OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time :-   **Wednesday, 8 November 2017 at 11.00 a.m.**

Venue:-   **Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.**

Membership:-   **Councillors Brookes, Clark, Cowles, Cusworth, Evans, Mallinder, Napper, Sheppard, Short, Steele (Chair) Walsh and Wyatt.**

AGENDA

1.   Apologies for Absence

2.   Declarations of Interest

3.   Questions from Members of the Public and the Press

4.   To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

   Agenda Item 7 has an exempt appendix. Whilst there is a presumption that all business will be conducted in public, if it is necessary when considering that item, the Chair will move the following resolution:-

   That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for agenda item 7 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006.

Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny
In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review, the following item is submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 13 November 2017. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

5.   Waste Options Appraisal - Consultation (Pages 1 - 10)

6.   Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Services Review
      (Pages 11 - 33)

7.   Member Development Strategy (Pages 34 - 64)

8.   District Heating Scheme Charges Review (Pages 65 - 75)

9.   To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

10. Date and time of next meeting

   The next meeting will be held on Thursday 22 November 2017, commencing at 11.00 a.m.

SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 8 November 2017

Report Title
Waste Options Appraisal - Consultation

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 and Environment

Report Author(s)
Karen Hanson – Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene
01709 822902 or karen.hanson@rotherham.gov.uk

Martin Raper - Head of Service, Street Scene
01709 822223 or martin.raper@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected
All

Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval to carry out consultation on proposed changes to the Council's waste collection service.

Waste collection services in Rotherham have developed over the last 14 years and currently consist of a hybrid of previous kerbside sorting regimes and current collection operations.

The Council is keen to consider how the service could be modernised ensuring full consideration is given to maximising recycling and reducing costs.

Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is invited to scrutinise the report and proposals below and make recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That consultation with the residents of Rotherham on proposed changes to household waste and recycling collection services be approved.

2. That a further report be submitted in February 2018 to report on the outcome of the consultation and present the recommended options for approval.

List of Appendices Included
None

Background Papers
None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 13 November 2017

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Waste Options Appraisal - Consultation

1.   Recommendations

1.1   That consultation with the residents of Rotherham on proposed changes to household waste and recycling collection services be approved.

1.2   That a further report be submitted in February 2018 to report on the outcome of the consultation and present the recommended options for approval.

2.   Background

2.1   Waste collection services in Rotherham have developed over the last 14 years and currently consist of a hybrid of previous kerbside sorting regimes and current collection operations. The service uses a range of bins, boxes and bags, which are traditional methods for kerbside collection and sorting and these have continued to today even though the Council no longer sorts waste at the kerbside.

2.2   These types of containers have been found to cause issues with manual handling, containment (windblown litter) and can result in littering on collection days. They are considered inappropriate for the current collection methodology using refuse vehicles. A modern collection service should ensure the provision of appropriate bins for residents, service requirements and staff operational requirements.

2.3   The Council is committed to achieving its priority of a strong community in a clean, safe environment. It is committed to a Rotherham where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well-maintained, working together with residents to achieve these priorities.

2.4   As the number of households across the Borough grows, it is important that the Council has reviewed its waste services to ensure that it continues to meet its priorities whilst providing best value to residents. A range of options have been considered to provide an efficient and effective waste management service, delivering high levels of customer satisfaction whilst identifying opportunities for cost reduction, service improvements and increased income generation.

2.5   In addition, advice has also been sought regarding policy guidance, legislation, best practice as well as cost and performance considerations.

3.   Key Issues

3.1   The Council's current kerbside collection consists of four waste collection streams:

- Black bin 240L Wheeled Bin – Household General Waste
- Green bin 240L Wheeled Bin – Household Garden Waste
- Blue 60L sack – Cardboard, newspapers, magazines, telephone directories
- Blue 55L Box – Mixed glass, food tins, drinks cans, foil and textiles

3.2 Facilities are available for recycling at the Council's four Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) at Bramley, Greasbrough, North Anston and Rawmarsh alongside a number of recycling points (bring banks) which also take recyclates across the Borough.

3.3 Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham (BDR) Councils have jointly managed waste generated in the three boroughs for more than two decades to boost recycling and divert waste from landfill. The success of the BDR Waste Partnership helped secure PFI funding to build the award-winning waste treatment facility at Manvers. It treats 250,000 tonnes a year of leftover household waste from 340,000 households, extracting the remaining recyclable materials including plastics, glass and organic matter, and turning the rest into a valuable resource rather than sending it to landfill. Non recyclable materials are turned into fuel which produces low carbon electricity for the National Grid.

3.4 Since the facility opened in 2015, around 95% of waste has been diverted from landfill, reducing C02 emissions and landfill costs. The state-of-the-art facility is one of the first in the UK to use pioneering new technology which enables it to deal with the vast majority of household waste on one site.

3.5 The target for the UK is to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020. In 2016/17 the Council recorded a recycling rate of 45.15% of all household waste collected. Councils are under increasing pressure to review and deliver waste services to ensure value for money as well as high reuse, recycling and composting performance. It is important that any agreed changes are introduced during 2018 to ensure the savings generated can support the Councils current budgetary challenges.

3.6 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 is the primary legislation in relation to the provision of household waste collection. This is supported by various Regulations including Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 and the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003. As a Metropolitan Borough, the Council is both a Waste Collection Authority and Waste Disposal Authority.

3.7 The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 stipulate that authorities must provide, where it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable (TEEP), separate collections of paper, metal, plastic and glass.

4.   Options considered and recommended proposal

Kerbside waste collection consultation

4.1 Having reviewed the current service provision, the Council now wishes to have a conversation and seek the views of residents on a range of improvements outlined below.

Materials for recycling and the use of wheeled bins

4.2 Kerbside dry recycling is currently collected fortnightly from approximately 116,700 properties across the Borough. The Council currently recycles paper, card, cans and glass at the kerbside in reusable bags and 55 litre blue boxes. Plastics are removed from Rotherham's general waste at the BDR waste facility at Manvers for recycling and can also be recycled at Household Waste Recycling Centres and Bring Sites across the Borough.

4.3 Residents have raised concerns regarding the use of bags and boxes, particularly with regard to the lack of capacity to recycle, windblown rubbish and littering.

4.4 Councils are under increasing pressure to review and deliver value for money waste services as well as high reuse and recycling performance. At the kerbside, the yields of all recyclables that are collected can be improved and there is a desire increase recycling rates across Rotherham. To maximise revenue to the Council, the collection of recylate is undertaken in two streams; paper and card separately from cans and glass.

4.5 In order to increase recycling, it is proposed that the existing bags and boxes are replaced with 240 litre wheeled bins to be collected alternate fortnightly. This means that a recycling collection will take place every fortnight with each bin collected 4-weekly.

4.6 It should be noted that Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council currently use wheeled bins to collect recycling and that Doncaster Council will also be using wheeled bins following their recent waste consultation.

4.7 By providing 2 x 240 litre wheeled bins for dry recycling, the total capacity for households to recycle will be doubled (compared to the existing bags and boxes). The consultation will also include a proposal to utilise existing bins where possible for recycling to minimise expenditure and maximise efficiencies across the service.

4.8 Using wheeled bins for collection of all waste streams, including recycling, has several advantages. They are easy to move both for the residents and the collection crew, they keep the recycling materials dry, they reduce the incidence of windblown litter and vermin, they have greater capacity than boxes or bags and it is unlikely that they will be blown away.

4.9 Investment in vehicles suitable for waste collection is substantial. By streamlining the types of wheeled bins used across the range of recycling materials collected, there will be no requirement for vehicles to be dedicated to one particular waste stream, providing a more efficient and effective service.

Residual waste

4.10 Every household in Rotherham is currently provided with a 240 litre black bin for non-recyclable residual (household) waste. The size of the bins has not changed since they were first introduced when there were very limited opportunities for recycling.

4.11 To enable the Council to reduce waste by encouraging recycling, the proposal for consultation will include reducing the size of the residual waste bin at the same time as providing 240 litre wheeled bins to improve the opportunities to recycle. The proposal for consultation will outline the introduction of a smaller 180 litre wheeled bin alongside the improved facilities for recycling. It will also seek resident's views regarding proposals to extend waste collection times to improve the efficiency of the service. This may include earlier or later collections each day.

4.12 The table below demonstrates the bin changes proposed for consultation. In practice, this demonstrates how waste collections could be provided over a rolling 4 week period as follows:

Week 1	Household waste collections
Week 2	Glass and cans (and, if subscribed, garden waste)
Week 3	Household waste collections
Week 4	Paper and card (and, if subscribed, garden waste)

Current collection			
60ltr bag – Fortnightly collections of paper and cardboard	55ltr box - Fortnightly collections of glass bottles and jars, steel and aluminium cans	240ltr Fortnightly (30 weeks) Garden waste	Residual waste 240ltr Fortnightly.
Collection service for consultation			
240ltr - 4 Weekly (Alternate). Paper and Cardboard (utilising existing bin)	240ltr – 4 Weekly (Alternate) Glass bottles and jars and steel and aluminium tins and cans (utilising existing bin)	240ltr Subscription bin for garden waste	Residual waste 180ltr Fortnightly – New bin

Garden waste

4.13 The Council currently collects garden waste at the kerbside during April – October each year. Residents regularly raise concerns regarding the ceasing of collections in October (particularly in relation to autumn leaf fall) and the Council would like to address these concerns by providing the opportunity for residents to consult on an all year round garden waste offer.

4.14 Unlike the collection of general household waste which the Council is statutorily obliged to undertake, the collection of garden waste is a discretionary service for which the Council may make a reasonable charge under the Controlled Waste Regulations (CWR) 2012.

4.15 To protect the waste service and to ensure its continued provision, the proposal includes consultation with residents on the introduction of a full year-round charged for green waste collections on an opt-in subscription basis of around £40 per annum is to be considered. Introducing a charge for this discretionary service means that the Council will be more able to maintain the delivery of other services.

4.16 The introduction of a charged for garden waste service will increase interest in alternative garden waste disposal methods such as home composting. The Council will look to increase its current promotion of home compositing to residents.

4.17 There is an increasing trend for Councils to charge for green waste collections with over 60% of UK local authorities now providing a chargeable garden waste collection.

4.18 In addition, the Council has been working across the BDR Partnership to develop a South Yorkshire Municipal Waste Strategy. By introducing a chargeable green waste service similar to Sheffield and using bins instead of boxes and bags for their dry recycling Rotherham will be in a better position to meet some of the aspirational targets contained in the Strategy including reducing waste by 2 kilos per household year on year by 2021 and aligning collection frequencies.

Consultation

4.19 The relevant guidance states Local Authorities should consult widely on any proposed changes to their local policies with all interested parties. The Council knows how important an efficient waste service is to residents.

4.20 The 8 week consultation, commencing on 27th November 2018 will ensure customers understand the proposed changes, the reasons for them and communicate how they can contribute to the consultation. Engagement will take place using a combination of drop-in sessions and online feedback. Communications around the proposed changes and the subsequent consultation will be undertaken using a combination of mechanisms, including social media, traditional media and printed material.

5.   Timetable and Accountability for Consultation

5.1   Following the approval to commence consultation, activities will be commenced in accordance with an agreed consultation plan, marketing and timetable.

5.2   The Head of Street Scene Services and the Interim Assistant Director of Community Safety and Street Scene will be responsible for the delivery of the consultation.

6.   Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1   Savings that arise from any changes to the Council's waste collection service, following the outcome of the consultation process, will contribute towards the Council's revenue savings for 2018/19 and future years, which reflect central government grant funding reductions. All local authorities have a duty of Best Value enshrined in the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness." This review has been carried out in line with these principles.

7.   Legal Implications

7.1   As a matter of public law, a proposal of this nature to significantly change a service will require a reasonable period of engagement and consultation with those affected by such a proposal. The amount of time required for a consultation exercise should be decided on a case by case basis. The latest Government guidance on consultation principles confirms that the length of a consultation exercise should be decided upon taking into account the nature and impact of the proposal. The consultation should achieve real engagement, rather than merely following a bureaucratic process. The guidance indicates that the period of consultation will usually last for between 2 and 12 weeks. In these circumstances a consultation lasting 8 weeks is proposed.

7.2   The purpose of the consultation is to gather the views and preferences of those consulted on the proposal and its implementation, and to understand whether there are any possible unintended consequences of the proposal. The product of the consultation will then help to inform final proposals.

8.   Human Resources Implications

8.1   There are no human resource implications arising from this report. However, following the outcome of the consultation exercise, it will be necessary to consider any human resource impacts in relation to any subsequent options being recommended for approval.

8.2   Full engagement with staff and unions will be undertaken as part of this consultation process.

9.   Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1   There are no implications arising from this report, however, following the outcome of the consultation exercise, it will be necessary to consider any implications for children and young people and adults in relation to any subsequent options being recommended for approval.

10.   Equalities and Human Rights Implications

10.1   Ensuring the Council meets its equalities and human rights duties and obligations is central to how it manages its performance, sets its priorities and delivers services across the board.

10.2   An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to the commencement of and following the waste consultation.

10.3   These service options will see no change to the councils assisted collection arrangements and when provision is made for an additional 140L bin due to family size or medical need this will be maintained.

11.   Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

11.1   Issues for partners and other directorates will be assessed and addressed as part of the full analysis of the consultation and implementation plans following final approval of any service changes.

11.2   The Waste Service will consult and work with all partners and other directorates to keep them fully informed of any changes to the service and work to mitigate and minimise any impact on them. This will include full consultation with the BDR PFI facility contractor at Manvers.

12.   Risks and Mitigation

12.1   Any revision to the waste collection service is likely to create interest as it will impact on all households across the Borough. Whilst, this in itself should not prevent the review, there are likely to be clear impacts which the Council needs to be mindful of. The consultation itself, does not present any potential risks provided it is comprehensive and inclusive.

12.2   It is anticipated that a further report will be presented to Cabinet following the consultation in February 2018 which will outline the outcome of the consultation exercise and will present proposals for approval. This report will provide more details regarding any potential risks relating to the implementation of any changes to the waste service and mitigation measures including a detailed communications and implementation plan.

13.   Accountable Officer(s)

Ajman Ali – Interim Assistant Director, Community safety and Street Scene
Martin Raper – Head of Service, Street Scene

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Judith Badger	25/10/2017
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Stuart Fletcher	26/10/2017
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Joanne Kirk	20/10/2017
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	20/10/2017

Report Authors: *Karen Hanson, Assistant Director – Community Safety & Street Scene*
Martin Raper, Head of Service – Street Scene

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-
http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 8 November 2017

Report Title
Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Services Provision

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)
Jackie Mould, Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement
01709 823618 or jackie.mould@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected
All

Summary

Infrastructure services provide support that helps voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations across the borough to become more effective and sustainable. Active and vibrant community groups and voluntary organisations are the backbone of local communities and work collaboratively with residents and with the Council to make a positive difference. The Council's funding for infrastructure support means that local groups and organisations can access capacity building support and be part of a Rotherham-wide network.

Community and voluntary organisations have an important role in helping to build resilient communities across the borough and in supporting residents - particularly the most vulnerable.

The current infrastructure services are provided by Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) with the engagement of Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA). The current arrangements run until the end of March 2018.

As part of considering arrangements for the next three years, a review into the infrastructure support needs of the VCS in Rotherham has been completed. The purpose of this review was to assess the effectiveness of the existing service and to identify future needs. The outcome of this is the recommended continuation of infrastructure support (in line with the commitments of the Rotherham Compact), with a priority focus on activity and support aligned to communities and neighbourhoods as set out in the Council and Rotherham plans. The next stage in the process is to invite bids for there to be a lead infrastructure organisation to work with the Council to develop full proposals and then lead the delivery over the next three years.

Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is invited to scrutinise the report and proposals set out below and make recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That the activities and outcomes of the review into voluntary and community sector infrastructure services be noted.

2. That approval be given to the start of the grant bidding process and to the appointment of a lead provider for voluntary and community sector infrastructure services delivery; with a grant funding agreement to be in place for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021 with a three year value of £560,578.

3. That within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, the grant funding agreement be to prioritise the following activity:
   a) Supporting the move to North, South and Central community based working and the evolving council approach to neighbourhood working by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough;
   b) Supporting the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal);
   c) Encouraging greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational level across networks and partnerships in the borough;
   d) Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;
   e) Providing external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the borough; and
   f) Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.

List of Appendices Included
Appendix A –Report on the Contract Review and Recommissioning of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Services

Background Papers

"Rotherham: State of the Voluntary and Community Sector 2015" – Sheffield Hallam University – available here: www.varotherham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Rotherham-SOS-Report_Final.pdf
Rotherham Compact – available here:
http://rotherhamtogetherpartnership.org.uk/downloads/file/8/the_rotherham_compact

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 13 November 2017

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Services Provision

1. **Recommendations**

1.1 That the activities and outcomes of the review into voluntary and community sector infrastructure services be noted.

1.2 That approval be given to the start of the grant bidding process and to the appointment of a lead provider for voluntary and community sector infrastructure services delivery; with a grant funding agreement to be in place for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021 with a three year value of £560,578.

1.3 That within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, the grant funding agreement be to prioritise the following activity:
   (i)   Supporting the move to North, South and Central community based working and the evolving council approach to neighbourhood working by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough;
   (ii)   Supporting the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal);
   (iii) Encouraging greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational level across networks and partnerships in the borough;
   (iv)   Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;
   (v)   Providing external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the borough; and
   (vi)   Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.

2. **Background**

2.1 Infrastructure services provide support that helps voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations across the borough to become more effective and sustainable. This is done through the provision of information, advice, training facilities and help with networking, partnerships, advocacy and campaigning. It includes specific support for volunteering, supporting people to set up voluntary and community organisations or social enterprises, and bringing VCS groups/organisations together in networks and forums to inform and influence strategic planning.

2.2 A report on existing service arrangements was presented to the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting held on 12 December 2016. Subsequent to that a review into the infrastructure support needs for the VCS in Rotherham has been completed. The review report is attached at Appendix A.

2.3 This report now gives recommendations to seek to appoint a lead organisation for infrastructure services for the three year period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021. The current single infrastructure grant agreement is held by Voluntary Action Rotherham and ends on 31 March 2018. Some of the services in the current grant are delivered through Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance under a sub-contract arrangement. Collectively, this service supports activity in line with strategic aims based on the needs and priorities identified by VCS organisations and partner agencies. The aim of the recommended process will help to ensure a transition to the new arrangements from April 2018 without interruption to services to the voluntary sector.

2.4 A Sheffield Hallam University report entitled "Rotherham: State of the Voluntary and Community Sector 2015 Rotherham" (published in January 2016 and funded by the Rotherham Together Partnership) was commissioned to enable a better understanding of the sector across Rotherham and improve awareness of the issues facing VCS groups.

2.5 The report shows in particular the economic and social contribution of VCS groups to the borough. The sector employs around 2,100 full-time paid and 1,500 part-time paid staff; 81% of these employees being women, and many employees live in the borough. £99m is contributed to the economy per annum by paid employees of Rotherham VCS organisations. There are around 49,000 volunteer roles and 12,300 committee/board members, together providing 85,300 hours of volunteering per week; and their economic contribution being estimated at a further £88 million.

2.6 The Council's current grant funding for infrastructure support enables capacity building across the VCS as a whole. It helps to support the development of the VCS to thrive and deliver by building capacity and capability in individual organisations and communities.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Review Process

3.2 A Steering Group was convened to oversee this review with the following membership:
- Councillor Taiba Yasseen – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services
- Shokat Lal – Assistant Chief Executive
- Nathan Atkinson – Assistant Director, Strategic Commissioning
- Jackie Mould – Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement

The group was supported by:
- Carole Haywood – Policy and Partnership Manager
- Waheed Akhtar – Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer

3.3 **Methodology**

3.4 The following activities have contributed to the review:
  a) Desktop research looking at the existing service provision, specifications from other areas, advice from the Local Government Association (LGA), discussion with other local authority leads and web based information on the needs of the sector.
  b) Stake-holder engagement – further details given below.
  c) Consultation workshops combined with an online questionnaire.
  d) Writing of a review report and a new grant specification in light of the feedback and the Council's needs.

3.5 **Stakeholder engagement**

3.6 A number of activities were undertaken to engage relevant stakeholders in the review as detailed below.

3.7 Joint sessions between the Council's Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Directors and voluntary sector representatives. In September 2016 a networking event was held between SLT, Assistant Directors and VCS groups represented in the Rotherham Together Partnership structures. At a follow on session held on Wednesday 14 June 2017 at the Unity Centre, productive discussions were held in four key areas:
  a) Commissioning, Procurement and Finances
  b) Locality and Neighbourhood Working
  c) Prevention and Early Intervention
  d) Building Stronger Communities

3.8 **Single Infrastructure Grant – presentation on delivery**

At its meeting of 3 July 2017, VAR and REMA gave a presentation to the Review Steering Group on achievements in the last 3 years of delivery under the grant agreement. The presentation and discussion also focussed on current demand, needs of the sector, challenges and future trends nationally and locally. Feedback was also given on a satisfaction survey carried out with local VCS groups.

3.9 **Consultation workshops**

Three consultation sessions were held during August 2017. Their purpose was to help inform the grant specification for the provision of infrastructure services. The sessions were designed to cover the three locality areas (North, South and Central) and were held at different times of day (morning, afternoon and early evening) to enable a range of people to be involved.

3.10 **Review report**

A more detailed review report has been prepared and this is attached at Appendix A.

3.12 **Findings**

The review found overall satisfaction from users of the existing services. The consultation process shows that VCS groups felt that the general composition of the current infrastructure priorities was correct but that it needed some adjustment and targeting. Some of the needs/issues highlighted are available through the existing services and can be addressed by further targeted communications. The feedback is summarised below:

- General - There should be more focus on bringing people together from different geographical areas and different communities. Flexibility should be retained for targeting as required through the period of the contract.
- Communication - Consider how communication can be improved especially to smaller community groups and how the new neighbourhood working arrangements can support this approach. Ensure that communication works both ways and have effective mechanisms in place to gather intelligence / information about issues and trends from the sector e.g. if a group is closing down and how it may impact on local communities.
- Equalities / Inclusion – Promote equalities and ensure continued support for BME communities and women.
- Joint working – Promote more of a culture of partnership working between all groups. Examine how we can promote mentoring roles within communities for larger/established groups to support smaller/new groups. Encourage more strategic decision making with organisations like the Big Lottery and the Arts Council.
- Support needs – VCS groups are facing pressures through increased demand on services especially as the delivery of public sector services is being cut back at the same time as funding sources are drying up. This is particularly the case for medium sized voluntary organisations. There are issues around sustainability for some groups e.g. just one month's funds being held in the account makes them very sensitive to cash flow problems. Additional issues include: opportunities for self-help, attracting more private sector sponsorship, and further development of VCS consortia.

3.13 **Revised Grant specification**

3.14 The main outcomes for the work will be to develop a strength based asset approach across the communities in Rotherham, ensuring both geographical and thematic areas of interest are covered.

3.14 There will be a focus on aligning this activity to the shared priorities of the Council's plan and the Rotherham Plan 2025. This approach will be to work with the VCS to develop the capacity and capability of the VCS to future proof a level of resilience against a backdrop of public sector austerity.

3.15 In addition to the above existing areas of work, and taking into account feedback from the review, there will also elements of the specification that will include:

a) Supporting the move to North, South and Central community based working and the evolving council neighbourhood approach by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough;

b) Support the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal);

c) Encourage greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational level across networks and partnerships in the borough;

d) Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;

e) Provide external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the borough; and

f) Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 Rotherham has a large and vibrant voluntary and community sector which adds great value to the quality of life for local residents. The sector plays a wide range of roles and is made up of organisations of all types and sizes, covering all sections of the community and thematic areas of interest. The Council's continued investment in this service demonstrates a commitment to building a strong and resilient third sector.

4.2 In consideration of the issues highlighted in this report, the following options are available:

4.3 **Option 1 – Stop service provision on termination of the current arrangements**
The existing grant agreement will end on 31st March 2018. Without action now to make follow-on arrangements, services to support the development and sustainability of the sector will not be available. This will have a detrimental impact on the estimated 1,400 groups in the VCS who will be left without independent support to recruit and develop volunteers and their organisations. It will also contradict the consultation exercise, which the Council has undertaken to help inform the content of the new grant specification.

4.4 Under this option, a full Equality Impact Assessment would be required due to the impact on protected characteristic groups under the Equality Act. The provision of voluntary sector infrastructure services helps contribute to the development of the sector which is in line with the Rotherham Compact.

4.5 **Option 2 – Undertake the grant bidding exercise and appoint a lead organisation to deliver infrastructure services for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021.**

4.6 This will provide vital infrastructure services to the sector and help the Council and other public services with the implementation of further transformational change in a period of limited budgets and austerity.

4.7 To deliver the specified outcomes, the Council are looking for a lead organisation that provides a range of infrastructure support and has the ability to work across the whole of the VCS to support the development of sustainable and viable communities. The Council would welcome the lead organisation developing a collaborative approach, engaging with other organisations as appropriate in the planning for and delivery of functions, if this approach can demonstrate enhanced service delivery.

4.8 There is no identified disproportionate impact on any 'protected characteristic' group and a full impact assessment is not required.

4.9 The recommended option for Cabinet to approve is Option 2.

5. Consultation

5.1 As detailed in section 3 of this report, the review Steering Group has considered the information from:
- Performance of the existing service provider including a user satisfaction survey
- Joint discussions between senior Council officers and VCS representatives
- Three face to face consultation workshops and an online consultation.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Should Cabinet endorse the recommended option at Section 4 above, the following outline timescales are envisaged (subject to detailed development):

Date	Description
13 Nov 2017	Cabinet
Sep–Nov 2017	Document preparation for inviting bids
20 Nov 2017	Issue invitation to bid
16 Jan 2017	Deadline for bids
30 Jan 2018	Confirm future provider
1 Feb 2018 to 31 March 2018	Detailed planning and grant funding agreement stage
1 April 2018	Start of new service delivery

6.2 The above timetable shows that the new contract arrangements could start in April or May dependent on the TUPE requirements. If the start date is after 1 April 2018, services will be maintained in the interim period by extension of the current provider's grant agreement.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The current grant per annum is £203,526. It has been proposed that there will be a £25k reduction in years two and three of the grant for the next three years. It is proposed grant in each of the three financial years would be:

Year 1 (2018/19)	£203,526
Year 2 (2019/20)	£178,526
Year 3 (2020/21)	£178,526
Total	£560,578

7.4 If an extension to the existing provider's grant agreement is required for a period of up to two months to allow TUPE transfer to be completed, this will be managed within the annual budget available.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 Section 11 of appendix 5 to the Council's constitution (Financial Regulations) makes provisions for entering into a grant funding agreement, as provided for in the Compact. The Financial Regulations set out the relevant requirements for awarding of the service level agreement together with monitoring, review and accountability and the compact sets out processes for dispute resolution.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no direct HR implications for the Council. If the existing voluntary sector providers highlighted in this report do not bid, or bid and are not successful in securing the delivery contract, there will be HR implications for them. There may also be implications arising from the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 for any new provider.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 Proposals in this report impact positively on children and young people and vulnerable adults through the provision of infrastructure support for VCS groups.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Equalities and Human Rights requirements are incorporated into the Council's procurement processes. The current VCS infrastructure service grant agreement includes specific delivery targets to BME organisations and communities. The future provider will be required to specify how they will apportion their work to include protected characteristic groups under the Equalities Act.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The refreshed grant specification takes into account all relevant learning from the consultation. The approach highlighted in this report is consistent with the principles of the Rotherham Compact.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The timetable for the grant bidding is extremely tight and the process will need to be closely managed. Therefore this report is being brought in order to enable the start of the process of the grant bidding process as well as the appointment of a provider on completion of the process.

13.2 There may be implications under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. These issues will be taken into account in the procurement process and planned into the delivery. If as a result, the new provider cannot start on 1st April 2018, service continuity will be managed through a short extension of existing arrangements.

13.3 The Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector is important and as service transformation progresses the role of the sector will be even more significant. The provision of infrastructure services will help to support the sector further in this partnership and service delivery role. This work supports the delivery of the Rotherham Compact principles.

14. Accountable Officer(s)
Shokat Lal – Assistant Chief Executive
Jackie Mould – Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Lisa Darnell	24/10/2017
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Stuart Fletcher	25/10/2017
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Karen Middlebrook	25/10/2017
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	

Report Author: Jackie Mould, Head of Performance, Intelligence & Improvement

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-
http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

Appendix A – Report on the Contract Review and Recommissioning of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Services

1. Introduction

1.1 Infrastructure services provide support that helps VCS organisations across the borough to become more effective and sustainable. This is done through the provision of information, advice, training facilities and help with networking, partnerships, advocacy and campaigning. It includes specific support for volunteering, supporting people to set up voluntary and community organisations or social enterprises; and bringing VCS groups / organisations together in networks and forums to inform and influence strategic planning.

1.2 A review of the Single Infrastructure Grant (SIG) agreement for the provision of infrastructure services to voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups has been carried out. The purpose of this is to inform the details of a new grant specification for the three year period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021.

1.3 The review considered the suitability of existing provision in light of the needs of the VCS and the Council. It also provided information on new areas that would need to be included in a revised grant specification.

1.4 The Council's funding for infrastructure support enables capacity building across the VCS as a whole. It helps to support the development of the VCS to thrive and deliver by building capacity and capability in individual organisations and communities. Infrastructure support is vital to a strong, well-managed and connected VCS that can adapt to a changing world.

2. Current infrastructure services provision

2.1 Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) currently holds a grant agreement with the Council to deliver infrastructure services in Rotherham. Some of the infrastructure support services are delivered through Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA) under a sub-contract arrangement.

2.2 VAR previously held a three year grant agreement with the Council to deliver these services in Rotherham until 31st March 2017. This grant agreement was extended for a year following approval of a report on the service arrangements to the Cabinet/Commissioner Meeting held on 12th December 2016.

2.3 The existing VAR grant agreement supports activity in line with strategic aims based on the needs and priorities identified by VCS organisations and partner agencies. These are:

a) Increasing individual and community engagement, resilience and self-help through:
- Provision of co-ordinated information, communications and consultation
- Support to increase volunteering opportunities and volunteering take up
- Support to small community groups

b) Increasing high quality VCS service delivery, innovation and effectiveness through:
- VCS representation, voice and influence
- Facilitating new forms of service delivery
- Supporting VCS organisations to develop business planning underpinned by robust governance and evidence bases

c) Targeted support to some of our most deprived communities and responding to the Welfare Reform agenda through:
- Targeted activity to increase involvement and take up of services and funding to deprived communities
- Continued involvement in the Welfare Reform Agenda and support on specific initiatives

d) Increasing the resources to the borough and maximising value for money through:
- Liaison with external funding bodies to increase funding opportunities to the borough on-going links with major funders e.g. Big Lottery, EU funding, Trust Funds
- Increase in donations and giving
- Funding and financial management advice to VCS organisations including specific support on bid writing
- Development of consortia/ lead body joint approaches to delivery of services, contract management, commissioning and purchasing

3. The Voluntary and Community Sector in Rotherham

3.1 A Sheffield Hallam University report entitled "Rotherham: State of the Voluntary and Community Sector 2015" (published in January 2016 and funded by the Rotherham Together Partnership) was commissioned to enable a better understanding of the sector across Rotherham and improve awareness of the issues facing VCS groups.

3.2 The report shows in particular the economic and social contribution of VCS groups to the borough. The sector employs around 2,100 full-time paid and 1,500 part-time paid staff; 81% of these employees being women, and many employees live in the borough. £99m is contributed to the economy per annum by paid employees of Rotherham VCS organisations. There are around 49,000 volunteer roles and 12,300 committee/board members, together providing 85,300 hours of volunteering per week; and their economic contribution is estimated at a further £88 million.

3.3 In a time of public sector transformation, harnessing the power of the VCS is essential to helping communities remain resilient, promoting self-help, co-operation and enabling new forms of service delivery.

4. Review Context – strategic priorities

4.1 It is envisaged that all future infrastructure support service provision will operate within the strategic priorities for Rotherham. These are set through partnership arrangements such as Rotherham Together Partnership and through the Council's own arrangements.

4.2 The Rotherham Plan 2025

4.3 The Rotherham Plan 2025 was launched in March 2017 alongside the Rotherham Compact. This plan is available on the internet (http://rotherhamtogetherpartnership.org.uk/downloads/file/7/the_rotherham_plan_a_new_perspective_2025) and it outlines the priorities for the borough.

4.4 It outlines a number of game changers as shown in the diagram below which will be integral to local plans. And the Council can't deliver that without all partners working together – including the voluntary and community sector. The VCS will have an impact on all of these game changers. Further information is available in the Rotherham Plan document itself.
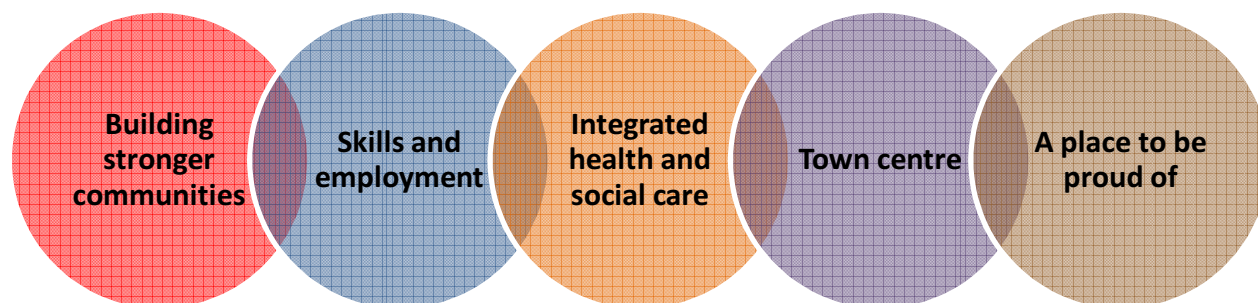
4.5 Health and Well Being Strategy

4.6 The Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board sets out its strategic priorities in the local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which all partners contribute to and support delivery of; including Voluntary Action Rotherham, which helps ensure the voice of the voluntary sector is heard at the board and included in the strategy.

4.7 The strategy includes five aims which have been chosen because the delivery of them is important to all partners, and no single agency is able to tackle the issues alone, the VCS therefore have an impact on each one of these:

- All children get the best start in life
- Children and young people achieve their potential and have a healthy adolescence and early adulthood
- All Rotherham people enjoy the best possible mental health and wellbeing and have a good quality of life
- Healthy life expectancy is improved for all Rotherham people and the gap in life expectancy is reducing
- Rotherham has healthy, safe and sustainable communities and places

4.8 Further information about the board and strategy can be found here: http://www.rotherhamhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/

4.9 Rotherham Council's priorities

4.10 In the last two years the Council has redefined what it stands for, through a clear vision for the organisation and the borough. This includes changing how the Council makes decisions, so that it is more open and accountable than ever before; redesigning how it works with other agencies; and driving forward some of the key changes that it wants to see with a focus on delivering better services even with unprecedented financial pressures.

4.11 During the summer of 2015, the Leader of the Council and the Commissioners, supported by other leading councillors and a range of partners, met with people across Rotherham to listen to their views and their priorities for the future. The 'Views from Rotherham' consultation was based on 27 roadshow sessions as well as the Rotherham Show, a 'Chamber means Business' event and an online consultation. In total, the views of around 1,800 people were received and a 'Views from Rotherham' consultation report was published in September 2015 to summarise the key findings.

4.12 The Leader of the Council, in consultation with other elected members, has used the feedback received to define a new vision for the borough, as follows:

Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind.

4.13 To achieve this, the Council will work in a modern and efficient way to deliver sustainable services in partnership with local neighbourhoods, looking outwards yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of residents. To this end the Council set out four 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

4.14 The VCS infrastructure services grant will help to deliver on all of these priorities.

4.15 Building Stronger Communities

4.16 'Building Stronger Communities' is Rotherham Council's strategy for community cohesion. It is central to the vision set out for the Council – emphasising that Rotherham is a shared community, which values decency, and provides opportunities so that no one is left behind.

4.17 The Building Stronger Communities strategy and a draft action plan were approved at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 15th May 2017 and are available here: http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1003&MId=13751&Ver=4

4.18 The Rotherham Compact

4.19 The Rotherham Compact is an agreement between public sector organisations (public services) who are members of the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) and voluntary and community organisations in Rotherham (referred to collectively as the voluntary and community sector). It sets out commitments on both sides to improve the way in which public organisations and the VCS work together for the benefit of communities and citizens.

4.20 The Rotherham Compact document is available online here: http://rotherhamtogetherpartnership.org.uk/downloads/file/8/the_rotherham_compact

4.21 Locality / Neighbourhood Working

4.22 The Council and its partners are developing a place-based approach including the evolving Council Neighbourhood Strategy in Rotherham that will:
- Enable the Council, it's partners and communities to work together to improve outcomes at a local level
- Make the most effective use of the available resources and local assets to achieve identified and shared outcomes for the area
- Develop innovative approaches to enable more people to help themselves and each other

5.   The Review Process

5.1   Steering Group

5.2   A Steering Group was convened to oversee this review with the following membership:
- Shokat Lal – Assistant Chief Executive
- Cllr Taiba Yasseen – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services
- Nathan Atkinson – Assistant Director, Strategic Commissioning
- Jackie Mould – Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement

5.3   The group was supported by:
- Carole Haywood – Policy and Partnership Manager
- Waheed Akhtar – Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer

6.   Methodology

6.1   The following activities have contributed to the review:
- Desktop research looking at the existing service provision, specifications from other areas, advice from the Local Government Association (LGA), discussion with other local authority leads and web based information on the needs of the sector
- Stakeholder engagement
- Consultation workshops combined with an online questionnaire
- Writing of a review report and a new grant specification in light of the feedback and the Council's needs.

6.2   Desktop research

6.3   The desktop research phase included discussions or information sharing on VCS support arrangements with the three other local authorities in South Yorkshire. It also included reviews of information from further afield based on officer knowledge and on advice from the LGA on good practice and from authorities that had recent experience of undertaking similar reviews.

6.4   The research raised a number of issues which would require further consideration:
- A single provider/consortium approach – other areas are using a number of approaches to providing infrastructure support. Many areas prefer a single contract approach with either a single or lead provider who deals with the Council liaison officer on the delivery of services. Where elements of the services are delivered by separate organisations, greater emphasis on coordination is often required.
- Encouragement of consortium based approaches to the delivery of services where larger VCS organisations can support smaller ones to develop their capacity.

- Demand for many council services remains high at the same time as the period of austerity and service transformation. The situation is similar for VCS providers of services. In this context prioritisation may be required in terms of the services provided or the issues/groups targeted for support.
- Developing and using digital services including opportunities for place based online crowd-funding on websites such as 'spacehive'
- Greater involvement of the private sector and the promotion of corporate social responsibility
- Enabling social value through the commissioning and delivery of services
- Understanding the 'offer' to the VCS and communities more widely and that this is not just about providing grant funding but also about effective dialogue and in-kind support such as access to meeting spaces
- Recognising that there are organisations that provide support to VCS groups other than those funded directly by the local authority and that this support should complement other providers e.g. that provided by the National Council for Voluntary organisations (NCVO) or by national/regional sports associations
- Support for grass roots community groups including faith groups
- Mobilisation of communities by working with local groups and addressing local issues

6.5 Stakeholder engagement

6.6 A number of activities were undertaken to engage relevant stakeholders in the review as detailed below.

6.7 Joint sessions between Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Assistant Directors and voluntary sector representatives

6.8 In September 2016 a networking event was held between SLT, Assistant Directors and VCS groups represented in the Rotherham Together Partnership structures. At a follow on session held on Wednesday 14th June 2017 at the Unity Centre, productive discussions were held in four key areas:
- Commissioning, Procurement and Finances
- Locality and Neighbourhood Working
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Building Stronger Communities

6.9 The event in June was structured to help exchange ideas and experiences with the aims being to: raise awareness / share information; develop relationships and contacts; and the development of future opportunities for collaborative working. About 40 people attended with equal numbers of council and VCS representatives.

6.10 Issues raised through this workshop are being progressed through different work streams and progress will be reviewed at a follow up meeting. Voluntary Action Rotherham, as the current infrastructure service provider, will help to ensure that these issues are progressed.

6.11 Single Infrastructure Grant Agreement – review of delivery

6.12 At its meeting of 3rd July 2017, VAR and REMA gave a presentation to the Review Steering Group on achievements in the last three years of delivery under a grant agreement. Highlights include:

- Since 2014 VAR's membership has been increased by 19% to 840 organisations (out of an estimated 1400 groups in Rotherham) – the largest proportion (36%) being micro groups with an income of less than £10,000 per annum
- 5,552 volunteer enquiries were received and 4,574 volunteer applications processed
- 29 training courses were delivered to 171 volunteer managers
- 6,000 people participated in community action events
- £2,500,000 was secured by Rotherham groups following advice, funding searches and bid writing support by the infrastructure providers

6.13 This represents a significant return on the Council's investment into infrastructure services.

6.14 The presentation and discussion also focussed on current demand, needs of the sector, challenges and future trends nationally and locally. These include:

- Increased scrutiny of charities and VCS organisations
- Significant changes to funding arrangements
- The need for strong governance arrangements and business planning
- Greater use of digital platforms
- The long term sustainability of the sector

6.15 The Rotherham Infrastructure Survey is carried out annually and it has gathered evidence on the individual and collective impact of local infrastructure organisations in Rotherham since 2010. The survey aims to provide an overview of how well local VCS groups feel their development, support and representative needs have been met during the past year and how this compares to previous years.

6.16 Data from the 2017 survey is not yet available. However, the 2016 report provides the key findings of an annual survey which was carried out between May and June 2016. A questionnaire was sent to a sample of around 500 local voluntary and community organisations that had received support from VAR or REMA during 2015-16. Online and paper versions of the questionnaire were available. A total of 185 responses were received - an overall response rate of about 37 percent.

6.17 Satisfaction with services provided has increased significantly compared to previous years. 82% said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the support local infrastructure bodies provide for the VCS in Rotherham.

6.18 Consultation workshops

6.19 Three consultation sessions were held during August 2017. Their purpose was to help inform the grant specification for the provision of infrastructure services. The sessions were designed to cover the three locality areas (North, South and Central) and were held at different times of day (morning, afternoon and early evening) to enable a range of people to be involved.

6.20 The sessions gave participants the opportunity to meet with the Cabinet Member and the Assistant Chief Executive and to discuss pertinent issues in relation to the needs of their organisations. In total 42 people representing a wide range of groups and organisations attended the sessions. The central area session had the most attendance but all three sessions provided valuable feedback and opportunity for discussion with current and potential users of the infrastructure services that are being reviewed.

6.21 The sessions were open to all community, voluntary and faith groups across the borough and publicity was sent through the infrastructure networks, partner networks, the Council's own contacts and through Elected Members. The groups that attended were included those that are working in:

- local neighbourhoods, across Rotherham, South Yorkshire and Yorkshire or with communities of interest
- diverse areas such as: sports, health, social care, arts and cultural activities, animal welfare, military veterans, cadets, welfare and general advice, refugee support, food and crisis support, support for women, residents action, children, young people and family support, training facilities, domestic violence, green spaces, older people and homelessness.

6.22 They included community groups run by volunteers as well as voluntary groups with paid employees. The sessions had a standard format which explored the background to the Council's improvement journey and the current financial situation, the state of the voluntary and community sector, and the current and future infrastructure priorities.

6.23 Participants were asked to consider the following questions:
- Is the current infrastructure support right for your group/organisation?
- What are the gaps in provision?
- What should the future priority areas of support be?

6.24 An online consultation was also carried out to support the face to face consultation workshops. This had five responses and feedback was in line with the feedback received at the face to face consultation sessions.

7. **Findings**

7.1 The review found overall satisfaction from users of the existing services. The consultation process shows that VCS groups felt that the general composition of the current infrastructure priorities was correct but that it needed some adjustment and targeting. Some of the needs/ issues highlighted are available through the existing services and can be addressed by further targeted communications. The feedback is summarised below:

- **General** - There should be more focus on bringing people together from different geographical areas and different communities. Flexibility should be retained for targeting as required through the period of the contract.
- **Communication** - Consider how communication can be improved especially to smaller community groups and how the new neighbourhood working arrangements can support this approach. Ensure that communication works both ways and have effective mechanisms in place to gather intelligence / information about issues and trends from the sector e.g. if a group is closing down and how it may impact on local communities.
- **Equalities/Inclusion** – Promote equalities and ensure continued support for women and BME communities.
- **Joint working** – Promote more of a culture of partnership working between all groups. Examine how we can promote mentoring roles within communities for larger/established groups to support smaller/new groups. Encourage more strategic decision making with organisations like the Big Lottery and Arts Council.
- **Support needs** – VCS groups are facing pressures through increased demand on services especially as the delivery of public sector services is being cut back at the same time as funding sources are drying up. This is particular the case for medium sized voluntary organisations. There are issues around sustainability for some groups e.g. just one month's funds being held in the account makes them very sensitive to cash flow problems. Promote more opportunities for self-help. Promote more private sector sponsorship. Development of VCS consortia should be a key priority.

8. **Revised Grant Specification**

8.1 The aim of the new grant specification is to ensure that VCS infrastructure services continue to support delivery of the Council's priorities. It will develop capacity and capability of the sector to deliver the shared priorities of the Rotherham Plan and other key strategic drivers.

8.2 The outcome of the process is the recommended continuation of infrastructure support (in line with the commitments of the Rotherham Compact), with a priority focus on activity and support aligned to communities and neighbourhoods as set out in the Council and Rotherham plans. The next stage in the process now is to invite bids for there to be a lead infrastructure organisation to work with the Council to develop full proposals and then lead the delivery over the next three years.

8.2 In addition to the existing areas of work listed above, new elements of the grant specification will include:

8.3 That within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, the grant funding agreement is to prioritise:
- a) Supporting the move to North, South and Central community based working and the evolving council neighbourhood approach by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough;
- b) Support the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through activities such as volunteering (both informal and formal),
- c) Encourage greater participation at both strategic and operational level across networks and partnerships in the borough;
- d) Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;
- e) Provide external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the borough; and
- f) Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) and foster community cohesion

9. Commissioning arrangements

9.1 In Rotherham, the experience from the 'Single Infrastructure Grant' approach – where a single agreement is in place between the Council and the lead provider linked to a consortium delivery model in which other providers can be involved - shows that effective delivery is more easily coordinated and that there are efficiencies associated with delivery and contract management. It is therefore proposed to retain this approach and any interested organisations that desire to deliver services under the single grant can decide between themselves on the composition of their consortium, their relative strengths and the delivery/ coordination arrangements.

9.2 Section 11 of appendix 5 to the Council's constitution (Financial Regulations) makes provisions for entering into a grant funding agreement, as provided for in the Compact. The Financial Regulations set out the relevant requirements for awarding of the service level agreement together with monitoring, review and accountability and the compact sets out processes for dispute resolution.

10. Finances

10.1 The current grant per annum is £203,526.

10.2 Given the financial budget pressures the Council face over the next three years, consideration has been given to potential budget efficiencies that may be realised as a result of this review. It has been proposed that there will be a £25k reduction in years two and three of the grant for the next three years to the value of the grant over the three years with savings being realised in years' two and three.

10.3 It is proposed grant in each of the three financial years would be that the maximum budget is:

Year 1 (2018/19)	£203,526
Year 2 (2019/20)	£178,526
Year 3 (2020/21)	£178,526
Total budget for the 3 year contract period	**£560,578**

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 8 November 2017

Report Title
Member Development Strategy

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)
James McLaughlin, Democratic Services Manager
01709 822477 or james.mclaughlin@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected
All

Summary
The Member Development Panel has worked with councillors, officers and the Local Government Association to prepare a strategy to direct the Council's approach to learning and development for Members. This strategy has been prepared to reflect the ambitions in the Council Plan and enhance the skills, knowledge and behaviours of Members. This report seeks formal approval of the strategy by the Cabinet.

Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is invited to scrutinise the report and proposal and make recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That the Member Development Strategy be approved.

List of Appendices Included
Appendix 1 – Draft Member Development Strategy

Background Papers
Minutes of Member Seminar – 13 June 2017

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Member Development Panel – 18 August 2017
Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 13 November 2017

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Member Development Strategy

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Member Development Strategy be approved.

2. Background

2.1 At the beginning of 2017, the Member Development Panel reviewed the overall position in respect of learning and development activities for councillors. It recognised that much of the work in this area since the Government intervention commenced had been driven and delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA). With the continued return of decision making powers to local democratic control, the Panel felt it was necessary for the Council to take ownership of the direction of member development activity for the remainder of the current term of the Council until May 2020.

2.2 The Panel reviewed examples of strategies for member development from a number of other local authorities and provided direction in respect of the 'look and feel' that would best reflect Rotherham's current position and continued improvement journey.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Council Plan identifies the need to embed a culture within the Council which seeks to improve the services that it delivers, by providing strong community leadership, being well governed, accountable, open and transparent. Members of the Council have a key role in ensuring that this is achieved. It is the underlying premise of the strategy that member development will lead and support the Council in achieving its objectives by enabling Members to increase and realise their potential as decision-makers, community representatives and community leaders.

3.2 This report sets out the Council's aims in relation to member development and how these aims will be realised. In particular it sets out how the learning and development needs of councillors will be identified, how these identified needs will be incorporated into a balanced and accessible programme of member development events and other activities and how the success of these activities will be reviewed.

3.3 Whilst the LGA have reviewed and supported the development of the strategy, the longer term aspiration is for the Council to seek external accreditation for member development activity. The adoption of the strategy is the first milestone towards seeking accreditation.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 It is recommended that the strategy be approved to ensure that there is support for all Members to enable them to acquire sufficient knowledge and a full range of skills to maximise their ability and capacity.

5.   Consultation

5.1   A Member Seminar was held on 13 June 2017, which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services, where all councillors were invited to express their views on the proposed content of the strategy. Amongst the feedback received was the need for the strategy to better reflect the ambition and aspirations of the Council and Members and to strike a more confident tone about how development activity would be delivered.

5.2   The Local Government Association have also reviewed the draft strategy and provided comments that have informed its final content. The general thrust of the feedback from the LGA was that the strategy was sufficiently robust in identifying the methods to be used to enable continued learning and development. The LGA are keen to explore with the Council how more innovative approaches to delivering learning and development can be provided. For example, discussions are continuing in respect of the use of podcasts for Members who cannot attend Member Seminars or other development events.

6.   Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1   Formal approval of the strategy is an executive function and is subject to Cabinet's agreement to the recommendation in this report. However, the approach to learning and development set out in the strategy is already being implemented and work continues to develop a plan of activity which reflects the objectives of the strategy and the overriding themes which have emerged from personal development plan interviews with Members.

6.2   The Member Development Panel will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and the delivery of the programme of learning and development. An annual Member Development report will be submitted to Council so that all councillors can reflect on the activities and progress made.

6.3   The Assistant Chief Executive and the Democratic Services Manager are the accountable officers for the delivery of the strategy and Member Development activity overall.

7.   Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1   There is a budget for learning and development activity, including attendance at conferences and seminars, within the Democratic Services budget. The 2017/18 budget for Member Development is £18,910. There are no new financial or procurement implications arising from the adoption of the Member Development Strategy.

8.   Legal Implications

8.1   There are no legal or statutory implications in respect of the approval of the Member Development Strategy.

9.   Human Resources Implications

9.1   There are no new human resources implications arising from the approval of the Member Development Strategy. Officers within Democratic Services are responsible for the co-ordination of the programme of learning and development for councillors. The aspirations of the strategy and the emerging Member Development Programme can be delivered within the existing staffing arrangement.

10.   Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1   There are no direct implications for children and young people or vulnerable adults. The adoption of the strategy and activities for learning and development will contribute to enhancing Members' understanding of safeguarding issues for children and young people and vulnerable adults.

11   Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1   The strategy reiterates that the Council is committed to the principle of equality in their learning and development programmes for all Members – irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or working pattern.

12.   Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1   There are no new implications for partners or for other services across the Council. Member Development is not a new concept; learning and development for councillors has taken place for many years in a variety of ways, but most frequently through the provision of information by officers at Member Seminars or other bespoke events responding to changes in law, policy or service delivery. The new strategy seeks to build upon those foundations and directorates across the Council will continue to contribute to Members' learning and development.

13.   Risks and Mitigation

13.1   The adoption of the strategy and activities arising from it will mitigate the risk of Members not having the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours to undertake the role of councillor.

14. **Accountable Officer(s)**

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive
James McLaughlin, Democratic Services Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Judith Badger	26/10/2017
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Stuart Fletcher	26/10/2017
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	25/10/2017

Report Author: James McLaughlin, Democratic Services Manager

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-
http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

ROTHERHAM MBC

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Foreword

Welcome to Rotherham's Member Development Strategy.

All councillors, whether newly elected, or with many years of experience have a duty to their communities, the Council and themselves to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to carry out their wide ranging and fast changing roles as effectively as possible.

Our commitment to equipping Members with the skills to contribute to the development of our borough is directly reflected in the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Rotherham's recent history has been turbulent following the publication of the Jay and Casey Reports and the subsequent intervention by central Government through the appointment of Commissioners in February 2015. The return of powers to local democratic control has been at the core of the Council's improvement journey since that time and we have prioritised reforming our services, practices and culture.

Following an intake of 24 new Members to the Council in 2016 and a further two in by-elections in February 2017, we are focused on ensuring all of our Members have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles and provide effective leadership for our communities.

All Members have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of this strategy and I believe that this document now provides a strong basis for the authority to conduct learning and development until the next whole Council election in May 2020.

Councilllor Taiba Yasseen
Chair of the Member Development Panel and
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services

Statement of Principles

Equality of Opportunity

Rotherham MBC is committed to the principle of equality in their learning and development programmes for all Members – irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or working pattern.

Access to Learning and Development

All Members will be given access to development opportunities that enhance the skills and knowledge that they need both now and in the future. They will be offered support to facilitate their continual personal development, to enable them to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Council's priorities and respond to the changing needs of the borough's diverse communities.

Care will be taken to identify and remove disadvantages or barriers that Members feel prevent their taking advantage of these opportunities. In practice this means making sure that there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers. Where possible the Council will support Members to develop skills and knowledge that will be useful to them in preparation for enhanced roles.

Enabling Members to attend events and undertake learning and development activities is a key priority. In order to facilitate this:

- formal sessions will be programmed in advance to try to ensure that they do not clash with the committee cycle and other major events
- activities will be programmed at different times of the day to accommodate individual commitments where possible
- Electronic learning materials and other new technology will be used where appropriate

The Member Development Panel will regularly review the dates, times and location of all events and make recommendations for change if required.

Introduction

Priorities

"Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind. To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents."

We have set four ambitious priorities that will help focus our activities:

- 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

In addition to this, we are committed to running a modern and efficient council.

Elected Members have a critical role in delivering these priorities by demonstrating their understanding of the complex challenges faced by modern local government and supporting their communities. We will endeavour to ensure that our learning and development programmes are linked to these priorities.

We define 'Member Development' as any development activities or training programmes specifically designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of elected members in their individual or collective roles in meeting the Council's priorities and as agreed via individual development plans

Context

From February 2015, the Government appointed Commissioners to oversee the improvement of the Council following the failings identified in the Corporate Governance Inspection by Dame Louise Casey. As part of the intervention package, the Local Government Association (LGA) provided a high level of support to the Council in developing Members. In the period since the intervention commenced, there has been a considerable change in the membership of the Council, with 38 out of 63 councillors having been elected since May 2015. The support from the LGA has therefore focused on induction and providing key information to new Members.

The development package provided by the LGA has been instrumental in giving Members the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to enable Commissioners to evidence to the Secretary of State that decision making powers should be returned to local democratic control.

This new strategy builds on the work and support provided by the LGA in identifying a long-term approach to member development which consolidates learning and

reflects the ambition of Members to continue to grow their knowledge and skills to embed high standards of decision making and conduct. Whilst support will continue to be available from the LGA in the medium term, this strategy confirms that our will focus be on the in-house provision of member development activity and externally sourcing learning and development where necessary.

Objectives

Access to strong and effective Member development is therefore essential to help Members fulfil their role and will strengthen the process for good decision making. The objectives of this strategy are to help Members develop and strengthen their awareness, knowledge and understanding of:

- local and national challenges and opportunities for the Borough
- complex issues facing local government with changes to legislation; changing governance structures in associated bodies a very different funding environment
- the skills and competencies needed by elected Members in the modern world, including effective communications, community leadership and ICT competencies.

To deliver these objectives the Council will demonstrate its commitment to Member development by

- fostering and supporting a Member led approach
- taking a planned and strategic approach to Member Development
- developing and delivering, with Member involvement, an effective Learning & Development Programme.
- assisting Members to develop their capacity to fulfil their role
- supporting all Members in their development
- providing additional officer support for portfolio holders and chairs of committees.
- facilitating regular assessment of training needs and working with Members to continually evaluate the learning and development programme
- evaluation and reporting of the effectiveness of the strategy through the Council's Corporate Priorities and Performance Framework
- providing a budget and facilities for training and development
- establishing an effective Member Development Panel
- continuing to work with the Local Government Association to enable Members to access opportunities to network with Members from other councils and share examples of good practice in development activity and to support their roles

The Member Development Panel
The Member Development Panel is a cross party working group that meets regularly throughout the year, with further meetings for specific sub groups. The Panel's terms of reference are included as Appendix B to this strategy.

Members have considered and guided the development of this Strategy, provided guidance and feedback on Member communications and provided valuable insight into the development of the Personal Development Plan process that will provide the foundation for Member training over the course of the term of the Council.

Members of the Panel
Councillor Taiba Yasseen (Chair)
Councillor Sarah Allen
Councillor Maggi Clark
Councillor Allen Cowles
Councillor Brian Steele
Councillor Gordon Watson
Councillor John Williams

Member Development Charter

The ambition of Rotherham MBC is to meet the requirements of the Yorkshire and Humber Member Development Charter. An important role for the Member Development Panel is to ensure that Rotherham MBC meets the standards required for Chartered status.

Members' responsibilities and commitments

All elected Members need to recognise the requirements to develop and maintain their skills and competencies and will be expected to meet their responsibilities in the following ways:

- newly elected Members and returning members will participate in the full induction programme
- all Members will attend training or briefings on a range of relevant local and national issues to ensure their skills and knowledge are up to date and keep pace with local and national changes
- all Members will participate in training on the Council's Code of Conduct
- all Members will attend training in respect of corporate parenting and safeguarding
- Members will participate in specific training and development sessions related to their roles – this is applicable in particular to Licensing and Planning, where compliance is a requirement before Members can exercise decision making powers on those bodies
- supporting each other through mentoring and advice
- sharing learning (through the Members Bulletin, cascading information through training sessions and as part of the regular Member Development updates to council)
- completing pre and post training evaluation of courses and where useful providing feedback on briefings.

Members demonstrate leadership and uphold the values and behaviours of the Council in undertaking development activity. Development will be viewed as an opportunity to improve and enhance the capacity of membership of the Council to

deliver against the Council Plan and for the people of Rotherham. The principles of the annex to the Code of Conduct apply to all Members when undertaking training, learning and development activity:-

Be respectful

1. Always remember the importance of those individuals and communities who need the council's services.
2. Ensure our words and actions are free from prejudice and improper discrimination.
3. Get the basics right and be courteous and reliable in all our dealings with the public.
4. Understand the legal requirements on the Council.

5. Always be mindful that we are responsible for other people's money.
6. Be clear with the staff of the council about our ambitions and expectations whilst treating them with respect.
7. Act, dress and carry ourselves in a way that invites others to respect our efforts.

Be imaginative

8. Be energetic and be ambitious; looking ahead to what needs to change.
9. Encourage others to take an interest in the Council.
10. Use evidence of what works elsewhere to improve our decision-making.
11. Advocate for those individuals and communities who need our help.
12. Widen the circle of those contributing to local life.
13. Never be complacent and try to learn from others and be open to new ideas.

Be open-minded

14. Accept if we have got things wrong and try to put things right
15. Commit to personal development to improve our understanding, skills and confidence.
16. Challenge those who fall below the high standards we believe in.
17. Avoid giving personal criticism, whilst being willing to vigorously debate ideas and principles
18. Resist taking offence too easily, recognising that politics requires resilience.
19. Understand our personal accountability and engage with the press and others to explain our work
20. Escalate any individual concerns responsibly, using agreed systems of the Council

The Learning & Development Programme

Four Year Cycle

The Learning & Development Programme is based on a four year cycle that is in line with Rotherham's election cycle. This approach also has the flexibility to meet the needs of new Members joining the Council (through by-elections) and the considerable experience of Members with long service. The Programme will be monitored and evaluated throughout the cycle to ensure it keeps pace with new priorities and initiatives.

Personal Development Plans

The foundation of the Learning & Development Programme is a robust evaluation of training needs which are matched to council priorities and are clearly based on role profiles for elected Members and the Member Skills Framework.

Every two years Members will be invited to attend a Personal Development Plan discussion with a support officer from Democratic Services. These sessions provide the opportunity for an open dialogue to identify training and development needs and a discussion on Members' interests and ambitions relative to their Council roles. These sessions also provide an opportunity to match Members for peer to peer mentoring. A copy of the PDP form and Member Skills Framework are appended to this strategy.

Timings

An election year is considered to be year one in the cycle and, PDP interviews will normally be completed between November and February in that Council year. This enables the completion of the Induction Programme and is timely to plan for the Programme of Learning for years 2 and 3,

A second PDP interview will follow during year 3, again between November and February. This will involve a review of the learning undertaken to date as well as an opportunity to identify further training needs and assistance to Group leaders for identification of successors to key roles.

The completed Training Needs Assessment Summary will be shared with the Member Development Panel, who will guide the development of a Learning & Development Programme

This programme will be agreed with the Panel

The Plan will then be delivered and regularly evaluated by the Member Development Panel.

The continuous cycle of appraisal, establishing training needs, development, delivery and evaluation is illustrated below

Key Themes

The majority of learning and development themes are relevant to all Members, for example:

- new or changing legislation
- core skills such as community leadership
- major policy or service delivery changes by the Council.

Other opportunities will be relevant to specific roles (for example Cabinet Members, Committee Chair or Scrutiny). Members will also have their own individual learning needs.

The Programme will be delivered through three key themes (Core knowledge and skills, Service Specific opportunities and Council & Committee issues). Each 'theme' is reflected to varying degrees in the four year approach:

- year one (2016/17) focused on induction to provide Members with the skills and knowledge needed to understand and fulfil their role.
- years two - three (2017 – 19) will focus on enhancing Members' competencies and knowledge.
- year four (2018/19) Identifying skills and development needs for succession planning and preparation for induction and mentoring of new Members.

Core knowledge and skills
This includes:

- Democracy and governance i.e. how Council decision-making works and organisational awareness
- The legal/constitutional framework
- Diversity and equality
- IT skills, media and communications
- Managing case work/ward work
- Code of conduct and probity
- Safeguarding
- Dealing with complaints
- Local government finance and financial responsibilities
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Risk and resilience planning
- Partnership working and structures
- Corporate plans

Service specific opportunities

This includes briefings and seminars on the work of individual departments and emerging issues that affect specific service delivery.

Council and Committee issues

There will be a number of issues relevant to Councillors as members of specific committees. These include:

- Planning matters
- Licensing matters
- Audit responsibilities
- Scrutiny skills
- Sitting on staffing disciplinary and dismissal appeals
- Recruitment and interviewing skills
- Evaluating reports and framing questions
- Specific training for the Cabinet (Portfolio holders) and chairs of committees

Learning Priorities

A significant level of support has been provided to Rotherham MBC by the Local Government Association as part of the package following government intervention. Whilst the LGA has delivered some of the content directly or indirectly, the Council has retained input and oversight of the delivery of the programme of support for councillors. The priorities for 2016-17 were:-

- Induction Programme
- Financial Training
- ICT skills
- Scrutiny (questioning skills, use of performance data, chairing skills etc.)
- Emergency Planning
- Safeguarding

- Equality and Diversity
- Committee training
  - Planning
  - Licensing

Delivering the Programme

The Panel recognises that learning and development must be delivered in ways that encourage Member involvement and generate strong Member participation. Opportunities will, where possible, be tailored to reflect different personal and domestic circumstances and preferred learning styles – for example:

- briefing notes and learning guides
- e-learning packages
- external conferences, seminars and network meetings
- in house briefings presented by senior managers and specialist officers
- peer coaching and mentoring
- visits to other authorities
- joint Member and officer sessions
- training with partner organisations and neighbouring authorities
- shadowing other councillors in Rotherham or in other authorities
- information from a variety of sources, including the LGA work books, Local Government Information Unit blogs (LGIU) and the Institute of Local Government Studies blog (INLOGOV).

Recognising that technologies are constantly evolving, time is limited and differing preferences for learning, the Council will look to be innovative in delivering its learning and development programme for Members. This may require input from other organisations and use of the Member development budget, but this should not detract from the aspiration to enable all Members to access learning and development through innovative methods.

Promotion of Learning and Development Opportunities

Opportunities for learning & development will be included in the Members Bulletin and shared with the group whips for group meetings. Members will also be encouraged to feedback on each learning opportunity undertaken and an update on courses undertaken and forthcoming opportunities will be given on a quarterly basis to full council to provide a formal opportunity to share learning.

In promoting courses, officers will ensure that the benefits of attending each session are clearly highlighted to Members as it is important that the link between a session and Members' own interests are identified.

ICT

In today's world Members will struggle to fulfil their role unless they take on board the opportunities provided through ICT – information communications technology. A

number of options are now available to Members including access to an iPad and online papers for use during meetings.

Training on ICT will focus on ensuring Members have the skills to:

- use email to communicate with constituents, officers, and other bodies
- be able to use social media effectively and know when and what it is best used for Social media
- access and use on line documents
- conduct electronic research
- use apps such as Modern.Gov
- support for new Members

In addition to the formal induction events and core skills sessions, new Members will be assigned a Member buddy who will act as their mentors to provide signposting and guidance.

Democratic Services will also take a proactive role in ensuring general issues on logistics, such as room layout, expenses etc are covered and that new Members feel 'connected'.

By-elections

When Members join the Council as a result of a by-election, Democratic Services will arrange tailored induction courses that introduce the varied elements of the year 1 programme and ensure adequate mentoring support is available to ensure new Members do not feel 'adrift'. Opportunities to observe committees and other operations will form part of this induction.

Enhanced programme for Members of the Cabinet, Opposition leaders and Committee Chairs

It is essential that targeted development opportunities are provided for senior Members who may be currently part of the Cabinet – or have the potential and ambition to join the Cabinet. This small team of Members provide the direction and leadership of the Council and their skills needs to be enhanced and refreshed to ensure they can deliver and embrace the challenges faced by local government. Succession planning is essential to the smooth running of the council and to facilitate part of this, portfolio holders, opposition members and chairs of other key committees will be involved in learning opportunities for Members who wish to develop their role at Rotherham.

Enhanced programmes will include:

- community leadership
- community engagement
- the impact of new legislation
- vision – local and national
- political understanding

- people strategy

As part of this work, senior Members will be encouraged to contribute to the learning experiences for newer Members and where appropriate share their skills and experience at a regional and national level. Suitable opportunities will be sought through the Local Government Association's Leadership Academy and courses by local universities and other Yorkshire and Humber councils.

Evaluation & Review and Resources

Training will be systematically evaluated and the Member Development Panel will be directly involved in encouraging feedback and considering evaluation from training opportunities. Their views will shape and determine the content of the Learning & Development Programme.

To enable full evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach to Member learning and development, we will use:

- pre and post training questionnaires – Members have a responsibility to complete these
- a short self-assessment of key skills and knowledge (Member Skills Framework).
- annual Member survey will include a section on training – seeking views on courses delivered in the year and quality of content and delivery.
- statistics on Member participation in training will form part of the annual Member Development report to Council.
- in addition, the overall strategy will be reviewed as part of the Corporate Priorities and the Performance Framework

Resources

The Council provides both financial and officer resources to support Member learning and development. The budget covers funding for training and allowances for travel and subsistence.

The budget will be discussed at each meeting of the Member Development Panel and when preparing the budget advice will be sought from the Panel on funding needs.

Political group leaders or whips will be advised of all training opportunities and will be kept informed about the attendance and non-attendance of Members on courses, along with the potential cost implications associated with not attending events which the Council has paid for.

Authorisation to attend any learning or development opportunities (which incur a cost) will need to be granted in accordance with the protocol for Member Attendance conferences, seminars, overseas travel and external training events (enclosed at Appendix A

PROTOCOL FOR THE APPROVAL OF COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND EXTERNAL TRAINING EVENTS

As part of Rotherham MBC's improvement journey we have committed to ensuring that councillors have access to appropriate learning and development to ensure that Members are able to best represent the people of the borough and effectively discharge their decision making responsibilities. The Council, through its Member Development Panel, will formulate a strategy and programme for Member Development covering each term of office between elections to the authority. The programme of activity will predominantly focus on the internal delivery of learning and development to Members through a variety of approaches. However, it is recognised that attendance at conferences, seminars, fact-finding visits, external training events can be useful sources of learning and this protocol details how the Council will consider and approve councillor attendance at such events.

For the sake of clarity, attendance at party political conferences are specifically excluded from this protocol and all expenses associated with attendance at these events will be met by the relevant group or the individual concerned, not the local authority.

Applying to attend

Any Member wishing to attend an external conference or course must complete an application form and return it to the Member Support Team in Democratic Services. The application must detail the reasons for attending the course or conference and how it will help them in their role as an elected member. An example application form is annexed to this protocol.

All applications by Members for external courses or conferences must be agreed and supported by the Cabinet Member responsible for the appropriate portfolio, or where appropriate by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. Where a Cabinet Member makes an application this will need to be agreed and supported by the Leader.

The application will then be considered by the Member Development Panel for approval guided by the following principles:

- The course/conference must either:

  a) have been identified within a Member's Personal Development Plan or
  b) be judged by the Member Development Panel to be a reasonable learning and development opportunity for a role they hold within the council, or
  c) be judged by the Member Development Panel to be a reasonable event to attend as a representative of the council in line with the member's other council responsibilities

- The event must be of reasonable cost according to the budget set aside for training and development for members. The cost of the course should directly link to the priorities for council expressed either within the Council's Corporate Plan or any other strategic plan.

- The event must be offered by an accredited training body, such as the Centre for Public Scrutiny, Local Government Association or Local Government Information Unit and, as a general point of principle, must not be organised by any political group. Any exceptions to this principle will be agreed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Member Development Panel.

- A maximum of one place should be offered on any course unless specifically authorised by the Assistant Chief Executive following consultation with the Chair of the Member Development Panel. If any external event attracts more than one application for attendance, places are likely to be prioritised in order of relevance to the role of the applicant, date of submitting the application and the number of previous courses attended.

Travel

Travel will be by private car (costs reclaimable in line with the council's staff policy) or by standard class public transport.

Overseas Travel

Overseas travel funded by the council should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The process and guiding principles are as identified within this document but the approval for any overseas visits will be authorised by the Leader and endorsed by the Chief Executive.

The criterion for the Leader to use is whether the benefits are "functional", that is, whether they are likely to help achieve the work of the Cabinet Member/Cabinet and/or the priorities of the Council.

Post Attendance

After attending a conference, seminar and external training event, Members will be required to provide a short briefing on the event to other members on their committee or political group to cascade the learning.

Following the event, members must complete a feedback form and return it to Democratic Services, the data of which will be reported to the Member Development Panel on a quarterly basis.

APPLICATION FOR COUNCILLORS TO ATTEND CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND EXTERNAL TRAINING EVENTS

Name of Councillor:-

Conference/Seminar/Course Title:-

Subject Matter:-
(*Briefly list and attach event outline*)

Benefits of Conference/Seminar/Course to Elected Member

Benefits of Conference/Seminar/Course to Committee/Council

Cabinet Member/OSMB Chair Recommendation

Date from:- | **Date to:-**

Venue and Address:-

Method of Travel:- Train ☐ Car ☐ Sharing Car ☐
Other ☐ (please specify) _____

Total Cost:

Elected Member Signature:

Print Name

OFFICE USE ONLY			
Authorised by ACX?	YES ☐ NO ☐ (Tick as appropriate)	Chair of Member Development Panel in agreement?	YES ☐ NO ☐ (Tick as appropriate)
Date of booking on:-		Travel arrangement & cost:-	
Order Number:-		Invoice Number:-	

16

Member Development Panel: Terms of reference (TOR)

The following TOR have been compiled to reflect the changing role of elected members; the greater diversity in political representation; to ensure greater alignment of activity to Council priorities and reiterate members' role in evaluating and monitoring activities effectively to ensure best use of resources.

- To develop and implement a learning and development programme to equip councillors with the skills, knowledge and confidence to represent their communities effectively relating to their Council role;
- To disseminate learning and development information to councillors within each political group and /or non-aligned councillors;
- To ensure each member receives a personal development planning interview;
- To ensure that learning programmes are prioritised effectively, reflecting the Council's improvement agenda and regional and national objectives;
- To develop and implement a comprehensive induction programme for newly elected members;
- To monitor and evaluate member learning and development activities and outcomes;
- To ensure that members are fully engaged in member learning and development activities (including mandatory programmes);
- To monitor the member learning and development budget and ensure that resources are allocated effectively;
- To formulate future policies and strategies for member development.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name:	Ward:
Year elected to Council:	

Position(s) currently held as a Councillor:

Have you received training to support you in these roles?

My main achievements in my Ward/Community in the previous 12 months (or since elected):

My main achievements in my wider Council role in the previous 12 months (or since elected):

Training and development attended in the previous 12 months which is relevant to your role (including independent study):

Looking forward – what do you want to achieve in your role as a councillor?

Community:

Council:

Based on your self-assessment do you need any skills development or training to help you be more effective in your role as a ward councillor?(e.g. undertaking casework, organising community meetings, mediation)

Do you need any skills development or training to help you perform your other Council roles/responsibilities more effectively?

Do you have any comments about other topics that should be included in the member development programme (e.g. health reforms, devolution etc?)

How do you prefer to learn?	
Small group sessions	
E-learning/ self-directed learning	
Coaching/ one-to-one	
Seminars	
Outside events or conferences	
Other (please specify)	

Signature:	Date:
Interviewer's Signature:	Date:

Member Personal Development Plan Skills Framework

Details

Name

_____

Ward

_____

Which Council positions do you currently hold? (tick all that apply)	tick	Have you received training and support to assist you in your role?		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Cabinet Member				
Chair/Vice-Chair of a Council Committee				
Overview and scrutiny member				
Member of Planning Board				
Member of Licensing Board				
Audit Committee Member				
Standards and Ethics Committee Member				
Council Representative on an outside body				
Member on appeal, staffing or appointment panel				
Member of Corporate Parenting Panel, adoption or fostering panel				

Other (please specify)

_____

How to fill in this form:

You are asked to complete a short self-assessment (which has been designed by members and based on the LGA Political Skills Framework). This will prompt you to self-evaluate your skills/knowledge in key areas and identify your learning and development requirements. It will be used as a basis of your Personal Development Plan discussion. You are also asked for your thoughts on how we can address the areas that you've identified for further development.

Your response will not be shared with other councillors, although your suggestions, comments and general issues raised will be used to inform the wider member development programme.

1. Local Leadership

Ratings   **1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development**

How do I see myself as a ward member?
Councillors engage with members of their community in order to learn about areas of concern for the local area and help to build a vision for the locality. This involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups, mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and community sectors.

How up to date am I on local issues?	
How easy is it for constituents, partners and local groups to contact me?	
How confident am I in handling casework and advocating for individuals who need my help?	
How effectively do I work and communicate with my ward colleagues (including those in other parties)?	
How aware am I of my personal safety and the safety of others (public meetings, surgeries etc)	

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

2. Partnership Working

Ratings   **1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development**

How do I see myself at partnership working?
Councillors build good relationships with others by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. Recognising and valuing different contributions, delegate or provide support as required and take a long term view in developing partnerships.

How well do I know the different networks and community groups in my area (e.g. parish councils, luncheon clubs or faith groups)	
How well can I demonstrate that my work has made a difference in my area?	
How effectively do I include people from different backgrounds and communities?	
How well do I resolve conflict or deadlock?	
How well do I maintain good relationships with colleagues, officers and community groups?	
How confident am I to develop and implement my ward plan?	

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

3. Communication Skills	
Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development	
How do I communicate with others? Councillors demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language. Communicating regularly and effectively with all parts of the community is an essential part of the role.	
How well do I speak and write, using clear and appropriate language?	
How well do I deliver difficult messages that people may not want to hear?	
How confident am I when speaking in public?	
How confident am I when speaking to the media (including when speaking on difficult issues)?	
How confident am I to communicate using social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) or email etc?	
Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?	

4. Political Understanding	
Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development	
How do I view my political understanding? Councillors need to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision and encourage democratic processes and public engagement.	
• How well do I work to build confidence in the Council and the role of Councillors?	
• How effectively do I work in other political environments (e.g. outside council)?	
• How well developed is my political awareness (e.g. local and national developments and how they affect my area/the Council)?	
• How well do I encourage others to take an interest in the Council?	
• How well do I understand the current context in Rotherham and the steps that are being taken to improve the way the Council works?	
Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?	

5. **Scrutiny, Monitoring and Challenge**	
Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development	
How do I view my approach to scrutiny and challenge? Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny both inside and outside the Council and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others	
• How effectively do I raise issues of local concern and engage the public through the scrutiny process?	
• How well do I quickly understand and analyse complex information?	
• Are my questions and contributions always concise, meaningful and easily understood?	
• How well do I hold decision makers to account?	
• Are my judgements based on evidence?	
• How well do I contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk?	
Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?	

6. **Legal responsibilities, standards and ethics**	
Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development	
How do I view my approach to my legal responsibilities, standards and ethics? Councillors are required to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions.	
• How well do I understand the Council's Codes of Conduct and how these apply to my role?	
• How well do I understand the relevant equalities legislation and how these relate to my role?	
• How well do I understand and act on my different statutory roles? (e.g. licensing, planning or emergency planning)	
• How well do I understand my role as a Corporate Parent to looked after children and care leavers?	
• How well do I understand the Council's safeguarding responsibilities to vulnerable children?	
• How well do I understand the Council's safeguarding responsibilities to vulnerable adults?	
• How well do I understand my role on appeal panels?	
• How well do I understand my role as a representative on an outside body?	
• How well do I understand my responsibilities in data protection and keeping information safe and secure	

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

7. Understanding how the Council Works?

Ratings   1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development

• How well do I understand the legal requirements and responsibilities of the Council	
• How well do I understand the way that Council meetings are run?	
• How well do I understand the rules of debate and speaking at Council meetings?	
• How well do I understand how decisions are made by Council and its committees?	
• How well do I understand the different roles and responsibilities of Council Committees	

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

8. Are you confident using IT in your council role?   Yes or No

What would help you to become more confident

9. When do prefer sessions to be held?

	tick
Morning (e.g, 9.30-11.30am)	
Afternoon (e.g. 1.00-3.00pm)	
Early evening (6.00-8.00pm)	
No preference	
Any other comments about session timings?	

10. Any other comments about your learning and development needs?

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Public Report with Exempt Appendix
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Summary Sheet

Name of Committee and Date of Committee Meeting:
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 8 November 2017

Council Report:
Review of District Heating Charges

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director for Adult Care and Housing

Report Author(s)
Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager
01709 822494 or paul.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Kath Andrews, Principal Finance Officer
01709 255987 or kathleen.andrews@rotherham.gov.uk

Executive Summary

A review of district heating has been undertaken following capital investment made to infrastructure that has improved the efficiency and concerns raised by tenants on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate about the high cost of heating.

A previous report to Cabinet in July 2017 recommended that a weekly standing charge of £2 be introduced to enable a reduction in kwh charge to 5.65p so mitigating a payment spike for residents on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate who are on pre-payment meters. The equivalent charge per kwh if no standing charge was levied would have been 7.09p per kwh. There were concerns expressed by some tenants and ward Members that prompted a further review of charges to be undertaken.

Subsequently, the review has focused on anticipated costs for 2017-18 based on full year operating costs for 2016-17 now being available and the known cost reductions from significant investment in district heating infrastructure over the last 3 years now coming to fruition.

This report recommends the reduction of the kwh charge to 6.28p per kwh with no standing charge for 2017-18 which will be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017. These cost reductions will mean that charges for district heating in Rotherham for 2017-18 are comparable to both Sheffield and Doncaster.

Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to scrutinise the report and proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That the content of the report be noted.

2. That the Council be recommended:-

   a) To approve the revised district heating cost model.

   b) To reduce the unit Kwh charge across all district heating schemes to 6.28p per kwh (incl. VAT) and apply retrospectively from 1 April 2017.

   c) To reduce weekly pre-payment charges on all pooled schemes as detailed in Option 3 of the report.

List of Appendices
Appendix 1 – Options Analysis (Exempt)

Background Papers
Review of District Heating Charges, 10 July 2017
District Heating Scheme Charges 2017/18 (9 January 2017)
Self-Regulation Select Commission – Review of RMBC's District Heating Schemes (November 2012).

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 13 November 2017

Council Approval Required
Yes – 13 December 2017

Exempt from the Press and Public
An exemption is sought for Appendix A under paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 is requested, as this report contains sensitive commercial information with regards to the potential acquisition of land and negotiation strategy which could disadvantage the Council if the information were to be made public.

It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption would outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information, as the parties' commercial interests could be prejudiced by disclosure of this commercial information.

Review of District Heating Charges

1.   Recommendations

1.1.   That the content of the report be noted.

1.2.   That Council be recommended:-

a)   To approve the revised district heating cost model.

b)   To reduce the unit Kwh charge across all district heating schemes to 6.28p per kwh (incl. vat) and apply retrospectively from 1 April 2017.

c)   To reduce weekly pre-payment charges on all pooled schemes as detailed in Option 3 of the report.

2.   Background

District Heating Charges

2.1   The Council operates two distinct district heating schemes:

- A pooled metered scheme and;
- A pre-paid card meter scheme at Swinton.

Over the last few years charges for each scheme have been brought into line with a phased increase in the kilowatt hour charge towards achieving full cost recovery.

2.2   District heating charges are based on a metered charge per kilowatt hour of heat used. A weekly charge is paid by tenants through their rent account for all schemes with the exception of Swinton Fitzwilliam which is via pre-payment meter. Weekly charges for most pooled schemes exceed the actual metered costs and hence 19% of all income received from weekly charges was returned to customers via a refund in 2016/17. This refund is calculated on each individual tenant's kwh usage and does not represent a reduction in kwh charge rate. The Cabinet in January 2013 recommended that the cost of district heating is fully recovered on a phased basis and therefore charges are set at the appropriate level. For 2016-17 there was no increase in charges at 8.72p per kwh. This was the second consecutive year that charges had been unchanged.

2.3   In July 2017 the Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council that charges for District Heating should be reduced to 5.65p per kwh and a weekly standing charge of £2 payable from the 2nd October 2017. Subsequent to this decision a number of tenants at Swinton Fitzwilliam and local Members expressed concerns that; the standing charge element is confusing and removes choice and they questioned whether staffing and administration costs should be passed onto tenants as they created financial difficulties. As a result a further review of the cost model has been undertaken with the aim of trying to address these concerns.

Investment in District Heating

2.4 Over the past 3 years there has been considerable investment upgrading the district heating infrastructure. This has included replacement boilers, distribution pipework and heat meters. Total investment funded through the Housing Revenue Account over the period has been £3.2m.

2.5 Given this significant investment in new infrastructure it has resulted in some district heating schemes being more energy efficient so reducing the Council's running costs. This has been particularly evident at the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate where new boiler installations have reduced operating costs and new heat meters have ensured heat use is now recorded and billed accurately.

Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate

2.6 Tenants on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate, supported by ward Members have raised concerns about the difficulties they were having in being able to afford the costs of heating their homes. Many tenants were experiencing difficulty paying to heat their homes during the winter period based on the prevailing 8.72p per kwh charge rate. This rate had been agreed by Council in January 2016 for the 2016-17 financial year.

2.7 Given the upgrade to the district heating system was ongoing at the time of 2016-17 budget setting, potential cost savings from installation of new infrastructure were not known and so the previous decision by Cabinet in January 2012 to pursue full cost recovery across the district heating schemes the charge rate of 8.72p per kwh was retained for 2017-18 pending a review.

2.8 Within the budget setting report a commitment was made that after a full year of operation any over recovery of income would be refunded to tenants. This was also confirmed in writing to tenants living on the estate.

2.9 An interim refund was issued to tenants prior to the year-end based on known income and expenditure between April – December 2016. The refund was issued to all tenants, with the exception of those with historic district heating debt, in February 2017.

2.10 A further refund was issued to tenants in April 2017 covering the date of heat meter installation until 31 March 2016. A final refund was issued 22 May 2017 based on known income and expenditure for the entirety of 2016-17.

3. **Key Issues**

3.1 Following the review of the prevailing charge rate for district heating at Swinton Fitzwilliam a full review of the cost model and subsequent charging rates was undertaken across all district heating schemes. The Cabinet recommended to Council at its meeting of 10 July 2017 that charges be reduced to 5.65p per kwh (applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017) and a weekly standing charge of £2 from 2 October 2017.

3.2   Following this recommendation tenants on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate along with local Councillors expressed further concerns about district heating charges. Their concerns included:

- The confusion and merit of implementing a weekly standing charge
- The equity of treating Swinton Fitzwilliam and Pooled schemes as one for charging purposes when the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate has different metering and is more efficient following recent investment
- Including staffing, administration and metering costs in the cost recovery calculations makes the proposed charging rate still unaffordable for many tenants

3.3   As a result of these concerns a further review of the cost model has been undertaken. This report now details a further option for district heating charges that reduces costs for tenants on district heating whilst being fair to other tenants who are on mains gas fuelled heating systems. As previous, this review will ensure a charging structure that is fair to all tenants on district heating throughout the borough is adopted.

3.4   In calculating the revised kwh rate the following assumptions have been made:

- Forecast 2017-18 expenditure is based on actual 2016-17 costs of operating the district heating schemes and not the budget that was originally set in January 2017. The original budget was based on actual operating costs for 2015-16 as these were the only actual full year costs available at the time of budget setting.

- Forecast income is based on the actual number of kwh purchased by tenants in 2016-17.

- Throughout 2017-18 further investment will continue to improve the efficiency of district heating systems. No allowance has been made for further reductions in the Council's operating costs that may result.

- The kwh charge the Council pays for utilities is assumed to remain the same. Utility costs used in calculating the cost of district heating include electricity and gas.

- Income from the Renewable Heat Incentive subsidy scheme has been included based on actual income received in 2016/17. This reduces the amount to be recovered via tenant charges.

3.5   In completing this work Sheffield City Council have undertaken a review of the principles behind the cost model and are satisfied that the costs have been calculated fairly. The basis is similar to those used for the modelling in Sheffield taking into account the economies of scale that Sheffield can rely on.

3.6   The cost models are based on all properties on district heating schemes across the borough being pooled and treated as one scheme. As a result there will be a cross subsidy between individual district heating scheme locations i.e. one location may make a loss and another profit, but all tenants throughout the borough will pay the same kwh rate. However, all tenants will see a reduction from the current charge rate of 8.72p per kwh. The details of each option previously recommended along with the new recommended option are set out below:

Option 1 – Reduced kwh charge and £2 per week standing charge (Recommendation to Cabinet 10 July 2017)

	2017-18 (current)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	2017-18 (proposed)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	Reduction £
Unit Cost per kwh	8.72p	627.84	5.65p	406.80	
Standing charge	0	0	£2 per week	104	
Total £		627.84		510.80	-117

3.7 This would ensure all costs of operating district heating are recovered including administration. It is proposed to include a weekly standing charge to mitigate against seasonal payment spikes.

3.8 The administration costs include the cost of service charges for heat meters, staffing costs for management and administration of accounts, postage and printing for billing. All charges would be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017 and relevant refunds placed on the rent account and issued as part of district heating quarterly billing cycle. It is anticipated this would take until mid-January 2018 to action.

Advantages
- Full cost recovery including administration and metering costs
- Consistent charging across all schemes
- Reduced costs for tenants

Disadvantages
- Does not address tenants concerns in relation to levying a standing charge and recovery of administration costs.

Option 2 - Reduced kwh charge and £2 per week standing charge from 2 October 2017 (Approved by Cabinet 10 July 2017)

	2017-18 (current)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	2017-18 (proposed)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	Reduction £
Unit Cost per kwh	8.72p	627.84	5.65p	406.80	
Standing charge	0	0	£2 per week	52	
Total £		627.84		458.80	-169

3.9 This would ensure all costs of operating district heating are recovered. It is proposed to include a weekly standing charge to mitigate against seasonal payment spikes.

3.10 The administration costs include the cost of service charges for heat meters, staffing costs for management and administration of accounts, postage and printing for billing. All charges would be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017 with the exception of the standing charge which would have been applied from 2 October 2017. Relevant refunds would be placed on the rent account and issued as part of district heating quarterly billing cycle. It is anticipated this would take until mid-January 2018 to action.

Advantages

- Full cost recovery including administration costs for future years
- Consistent charging across all schemes
- Reduced costs for tenants

Disadvantages

- Under recovery of full costs by £65k in 2017-18.
- Does not address tenants concerns in relation to levying a standing charge and recovery of administration costs.

Option 3 – Charge fuel cost only with no standing charge – recommended

	2017-18 (current)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	2017-18 (proposed)	Average Bill £ (7,200 kwh)	Reduction £
Unit Cost per kwh	8.72p	627.84	6.28p	452.16	
Standing charge	0	0	0	0	
Total £		627.84		452.16	-176
Weekly pooled meter charges:	£		£		
Bedsit	11.81		9.66		-2.15
1 Bed	13.76		11.25		-2.51
2 Bed	15.78		12.90		-2.88
3/4 Bed	18.26		14.93		-3.33

3.11 This would limit cost recovery to fuel costs only. All staffing, administration and metering costs have been omitted and would in future be funded through general HRA resources which is the same as staffing costs associated with Gas Servicing and Safety inspections for individual central heating systems. All charges would be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2017 and relevant refunds placed on the rent account and issued as part of district heating quarterly billing cycle. Tenants on pre-payment meters would be issued with refunds for the period 1 April to 30 November 2017 following decision by the Council. The remaining refund for the period 1 December to 13 December 2017 would be applied as a credit to the heat meter. By processing the refunds in this way it will ensure tenants receive a refund prior to Christmas. The new charge rate will be applied to the meter remotely on 14 December 2017.

Advantages

- Reduced costs for tenants. The average bill will reduce by £176.
- Consistent charging across all schemes so is equitable for all tenants
- Is a positive response to tenant and member concerns

Disadvantages

- Does not deal with winter payment spike for tenants and residents on pre-payment meters.

- It would result in a cost under recovery of £73k in respect of not recovering the costs of staffing, administration and metering charges which would therefore be a general cost to the HRA.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 The options detailed in the main body of the report outline the cost to tenants and forecast deficit to the HRA depending on the option chosen. To ensure that all tenants on district heating pay at the same rate it is recommended that the Council move to district heating scheme (Option 3). This will result in an average bill reducing by £176 in 2017-18 assuming the average 7,200 kwh usage remain unchanged.

4.2 There will continue to be an annual review each year as part of the budget setting cycle. This will continue to increase or decrease the kwh charge depending on total income and expenditure forecast for the forthcoming year. Any forecast over-recovery of income in the current financial year would lead to a price adjustment in the subsequent financial year.

4.3 By adopting the recommended option this would mean for 2017-18 charges were comparable to other Local Authority district heating providers in the sub-region as illustrated in the table below:

Charge Rate	Rotherham	Doncaster	Sheffield
Pence per kwh	6.28	6.09	3.04
Standing charge/ credit	0	0	£4 per week (over 50 weeks) (£14.54 monthly amenity charge for leaseholders and RTB properties only)
Total based on 7,200 khw per annum	£452	£438.48	£418.88

4.4 It should be noted Sheffield currently offer a subsidised rate, if this was not offered the charge rate would be 3.72p per kwh or £467.84 per year based on 7,200 khw.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Improving Places Select Commission has been briefed on the options review.

5.2 A series of consultation events have been held on district heating schemes during August and September 2017. The feedback has been included in developing this report

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the proposals at its meeting on 13 November 2017 and to recommend final approval by the Council on 13 December 2017. Assuming Council agreement, Tenants will be advised of revised charges week commencing 18 December 2017.

6.4 Pooled schemes will have relevant refunds placed on the rent account and issued as part of district heating quarterly billing cycle. It is anticipated it will take until mid-January 2018 to update all pooled metered accounts.

6.5 Tenants on pre-payment meters will be issued with refunds for the period 1 April to 30 November 2017 during the w.c.18 December 2017. The remaining refund balance for the period 1 December to 13 December 2017 will be applied as a credit to the heat meter. The new charge rate will be applied to the meter remotely on 14 December 2017.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The financial implications of each option are outlined in sections 3 and 4 of the report. The new unit rates have been calculated using the 2016/17 actual financial and usage data for district heating.

7.2 In 2016/17 the actual average annual usage of all tenants was approximately 7,200 kwh. This has been used to model the average costs for all tenants. However, individual charges to tenants could be higher or lower than this value dependent upon their actual usage.

7.3 The average cost per tenant in 2016/17 was £628 per annum. Option 3 would see this average cost fall to £452 per annum. Appendix 1 shows the details for each option.

7.4 The proposed option would result in a potential cost under-recovery of £73k for the HRA which would therefore fall as a general cost to the HRA. This would be funded from emerging revenue underspends in the current year and in future years would be absorbed within the HRA business plan to ensure the future sustainability of the HRA.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 allows local authorities to make such reasonable charges as they may determine for a tenancy or occupation of their houses. Further, it requires the local authority from time to time to review rents and other charges (such as district heating charges) and make such changes, as circumstances may require. The changes proposed in the recommendations to this report would fall within the ambit of the Council's discretion as set out in section 24 of the Housing Act 1985.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The reduction in district heating charges will assist families and vulnerable adults living in properties on district heating. This will mean they have more money for other living expenses such as their rent, thereby reducing the risk of being evicted due to rent arrears.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 There are no direct implications in approving the recommended option. However if the option to subsidise the heating charges of tenants on district   heating was pursued this would create inequality with other tenants who are on mains gas and do not have the option to receive a subsidy from the Council towards the cost of their heat and hot water.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 There are no direct implications for partners and other directorates.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Through reducing the rate charged the Council may not be able to recover any additional costs it incurs so inadvertently operating at an even greater deficit. This may occur if kwh charges for utility cost were higher than budgeted or Renewable Heat Incentive Income is lower than budgeted. These risks are minimal and the financial impact would be borne by HRA reserves if required.

13.2 There is also a reputational risk that the Council may be criticised for not investing further in district heating infrastructure, such as Biomass which can reduce costs to the tenant due to grant income received.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Services.

Approvals Obtained from:

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Judith Badger	26/10/2017
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Neil Concannon	06/09/2017
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	

Report Authors: Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager
Kath Andrews, Principal Finance Officer

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-
http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted