

## **IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION**

**Date and Time :-** Thursday, 19 December 2019 at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Membership:-** Councillors Atkin, Buckley, B. Cutts, Elliot, Jepson, Jones, Khan, Mallinder (Chair), McNeely, Reeder, Rushforth, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Tweed (Vice-Chair), Julie Turner, Whysall and Wyatt.

**Co-opted Members:-** Mrs. W. Birch and Mrs. M. Jacques.

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

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

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

#### **3. Questions from members of the public and the press**

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

#### **4. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

#### **5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th October, 2019 (Pages 1 - 4)**

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

## **6. Communications**

To receive communications from the Chair in respect of matters within the Commission's remit and work programme.

### **For Discussion/Decision**

#### **7. Dignity - Evaluation of Extended Hours Pilot (Pages 5 - 23)**

To consider a paper reporting on the recent pilot project for extended hours for burial services. Progress on a number of performance measures is also included within the report.

#### **8. Work Programme - Update (Pages 24 - 30)**

To consider a presentation summarising progress with the work programme during the year to date and forthcoming items for the remainder of 2019-20.

### **For Information/Monitoring**

#### **9. Outcomes from Workshop on Council Plan Performance Indicators (Pages 31 - 36)**

To consider a briefing providing information on issues discussed in respect of performance measures in the Council Plan at a recent workshop with Scrutiny Members.

#### **10. Outcomes from Workshop on Area Housing Panels Review (Pages 37 - 39)**

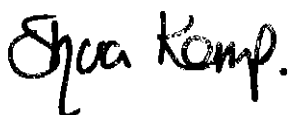
To consider a briefing outlining the outcomes from a recent workshop with Scrutiny Members in respect of emerging proposals for Area Housing Panels.

#### **11. Urgent Business**

To consider any item which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

#### **12. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on Thursday 6th February, 2020 commencing at 1:30pm in Rotherham Town Hall.



**SHARON KEMP**  
Chief Executive

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION- 24/10/19****IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION****Thursday, 24th October, 2019**

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Birch, Buckley, B. Cutts, Jacques, Jepson, Jones, Reeder, Sansome, Taylor, Tweed and Wyatt and co-optee Mary Jacques, RotherFed.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elliot, McNeely, Sheppard and Whysall.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

**27. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the press or members of the public from the meeting.

**28. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

**29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2019.**

In respect of Minute 18, (Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2019) the information requested regarding the Evaluation Time for Action Initiative had not been received. The Governance Advisor would contact the Assistant Director for clarification.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

**30. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair put on record her thanks to Christine Majer for her work in supporting the Select Commission.

**31. ALLOTMENTS SELF-MANAGEMENT - UPDATE**

The Chair of the Rotherham Allotments Alliance Board, Cllr Brian Steele introduced the briefing paper along with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, Cllr Hoddinott.

The Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the July 9,

2018 agreed to recommend to the Council the transfer of Council-owned allotments to a new borough wide self-management body.

Officers have been working with the Rotherham and District Allotment Association (RADAA) as the main umbrella organisation for Rotherham's Allotment Community. Work was also undertaken to examine if there were similar operating models adopted by other Local Authorities.

Following early discussions with RADAA representatives, Co-operatives UK were employed from August 2018 to help register a new Community Benefits Society to be known as Rotherham Allotments Alliance Ltd (RAA).

The RAA Board was established in January 2019 and RAA became a legal entity on April 2, 2019. Of the Board's eight members, three were RADAA representatives and two were Borough Councillors: Cllr Steele and Cllr Hoddinott. The requirement for two Councillors (one being the Cabinet Member with responsibility for allotments) was included in the new company's rules.

The transfer of Rotherham's Allotments from the Council to RAA was postponed to January 1, 2020. This later target date allowed Officers more time to undertake survey work and determine the heads of terms for the transfer lease to allow the RAA to take legal responsibility for the allotments sites and sub-let them either directly to tenants or to site societies.

An action plan has been prepared to guide the process and was updated regularly. Prior to transfer of the land holding responsibility a pro-rata share of the 2019/20 income already collected by the Council was needed to be transferred (£15,181) from the Council's revenue budgets.

A capital amount of £100,000 had also been made available to the RAA by the Council from 2019/20 for the benefit of improving allotments. It was envisaged that this funding was monitored by Green Spaces in a legacy role. Green Spaces had retained the Statutory Allotments Authority function under the Allotments Act. This function could not be transferred to the RAA.

All tenants and chairs and secretaries of allotment societies had been consulted on the transfer. RAA had set up its own finance and legal team and the Council had transferred a small revenue grant which would be used to fund an administrative post.

Cllr Hoddinott commented on the commitment and expertise of the alliance members in setting up this new entity and recorded her thanks to Cllr Steele for his work as Chair.

The following points were raised and clarified:

- Assurance was given outlining that RAA had obtained public liability insurance. In response to an offer of assistance from Rotherfed, the Chair thanked the co-optee and indicated that RAA were open to such discussions.
- The status of the allotments was clarified. It was reiterated that management of the allotments was undertaken by RAA however, the Council still retained ownership of the sites and statutory responsibility for provision of allotments.
- It was anticipated that there was no additional administrative burden on self-managed sites or individual tenants.
- A query was raised in respect of frequency of reporting to the Commission. Cllr Steele outlined actions taken by the Board to monitor progress and ensure due diligence was in place.
- Allotment rules had been adapted from existing Council guidelines and those issued by the National Allotment Society; these promoted what was allowed on sites and also gave guidance on how to be a good neighbour to local housing and amenities.
- The Chair expressed confidence in the action plan and the progress that had been achieved.

Resolved:

- 1) That this briefing is noted and a further update be reported in December 2020 following the transfer of the allotment management responsibility to the RAA.

## **32. IMPACT OF TRAFFIC FROM WALESWOOD CARAVAN PARK**

The Transportation Infrastructure Service was asked to provide Members with information on any impact the opening of the Waleswood caravan and camping site in April 2019 had had on the local road network as a consequence of additional vehicle movements generated from this development.

A review of correspondence received within the Transportation Infrastructure Service, observations of the local road network and assessment of the traffic signal timings at Wales Bar Crossroads had taken place and had not identified any negative impact on the local highway network as a consequence of Waleswood Caravan and Camping site being operational. This was potentially due to the fact that the amount of additional traffic generated by the development was relatively small in comparison to general traffic flows in the area.

A small number of formal requests had been received from residents requesting a reduction in the existing National Speed Limit along Delves Lane and a review had taken place. These surveys had taken over a 7

day period during February 2019. However, arrangements would be put in place for a follow up speed survey to be undertaken during 2020 to determine existing vehicle speeds.

The following points were raised and clarified:

- It was noted that the opening of the Gulliver's development would create a greater impact on the local areas and it was clarified that a further survey would be undertaken once the development was opened.
- It was noted that the survey was undertaken prior to the site opening and therefore the assertion about limited impact was questioned. The Assistant Director, Culture, Sport & Tourism gave assurance that due diligence had been exercised to ensure residents' concerns had been addressed including oversight of the complaints procedure and correspondence since the caravan park opened.
- Details of road traffic incidents in the locality had been monitored and it was advised that the opening of the caravan park had not had significant impact. However, it was suggested that this did not reflect near misses or other related issues.
- Clarification was sought of the timing of the review and the areas that this would cover. The Chair requested that a further detailed report be submitted outlining the impact of the Waleswood developments on residents and an assessment of noise levels and traffic/congestion.

Resolved:

- 1) That a review of the National Speed Limit is programmed to take place during 2020 when the site is operating at, or near, capacity, to determine whether a lower speed limit is required.
- 2) That a further report be submitted outlining the impact of the Waleswood developments on residents and an assessment of noise levels and traffic/congestion.

### **33. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgency.

### **34. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:

The next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> December, commencing at 1.30pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

Public Report  
Improving Places Select Commission

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Places Select Commission – 19 December 2019

**Report Title**

Burials pilot evaluation and update report on the agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

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

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

Louise Sennitt [louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This report has been requested to provide feedback on the pilot Out of Hours Burial Service which was trialled between April and September 2019 by the Council and Dignity.

The report also provides an update, by exception, on progress against the performance management framework which monitors the Council's contract with Dignity for the delivery of bereavement services.

**Recommendations**

1. That Members note the content of this report.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Report on the result of the Out of Hours Pilot.  
Appendix 2 Equality Screening Assessment.

**Background Papers**

Minutes of the Improving Places Select Commission meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

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

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Burials Pilot Evaluation and update report on the Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 At the Improving Places Selection Commission meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Members requested that officers provide feedback on the pilot Out of Hours Burial Service which was trialled between April and September 2019 by the Council and Dignity. The pilot was intended to trial extended hours for burials at Herringthorpe Cemetery, with the aim of better serving the needs of the Muslim faith community.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update, by exception, on progress against the performance management framework.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **BURIALS PILOT**

- 2.1 The report on the pilot is contained at Appendix 1. In summary, the key findings are in the following section:
- 2.2 The report concludes that the pilot was largely a success, particularly in relation to better delivery of the Council's commitment to the Public Sector Equality duty:
  - 77% of respondents consider the pilot made a reasonable adjustment to meet community, religious and cultural needs.
  - 71% of respondents consider the pilot had a positive impact on community relations.
- 2.3 Demand for the service was relatively low during the first 6 months. Further research is required to assess the likely speed and volume of growth in demand in future.
- 2.4 Further research is also needed to assess implications in relation to the following issues:
  - Whilst there was no change to the fee charged for burials that took place between 5pm and 6:30pm, there is a need to give further consideration as to whether this fee is comparable with other areas and if it is acceptable under the terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
  - Although the delivery of the pilot has achieved significant support from the community, further work is needed to manage the impact on staff delivering the service.
- 2.5 The findings will be given further consideration by the internal working group at the next meeting in January 2020.



## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

2.6 There are 47 Key Performance Targets which have been met (green).

2.7 Key Performance Targets not met (red) are:

*KPT 9.1 The provision of environmentally friendly burial options.* Initial investigations into a potential location were carried out. A consultation exercise would be required to assess likely take up and this will be scheduled into the action plan for 2020. Meanwhile, the current focus is on expansion of cemeteries, where additional burial space is most required.

*KPT 10.2 Secure storage for registers and records.* This is a priority for the Council, Dignity have allocated funding for a safe and identified a supplier, delivery dates are pending.

2.8 Key Performance Targets that are in progress (amber) are:

*KPT 3.1 All signs in the Facilities (including temporary signs) shall be clearly legible and illuminated (where relevant) and maintained in good order. All temporary signs shall be provided or removed promptly where appropriate, such as maintenance operations, in accordance with the Council's requirements.* The signage audit has commenced and proofs were provided to the Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.

*KPT 3.2 All external light fittings to be working at all times.* A capital request of £12,000 has been made to the Council's capital programme to cover the costs of reinstating lighting on the driveway to the crematorium which is used mainly by Funeral Directors. This will be considered by Members as part of the Council's capital approvals process.

*KPT 8.3 Provide annual statement on customer satisfaction levels including plan for improvements.* Customer surveys have been ongoing since May 2019, it was reported at the Project Liaison Group on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019 that response rates are low. Dignity will provide results at the next Project Liaison Group in February 2020.

*KPT 10.3 Restoration of and redrafting of cemetery plans in line with agreed proposals.* Plans are in place to create electronic copies alongside memorial testing, there is no timescale for the plan at present.

*KPT 15.4 Provision of an effective plan for systematic testing of all cemetery memorials and progress in accordance with agreed timescales. Testing protocols and procedures to be in accordance with the Council's policy for the Management of Cemetery Memorials.* Paper plans and registers are being cross checked to ensure accurate data before the process commences, there is no timescale for the project at present.

2.9 Other Actions

*Repairs to Maltby cemetery wall.* Contractors started work on the project week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019, weather permitting, works are scheduled for a five week period.

*Haugh Road cemetery gates.* This work is included in the same five week schedule set out for the repair of Maltby cemetery wall as the same Contractor is carrying out the works.

**3. Consultation on proposal**

- 3.1 Consultation on the burials pilot took place in November 2019 and the report on the evaluation is attached at Appendix 1. The report sets out the consultation methodology and the results are summarised in section 2 of this report.

**4. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 4.1 This report is for information only, no decision is requested.

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

- 5.1 This report introduces no additional financial or procurement implications.

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

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

**7. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 Whilst there are no human resources implications arising directly from this report, the delivery of the pilot has highlighted a need to address wider resilience for Out of Hours working in the Registration Service. Accordingly, officers in Culture Sport and Tourism and Human Resources are working to address this and reporting progress to the internal working group.

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

- 8.1 This report introduces no specific implications in relation to Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

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

- 9.1 An Equality Screening Assessment was carried out prior to the issue of post pilot surveys. This is attached at Appendix 2.

## 10. Implications for Partners

10.1 This report introduces no additional implications for partners or other Directorates.

## 11. Risks and Mitigation

11.1 All Risks relating to the Agreement are monitored via the performance management framework. There are no issues to report.

11.2 Financial risks are monitored via the Council's annual review of the finance model. There are no issues to report.

## 12. Accountable Officer(s)

Polly Hamilton Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism.

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Paul Woodcock	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	Click here to enter a date.
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

*Report Author:*

*Louise Sennitt* [louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk)

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

Appendix 1 – Pilot to extend the latest time of burial  
– Consultation Analysis Report

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Appendix 1 – Pilot to extend the latest time of burial  
– Consultation Analysis Report

## **Introduction**

Between April and September 2019, the Council and Dignity agreed to trial a new 'out of hours' service to enable short notice burials to take place after 3pm in Rotherham.

The pilot aimed to make a reasonable adjustment to the bereavement service to address the concerns raised by the Muslim community and to improve the offering to any other service user who wished to bury up until 6.30pm in East Herringthorpe cemetery.

This report provides a high level overview of the findings from the post pilot survey which was conducted with key stakeholders between the period 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 and 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 in order to understand whether the main aims of the pilot had been achieved.

Appendix 1 – Pilot to extend the latest time of burial  
– Consultation Analysis Report

## Background

**About the Public Sector Equality Duty:** Under the terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that in the exercise of the Council's functions, that services will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

**About Muslim Burial Traditions:** Members of the Muslim community, for faith and cultural reasons, bury as soon as possible after a death. The community had expressed concern that 3pm, as a latest time of burial was too early and therefore contributed to the pressures involved in trying to arrange a funeral at short notice.

In order to address the concerns of the community it was agreed that a pilot would be carried out between the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2019 and 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 at East Herringthorpe cemetery extending the time of the latest burial from 3 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. which is an extension of three and a half hours. The pilot aimed to make a reasonable adjustment to service to address the concerns raised by the Muslim community and to improve the offering to any other service user who wished to bury after 3p.m. in East Herringthorpe cemetery.

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## Evaluation Process

**What the Pilot Was Seeking to Understand:** An Evaluation Framework was developed in order to assess the pilot in an open and transparent way. The main aims of the evaluation process were to consider the implications of delivering an extended out of hours service and to understand to what extent such a service could:

- Advance equality of opportunity, though making a reasonable adjustment to ensure that the bereavement service enables members of the Muslim community to practice their faith through their burial traditions?
- Improve community relations, through improving the quality of relationships between Registration staff, Dignity staff, Funeral Directors and, most importantly, members of the Muslim faith community?

**Data Collection:** The following stakeholders were asked to complete a survey, designed in collaboration with officers with expertise in Communications, Registration Services, Performance and Partnerships. Surveys went to Registration Officers, East Herringthorpe cemetery staff, the Faith and Community Leaders Forum, the Community Reference Group and funeral directors who provide a service to bury after 3pm.

The Council sought to collect data via an online survey for all stakeholders with a paper version made available for those without internet access. Data collected via these methods has been collated in to this summary report.

**Response Rates:** There were 134 responses, broken down as follows:

- Of 18 Registration Officers surveyed 9 responded, this is a 50% return rate.
- Of the 17 team members surveyed at East Herringthorpe cemetery 16 responded, this is a return rate of 94.11%.
- Of 4 Funeral Directors, appointed by service users who opted to bury after 3pm, 1 responded, this is a 25% response rate.
- Partners and community members were asked to provide feedback via the Rotherham Faith and Community Leaders Forum and the Community Reference Group. As invites to comment went wider than Forum and Group members, the % response rate is unknown: there were 108 responses

## Appendix 1 – Pilot to extend the latest time of burial – Consultation Analysis Report

### **Key Findings**

#### **Service Demand:**

During the pilot 21 burials took place after 3p.m. at East Herringthorpe cemetery, take up was as follows:

- Between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. the service was accessed by service users who had planned a funeral in advance and opted for a burial time after 3pm as well as those wishing to bury at short notice to meet a faith or cultural requirement.
- Between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., the service was accessed by those wishing to bury at short notice to meet a faith or cultural requirement.
- Take up was greatest at 3:30 p.m.

Providing the death occurred in Rotherham and all necessary documentation is available the Registration Service is able to issue a Form 9, to permit a burial to take place prior to death registration. This enables burials to take place at short notice.

The table below illustrates number of burials, time of burial how many were planned in advance and how many were arranged at short notice:

<b>Time of burial</b>	<b>Number of burials</b>	<b>Arranged at short notice</b>	<b>Not arranged at short notice</b>
3:15pm	<b>3</b>	1	2
3:30pm	<b>9</b>	6	3
4pm	<b>5</b>	3	2
4:30pm	<b>2</b>	2	
5:30pm	<b>1</b>	1	
6:30pm	<b>1</b>	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>

Of the 14 short notice burials that took place after 3pm in East Herringthorpe cemetery, a Form 9 was issued by Rotherham Registration Service on 9 occasions.

During usual business hours no adjustment to service was necessary as the Register Office is open for appointments between 9:30a.m. and 5p.m.

Of the 9 Form 9's issued 7 were issued during usual business hours.

The Registration Service provides an on call out of hours burial service at weekends and Bank Holidays (excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday).

A Form 9 was issued via the out of hours burial service on two occasions during the pilot; on one occasion the death had occurred on the previous day, the family chose to bury the day after death and access the out of hours burial service. On the other



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– Consultation Analysis Report

occasion the Registration Officer was contacted to issue a Form 9 on the same day as the date of death.

All the Form 9 issued at short notice were within a time frame that permitted burials to go ahead at the planned time.

The table below illustrates the time a form was requested by the service user and the time of issue during usual business hours

<b>Usual business hours – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm</b>	
<b>Time of request</b>	<b>Time of issue</b>
9am	9:15am
10:05am	11am
10:50 on day before funeral	2pm on day of funeral per family request
1:50pm	2:20pm
9:30am	9:40am
11:40am	11:45am
9:10am	9:30am

The table below illustrates the time a form was requested by the service user and the time of issue outside usual business hours

<b>Out of hours burial service – Weekends and Bank Holidays (excluding Christmas day, boxing day, New Year's day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday)</b>	
<b>Time of request</b>	<b>Time of issue</b>
9am	9:20am
9am	11am

### **Other Implications**

The first 6 months required Registration staff to extend their 'on call' availability at weekends from 9am to 11am to 9am to 1pm. As well as impacting on the work-life balance of staff on call, the pilot impacted on the rotas for the statutory marriage programme, creating additional pressure within the service.

During the 6 months of the pilot, take up of the service from the Muslim community has been relatively modest.

There is therefore a need to give careful consideration as to whether there is likely to be increased demand for the service, the wider benefits that the availability of the service brings to fostering positive community relations and, consequently, to what extent the adjustments necessary to the delivery of the service are 'reasonable'.

Appendix 1 – Pilot to extend the latest time of burial  
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## Delivery of the Equality Duty:

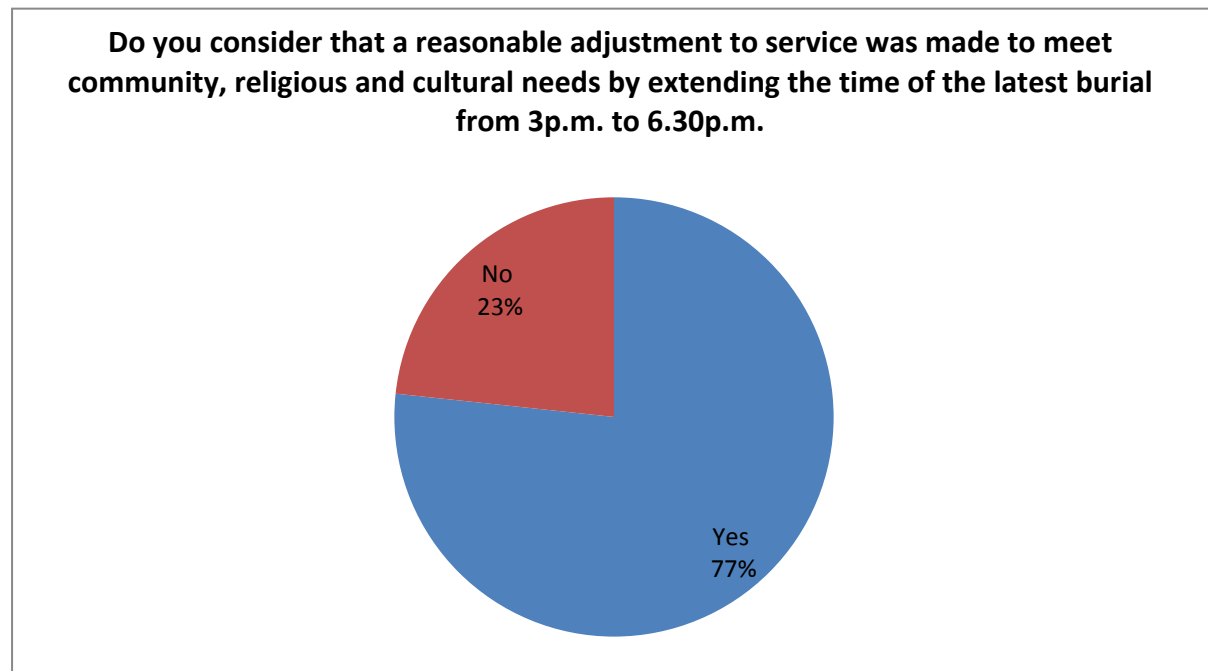


Figure 1

The above chart (figure 1) shows that of the 134 respondents (**102 respondents, or 77%**) consider the pilot made a reasonable adjustment to meet community, religious and cultural needs.

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment, with examples as follows:

The positive impact of the pilot is reflected in the following examples:

*'It gives families more chance of getting a burial that day!!'*

*'Great service example of good practice and meeting the needs of local people'*

Additional comments included:

*'Because burials taking place after 1700 incur a charge. This is not meeting the Muslims needs who have the need to bury as soon as possible.'*

*' I think although it was appreciated by community of extending the hours but same time it was financially was too costly for already very expensive cost of burial, we know that out hours factors but if dignity could look at extra cost of burial involved.'*

*'the service was ok before'*

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**Impact on Community Relations:**

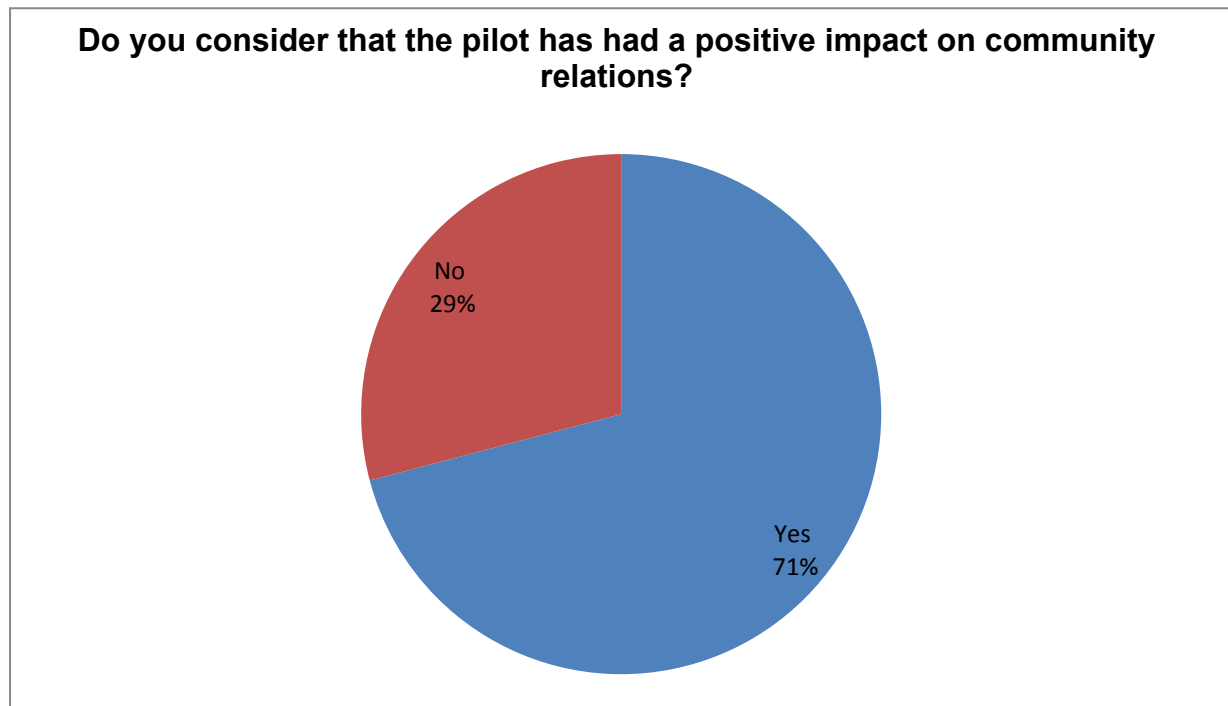


Figure 2

The above chart (figure 2) shows that of the 134 respondents, the majority stated that the pilot had a positive impact on community relations (**95 respondents, or 71%**).

Examples of positive feedback are as follows:

*Very appreciative you took other minority views into perspective thanks'*

*'We need to have this time till 6.30pm. It's great for the community'*

*Makes the community feel you are valuing the opinions and feelings to do with their beliefs'*

*'Continue make it permanent'*

Other feedback is as follows:

*'The service users that I assisted were respectful and polite, however, it is important to note that the situation of telling a family that you cannot issue documentation is intimidating. The time constraints of issuing documentation can also add pressure to the situation.'*

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## **Summary and Conclusion**

In summary, the main conclusions from the pilot are:

- 77% of respondents consider the pilot made a reasonable adjustment to meet community, religious and cultural needs.
- 71% of respondents consider the pilot had a positive impact on community relations.
- Demand for the service was relatively low during the first 6 months. Further research is required to assess the likely speed and volume of growth in demand in future.
- Whilst there was no change to the fee charged for burials that took place between 5pm and 6:30pm, there is a need to give further consideration as to whether this fee is comparable with other areas and if it is acceptable under the terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Although the delivery of the pilot has achieved significant support from the community, further work is needed to manage the impact on staff delivering the service.

*'This has been a very beneficial pilot and has highlighted the need and demand to extend the service provision. It has greatly helped to ease the pain and suffering of families who wish to bury their loved ones on the same day. It has allowed families to have the time to grieve in this difficult time and not to hurry the funeral prayers in order not to miss the burial time/slot. This has had a positive impact on mental well being of the families, friends and community. I hope and recommend that this service is extended.'*

## PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

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

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

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

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

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

### 1. Title

**Title: Burials Pilot**

**Directorate: Regeneration and Environment**

**Service area: Registration Service and Bereavement Services at East Herringthorpe Cemetery**

**Lead person: Louise Sennitt**

**Contact number: 07795542990**

Is this a:

☐

**Strategy / Policy**

☐

**Service / Function**

☒

**Other**

**If other, please specify Post pilot evaluation**

### 2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

A pilot to extend the time of latest burial from 15:00 to 18:30 ran at East Herringthorpe cemetery from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The issue of a Form 9, which, on the provision of necessary documentation, permits a burial prior to death registration, is issued by the Registration Service.

During usual business hours there was no change to this service, a Form 9 could be requested between 09:00 and 17:00.

At weekends and Bank Holidays, excluding Good Friday and Easter Sunday, the out of hours service was enhanced for the duration of the pilot. Rather than being on call from 09:00 to 11:00, Registration Officers were on call from 09:00 to 13:00.

The aim of the pilot was to make a reasonable adjustment to service to meet community, religious and cultural needs and to make a positive impact on community relations.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

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

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

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

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**
- **The pilot aimed to address concerns expressed, primarily by members of the Muslim community, that 15:00 as a latest time of burial, was restrictive for those who needed to bury at short notice to meet religious or cultural requirements.**
- **A pre-pilot forum gave members of the Muslim community opportunity to express their views.**
- **The Faith and Community Leaders Forum was asked to comment on whether there were any specific requirements from other religious groups.**
- **A presentation was given to the Community Reference Group.**
- **A presentation was given to the older people's forum.**
- **The extension to service applied to all service users.**

*(Think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)*

- **Key findings**
- **The evaluation process will inform the success, or otherwise of the pilot and whether a permanent change to service is desirable.**
- **Verbal feedback from the pre-pilot forum was that the Council and Bereavement Services were taking a positive step to improve community relations.**
- **Consultation with established groups and forums was well received.**

*(Think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Actions</b></li> <li>• <b>The success of the pilot is being screened up to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.</b></li> <li>• <b>Post pilot evaluation will take place up to 6th December 2019.</b></li> <li>• <b>Survey forms will be available as an esurvey and in paper format.</b></li> <li>• <b>A post pilot evaluation will inform future actions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Statistical information will be collated to inform post pilot evaluation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 77% of respondents consider the pilot made a reasonable adjustment to meet community, religious and cultural needs.</li> <li>- 71% of respondents consider the pilot had a positive impact on community relations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>A guide to Muslim burials will be produced to clarify the process for those needing to bury at short notice to meet a faith or cultural requirement.</b>  <i>(Think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact)</i> </li> </ul>	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	Following post pilot evaluation.
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	Prior to 1st April 2020.
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Louise Sennitt Superintendent Registrar, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.  Samantha Fletcher Bereavement Services, Dignity

## 5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Polly Hamilton	Assistant Director Culture Sport and Tourism	09.12.2019
Councillor Hoddinott	Cabinet Member	09.12.2019
Zaidah Ahmed	Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer	26.11.2019

## 6. Publishing

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

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



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

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

<b>Date screening completed</b>	22.11.2019
<b>Report title and date</b>	Burials pilot evaluation and update report on the agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	Improving Places Select Commission report for meeting on 19.12.2019  Sent for publication on 11.12.2019
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	22.11.2019

# **Improving Places Select Commission**

## **Work Programme Update 2019-20**

[www.therham.gov.uk](http://www.therham.gov.uk)

Rotherham  
Metropolitan  
Borough Council



# Improving Places Select Commission

Year to Date

- Dignity Bereavement Services
  - annual report and performance/pilot and KPI progress
- Thriving Neighbourhoods
  - delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Neighbourhood Working model
- Enforcement Contract - Kingdom/Doncaster MBC
- Home to School Transport
  - implementation new Home to School Transport Policy

# Improving Places Select Commission

Year to Date

- Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy
- Council Plan Performance Measures Workshop  
- focus exception reporting Priorities 3 and 4
- Area Housing Panels Review Workshop
- Allotments Self-Management – Update
- Impact of Traffic from Waleswood Caravan Park  
- initial

# Improving Places Select Commission

Coming up in early 2020

- Major Incident Plan
- Impact of CCTV Project
- Progress – Vehicle Immobilisation
- Public Spaces Protection Order  
- Fitzwilliam Road area

# Improving Places Select Commission

To go forward into 2020-21

- Employment and Skills Strategy
- Allotments Self-Management – Update
- Impact of Waleswood Developments
- Learning from Modern Methods of Construction Pilot Project (from OSMB)

# Improving Places Select Commission

To go forward into 2020-21 continued

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Prevention Strategy
- Housing – possibly repairs/maintenance
- Recycling/Environment
- Performance

# Improving Places Select Commission

**Suggestions or Questions?**



<b>BRIEFING</b>	<b>TO:</b>	Improving Places Select Commission
	<b>DATE:</b>	19 December 2019
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Janet Spurling Governance Advisor, Assistant Chief Executive’s Directorate 01709 254421
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Outcomes from Workshop on Council Plan Performance Indicators
<b>1. Background</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	In the new approach to scrutiny of the performance measures in the Council Plan from 2019-20, each of the Select Commissions now maintains oversight of the performance measures that link in with their respective terms of reference.	
<b>1.2</b>	The focus will be on exception reporting based around red rated measures or ones with a negative direction of travel.	
<b>2. Key Issues</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	For Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) the respective measures to consider are those under Priority 3 <i>A strong community in a clean, safe environment</i> and Priority 4 <i>Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future</i> . The exception is with measures 3.A1 to 3.A3 which relate to the work of the Safer Rotherham Partnership, which is scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB).	
<b>2.2</b>	A sub-group of the OSMB also considered two measures in depth during the summer, including 3.B2 (a) effective enforcement action taken where evidence is found a) fly tipping (fixed penalty notices and prosecutions).	
<b>2.3</b>	IPSC held a workshop following its formal meeting on 19 September 2019 to discuss all the measures under its remit. Comparing performance in Quarter 1 with that in Quarter 4 identified a small number of measures that met the agreed criteria for exception reporting. These were scrutinised at OSMB on 2 October 2019 and the findings are reported in the next section.	
<b>2.4</b>	Queries emerged about other measures in the Council Plan at the IPSC workshop and these questions and the responses to them are appended to this briefing.	
<b>3. Key Actions and Timelines</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Measure 3.B4 Missed bins per 100,000 collections</b> Target - 50 Performance - 113 (seasonal effects: data compared to Q1 2018-19 - 43.01)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Significant changes to the service, such as what is collected and new routes for the crews, were factors in performance not being where the service wanted to be, but the changes needed time to bed in. Although vehicles were fitted with in-cab computers the local knowledge of the crews was really important alongside the IT. The service knew which streets were being missed. Supervisors were out</li></ul>	

with crews and targeted work took place with individual crews if there were higher than expected missed collections.

- In terms of more recent performance, this had improved, as in July the rate was 90 per 100,000, 83 in August and 65 in September. Officers were confident of being under target within the next few months.

### 3.2 **3.A4b Proportion of a) licensed vehicles b) drivers found to be compliant with licensing requirements**

Target – Vehicles 85% Performance 73% (last two quarters 88% and 76%)

Target – Drivers 85% Performance 77% (previous data was for vehicles only)

- The data for spot inspections related to taxis licensed by RMBC and although the number had gone down, officers highlighted Rotherham's stringent and robust taxi licensing policy introduced four years ago. Generally, policy infringements were ones that did not present a risk to the public and were easily resolved, such as a display plate being slightly wrong, fire extinguisher service sticker or windscreen wipers. In the majority of cases they were resolved at the point of inspection or within a week and if not the vehicle was suspended until the issue was resolved. Compliance with safeguarding requirements was 100% as drivers could not have a licence without a DBS check and safeguarding training.
- In terms of drivers, a very specific issue had emerged from inspections, which was the failure of drivers to wear their badge when driving the vehicle. This part of the policy will be reviewed as it was important for passengers to be able to see the badge but also for it to be practical for the drivers. Licences would be suspended or revoked if issues were not resolved quickly.
- On an encouraging note the trade representatives were positive about the policy and took pride in being compliant in Rotherham. They are not seeking to make the policy less robust in the forthcoming review but wondered about possible ways to reward or recognise the really good drivers.

### 3.3 **4.B1a Number of new homes delivered during the year via direct Council intervention**

Target - 175 Performance 8 year to date (last quarter 19 new homes)

- Delivery of new homes was not a linear process but rather the target had been set based on assessing current sites where work was happening or planned, including with partners. Housing knew the number of homes due to be built on each site and when by, with this aggregated across the sites for the target of 175. An increase in new homes delivered was expected in quarter 2 with the majority anticipated in quarter 3. Sites were monitored monthly to ensure any problems could be foreseen and mitigated against but the service did not see any problems at this point and were confident the target would again be exceeded as last year.
- Construction at key sites included Braithwell Road, Maltby and the Bellows development in Rawmarsh, where a number of units were due to be handed over. Pre-fabricated homes were not included within the target of 175.

### 3.4 **3.B3 Number of customer contacts by service area for a) official complaints**

Target – 10% reduction – cumulative target of approx. 190

Performance 72 with 31 upheld (seasonal effects: data compared to Q1 2018-19 - 52)

- Although many complaints had not been upheld, the majority of the 72 were in relation to waste management. It was clarified that rather than being particular

	<p>areas which had more complaints than others, most were in relation to the garden waste collection, which services were working to address. In the last year more activity had moved into the contact centre and many complaints related to not getting through and having queries answered regarding garden waste. Demand had been higher than planned but it was not expected to be an issue this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion at OSMB ensued on the Compliments and Complaints Annual Report. It was clarified that telephone contact for housing services would be looked at. Housing were aware of the volume of calls coming through and were looking to improve technology and encourage self-serve. Assurance was sought that complaints by email or on-line would also have as quick a response as by phone call.</li> <li>- Customer Services receive complaints through various channels and pass them on if they relate to another specific service. More joining up between back office processes to avoid hand offs is needed and will be facilitated through the new website and new processes. This should also include people being able to log in and see progress on a request or an issue they have raised, but would be undertaken step by step, service by service. Work to reduce avoidable contact and the call volume was also another area to look at overall.</li> </ul>
<b>3.5</b>	<p><b>Measure 3.A5b How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Rotherham Borough as a place to live?</b></p> <p>Target - greater than 69% Performance 58% (data compared to Q1 in 2018-19 - 57%)</p> <p>This measure was not discussed at OSMB but is covered in question 1 in Appendix 1.</p>
<b>4. Recommendations</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p>Members of IPSC are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the outcomes of scrutiny at OSMB on the exception report.</li> <li>2. Note the responses to the questions raised at the workshop session.</li> <li>3. Continue to scrutinise performance on the relevant Council Plan measures under Priorities 3 and 4, with a focus on those meeting the criteria outlined above for exception reporting.</li> </ol>

## Council Plan performance queries from Improving Places Select Commission

This appendix provides responses to specific issues discussed by IPSC in the workshop session on Council plan performance measures held on 19 September 2019. The questions related to measures which did not meet the exception reporting criteria for discussion at OSMB but were still of interest to the Select Commission.

### 1. How scientific is the satisfaction survey for where you live and what does it actually measure – infrastructure, quality of life, services, sense of pride?

During 2015 and 2016, the LGA undertook four polling surveys to find out what residents of Rotherham Borough thought about Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and the Borough in general. The survey formed part of the improvement activity within the authority which began in May 2015, with the first survey taking place in June 2015. The survey asked about satisfaction with the Council, perceptions of value for money, responsiveness, trust and confidence in the Council, and satisfaction with aspects of life in Rotherham.

Following the ending of the LGA's support related to resident satisfaction, the Council continued the surveys, on a six-monthly basis, to monitor satisfaction levels and the extent to which the views of residents have changed over time. The Council also wished to explore residents' perceptions of safety, optimism about the future of the borough and town centre, and their views on community cohesion. A statistically representative random sample of around 500 Rotherham residents (aged 18 or over) have been polled, mainly by landline telephone using quotas set by age and gender, on a six-monthly basis.

Whilst the results of the polling in Rotherham provides a good high-level indication of resident views of Rotherham and its council, it is important that they are seen as complementary to a wider approach to understanding and responding to communities at the local level. The relatively small sample size in Rotherham means that small variations from one survey wave to another should not be interpreted as indicating a significant change in opinion. The results should be seen in the wider context provided by the patterns of all surveys since 2015.

The most recent survey took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and previous surveys took place in June 2015, December 2015, June 2016, December 2016, June 2017, February 2018, June 2018 and December 2018.

Survey questions include:

- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area (within a 15-20 minute walk from your home) as a place to live?
- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council runs things?
- To what extent do you think that the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides value for money?
- To what extent do you think that the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?
- Overall, how well informed do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?
- How much do you trust Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?
- To what extent would you say that you have confidence in Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day? How safe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

- How optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham as a place to live? And, more specifically, how optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham town centre?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?
- Overall, all things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Rotherham Borough as a place to live?

All surveys are published on the RMBC website:

[https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/250/lga\\_resident\\_satisfaction\\_survey](https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/250/lga_resident_satisfaction_survey)

The next resident survey will be conducted in June 2020, following a decision to move from twice-yearly to annual surveys. The sample size will roughly double, meaning a broader section of the borough's residents will be involved in the survey. This is to bring both aspects of the survey more closely in line with local authorities across the country, against whom the Council benchmarks.

### 2. RotherFed ask these types of questions re satisfaction when they knock on doors, does it link in or could it?

Rotherham Federation of Communities does not currently undertake any satisfaction surveys on the Council's behalf.

Following a competitive tendering process recently, Kwest Research Ltd have been appointed to carry out bespoke surveys on the Council's behalf which includes surveys such as the Tenants Satisfaction Surveys and Employee Opinion Survey. The service specification required that the appointed organisation will be able to provide a personal touch and bespoke surveys to the directorate's specific needs as and when required, by using a range of assorted, digital, modern and innovative tools. An introductory meeting was held with Kwest on 29<sup>th</sup> October to discuss the Council's requirements.

The Council has moved away from the overall Housing Service STAR postal survey completed in previous years following feedback that the survey was too long, outdated and expensive. Housemark are currently reviewing the future of the STAR Survey and the Council has inputted as part of the consultation process. The Council will ensure that the future tenant satisfaction surveys complies with the new STAR Survey framework. Previously the results have been used to drive forward service improvements and monitor housing key performance indicators.

### 3. Measure 3.A7 Parks and Open Spaces - lowest satisfaction rating for this category. Where/when are people asked the questions and will it be across the board or just in relation to their own local park?

Green Spaces undertakes visitor surveys at Clifton Park, Rother Valley Country Park and Thrybergh Country Park in Quarter 2 every other year. One of the questions relates to satisfaction of the relevant park where the question is being asked and another question asks about general satisfaction with people's local parks. Satisfaction ratings for the three specific parks are between 89% and 98% but the general satisfaction is lower at 82.5%. However, of those surveyed at Clifton and Rother Valley, up to 75% are non-Rotherham residents, which is likely to at best reduce the sample size as most will not have an opinion of other Rotherham parks and green spaces.

4. Measure 3.A8 Country Parks Is there a view that increased car parking charges have been a factor in reduced attendance?

There was a large increase (from £3.50 to £5.00) at Rother Valley in 2016/17. There were no large increases between 2017/18 and 2018/19 at either Rother Valley or Thrybergh Country Park so this would not have been a factor. Records show a reduction in visitors in Quarter 4 of 2018/19 due to poor weather (wet and windy); this compares the previous spring which was warm and dry and coincided with the Easter school holidays.

5. Measure 4.A3 Vacant Floor Space in town centre - how is this calculated and does it include markets? If sites are under development are they included or removed? Does it count as vacant if a business relocates elsewhere?

Following adoption of the Local Plan Sites and Policies document a revised approach to monitoring vacancies in town centres has been introduced. This approach continues to monitor vacancies at ground floor level but excludes derelict buildings or buildings which are unoccupied and where redevelopment is expected to take place within a reasonable period of time. This approach reflects the fact that these premises are not available to come back into use within a reasonable period of time and as such more accurately identifies where units are vacant (and could come back into use) as opposed to being unavailable.

The approach measures vacancy rates based on estimated floorspace of units, or the actual floorspace data where this is known. Units are counted as vacant where businesses have relocated as the data is derived from surveys of individual premises.

The indoor and covered outdoor markets are included in the survey data. This is based on overall floorspace for these markets rather than individual stalls / trading areas, as it is not practical to monitor vacancies down to this detailed level.

6. Measure 4.B3 Selective Licensing compliance – will the target need to be reviewed in light of the changes to existing designated areas and planned new ones? And for staffing?

Yes, this will need to be reviewed, however this will not be until there has been a Cabinet decision.

<b>BRIEFING</b>	<b>TO:</b>	Improving Places Select Commission
	<b>DATE:</b>	19 December 2019
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Janet Spurling Governance Advisor, Assistant Chief Executive’s Directorate 01709 254421
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Outcomes from Workshop on Area Housing Panels Review
<b>1. Background</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	On 24 October a sub-group of Members of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) undertook a focused workshop session to consider emerging proposals for Area Housing Panels from 2020-21.	
<b>1.2</b>	Cllrs Mallinder (Chair), Jepson, Jones, McNeely, Reeder and Sansome and Mrs Mary Jacques and Mrs Wendy Birch (Co-optees from RotherFed) participated in the review session.	
<b>1.3</b>	Cllr Beck (Cabinet Member for Housing) introduced a briefing paper and outlined the emerging proposals from the consultation. The importance of the customer voice was reiterated. The Council held accreditation from Tpas (tenant engagement specialists) and was seen as an exemplar of good practice for its tenant engagement work.	
<b>1.4</b>	The following officers were also in attendance to provide further information for IPSC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paul Walsh, Head of Housing Operational Services</li><li>• Asim Munir, Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator</li><li>• Lyndsey Mould, Housing Operations Manager</li><li>• Jessica Sarracco, Tenant Involvement Officer</li></ul>	
<b>2. Key Issues</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	The briefing paper provided an overview of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus of the review and response to the consultation</li><li>• Future tenant engagement geography and offer</li><li>• Ward pilots</li><li>• Future budget arrangements</li><li>• Budget roll forward proposal</li><li>• Budget and project governances</li></ul>	
<b>2.2</b>	The Head of Housing Operational Services gave a presentation highlighting key issues in the development of the new model. It was reiterated that the aim was to move towards a more agile way of engagement, which was easily recognisable to tenants whilst reflecting ward needs. Three ward pilots testing different ways of working had commenced in September 2019. Examples of projects were outlined to the sub-group.	
<b>2.3</b>	The funding model from 2020-21 would be based on a base budget of £4,000, with a further budget top up then being applied. based upon the percentage of Council homes	

within the Ward, which was funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). There was a proposal for an option to roll forward unspent budget (within a four year cycle) and there was scope to align/match fund from other sources.

### 3. Key Points Discussed

- 3.1** The following is a summary of the main issues discussed during the workshop.
- Role of Elected Members – providing a community leadership role and ensuring tenants' voice is reflected.
  - Consultation responses and how these were reflected in the emerging proposals.
  - The range of options for receiving bids for funding including on line applications as well as more 'traditional' methods. Ward Housing Hubs would be flexible to ward needs – there would be different models of engagement, including online platforms, ward walkabouts, meetings etc. Area panels would cease to operate, to be replaced by Ward Housing Hubs.
  - Opportunities for cross ward working - however, focus should be on ward priorities – closely aligned to neighbourhood working.
  - The annual review of housing stock – funding would be adjusted annually reflecting stock numbers in the Ward.
  - Steps to encourage people's involvement – particularly in areas where there has been low engagement and there has been a struggle to identify projects or spend money. It was noted that there was a need to engage with a greater number of tenants who had not been previously engaged in Area Housing Panels.
  - RotherFed would remain principal first point of contact for tenant involvement.
  - Approval for projects would be made through support from ward councillors and tenants through the Ward Housing Hubs, supported by Council officers.
  - Reiteration that projects would align with ward priorities and would need to meet HRA funding criteria.
  - Clarity was sought about budgets and areas of spend. This would be project specific, but generally speaking funding for smaller scale projects could be accommodated within the Ward Housing budget, but larger scale projects would have to be funded through the Housing Capital Programme.
  - Customer access still to be further developed through digital channels, however with recognition that there may need to be other channels available for people who may have difficulty with digital access. Most younger tenants have access to the internet through mobile phone contracts. Free access to wifi was available in local libraries and was also being rolled out in some of the Housing neighbourhood centres.
  - Need to publicise the benefits of ward based working and successes. There was also a need to move swiftly on projects, with regular updates provided to ward members and groups on progress.
  - Awareness raising would take place with officers to update them of new



	<p>arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process for conflict resolution was discussed, particularly in two member wards. Any issues arising would be considered by the Cabinet Member for Housing, as portfolio holder and Head of Housing Operational Services, as senior officer for tenant involvement and associated budget.</li> <li>• Closer working with Parish/Town Councils was welcomed; however, clarification was sought about how this would be facilitated.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b>	In summary, the Chair thanked the officers and Cllr Beck for the briefing and concluded that Members were assured by the emerging proposals to disestablish the existing Area Housing Panels at the end of the 2019-20 financial year and replace these with 25 Ward Housing Hubs. The Housing Hubs would have an annual base budget of £4,000 per Ward, with the remainder of the annual budget provision being allocated to Wards, based upon the percentage of Council homes within each Ward.
<b>3.3</b>	The outline process for approval was noted as well as the proposed provision to roll the budget over should there be an underspend.
<b>3.4</b>	The timeline was also noted and that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in the near future.
<b>4. Recommendations from the Workshop</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	That the review process undertaken and consultation feedback received to date be noted.
<b>4.2</b>	That the emerging proposals for Ward Housing Hubs and the work to be undertaken to test this approach be noted.
<b>4.3</b>	That the emerging recommendations with regard to Ward Housing Hubs, future budget setting and management and project governance be noted.
<b>4.4</b>	That the comments from the workshop be fed back to OSMB as part of its pre-decision scrutiny of the new proposals.