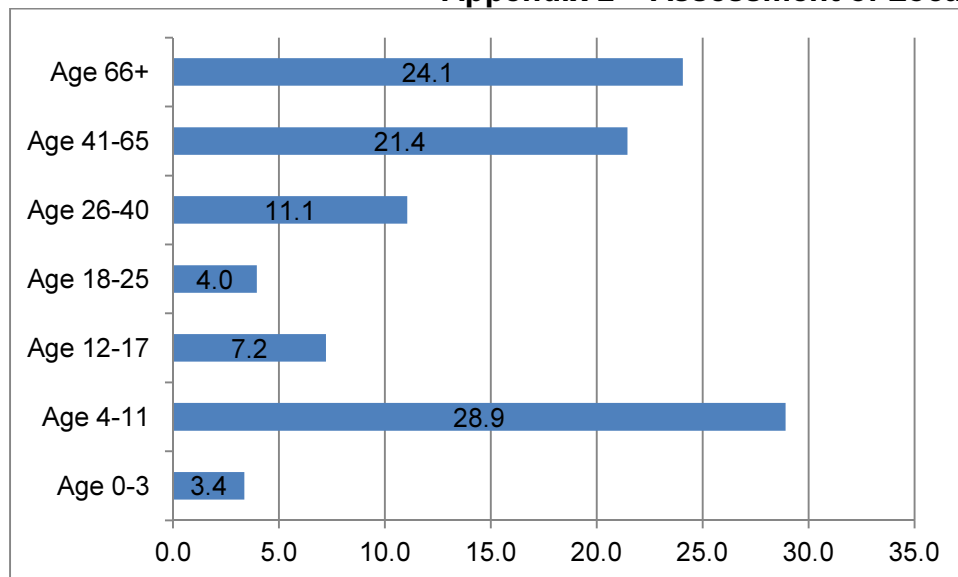
The Library Service has resources available to help people improve their employment chances, such as access to IT for job searching, sessions to help develop and improve IT skills, and supported work clubs. The Service also works with partners, including JobCentre+. More than 2,400 people attended employability support sessions in libraries in 2015/16.

***Contribution to reducing education, skills and training deprivation***

Libraries have a role in improving education and skills sets by providing appropriate stock, study space, access to the internet and IT, as well as raising literacy levels amongst children (and adults), by encouraging and fostering a love of reading with initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge.

Active borrower statistics show that children aged from 4-11 years use the library well, although usage drops in the 12-17 year old age group. The following table shows the percentage of active borrowers in each age group:

## Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016



Save the Children's 'Read On, Get On' report (2014) states that "In England, struggling to read is more closely linked to low pay and the risk of being unemployed than any other country, including the USA." The annual Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) encourages children to keep reading and therefore maintain their reading skills, over the summer holidays. Latest SRC challenge figures show that, in Rotherham, 1611 children started the 2015 challenge (Record Breakers), with 961 completing. In terms of gender split, 39% boys and 61% girls completed.

The Service will continue to work closely with colleagues and partners to support Rotherham's ambition to become a child-centred borough. The Service offers a range of activities which encourage and develop children's literacy and digital literacy skills, such as the SRC, Rhymetimes, Chatterbooks, class visits and Code Clubs.

In terms of adult skills, libraries offer a range of informal learning sessions, which impact positively on employability and health/wellbeing. Adult skills sessions include work clubs, CV writing sessions, ICT learning, talks, craft activities, Readers Groups and knit and natter groups. These sessions were attended by over 33,000 people in 2015/16.

### ***Contribution to reducing health and disability deprivation***

Although the Library Service does collect disability profiling data from customers, the returns are minimal, and are not a reliable indicator of how many people with disabilities are accessing the service. However, during recent consultation on the library strategy (June 2016) 11% of the respondents stated that they had a disability. Of these, 30% declared it as a long standing illness or health condition.



There are a range of activities within libraries which are in line with the Society of Chief Librarians health offer, a national strategy expressing public library contribution to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

The library service participates in Books on Prescription and Reading Well. These are national reading initiatives which provide health related and 'mood boosting' stock. Over 8,000 of these books were issued during 2015/16.

We currently work with colleagues in public health and other partners to deliver a range of health based activities, ranging from readers groups for visually impaired to Active Always sessions. Over 5,000 people attended these sessions in 2015/16.

The Book Link service also delivers books direct to the homes of vulnerable elderly people – generally those with health problems or disabilities which mean they cannot easily visit a static library site.

**Demographics**

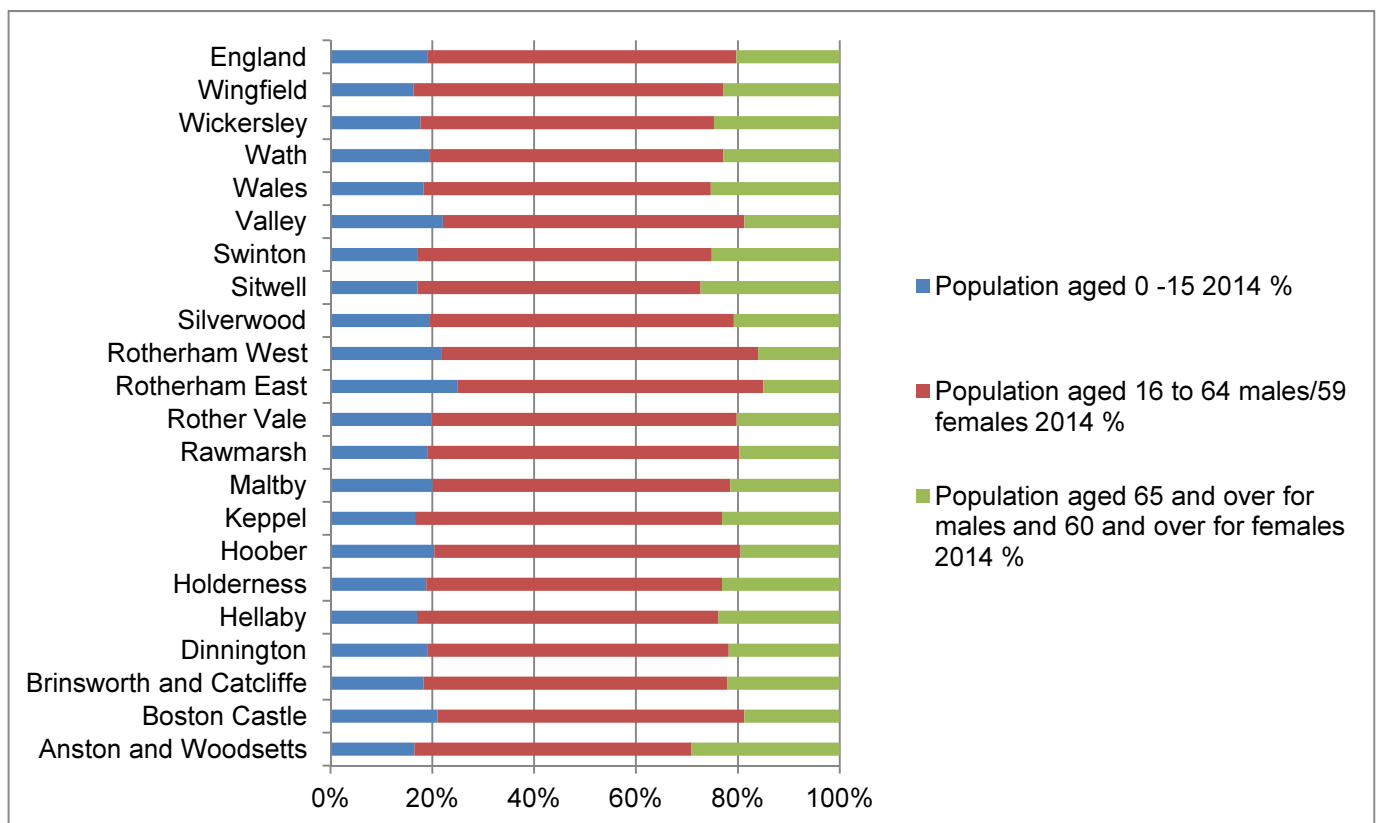
**Why is this an issue?**

- Local public services have a duty to address or take into account the needs of people who are usually resident in Rotherham. Government funding for public services is influenced by the size and characteristics of the resident population.

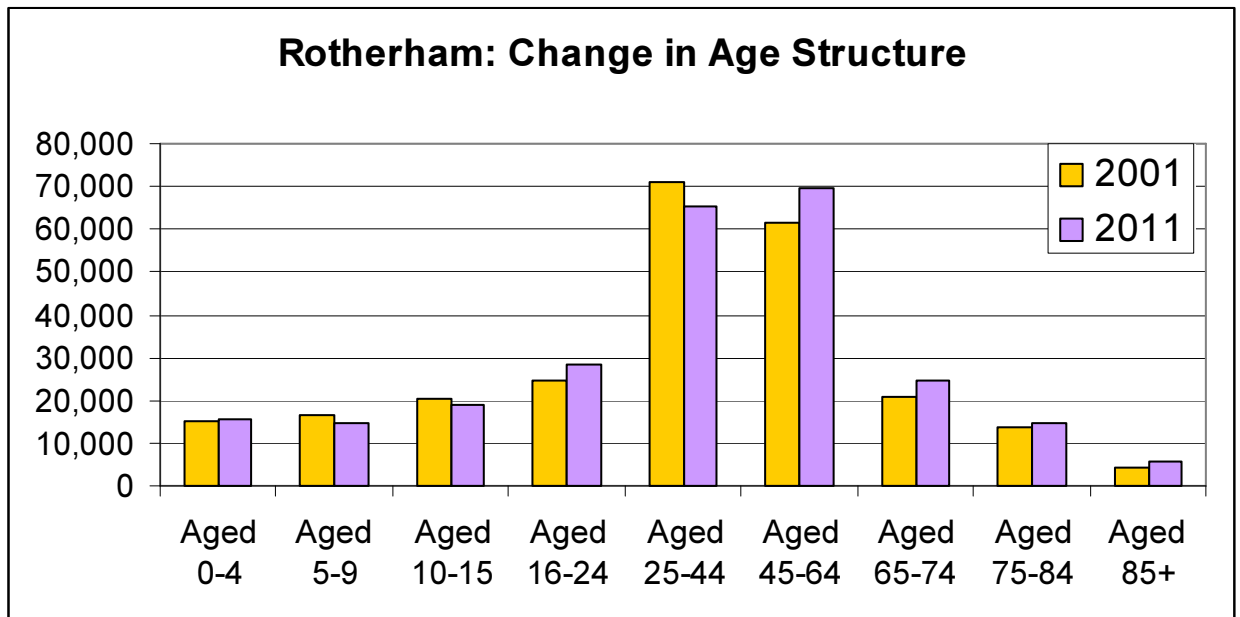
***Aging Population***

The average age of Rotherham’s population of is 40 years. This compares to an average age of 39 years for England. Overall, 19.2% of the population are aged under 16 and 18.8% are aged 65 and over. Anston and Woodsetts Ward has the highest proportion of residents aged 65 and over at 25.0% (higher than the England average of 20.3%), while Rotherham East has the highest proportion on 0-5 year olds at 24.9% (higher than the England average of 19%).

**Ward population breakdown by age (2014 population estimates)**



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**  
**Change in age structure (2011 Census actuals)**



- The 2011 Census showed that resident population of Rotherham increased by 9,105 (3.7%) between 2001 and 2011.
- The number of children aged 0-4 increased by 730 (4.9%) but those aged 5-15 fell by 3,699 (-9.9%).
- The population aged 65+ increased by 6,185 (16%) 2001-2011. This is projected to increase by a further 19% between 2015-2025.
- The population of Rotherham is projected to increase by 3.3% from 2016 to reach 269,900 by 2026.
- The life expectancy at birth for people living in Rotherham is 77.5 years for males, and 81.4 years for females. This compares with the England life expectancy at birth for males at 78.3 years and 82.3 years for females for the same period (2006-10).
- Within Rotherham, Valley has the lowest life expectancy at birth for males at 74.6 years. Wales has the highest life expectancy at birth for males at 80.3 years. Wingfield has the lowest life expectancy at birth for females at 78.1 years. Anston and Woodsetts has the highest life expectancy at birth for females at 84.5 years.

**Current Library Service users: Age Profile**

Of the total resident population<sup>1</sup>, 22,472(9%) are active library users (year end user statistics 2015/16). Active usage per age group is as follows:

- 3.4% are aged 0-3 years;
- 29% are aged 4-11 years;
- 7% are aged 12-17 years;
- 4% are aged 18-25 years;
- 11.1% are aged 26-40 years;
- 21.4% are aged 41-65 years; and
- 24.1% are aged 66 and over.

The demographic profile of Rotherham indicates that the borough has an aging population, and there is a demand for library services from the 66+ age group at 24.1% active usage. The Library Service is ideally placed to support older people to live independently, and help them to remain actively engaged in their community. Libraries can and do enhance the quality of older people's lives, especially around reducing isolation and increasing socialisation.

Children aged from 4-11 years also use the library well, although usage drops in the 12-17 year old age group (Key Stages 3 and 4). Our lowest active user group is the 18-25 year olds, and this correlates with the resident population (currently 14.3% of the total population). As Rotherham strives to become a child centred borough, libraries are well placed to engage with children and young people.

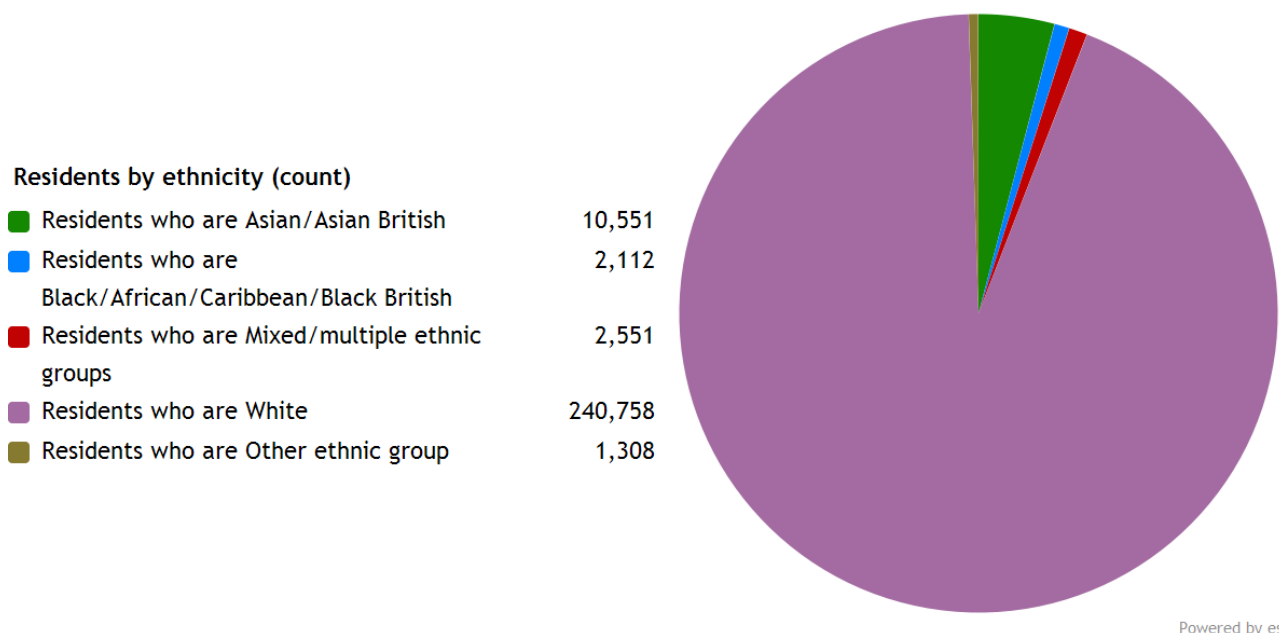
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<sup>1</sup> Data presented is based on a comparison with 2014 population estimate of 260,100

**Black or Minority Ethnic Population**

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public services to avoid discrimination on the grounds of race and religion or belief. Rotherham's population is not homogenous and people with different cultural identities may have different needs or require different approaches to service provision. Changes in international migration patterns have a significant effect on the composition the minority ethnic population and the growth of new migrant communities which in turn can have an impact on demand for local services.

Rotherham has a black and minority ethnic population of 16,522 people. This is 6.4% of the total population, and compares with 14.6% for England, and 11.2% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Rotherham's ethnic split is shown below:



Overall 8.0% of residents in Rotherham describe themselves as from a non-white UK population. This compares with a non-white UK population of 14.3% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region, and 20.3% for England. This is the population who do not describe themselves as being white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British. In Rotherham the non-white UK population includes 20,842 people.

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1.1% of the population in Rotherham report that they cannot speak English well or at all. This is 2,712 people. This compares with 1.7% for England, and 1.6% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Boston Castle has the largest black and minority ethnic (BME) population in Rotherham totalling 4,265 people, and Boston Castle has the largest population describing themselves as non- White UK totalling 4,940 people. Rotherham East has the largest number of people who cannot speak English well or at all totalling 805 people.

**BME Population by Ward**

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>BME Population 2011</b>
Anston and Woodsetts	2.1%
Boston Castle	36.8%
Brinsworth and Catcliffe	6.2%
Dinnington	3.6%
Hellaby	2.7%
Holderness	3.4%
Hooper	2.9%
Keppel	2.7%
Maltby	3.0%
Rawmarsh	4.2%
Rother Vale	3.4%
Rotherham East	29.7%
Rotherham West	21.7%
Silverwood	3.4%
Sitwell	11.5%
Swinton	2.4%
Valley	7.5%
Wales	3.1%
Wath	3.6%
Wickersley	2.9%
Wingfield	4.1%

***Current Library Service Demand: Usage by BME communities***

- 75% identified themselves as White;
- 0.9% identified themselves as Black or Black British;

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- 0.4% identified themselves as Dual Heritage;
- 2.2% identified themselves as Asian or Asian British;
- 1% identified themselves as Other;
- 20.3% of customers chose not to respond.

Active library usage is high amongst those who identified themselves as White, but is significantly lower amongst other ethnic groups at just 4.5% combined.

The Library Service has a central role in co-ordinating and facilitating learning activities to our BME communities, reducing exclusion and encouraging participation. Support is given to foreign language speakers and to those who wish to improve their English language skills. Cultural events are organised and supported, especially from Mowbray Gardens Community Library, which serves the area with one of the largest populations of BME residents in the borough.

## Digital Inclusion

### Why is this an issue?

Basic Digital Skills are essential if people are to complete everyday tasks online and get the most out of our increasingly digital world. With more and more services moving online and the increasing prevalence of digital as a medium, having these skills improves outcomes as varied as economic growth, social mobility, financial inclusion, productivity and better health and wellbeing.

The Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy (2014) sets out how government and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors will increase digital inclusion. This means helping people become capable of using and benefiting from the internet.

Digital inclusion, or rather, reducing digital exclusion, is about making sure that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them day to day. 18% of adults in Rotherham do not have access to the internet, higher than the 11% UK average (Internet Access Quarterly Update, Office for National Statistics, May 2015)

Digital inclusion is often defined in terms of:

- Digital skills (being able to use computers and the internet.)
- Connectivity (access to the internet.)
- Accessibility (services should be designed to meet all users' needs.)

Doteveryone (formerly Go ON UK) has produced a digital exclusion 'heat map' which indicates the likelihood of digital exclusion in a particular area. The combined digital indicator is made up of four metrics that indicate digital exclusion: Infrastructure, access, basic digital skills and basic digital skills used.

The likelihood of digital exclusion in Rotherham is 'high' as it is in the rest of South Yorkshire (with exception of Sheffield which is ranked as 'medium').



**Current Library Service: Contribution to digital inclusion**

All static library sites offer access to computers and the internet. This service is available free of charge, although there is a small charge for printing (excluding those people attending employment sessions). Wi-Fi is also available in all static sites.

Although there are a number of focussed IT sessions on offer (using the Tinder Foundation's 'Learn My Way' package), Basic IT sessions remain our most highly subscribed sessions. There is also a growing demand for tablet/i-pad familiarisation sessions.

As the Council moves towards offering more services online, there will be a requirement for libraries to provide support to those with limited or no experience of accessing online services, via our assisted digital offer. Libraries will support these people by providing free access to computers, free public Wi-Fi and activities and support for people to improve their digital skills or access services online.

<b>Library site</b>	<b>Total users</b>	<b>Hours used</b>	<b>Learners attending supported IT sessions during 2015-16</b>
Aston	3,349	4,241	27
Brinsworth	533	658	3
Dinnington	6,333	8,769	291
Greasbrough	3,442	4,876	299
Kimberworth	994	1,309	27
Kiveton Park	1,391	1,907	0
Library @ Riverside	28,461	38,962	658
Maltby	5,196	6,421	717
Mowbray Gardens	8,197	12,816	1,497
Rawmarsh	5,253	6,344	152
Swinton	5,356	7,506	116
Thorpe Hesley	341	368	12
Thurcroft	899	1,239	45
Wath	8,418	9,451	466
Wickersley	5,161	7,142	1,127
<b>Site totals</b>	<b>83,324</b>	<b>112,007</b>	<b>5,437</b>

## The Current Service

There are 15 static library sites located across the borough. The service also incorporates two mobile library vehicles and a School Loans Service, which offers resources to support schools.

The service is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Rotherham, and to visitors to the area. There were 719,827 visits to Rotherham libraries in the year 2015/16.

Riverside House is the largest library and customer service centre located in the town centre. It holds the biggest collection and range of lending material in the borough, houses heritage and arts items and has indoor and outdoor performance spaces for events and activities. Customer Service provision is available here, together with free access to public Wi-Fi, public computers, and a wide range of skills development and activities.

There are five Joint Service Centres across the borough, which provide residents with access to a wide range of public sector services, including NHS, leisure and social care facilities.

A large library facility is available in four of these Joint Service Centres; Aston, Dinnington, Rawmarsh and Swinton. These sites offer free access to computers, public Wi-Fi, digital skills training, activities and events, supported access to most council services and a community meeting space.

Rotherham has a further ten libraries within communities across the borough, ranging in their size and reach, depending on the make-up of each local community. These are based in Brinsworth, Greasbrough, Kimberworth, Kiveton Park, Maltby, Mowbray Gardens, Thorpe Hesley, Thurcroft, Wath and Wickersley. These libraries also offer free access to public Wi-Fi, public computers, activities and events.

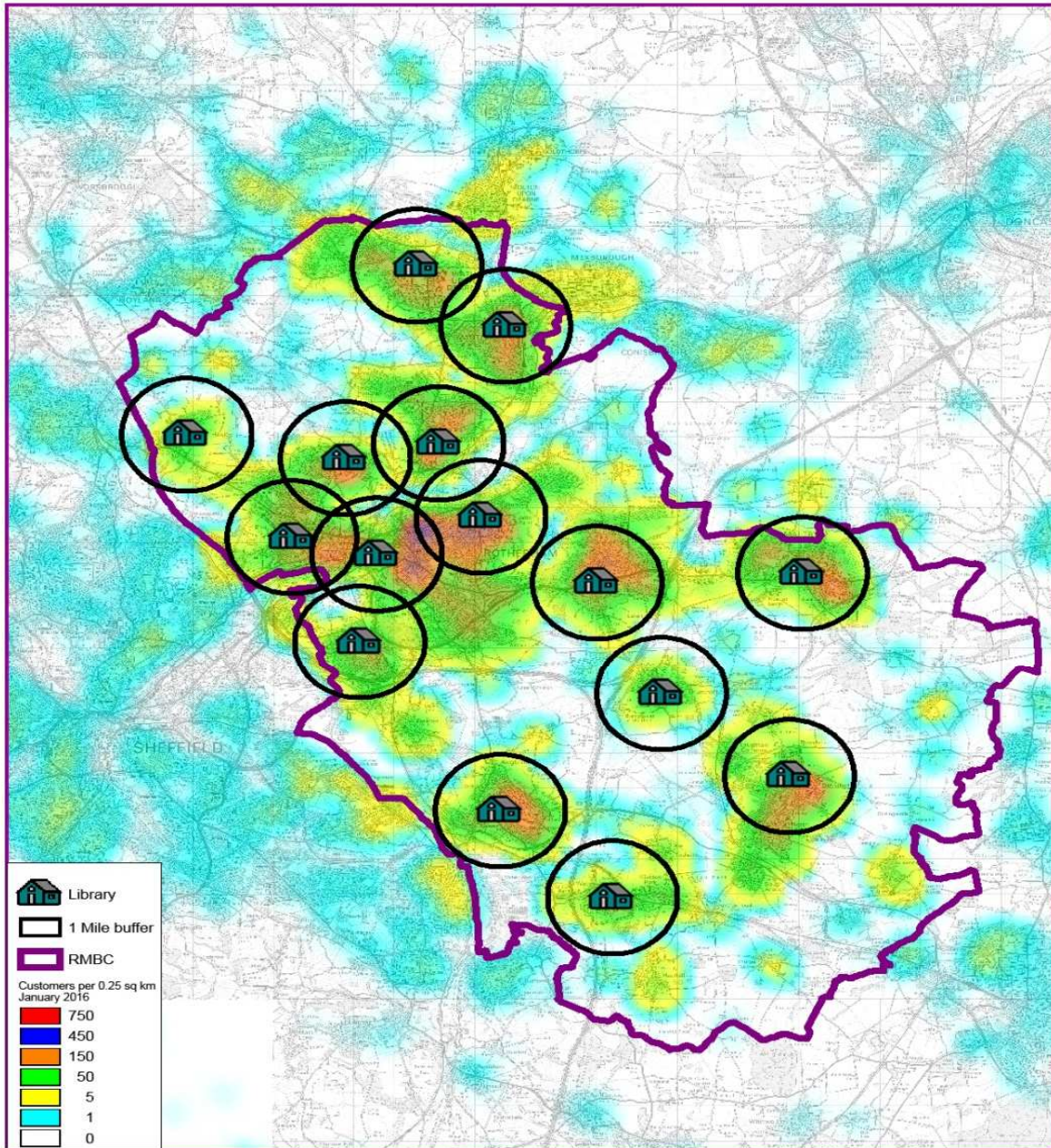
The two mobile library vehicles serve our rural communities as well as supporting residents who find it difficult to access a static site. The vehicles currently visit 14 villages around the borough and in addition provide vulnerable adults, who are housebound or who are in residential care, with access to the Library Service (this service is known as Book Link).

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The Service also provides a digital library service, which enables people to access services online 24/7/365. Users can join the library, download e-books and other digital resources, reserve or renew books online and engage with the Service through social media.

***Library Locations***

Rotherham has a geographical spread of libraries across the borough. Currently 98% of Rotherham residents are able to access a library within 2 miles of their home. All static library sites are accessible by public transport. The mobile library currently provides a service to more rural areas with infrequent bus services. The following map shows the distribution of registered library customers throughout the borough per 0.25 square kilometres. The circle border shows a 1 mile radius around the library building. The key indicates that red is the most populated areas and light blue the least.



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### ***Library Overview***

The following section gives an overview of what each library service offers. Core service data for comparative purposes is presented later on in this report.

#### **Riverside**

The service was relocated to Riverside House in April 2012. It differs from other libraries in that the community it serves is more wide and diverse, making it difficult to define due to its town centre location and the fact that it sits within the Council's main office accommodation. Its position in the town centre means that it serves several of our most deprived areas, and sits in the Boston Castle ward. Although there is no on-site parking (although on-road disabled parking is available), there are several car parks in the vicinity and is within walking distance of the train station and bus interchange. Frequent bus network numbers 7, 8 and 22m run along Main Street.

In 2014 Customer Services and the Library Service within Riverside House were merged to become Customer and Library Services. The aim at that time was to offer an integrated service with multi-skilled staff working across all service areas. The two services are located in three separate wings on the upper ground floor.

The offer at Riverside is varied. The Customer Service Centre, services the reception function for the whole of the building as well as delivering a number of specialist services on a daily basis. The Library operates as a resource for the whole of the borough and as such is expected to provide a flagship collection for a wide variety of needs and tastes.

As a Cultural offer a number of varied events take place during the year, ranging from musical recitals using the Steinway piano, English Touring Opera Company, and author events. The gallery houses heritage display cases and exhibition wall space and has a full diary of exhibitions from local artists.

#### **Current Opening Hours**

Monday	8.30 - 7.00pm
Tuesday	8.30 - 5.30pm
Wednesday	8.30 - 5.30pm
Thursday	8.30 - 7.00pm
Friday	8.30 - 5.30pm
Saturday	9.00 - 4.00pm

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The Library at Riverside is open for 55 hours per week. The nearest library is Kimberworth (1.4 miles).

**Aston Library and Customer Service Centre**

Aston Library and Customer Service Centre sits in the Holderness ward and serves a mainly rural area with urban populations based in several villages. Suburban housing dominates and the area is popular with commuters. The ward has a high proportion of owner occupied housing and contains some of the most prosperous areas in the borough, mainly on the east side of Aston. However, there are also pockets of deprivation, notably in north-west Aston. The ward profile indicates a lower than average level of health, employment and educational attainment compared with the rest of the borough.

The Library and Customer Service Centre is located in a shared building alongside a Health Centre, Children and Young Peoples Services and a Pharmacy. It has good public transport links (frequent bus network numbers 27, 29, 29a and X5) and a large car park. In June 2013 Library and Customer Services merged to form a joint service offer and this has helped to increase footfall. Overall customer satisfaction has increased as a result of enabling access to varied services in one location.

Customers are able to access council services such as benefit advice or council tax advice from Aston 'in person' Monday–Friday. Over and above this Aston has a public access free phone available and public access computers which are available in the Library and this offers further support to customers in gaining access to council services. Customers can make payments for council services at this site using the self-service payment machine.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 – 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 – 5.00pm
Wednesday	9.00 – 7.00pm
Thursday	9.00 – 5.00pm
Friday	9.00 – 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00 – 1.00pm

Aston Library and Customer Service Centre is open to the public for 46 hours per week. The opening hours were set after public consultation, and do not necessarily mirror the opening hours of the other services within the building. The nearest library is Kiveton Park

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(2.9 miles). Some areas of Aston are also served by the Mobile Library service. Crystal Peaks Library (Sheffield) is 3.25 miles away.

**Brinsworth Library**

Brinsworth is a suburban area in the West of Rotherham. The ward is neither particularly affluent nor deprived but there are pockets of deprivation in the north east of Brinsworth and Catcliffe.

The Library is currently housed in a Portacabin sitting on a council owned piece of land. There are good public transport links (frequent bus service number 71) and limited on street parking is available. The building is old and is fast becoming unfit for purpose.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 12.30pm	1.30 - 4.30pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 12.30pm	1.30 - 6.00pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	9.00 - 12.30pm	1.30 – 5.30pm
Friday	Closed	
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm	

The Library is open for 26 hours per week. The nearest library is Riverside (2 miles).

**Dinnington Library and Customer Service**

Dinnington Library and Customer Service Centre is situated in the Dinnington ward. The ward profile indicates a poor level of health, employment and educational attainment compared with the remainder of the borough.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Wednesday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Thursday	9.00 - 2.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm

Dinnington Library and Customer Service Centre is open for 46 hours per week. It is housed in the Community Resource Centre, sharing facilities with a playgroup and café,

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and with a large meeting hall available. It is within easy access of housing, shops and bus routes (frequent bus network numbers 19, 19a, 19b) and has an adjacent free car park.

In June 2013 Customer and Library Services merged to form a joint service offer and this has helped to increase footfall. Overall customer satisfaction has increased as a result of enabling access to varied services under one roof.

Customers are able to access council services such as benefit advice or council tax advice from Dinnington 'in person' on Mondays and Fridays. Access to services outside these times can be obtained from the public access free phone or by using the public access computers which are available in the library. Customers can make payments for council services at this site using the self-service payment machine.

The nearest library is Thurcroft (2.9 miles).

**Greasbrough Community Library**

Greasbrough Library sits in the Wingfield ward, one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The Library is situated in a detached building and houses a sizeable, well used meeting room. It is close to a small shopping precinct that offers free car parking and has good access to major bus routes (frequent bus network numbers 41 and 42).

The adjacent local Housing Office was closed in 2012, and so a strong partnership was formed between the Library and Housing to bridge the gap; a Housing Officer "Drop In" session now operates regularly and a Key Choices Kiosk was also installed in the Library to help with Housing searches.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 – 1.00pm	2.00 – 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 – 1.00pm	2.00 – 5.00pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	9.00 – 1.00pm	2.00 – 7.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 2.00pm	
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm	

Greasbrough Library is open for 32 hours per week. The nearest library is Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre (1.9miles).



**Kimberworth Community Library**

The catchment for Kimberworth Library is urban with the Library being located at the centre of what was once an established village and now forms part of Rotherham town. It serves one of the most deprived wards in the area, Rotherham West. The Library was fully refurbished in 2012 and has a bright children's space and an extended IT suite (the number of computers was doubled from two to four).

Kimberworth Library is situated at the end of a row of small localised shops with limited on street parking and has good access to bus routes (frequent bus network numbers 7 and 8). The area is mixed with some areas being fairly prosperous and areas on the fringe of the catchment being less so.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.30-1.00pm
Tuesday	9.30-1.00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	1.30-7.00pm
Friday	1.30-5.30pm
Saturday	9.30-1.00pm

The Library is open for 20 hours per week. The nearest libraries are Riverside (1.4 miles) and Greasbrough Library (2 miles).

**Kiveton Park Community Library**

Kiveton Park Library sits in the Wales ward. It is well-located on the main road, in a detached building on a main bus route (frequent bus network numbers 29, 29a and X5) and close to housing and shops. It has its own free car park to the front of the building and a large, free car park to the rear, on the other side of which is Kiveton Park Village Hall. The building also hosts the busy Kiveton Park Advice Centre.

**Current Opening Hours**

<b>Summer</b>			<b>Winter</b>		
Monday	9.00-1.00pm	2.00-6.30pm	Monday	9.00-1.00pm	2.00-6.00pm
Tuesday	9.00-1.00pm		Tuesday	9.00-2.00pm	
Wednesday	closed		Wednesday	closed	
Thursday	9.00- 1.00pm	2.00- 6.30pm	Thursday	9.00- 1.00pm	2.00- 6.00pm
Friday	9.00- 1.00pm	2.00- 5.00pm	Friday	9.00- 1.00pm	2.00- 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00-1.00pm		Saturday	9.00-1.00pm	

The opening hours are adjusted seasonally to allow for earlier closing in winter.

The Library is open for 32 hours per week. The nearest libraries are Killamarsh Library in Derbyshire (2.5 miles) and Aston Library and Customer Service Centre (2.9 miles).

### **Maltby Community Library**

Maltby Library is situated in the Maltby ward. Maltby is a former mining community characterised by older social rented and private housing to the east and modern private estates to the west. The ward profile notes that Maltby has fairly high levels of deprivation, especially in the east of the town, but there is also a more affluent pocket in the north-west.

The Library is housed in a large two-storey detached building on a main bus route (frequent bus network numbers 1, 2, 10, 18, 87 and X7) and close to housing and shops. There is limited adjacent car parking but free parking is available nearby. On the upper floor there are the Libraries on the Go mobile services and the Schools Loans Service. There is also a meeting room and office space on the first floor, although access to this floor is unsuitable for disabled people.

The building is in need of a substantial amount of renovation work, particularly upstairs in the meeting room and staff areas. There are several areas of concern in addition to the lack of disabled access to the upper floor: the flat roof has leaked on several occasions, the electrics/lighting, heating/ventilation, flooring, kitchen and toilet facilities. A major re-fit would be required if the building was to continue in use for any length of time. However, the Library has benefited from work in recent years to improve the frontage and access to the main front doors and by the installation of an accessible public toilet on the ground floor.

### **Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 2.00pm
Wednesday	9.00 - 2.00pm
Thursday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm
Sunday	10.00 - 2.00pm

Maltby Library is open 46 hours per week. The nearest Library is Wickersley Library (3.2 miles).

**Mowbray Gardens Community Library**

Mowbray Gardens Library is situated in a heavily deprived area, Rotherham East. The ward profiles indicate a low level of health and very low levels of employment and educational attainment compared with the rest of the borough.

Mowbray Gardens Library was extended and refurbished in 2008 using Big Lottery Funding. The building offers a community meeting room, free parking facilities and a community garden that is cared for by volunteers. It is easily accessible by public transport (frequent bus network numbers X78, 4, 15 and 37).

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 2.00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Friday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm
Sunday	10.00 - 2.00pm

The Library is open 40 hours per week including 4 hours on a Sunday, and has a high number of visitors. The nearest library is Rawmarsh (1.9 miles).

**Rawmarsh Library and Community Service Centre**

Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre sits in the Rawmarsh ward. The library was relocated to a purpose built joint service centre in 2012. The Council worked closely with the Rotherham Primary Care Trust to develop multi-tenanted Customer Service Centres at Rawmarsh and this has increased the number of services which are available to customers. There is a large on-site car park and has good transport links (frequent bus network numbers 217 and 218).

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Wednesday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Thursday	9.00 - 5.30pm
Friday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm

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Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre is open 46 hours per week.

In June 2013 Library and Customer Services merged to form a joint service offer and this has helped to increase footfall. Overall customer satisfaction has increased as a result of enabling access to varied services under one roof.

Customers are able to access council services such as benefit advice or council tax advice from Rawmarsh 'in person' Monday – Friday. Over and above this Rawmarsh has a public access free phone and public access computers which are available in the Library and this offers further support to customers in gaining access to council services. Customers can make payments for council services at this site using the self-service payment machine.

The nearest libraries are Greasbrough and Mowbray Gardens (1.9 miles).

**Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre**

Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre sits in the Swinton ward. The Library and Customer Service Centre is located within the town's main shopping precinct, next to Swinton Civic Hall. There is a large free car park available, and there are good bus links (frequent bus network numbers 218 and 222) and a railway station. The building also has a large, well-used meeting room.

In June 2013 Library and Customer Services merged to form a joint service offer and this has helped to increase footfall. Overall customer satisfaction has increased as a result of enabling access to varied services under one roof.

Customers are able to access council services such as benefit advice or council tax advice from Swinton 'in person' on Mondays and Wednesday. Access to services outside these times can be obtained from the public access free phone or by using the public access computers which are available in the Library. Customers can make payments for council services at this site using the self-service payment machine.

**Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 6.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Wednesday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Thursday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm

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Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre is open for 46 hours per week. The next closest libraries are Mexbrough Library (1 mile) in the neighbouring authority of Doncaster and Wath Library (2.8 miles).

**Thorpe Hesley Community Library**

Thorpe Hesley is situated at the border of the Keppel Ward, north west of the borough and is a village of approximately 4,000 residents. It is mainly an affluent area popular with commuters as it is situated close to Junction 35 of the M1 motorway and is where Rotherham borders with Sheffield. The surrounding area is mainly rural and the next closest village is Scholes with a population of approximately 340 residents.

In January 2007 Rotherham Council entered a partnership with Holy Trinity Church Thorpe Hesley regarding provision of a permanent Library within the Community Centre being built in the grounds of the church. This was to replace the more limited service provided by a mobile Library, a need of the community that was identified during consultation leading up to the bid for funding.

The Library has an excellent local profile but membership is low due to it being on the edge of a village and within the Church grounds. Usage is affected during the winter months. Car parking is available and the frequent bus network numbers 66 and 67 run nearby.

The ward profile indicates a higher percentage of good health, lower percentage claiming job seekers allowance and incapacity benefit, and higher educational attainment compared with the rest of the borough.

The Library offers a small but welcoming space. It is what is known as a “roll in roll out library”, as the shelves are on wheels and can be folded away. This enables the room to be used for other activities either while the library is open or when the library is closed.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	1.30 - 4.30pm	
Tuesday	9.30 - 12.30pm	1.30 - 4.30pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	9.30 - 12.30pm	1.00 - 7.00pm
Friday	9.30 – 1.00pm	
Saturday	9.30 - 12.00pm	
Sunday	9.30 - 12.00pm	

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The Library is open to the public for 26 hours per week (3 of these hours on a Sunday).

The nearest libraries are Kimberworth Library (2.8 miles) and Greasbrough Library (3.9 miles).

**Thurcroft Community Library**

Thurcroft is situated in Rother Vale ward and is a former pit village. Thurcroft Library is located within Thurcroft Junior Academy in the centre of the community, close to housing, shops and bus routes (frequent bus network numbers 19, 19a and 19b). There is also free parking within the school grounds, though this is limited at certain times on school days.

The Library was refurbished in 2003, using Space for Sports and Arts funding.

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	1.30 - 7.00pm	
Tuesday	10.00 - 12.30pm	1.30 - 5.00pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	10.00 - 12.30pm	
Friday	10.00 - 12.30pm	
Saturday	9.30 - 1.00pm	

Thurcroft Library is open 20 hours per week. The next closest libraries are Dinnington Library and Customer Service Centre (2.8 miles) and Wickersley Library (2.9 miles).

**Wath Community Library**

Wath-upon-Dearne is a small town with a mix of council estates, terraced and suburban areas, situated in the Wath ward. North-west Wath is the main area of deprivation although there is also a smaller deprived pocket in the east. In the north, the Manvers area is one of the main employment areas in the borough and is also the location of Dearne Valley College.

The Library is situated in the town square, next to the transport interchange (frequent bus network include 22, 22M and 22X). It has a large free car park and is across the road from a Tesco Extra store. The Library has a lift to the first floor Gallery and a very large Meeting Room. Exhibition space is provided on the first floor gallery and meeting room throughout the year for local Art, Photography and Writing events. The Library provides a Customer Service Kiosk for Council payments to be made and a free phone line to Council Services for public use.

**Opening Times**

Monday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Wednesday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Thursday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm

Wath Library is open 46 hours per week. The nearest Library is Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre (2.8 miles). Wath Library is also close to Mexborough Library in Doncaster (3.2 miles) and Wombwell Library in Barnsley (3.3 miles).

**Wickersley Community Library**

Wickersley Library opened in September 2008 to replace a previous mobile Library service to the area.

The Library is situated in the Hellaby ward area. The Library catchment extends along the A631 east to west from the M18 through to Whiston crossroads and north in the Wickersley ward to Flanderwell and Ravenfield. Although some areas rank as amongst the most prosperous in Rotherham there are two areas of council housing with higher levels of deprivation. The ward profile indicates an average or better level of health, employment and educational attainment compared with the rest of the borough

The Library shares the community building with the Parish Council, situated on the upper floor of the building with a public lift and stairs providing access. The building is owned by the Parish Council and the Library pays a lease and towards services, including the support of the Parish Council caretaker. The Library values the ongoing support of the Parish Council.

It is situated adjacent to the main dual carriage close to housing and a busy shopping precinct. There is a small car park with designated disabled spaces and good public transport links (frequent bus network include 1, 1a, 2, 10, 33, 13a, 19, 19a, 19b, 87, X7 and X13).

**Current Opening Hours**

Monday	9.00 - 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00 - 7.00pm

Wednesday	9.00 - 1.00pm
Thursday	9.00 - 7.00pm
Friday	9.00 - 1.00pm
Saturday	9.00 - 1.00pm

The Library is open 40 hours per week. The nearest libraries to Wickersley Library are Thurcroft Library (2.9 miles), Maltby Library (3.5 miles) and Mowbray Gardens Library (3.5 miles)

### **Libraries on the Go**

The Mobile service visits locations throughout the borough targeting areas where there is either a geographical gap in static library provision or a lack of access to library services. The latter may be because of a lack of public transport in some of the more rural locations or because there is a barrier created by age or health. The age profile for the Service is predominantly elderly. As the vehicle covers the whole of the borough there is a wide variety of users from different backgrounds.

Introduced in 2011, Book Link is also a mobile Library service delivered from a Transit sized vehicle. There are three separate elements to the service:

- Visits are made to sheltered accommodation units and residential nursing/care homes across the borough. Residents can select books and Spoken Word from the vehicle and a Home Library, or housebound service, is provided to anyone who is unable to visit but who wishes to receive a service. Sometimes, visitors to the vehicle may only need a home delivery for a short period of time due to illness after which then return to selecting from the vehicle.
- Book Link offers a borough-wide Home Library or housebound Library service to individuals who for reasons of infirmity or disability are unable to access a static service point on their own. The individual collections (books and audio –visual material) are tailored to meet client preferences and packed in bags. Some of the community libraries select from their own stock for Home Delivery and the Book Link vehicle then collects the bags from these sites before making home visits. Most of the stock preparation is undertaken from the Libraries on the Go base on the first floor of Maltby Library.



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

- Book Link provides an Exchange service (bulk delivery and collection of Library stock) to residential nursing/care homes and sheltered accommodation units .The stock is left in the residents' lounge at each site.

**Online Library Services**

The library service provides a range of online library services accessible through the website at [www.rotherham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/libraries):

- Downloadable eBooks and eAudio books
- Online library catalogue – search for and request items
- Online renewals
- Online family history resources
- Online subscriptions to e-magazines

The eBook service was introduced in October 2013 with one of the primary aims being to develop it to a point where its performance equalled that of the smaller static sites. As of January 2016 this is now being realised which is due to several factors: purchasing a wide range of quality material, targeted marketing and promotions, redesign of Prism (the online Library Catalogue) with eBooks featuring prominently, and purchasing customers' recommendations. Rotherham also offers an eAudio and eMagazine service to further supplement the digital collection.

**Services to children and young people**

Library Services to Children and Young People are made up of two elements – the Public Library and the Schools Library Service. The latter is offered on an annual subscription basis to primary and special schools. The two strands are jointly managed to facilitate a co-ordinated and complementary delivery of services and resolve any conflicting priorities.

In summary, services to Children and Young People comprise the following:

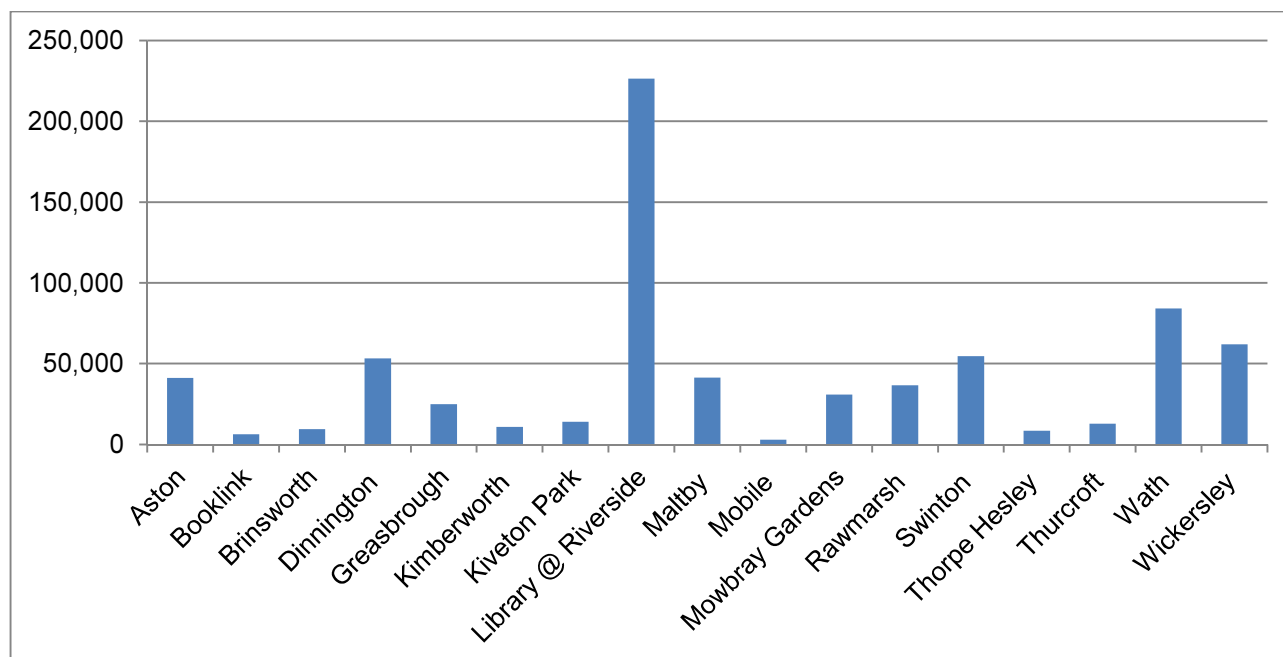
- A wide range of stock, suitable for ages 0 to 16
- Concessionary terms *re* hire and overdue charges
- Online resources available 24/7
- Bookstart book gifting programme
- Bookstart Rhymetimes and Bookstart Bear Club

- School class visits to libraries
- Visits to schools by Library staff
- The Summer Reading Challenge
- Out of school / holiday activities
- Study space, homework and ICT support, including internet safety guidance
- Story-reading opportunities
- Reader groups, e.g. Chatterbooks
- Creative work with young people – e.g. Code Clubs, Arts Award
- Schools Loans Service – loans of books and museum artefacts, literacy support and professional support in Library development
- Outreach work and partnership links

## Core Service Data

*Who uses libraries?*

Library Visits 2015/16



Library Visits – Site Breakdown 2015/16

Site	Visits 2015/16
Aston	41,066
Book Link	6,298
Brinsworth	9,396
Dinnington	53,330
Greasbrough	24,841
Kimberworth	10,939
Kiveton Park	14,032
Library @ Riverside	226,349
Maltby	41,370
Mobile	2,954
Mowbray Gardens	30,803
Rawmarsh	36,522
Swinton	54,547
Thorpe Hesley	8,490
Thurcroft	12,811
Wath	84,121
Wickersley	61,958
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>719,827</b>

People visit libraries for a number of different reasons, in addition to the transactional activities of borrowing items and using computers. This will include those who are just calling in to read a newspaper or with a general enquiry, for example, as well as those people attending organised sessions.

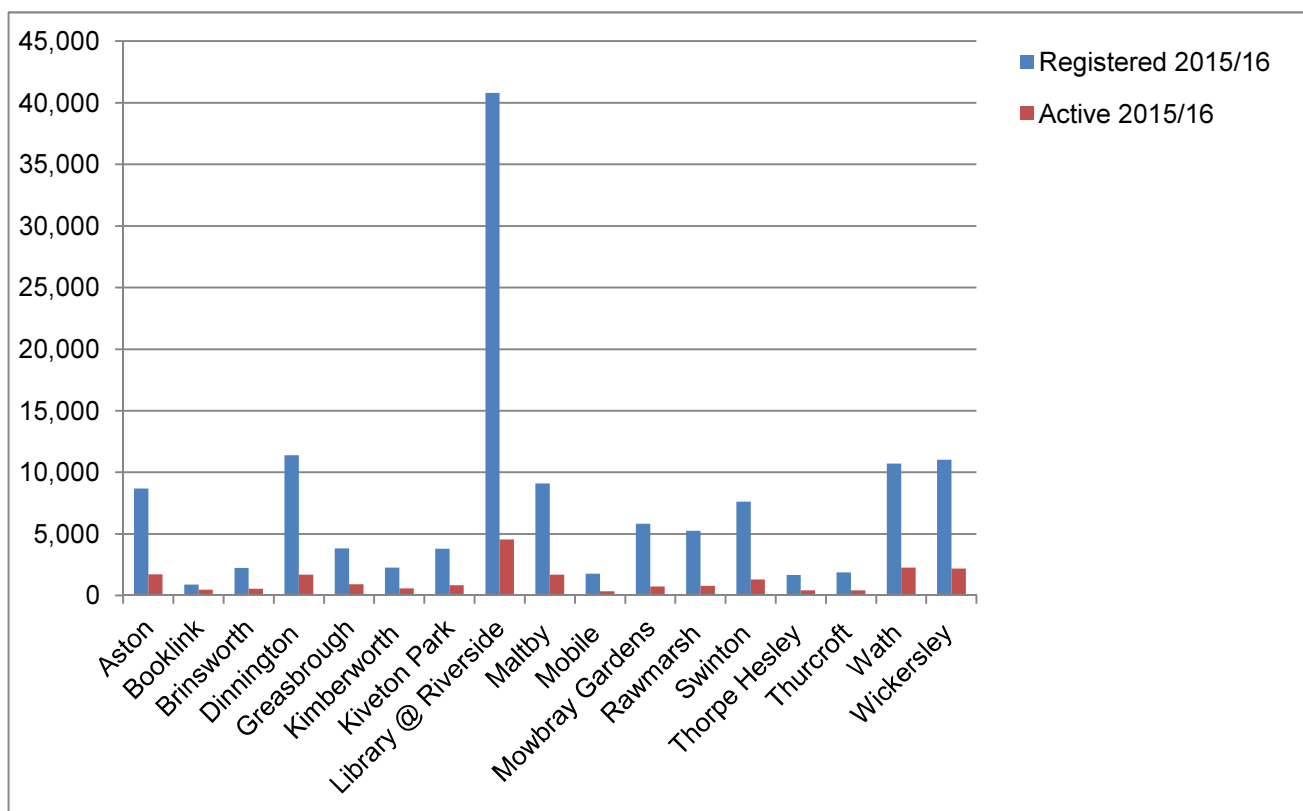
### **Active Users**

To capture library use across the borough consistently, usage has been measured by transaction in a library. A transaction is seen as borrowing or renewing an item. Data was analysed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Two key data sets have been produced:

- Registered users (people who have joined the library in the last 3 years)
- Active borrowers (people who have borrowed at least one item during 2015/16)

**Registered users v Active borrowers per site 2015/16**



## Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016

Site	Registered users	Active borrowers	% of active borrowers
Aston	8,675	1,715	20%
Book Link	892	472	53%
Brinsworth	2,252	563	25%
Dinnington	11,388	1,688	15%
Greasbrough	3,822	922	24%
Kimberworth	2,274	584	26%
Kiveton Park	3,799	850	22%
Library @ Riverside	40,807	4,553	11%
Maltby	9,111	1,687	19%
Mobile	1,771	356	20%
Mowbray Gardens	5,836	725	12%
Rawmarsh	5,251	799	15%
Swinton	7,627	1,302	17%
Thorpe Hesley	1,668	428	26%
Thurcroft	1,875	434	23%
Wath	10,707	2,280	21%
Wickersley	11,033	2,203	20%
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>128,788</b>	<b>21,561</b>	<b>17%</b>

It is worth noting that the active borrower figures do not include IT usage, which is collated separately. Nor do they take into account attendance at activities, events or skills development sessions.

#### Summary of active users:

- There were 128,788 registered library users at the end of March 2016. This represents almost 50% of the resident population.
- Of these 22,472 active library users during 2015/16 (17% of registered users; just 9% of the population).
- Active borrowing is low in areas of most deprivation, but is higher in more affluent areas. The Book Link service, which delivers a service to vulnerable adults in their own home or in residential care) is proportionally well used against their registered users.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

- The Library @ Riverside, which serves several of Rotherham's most deprived areas, has the least % of active borrowers.
- Mowbray Gardens also has a low active borrower rate. However, this site has high attendance at skills and development sessions. This demonstrates that any assessment of the service needs to consider all elements within the library "offer", not 'just' books.

***Age profile***

- 3.4% are aged 0-3 years;
- 28.9% are aged 4-11 years;
- 7% are aged 12-17 years;
- 4% are aged 18-25 years;
- 11.1% are aged 26-40 years;
- 21.4% are aged 41-65 years; and
- 24.1% are aged 66 and over.

The demographic profile of Rotherham indicates that the borough has an aging population, and there is a demand for library services from the 66+ age group at 24.1% active usage. Children aged from 4-11 years also use the library well, although usage drops in the 12-17 year old age group (Key Stages 3 and 4). Our lowest active user group is the 18-25 year olds, and this correlates with the resident population (currently 14.3% of the total population). As Rotherham strives to become a child centred borough, libraries are well placed to engage with children and young people.

***Gender profile***

- 37% of active users are male; 63% are females.

This correlates with the resident population where there are more females than males.

***Ethnic profile***

- 75% identified themselves as White;
- 0.9% identified themselves as Black or Black British;
- 0.4% identified themselves as Dual Heritage;
- 2.2% identified themselves as Asian or Asian British;
- 1% identified themselves as Other;

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

- 20.3% of customers chose not to respond.

In relation to the demographic profile, 8.1% of the population belong to ethnic groups other than White British (6.4% are from non-white groups), well below the UK average of 20.2%. It follows that 91.9% of Rotherham residents are White British. Active library usage is high amongst White people, but is significantly low amongst other ethnic groups at just 4.5% combined.

## 2015/16 Performance data

*Issues/renewals*

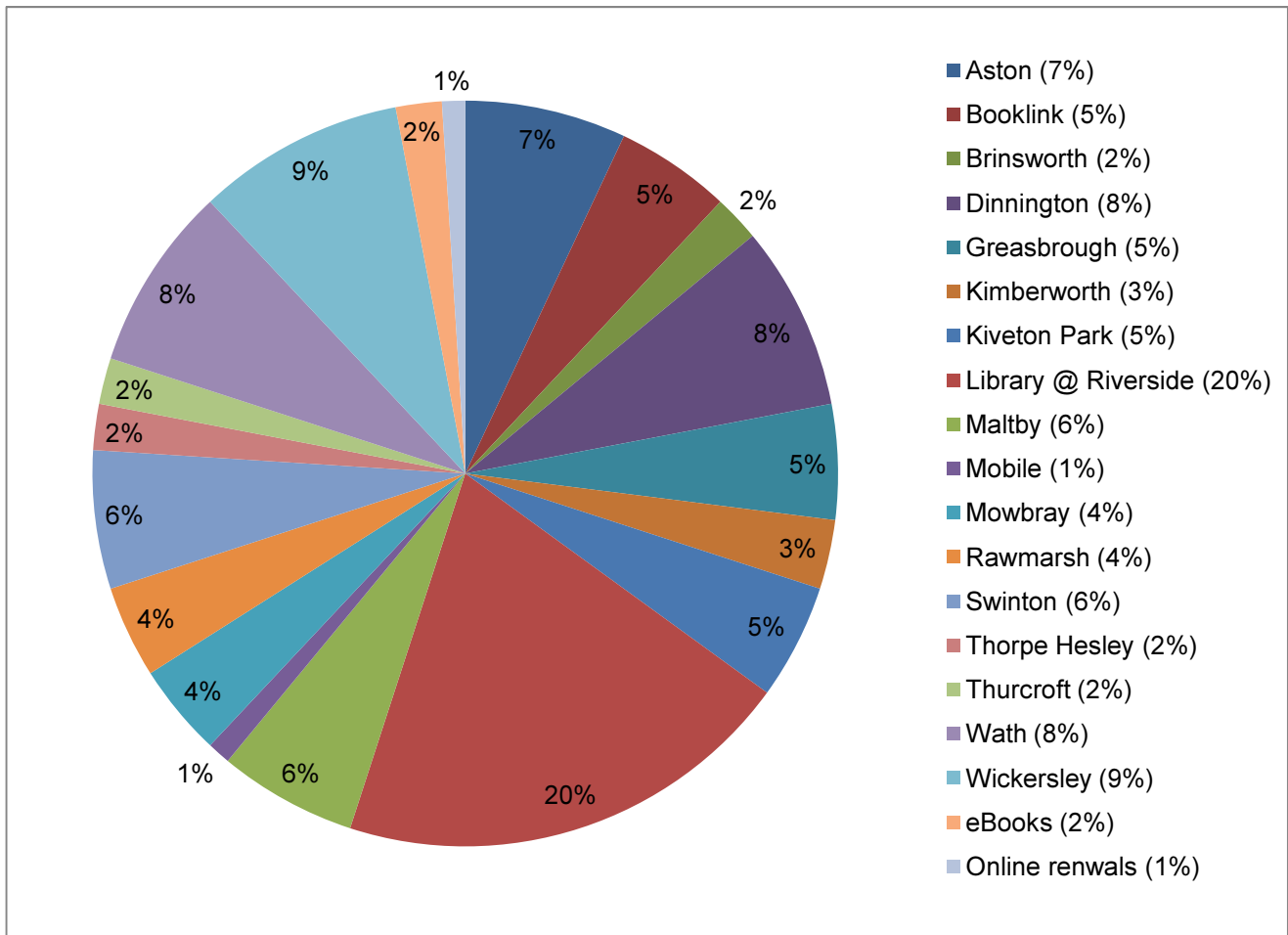
Site	Issues/Renewals
Aston	36,903
Book Link	28,232
Brinsworth	11,988
Dinnington	40,609
Greasbrough	25,223
Kimberworth	16,990
Kiveton Park	25,348
Library @ Riverside	104,722
Maltby	31,209
Mobile	7,288
Mowbray	18,490
Rawmarsh	21,049
Swinton	31,347
Thorpe Hesley	11,859
Thurcroft	11,472
Wath	43,364
Wickersley	48,246
eBooks*	12,134
Online renewals**	7,200
<b>Service total</b>	<b>533,673</b>

(\*eBooks include eBook, eAudio and eMagazine downloads)

(\*\*online renewals via the online public catalogue)



**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**  
**Proportion of items issued/renewed across libraries 2015/16**

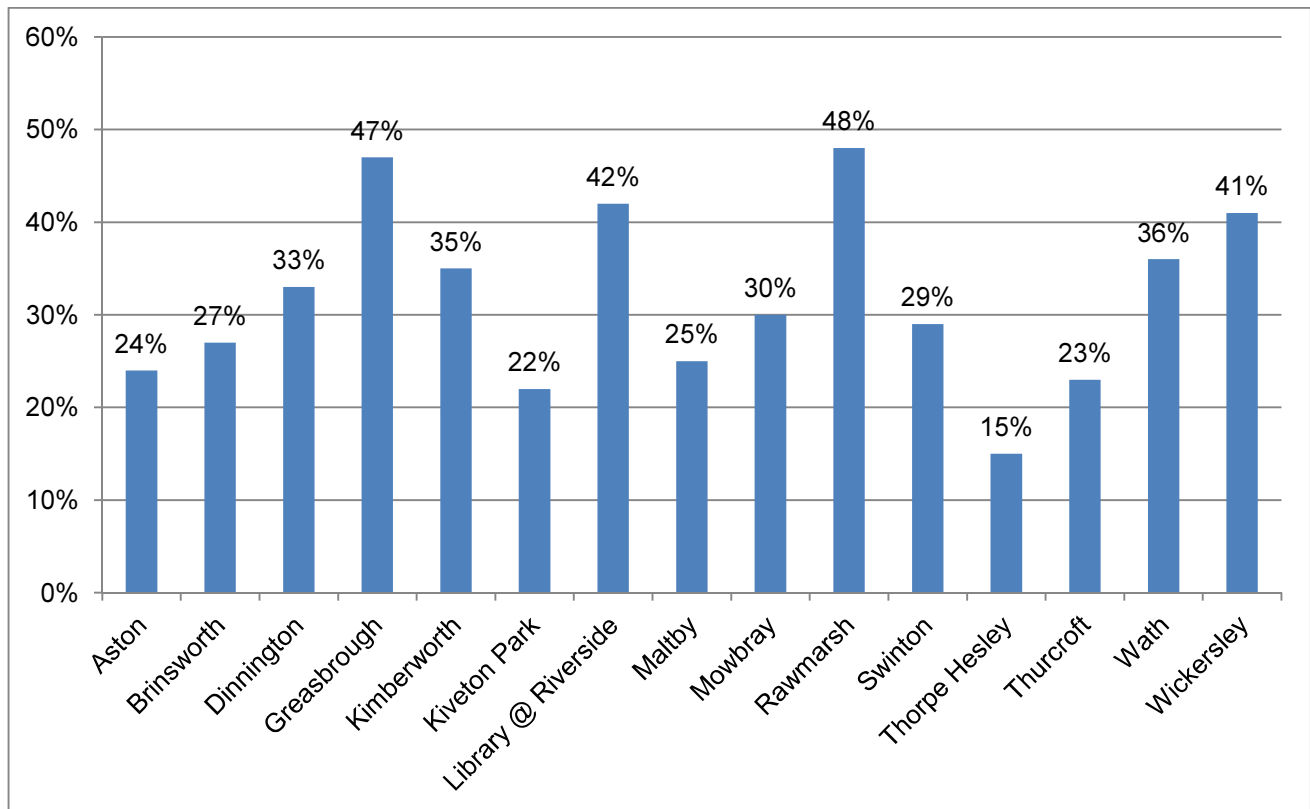


Issues across all sites have declined over recent years, which reflect the national trend. The exception to this is eBook borrowing, which continues to increase month-on-month, and now surpasses issues at our 3 smaller sites and the Mobile library. There are 1,065 active eBook users. Of these 51% are borrowing physical items as well as eBooks, with the remaining 49% only borrowing eBooks.

All in-stock books at a Rotherham library can be reserved and collected at a local library free of charge. This ensures that users are not disadvantaged by smaller collections in smaller sites.

**Public IT Usage**

% use against available time 2015/16  
(service-wide average 35%)



The public IT facilities were used for a total of 112,007 hours in 2015/16, which represents 35% of total available hours (based on library opening hours). Sessions typically last for 1 hour, although some of the IT taster sessions last longer. Sessions can be delivered by library staff, external partners or volunteers and range from Basic IT sessions to Coding Clubs.

Above service average usage generally correlates with the high number of IT sessions in those particular sites; low usage is evident in those sites which don't offer any supported sessions. The exception to this is Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre, which has the highest % usage rate, but relatively low IT session take-up.

**Public Wi-Fi**

Public Wi-Fi is available across all static sites. Usage steadily increased over 2015/16 being accessed for a total of 32,209 times. No customer data is collected.

**Customer Satisfaction**

Various methodologies exist across the service to measure customer satisfaction. At the end of 2015/16, satisfaction was running at 98%

**2014/15 CIPFA Benchmarking Data**

Comparative profiling data provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) allows us to examine costs and key performance measures against other authorities. This ensures that we are providing value for money and a good service for customers.

The profiles look at the following key aspects of library provision:

- Numbers of libraries and service users.
- Cost of running library services.
- Levels of staffing and volunteers.
- Annual issues.
- Stock and acquisition levels.
- Performance in relation to speed of requests.
- User satisfaction.

**Note:** The CIPFAstats Comparative Profile was published in December 2015. The data presented in based on 2014/15 Actuals.

*Libraries and Library Users*

Local Authority	Number of Service Points	Resident Population	Active borrowers
Rotherham	17	260,100	25,684
Doncaster	24	304,200	19,009
Barnsley	17	237,800	19,285
St Helens	13	177,200	36,989
Wakefield	15	331,400	26,008
Wigan	15	321,000	26,691
Stockton-on-Tees	12	194,100	28,315
Calderdale	22	207,400	26,124
Tameside	9	220,800	22,538
Dudley	17	315,800	44,058
Stoke-on-Trent	6	251,000	25,319
Telford & Wrekin	10	169,400	24,573
Darlington	3	105,400	13,136
Gateshead	13	200,500	35,350
Rochdale	18	213,000	23,680
<b>Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>233,940</b>	<b>26,451</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>220,800</b>	<b>25,846</b>

- Rotherham has close to the highest number of libraries within the comparative group.
- It is the fifth largest of the 15 authorities in the group (in terms of population).
- The number of active borrowers is a key indication of how well the library service engages with the public. Rotherham performs relatively well against this indicator, although more could be done to promote services to the resident population.

**Resourcing**

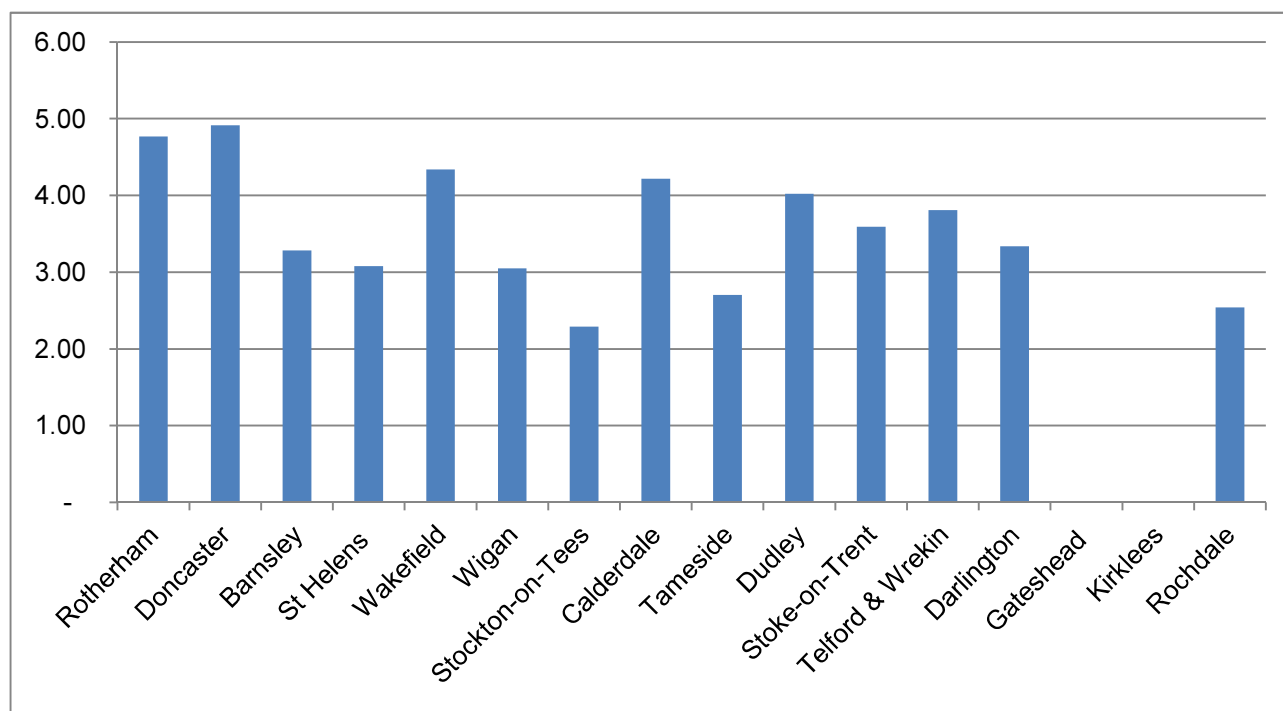
## Costs

**Revenue costs per 1,000 Population (£'s) – Actuals 2014-15**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Revenue costs per 1,000 Population (£)</b>
Rotherham	12,768
Doncaster	11,152
Barnsley	11,129
St Helens	14,918
Wakefield	12,563
Wigan	9,518
Stockton-on-Tees	14,662
Calderdale	14,268
Tameside	9,258
Dudley	16,228
Stoke-on-Trent	9,677
Telford & Wrekin	11,109
Darlington	9,892
<i>Gateshead</i>	<i>nil return</i>
Rochdale	13,011
<b>Average</b>	<b>11,344</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>11,152</b>

- Rotherham comes out as being at the middle of the comparison, suggesting that its costs are similar to the group as a whole.

## Costs per visit



## Levels of staffing and volunteers

Local Authority	Professional Posts	All Other Posts	Total	Staff in post per 1,000 Population	Number of Volunteers	Number of Volunteer Hours
<b>Rotherham</b>	5.0	62.7	71.7	0.3	<b>77</b>	<b>5,414</b>
Doncaster	6.5	33.7	40.2	0.1	508	116,225
Barnsley	4.0	57.7	61.7	0.3	20	720
St Helens	6.5	47.0	53.5	0.3	10	84
Wakefield	10.9	71.2	82.1	0.3	16	811
Wigan	4.0	73.4	77.4	0.3	..	11,357
Stockton-on-Tees	17.1	49.2	66.3	0.4	55	1,094
Calderdale	9.3	45.2	54.6	0.3	46	3,177
Tameside	7.5	37.9	45.4	0.2	53	..
Dudley	21.0	90.6	111.6	0.4	67	2,042
Stoke-on-Trent	7.3	43.4	50.7	0.2	46	2,159
Telford & Wrekin	7.5	30.2	37.7	0.22	112	1,642
Darlington	2.8	21.6	24.4	0.23	26	1,190
Gateshead	11.5	63.5	75.0	0.37	177	2,005
Rochdale	3.0	43.0	46.0	0.22	78	3,308
<b>Average</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>10,802</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>2,024</b>

**Workload**

## Visits

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Number of Visits for Library Purposes</b>	<b>Library Visits per 1,000 Population</b>
Rotherham	683,850	2,629
Doncaster	666,161	2,190
Barnsley	784,187	3,298
St Helens	789,023	4,453
Wakefield	906,321	2,735
Wigan	940,925	2,931
Stockton-on-Tees	1,137,164	5,859
Calderdale	641,050	3,091
Tameside	718,544	3,254
Dudley	1,147,900	3,635
Stoke-on-Trent	630,675	2,513
Telford & Wrekin	466,450	2,754
Darlington	297,539	2,823
Gateshead	1,009,240	5,034
Kirklees	..	..
Rochdale	1,001,677	4,703
<b>Average</b>	<b>788,047</b>	<b>3,460</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>784,187</b>	<b>3,091</b>

## Book Issues

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total Book Issues</b>	<b>Total Book Issues per 1,000 Population</b>
Rotherham	596,984	2,295
Doncaster	522,287	1,717
Barnsley	518,031	2,178
St Helens	633,050	3,573
Wakefield	703,901	2,124
Wigan	645,086	2,010
Stockton-on-Tees	676,145	3,483
Calderdale	594,916	2,868
Tameside	607,050	2,749
Dudley	1,218,005	3,857
Stoke-on-Trent	528,293	2,105
Telford & Wrekin	442,155	2,610
Darlington	376,583	3,573
Gateshead	738,302	3,682
Kirklees	..	..
Rochdale	511,819	2,403
<b>Average</b>	<b>620,840</b>	<b>2,749</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>596,984</b>	<b>2,610</b>

**Stock**

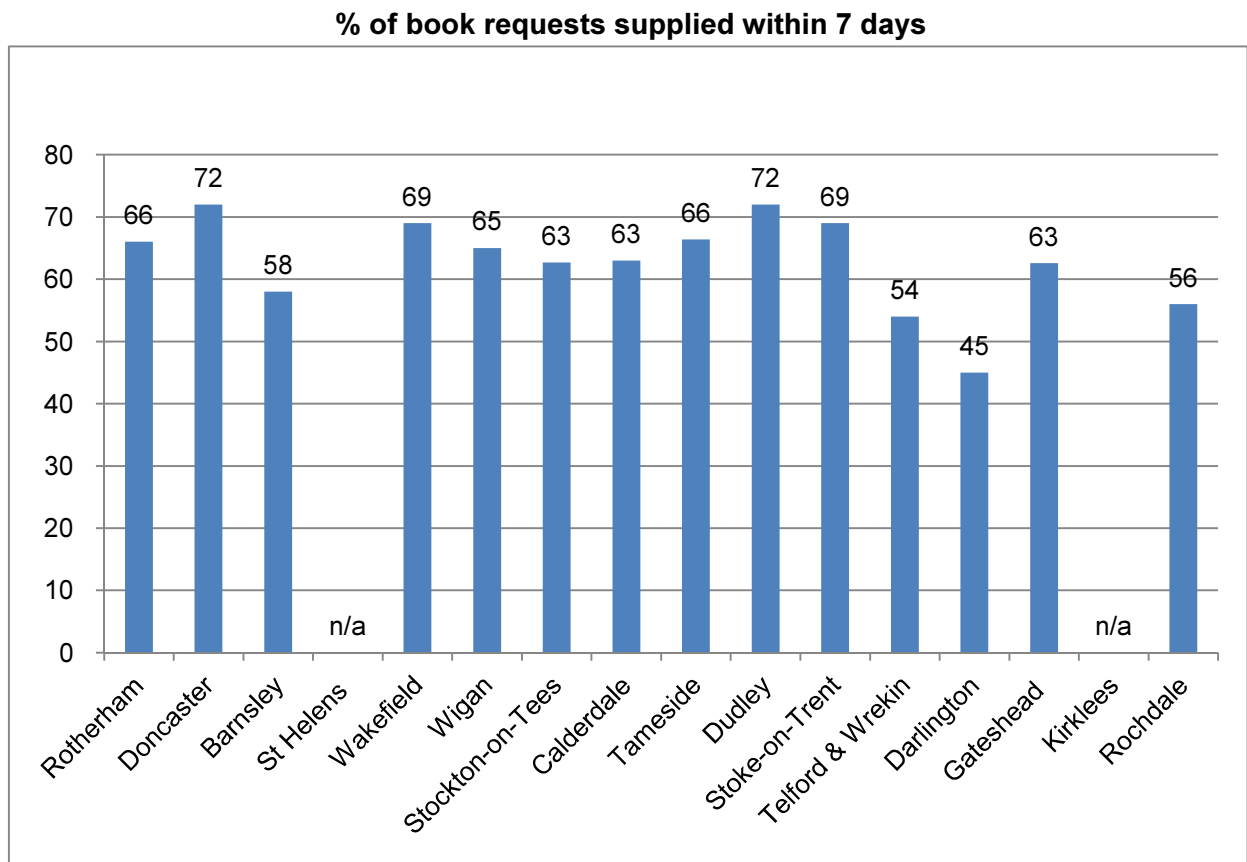
This table compares the overall book stock level of the library service. Rotherham has lower than average stock per 1,000 population than the other library authorities.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total Book Stock</b>	<b>Book stock per 1,000 Population</b>
Rotherham	250,742	964
Doncaster	283,461	932
Barnsley	334,593	1,407
St Helens	290,517	1,639
Wakefield	395,188	1,192
Wigan	318,319	992
Stockton-on-Tees	248,887	1,282
Calderdale	332,042	1,601
Tameside	254,931	1,155
Dudley	372,425	1,179
Stoke-on-Trent	..	..
Telford & Wrekin	122,156	721
Darlington	234,724	2,227
Gateshead	181,340	904
Kirklees	..	..
Rochdale	197,461	927
<b>Average</b>	<b>272,628</b>	<b>1,223</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>269,196</b>	<b>1,167</b>



**Requests**

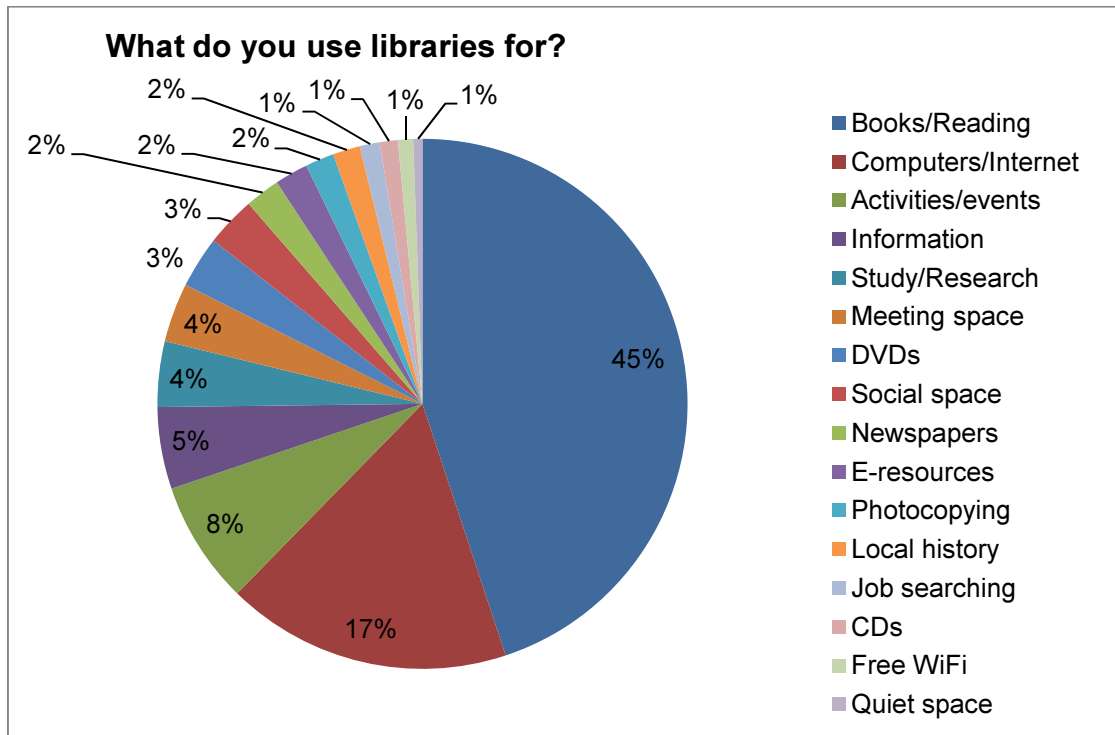
Satisfying requests for in-stock books within a reasonable timescale is a key performance indicator. Rotherham performs well in comparison with other authorities.



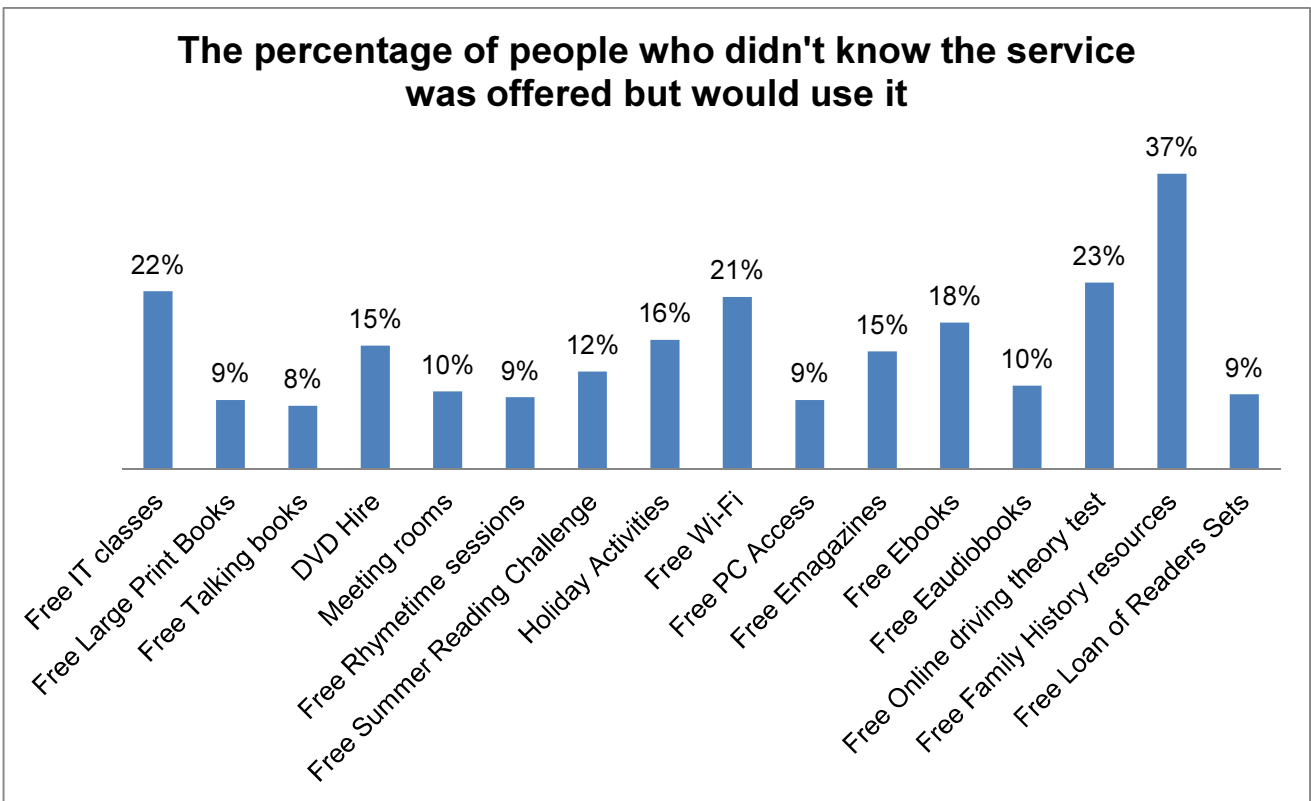
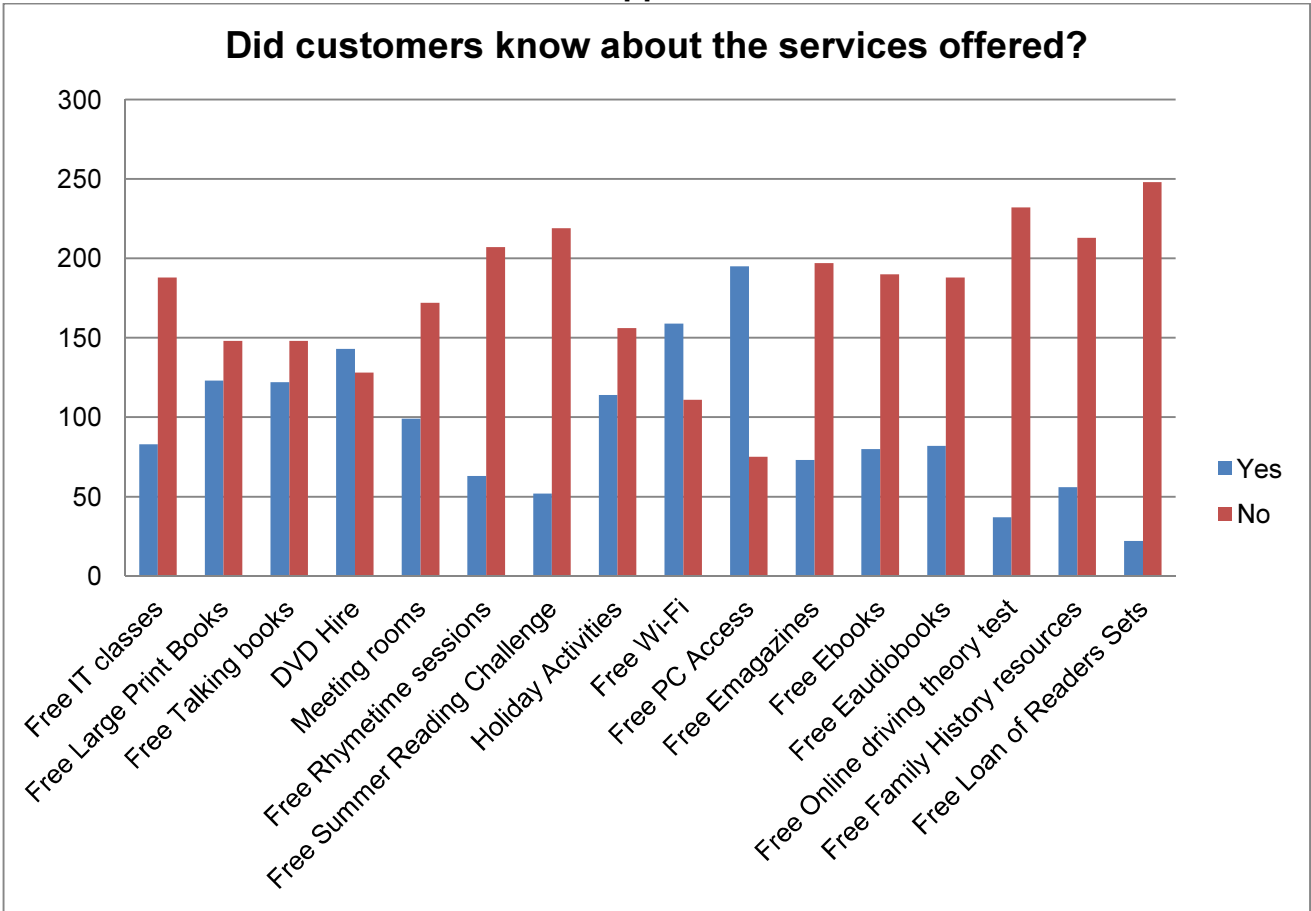
### Community views – recent update

The library service has recently undertaken customer surveys on a range of different service issues. Some of the responses have given us an insight into how current users and non-users view the service.

There were 606 responses to the library strategy consultation. 97% of respondents were current library users, and stated that books and reading were the main reason for using the service.



Consultation also took place with approximately 300 non-users across the service, who were asked questions around why they didn't use the service and what would encourage them to do so. Although 89% knew where their local library was, they didn't use it because they could access information on the internet themselves or that they didn't have time to visit. Other major factors for non-use were the general perception that libraries are 'old fashioned' and a lack of awareness of the services on offer, as illustrated in the table below:



**Conclusion**

When considering the demographic profile there a number of key indicators which will provide challenges and opportunities for the library service in the next few years.

**Deprivation**

Deprivation in Rotherham has increased between 2007 and 2015. The borough is now ranked as the 52nd most deprived district in England and deprivation has increased in most of the areas with the highest deprivation. The key drivers for deprivation in Rotherham are employment, education, skills and training and health and wellbeing. The most deprived wards are Rotherham East, Rotherham West and Wingfield.

Although the authority currently has a borough-wide network of libraries with 98% of residents able to access a library within a two mile radius of their home, borrowing activity is low in most areas of deprivation but higher in more affluent areas. The library at Riverside, which includes several of Rotherham's most deprived areas in its catchment area, has the lowest proportion of its registered members as active borrowers of any service point.

**Employment**

The number of Rotherham residents who are economically active is below the national average. The unemployment rate is also above the national average and the ward with the highest proportion of adults claiming out of work benefit is East Rotherham.

Whilst the library service has the IT resources to help people improve their employment prospects these resources were only used for 35% of the available hours in 2015/16. There is therefore considerable scope to improve take up especially via the service's assisted digital offer.

The potential for the service to help those in greatest need can be assessed by analysis of the site-by-site breakdown of IT usage. The catchment areas of the 3 sites with the highest IT activity in 2015/16 (Mowbray Gardens, Maltby and the Library @ Riverside) are located within 3 of the 11 most deprived wards in the borough.

The contribution which can be made to addressing employment issues is compatible with the corporate objective to help people and businesses benefit from a growing economy.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

Within the contexts of providing help for the unemployed and also helping people to complete day-to-day tasks online, the service has plans for further development of the digital literacy element within the Universal Library Offers.

**Education and Skills**

Despite improvements in Key Stage 1 assessments, attainment in reading and writing is still below the national average for England and below the levels achieved by Rotherham's comparator authorities. Key Stage 2 attainment in English has improved but is still slightly below the average for England as a whole and below Rotherham's comparator authorities. Rawmarsh, East Rotherham and Swinton wards have the lowest school achievement rates within the borough. There is a well-known and accepted link between educational attainment and employability and in Rotherham only 27% of those without qualifications are in employment.

There is good evidence to suggest that Rotherham's library service is well placed to take advantage of developing initiatives to boost literacy. Almost 30% of the current active borrowers have an age profile of between 4 and 11 years and initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge are popular and successful.

Despite this success more needs to be done to encourage library use by older children and non-users in this age bracket, particularly in the areas of deprivation. This aspiration is in line with the corporate agenda which will prioritise work to ensure that children and their families have the best start in life within the context of a child centred borough.

**Health**

The number of people reporting that their day-to-day activities are limited because of long term illness is higher than the national average for the retired and the employed. The recent public consultation about the library service revealed that 11% of respondents consider themselves to be disabled.

There is a clear agenda already in place for the service to respond to the issues raised by these statistics.

Access to services will present a particular problem for many and the Book Link service currently provides a Home Library service for those unable access static library sites. Expansion of this service would enhance the quality of life for many more residents. The digital library service contributes to alleviating access issues caused by poor health.

**Appendix 2 – Assessment of Local Need 2016**

Development of the digital agenda, combined with promotion to non-users, will help the service address problems of deprivation and social isolation caused by long term illness.

**Population changes**

Evidence from statistical data indicates that in the foreseeable future the population will continue to grow in diversity with a net growth in inward migration. Combined with this is an anticipated growth in the number of people aged over 65 with a 19% increase anticipated between 2015 and 2025.

Significantly, almost a quarter of current active users are aged 66 and over which strongly suggests that the Library service is greatly valued by this sector of the population. The popularity of Book Link is testimony to this as is the age profile of e-book borrowers.

Future challenges will include ensuring that the service continues to provide resources for the borough's culturally diverse population whilst at the same time developing capacity so that it can respond to the needs of the growing number of elderly residents.

The location of services within communities across Rotherham can also facilitate communication and shared experiences between within and between Rotherham's diverse communities and supporting the ambition to "get Rotherham talking".

**Promotion**

Although the number of active borrowers is low the number of registered borrowers represents almost 50% of Rotherham's population. This indicates that there is potential for developing wider regular participation. A co-ordinated and sustained programme of promotional work is needed to ensure that a greater number of residents borrow library material on a more frequent basis.

The service has a borough-wide remit but within this there are corporate priorities to target centres of deprivation. Added to this is the need to ensure that the majority of the local population which currently does not access library services have greater awareness of the facilities which are freely available to everyone. The need to raise general awareness is the essential foundation on which targeted intervention, based on the National Library Offers, can be developed.