

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

- Date and Time :-** Tuesday, 20 October 2020 at 1.30 p.m.
- Venue:-** Virtual Meeting
- 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. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 September 2020 (Pages 1 - 7)

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 September 2020, as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Economic Recovery (Pages 8 - 44)

To receive a presentation and briefing in respect of national, regional, and local economic recovery initiatives.

7. Energy Switching Scheme (Pages 45 - 51)

To receive a report in respect of the Council's progress toward changing energy providers.

8. Bereavement Services Briefing [withdrawn]

This agenda item has been withdrawn following consultation with the Chair.

9. Work Programme Update (Pages 52 - 56)

To receive an update briefing in respect of the goals and scrutiny projects outlined in the work programme.

10. Urgent Business

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

11. Date and time of the next meeting

The next virtual meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 8 December 2020, commencing at 1.30 pm.

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday, 8th September, 2020

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Buckley, B. Cutts, Elliot, Jepson, Jones, Lelliott, McNeely, Reeder, Rushforth, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Tweed, Whysall and Wyatt. Co-optees M. Jacques and K. Bacon were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hoddinott, the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

85. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2020

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 July 2020, be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair advised that there were no members of the public or representatives of media organisations present at the meeting and there were no questions in respect of matters on the agenda.

88. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

89. COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair confirmed there were no communications.

90. TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report presenting recent progress toward the goals set out in the Town Centre Masterplan which were adopted by Cabinet in September 2017. The report described the progress with respect to a number of interventions that had been identified as key projects, including a leisure led Forge Island redevelopment; high-quality public realm, in key locations in the town centre, and improved linkages between Forge Island and the town centre

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION - 08/09/20

core to fully realise the benefits of the Forge Island development; redevelopment of Rotherham Markets; and development of housing sites within the town centre.

A range of additional projects were also described including University Centre Rotherham's new £10.5m town centre campus, offering degrees and professional training qualifications in a state-of-the-art teaching facility; a National Tram Train Pilot, a unique national pilot scheme that connects heavy and light rail infrastructure, systems and operations together to provide a new transport service between Sheffield and Rotherham; a Rotherham Interchange Refurbishment, a £12m refurbishment and modernisation of the Rotherham Interchange enhancing the public transport infrastructure present in the town centre; George Wright, a major renovation of Grade II Listed building as a boutique hotel with associated bar and restaurant; Westgate Chambers and Domine Lane, a £10.7m redevelopment in a prime central location providing, retail space and 61 apartments; at Keppel Wharf, Old Market and Imperial Buildings, work was underway to increase the residential space at Keppel Wharf overlooking the river and incentives offered to attract new niche businesses to vacant refurbished retail spaces in the Grade II Listed Imperial Buildings; and Makers Emporium, a unique retail space on the High Street bringing together a mixture of crafters, makers, artists and designers, trading from a shared and professionally managed retail unit. (In the 6 years since opening, over 120 small businesses have been supported by Makers Emporium).

The report included information regarding the funding for these projects which originated from various sources including Sheffield City Region, the Get Building Fund, and the Council's own funding contribution to the development delivery. Details were included as to which projects were funded by which schemes and which would be included as part of the next bidding stages, such as potential funding that is being requested from the Future High Street Fund and other Town Deal Fund Grants.

A progress update was provided as to the delivery of the projects including the flood defences and housing projects, and indicative timescales for future delivery were also provided. Details as to preliminary concept design for leisure developments were also displayed as part of the presentation.

In discussion, Members requested assurances that there would be provision for sufficient litter bins, recycling bins, and wardens to keep the areas clean and tidy. Assurances were provided in response that such measures would be taken to keep the areas tidy, even though the full range of details would not be visible at this stage in the design, they would be included at a later stage.

Members also asked for assurances that accessibility had been taken into consideration in the design of these spaces; it was further inquired as to how many accessible parking spaces would be made available. The

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION- 08/09/20

answer provided assurances that the housing developments had been designed to be visited accessibly, although not designed expressly for accessibility for disabled residents to live in. With regard to the accessible parking, the answer was offered in writing.

Assurances were requested as to back up plans in case bids for funding proved unsuccessful. There were three main categories: council funded, funding in place, private sector funding, and finally the bids that are in. If partial funding is received, the hunt for other funding or other investment from ourselves or others will then commence. Otherwise, it would be necessary to revise the propositions. The devolution funding had been approved, so there was more funding from SCR that could be leveraged in due course.

Assurances were also requested as to how the planning would be flexible in the face of unforeseen circumstances and changing national picture when it came to planning consultation. Officers responded that consultation had revealed COVID had put pressure on retail space but a benefit of this Masterplan was that it combined leisure, retail and housing, and it could be expected that other town centres around the country will follow suit.

Members requested assurances around provision for car parking at Forge Island. The response provided the information that a public car park had been planned to have 350 spaces. Those who parked in order to visit the Cinema would be refunded so that their parking was free. The Council would set the parking fees. During the day, the car park would be used as a general Town Centre parking facility.

Members requested clarification as to the future of a specific site on Corporation Street. Planning permission had been granted to the burned buildings on this street, with a 12-month window to demolish the buildings. The three-month extension had been allowed due to COVID. The plans were to build hotels on those sites, but as long as a valid planning permission existed for those sites, it was in the hands of the developers and the owners of the buildings to demolish the buildings. Until the allowed time has elapsed, no further action could be taken.

Members inquired if funding was being sought for revitalisation of other townships within the Borough in addition to the Town Centre. In response, it was clarified that the area of the Town Centre was set by Central Government, and that the revitalisation plan for the Town Centre was decided on as a priority set by Members. Officers were therefore seeing that priority through to implementation. At the moment, other plans for similar priorities in other townships were not in place. Other funding could be sought, should that stance be taken. With respect to the other townships in question, in terms of economic development, a few years ago, the council invested in a business incubation centre which had been established in Dinnington in addition to other similar centres elsewhere in the Borough, for example in Wath and near Magna.

Members raised concerns that buildings would be of good quality and consistently maintained so as to remain neat in appearance. In response, members referenced the Lifetime Homes standards that some developers were required to work to. The standard that was currently being built to was not perhaps as rigorous as the Lifetime Homes standards, from an accessibility standpoint, but the building plans that were in use would be nonetheless manoeuvrable for wheelchair use. Homes England which were the partner organisation for the affordable housing developments (shared ownership and council rent) have their own space standards that they have to work to, a generous space standard. These were not rabbit hutches or compromised space standards that some renovated or repurposed spaces had often exhibited. Assurances were provided that quality standards that have not been upheld by houses in some of the 2011 builds in Canklow were currently under review by officers with a view to addressing any structural or aesthetic issues.

Members also requested assurances around selection of consistent pavement surfaces such that partially and non-sighted community members would also be able to navigate these areas safely. Assurance was provided that although the exact materials had not yet been chosen, there would be consistency in the theme and in the design so that it would be clear how to navigate the space and people would be able to tell easily where they want to go.

Resolved:-

1. That the update report be noted.

91. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report with respect to Bereavement Services, specifically the performance delivery by partner organisation Dignity Funerals, Ltd. This report followed from the previous discussion which had taken place at the December 2019 meeting. The report included an update on the permanent extension of latest burial time at East Herringthorpe Cemetery, following a successful pilot. The report also included the active plans to reschedule a member visit to the cemetery which had been cancelled due to coronavirus. The report addressed 54 key performance targets, providing an update on performance against each of the measures. Two performance targets had not been met at the time of the annual report: provision of environmentally friendly burials and secure storage for registers and records.

In discussion, Members inquired as to the latest status of secure storage arrangements. The representative from Dignity provided assurance that as of the current day all records had been placed permanently into secure

storage, and appointments could be made to view these records.

Members also requested more information about how chapel repairs were handled. Officer indicated that an initial meeting had been scheduled for the 28 September with officers in Bereavement Services and Asset Management to address the four sites in Rotherham that have disused chapels. Meetings with Friends of the Cemetery groups have located possible funding that these organisations could be eligible to apply for. Good practice has also been considered. It was requested that the outcome of these meetings be circulated to ward members.

Members sought clarification around capacity, as capacity had been measured in 'years' and such metrics may be no longer appropriate if rates of need had grown during coronavirus. Officers provided assurances that sites had been identified by the working group. Currently legal personnel were examining the areas, and testing for possible expansion was underway. Results were awaited to add on to the burial sites, which if possible, would allow for many more years of burials at Wath, including environmentally friendly burials. Asset management had also visited a Maltby site. Some sites had been declared not suitable as originally hoped, but a potentially better site had been identified.

Members also requested more information around the reasons that arrangements had not yet been made to be able to provide environmentally friendly burials. The representative from Dignity supplied information that the first draft on the consultation had been completed and shared with Bereavement Services that same day. Further details of the timeline for arrangements were provided, extending through the autumn. Three potential sites had been identified and visited.

Further, a question was raised around availability of refrigerated coffin space during the pandemic. Assurances were provided that daily monitoring processes were put into place during the pandemic, one of which was monitoring the availability of storage whether it was at the mortuary or at the funeral director's. There was additional temporary storage put in place at the Rotherham hospital, which is still in place. Any issues that surface are noted quickly, therefore the service was confident that it was prepared to respond to any increase in deaths, even given seasonal fluctuations and the pandemic situation.

Members also sought clarification around the topic of DIY curb sets, given the health and safety concerns. It was clarified that the DIY curb sets were those placed by families, and these were often not compliant with health and safety regulations. These presented challenges to maintenance as well. The presence of any DIY curb sets was planned to be addressed concurrently with the upcoming safety testing and assessment of the memorials.

Members thanked the representative of Dignity for their work in completing so many of the numerous objectives. A follow up with the

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION - 08/09/20

member was offered after the meeting regarding the collaborations with “Friends of” societies.

Members noted the advantages of working with “Friends of” Societies and looking at best practices for addressing disused Chapels. It was hoped that future discussions could include a consideration of alternative funding methods of churchyard and burial area maintenance, since conventional avenues for these groups to source funding had been compromised by the pandemic. In response, further input from Members was welcomed as the meetings with Friends of groups were being undertaken with a view to making these meetings as helpful as possible. Through the neighbourhoods team, the service had maintained an ongoing conversation with Parish Councils. Upcoming meeting times were clarified for Members as well.

Resolved:-

1. That the briefing be noted.
2. That the annual performance report be noted.
3. That the permanent extension of latest burial time at East Herringthorpe Cemetery be noted.
4. That progress in respect of digitisation of burial records be submitted in the next update.
5. That the next update be provided in 12 months, to include information on land use.

92. OUTCOMES FROM SCRUTINY WORKSHOP - HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE (AUGUST 27 2020)

Consideration was given to a summary of the recent virtual workshop on Housing repairs and maintenance which was held on 27 August 2020. The workshop addressed the topics such as the new contract with Engie, COVID-19 response, Communications with and feedback from Residents, Operations Priorities, and Social Value Added.

Resolved:-

1. That the briefing be noted.
2. That the results of data analysis including GIS mapping be included in the next update in respect of Housing Repairs and Maintenance.

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION- 08/09/20

3. That the Chair, together with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, arrange a meeting with relevant Senior Leadership in respect of concerns around call centre wait times and dropped call rates.

93. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Governance Advisor provided an update with respect to progress on the agreed Work Programme including two changes to the scheduling of work programme items. It was advised that the PSPO on Dog Fouling had stayed with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, but relevant papers would be circulated to Members so that they would be able to stay current on the development of that discussion. Further, it was noted that Highways have been moved later in the year, to February, in order to allow for more completed progress on projects to be reported.

In discussion, Members requested more information about possible revised scheduling for the Energy Switching Scheme item. In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Finance noted that the Energy Switching Scheme was in the process of being reworked and would likely also be rescheduled.

Resolved:-

1. That the updated Work Programme be approved.

94. URGENT BUSINESS

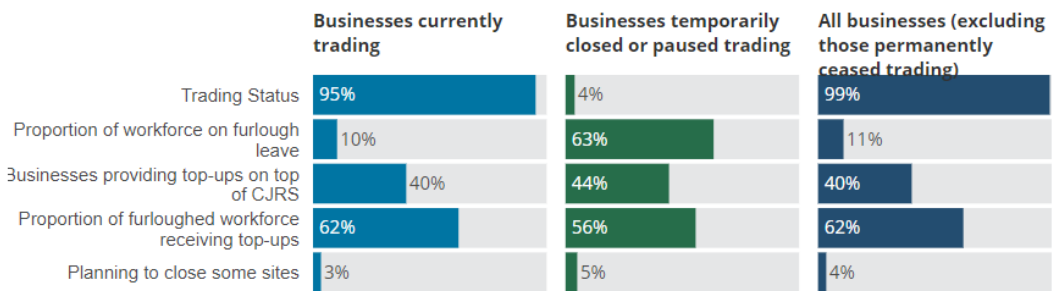
The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring the Commission's consideration.

95. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

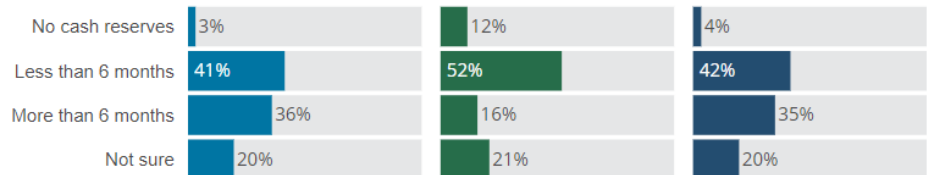
The Chair announced that the next virtual meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 22 October 2020, commencing at 1:30 pm.

<h1>Briefing</h1>	TO:	Improving Places Select Commission
	DATE:	20 th October 2020
	LEAD OFFICER:	Tim O'Connell Head of RiDO
	TITLE:	Economic Recovery
1. Summary		
1.1	<p>The economic impact of the Covid pandemic is severe and is likely to persist for some time. Although the government has introduced a wide range of measures to support the economy it seems likely that the full impact of business failures and redundancies has not yet been felt.</p> <p>The government has also announced the availability of funding to accelerate the delivery of capital schemes and support recovery. The Council is working to draw this funding down, to deliver regeneration schemes that meet the funding criteria.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with City Region partners to develop a Renewal Action Plan and is engaging in developing delivery plans.</p> <p>Proposed activity is focussed on the delivery of a number of committed major projects for delivery this financial year and over the next 18 months. This paper provides information on the main areas of activity and projects that the Council is directly involved in.</p>	
2. Key Issues		
2.1	<p>The Covid-19 outbreak continues to have a significant impact on the national economy. Although lockdown measures have been eased, with non-essential retail now open as well as some of the hospitality and leisure sector, the risk of a further downturn in the economy and redundancies remains evident. At the time of writing this report, against a backdrop of transmissions escalating nationally, restrictions have been tightened again with social gatherings in England limited to a maximum of six people, and local lockdowns emerging in several parts of the country.</p> <p>The September release of official figures from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) show just under half (47%) of businesses reporting that their turnover had decreased below what is normally expected for this time of year and 46% that they had less than six months cash reserves remaining.</p>	

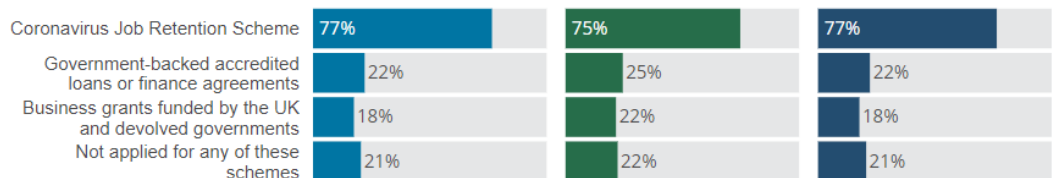
Proportion of businesses by trading status and proportion of workers on furlough leave and receiving pay top-ups



Cash reserves



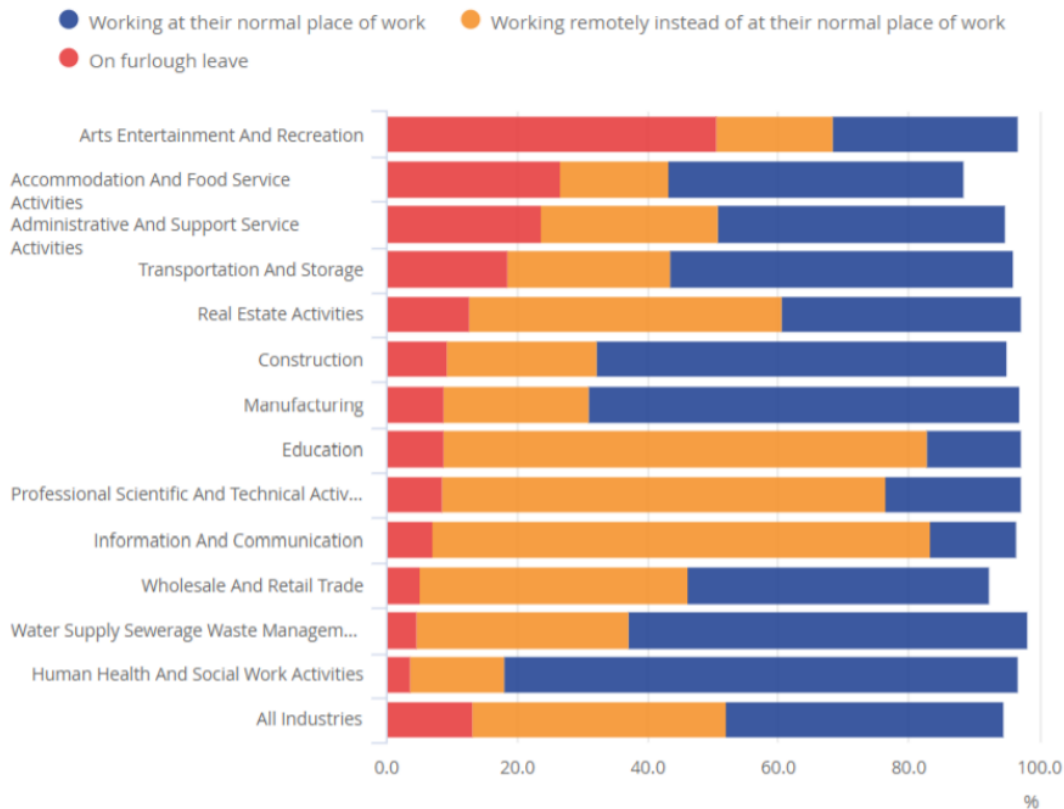
Percentage of businesses applying to government schemes



The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) (aka furlough) has suppressed the rise in UK unemployment so far. It is likely that unemployment would have risen to 10.0% (by 2.1million) in May without the CJRS according to National Institute for Economic and Social Research. The CJRS reduces the passage into unemployment by keeping people in employment. However, it has little or no effect on hiring and getting people out of unemployment. It is estimated by the ONS that 13% of the UK workforce is on the CJRS scheme at the current time. Numbers of the workforce on the CJRS scheme have been higher than expected although numbers have been steadily reducing through July and August.

Local redundancies have been announced but have almost certainly been mitigated by the CJRS. Rotherham has seen similar levels of CJRS take-up to the national economy with 37,200 jobs furloughed (32% of eligible jobs). This does highlight a risk that without an upturn, redundancies may spike as the scheme comes to an end in October with the Office for Budget Responsibility estimating that at least 10% of furloughed workers will become unemployed. This is supported by the influential BoE's Decision Maker Panel survey which suggests businesses will reduce employment by 9.1%, on average by Q4 on account of Covid-19.

The Rotherham economy includes many businesses operating in sectors for concern including accommodation and food services and arts and entertainment where numbers on furlough are particularly high. However, as a percentage of the economy these sectors are smaller in Rotherham than the Great Britain average. Compared to other the regions and Great Britain as a whole, Rotherham has a notably large manufacturing base.

CJRS by Sector:

Source: ONS

Employee jobs in Rotherham

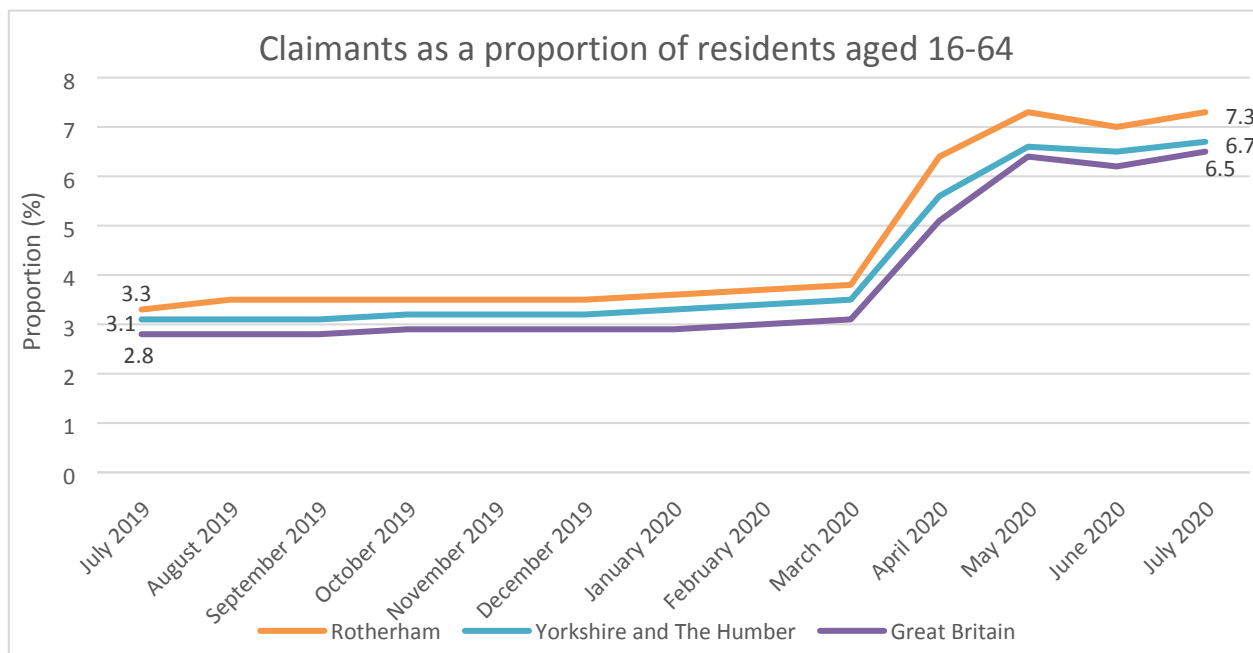
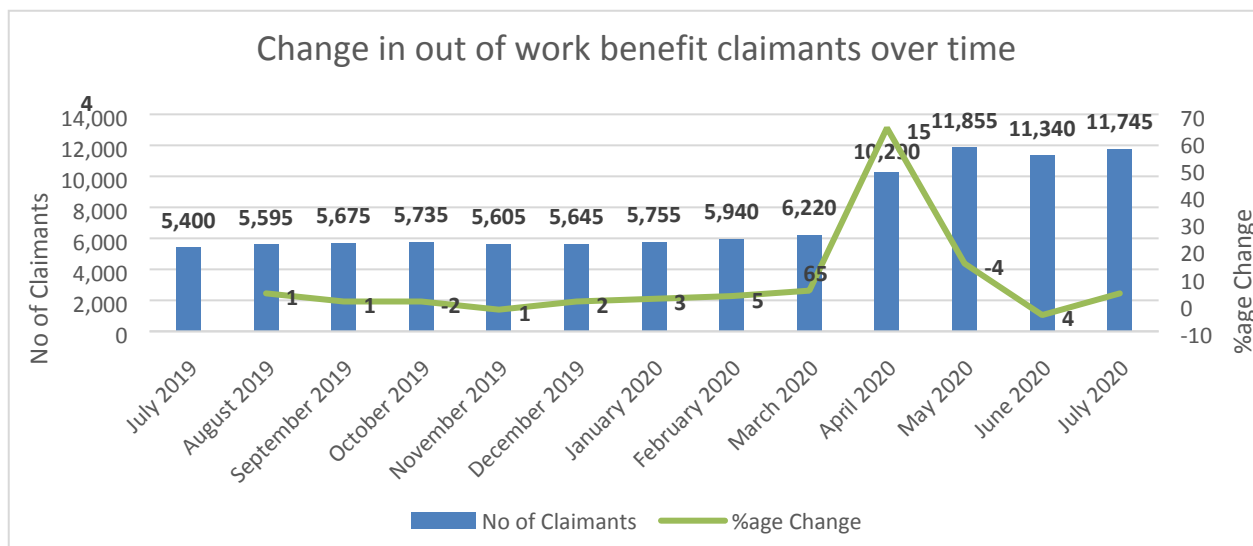
Employee jobs by industry	R'ham	R'ham	Y&TH	Great Britain	R'ham Vs GB
	(employee jobs)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%) variance
B : Mining and quarrying	0	0	0.1	0.2	-0.2
C : Manufacturing	15,000	15.2	11.9	8.1	7.1
D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	800	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.3
E : Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1,000	1	0.8	0.7	0.3
F : Construction	5,000	5.1	4.1	4.7	0.4
G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	15,000	15.2	15	15.2	0
H : Transportation and storage	5,000	5.1	5.6	4.8	0.3
I : Accommodation and food service activities	6,000	6.1	7.3	7.6	-1.5
J : Information and communication	3,500	3.5	3.1	4.2	-0.7
K : Financial and insurance activities	1,750	1.8	3.1	3.5	-1.7
L : Real estate activities	600	0.6	1.3	1.7	-1.1
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	3,500	3.5	6.9	8.7	-5.2
N : Administrative and support service activities	9,000	9.1	9	9.1	0

O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6,000	6.1	4.3	4.3	1.8
P : Education	10,000	10.1	9.8	8.9	1.2
Q : Human health and social work activities	13,000	13.1	13.6	13.2	-0.1
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,750	1.8	2.3	2.5	-0.7
S : Other service activities	1,250	1.3	1.3	2	-0.7
Total	98150				

Source: Nomis Employee Jobs 2018

Universal credit claimants in Rotherham increased by 65% in April and a further 15% in May 2020. The increase in claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16-64 is broadly in line (though slightly higher) than the regional and national trend.

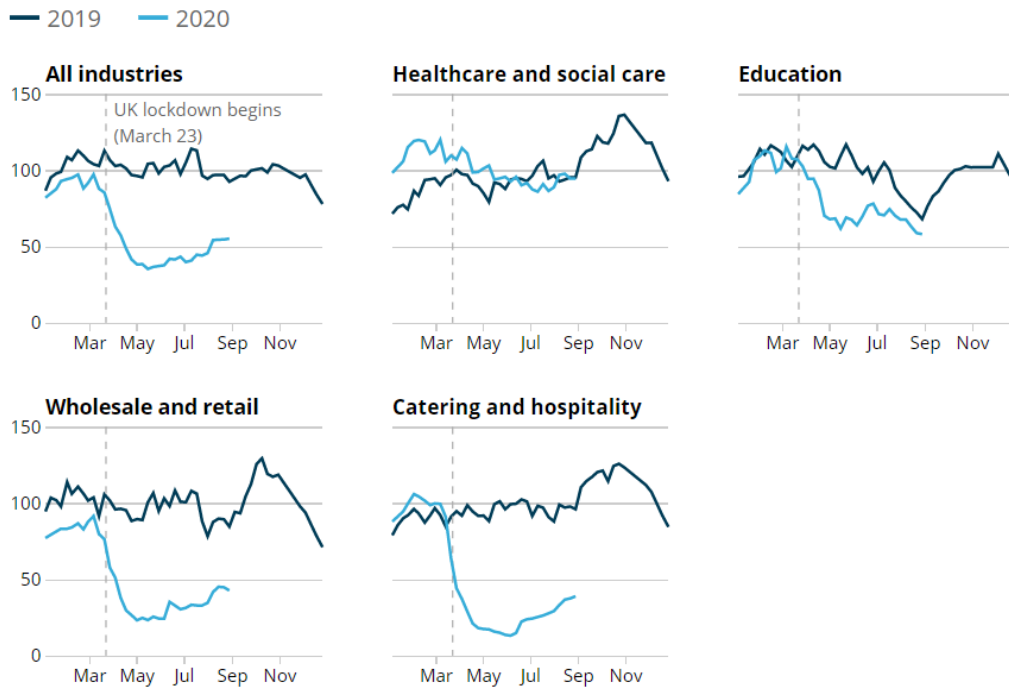
Rotherham Out of Work Benefit Claimants



National data is also provided on the number of job adverts over time as an indicator of the demand for labour. The data indicates that the demand for labour has fallen significantly. Between 21 and 28 August, total online job adverts remained around 55% of their 2019 average for a fourth consecutive week.

National Job Adverts

Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 28 August 2020:
index 2019 average = 100



Source: Adzuna

National Response

The government has announced measures to support the economy including:

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Statutory Sick Pay rebates
- Deferral of VAT and self-assessment payments
- Business rates relief
- Business Support Grants for small businesses and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors
- Local Authority Discretionary Grants
- Self-employed Income Support
- Loans and loan guarantees for small and medium sized enterprises
- Loan guarantees and corporate financing for large companies

In addition, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Summer Statement made further announcements aimed at 'getting the economy going again' – Details of the initiatives announced in the Summer Statement are attached at Appendix 1.

The government has also announced funding to accelerate infrastructure delivery, with the following that are relevant locally:

Towns Fund Accelerated Funding – £96m to accelerate investment in town centres and high streets through the Towns Fund this year with each Towns Fund area receiving £500k-£1m to spend on projects such as improvements to parks, high streets, and transport.

Getting Building Fund – £900m for a range of ‘shovel ready’ local growth projects in England over the next 18 months, with £33.6m allocated to Sheffield City Region.

Brownfield Housing Fund – £400m allocated to the regional authorities, including £40m to Sheffield City Region to support house building on brownfield land.

Regional Response

A City Region **Renewal Action Plan** (RAP) has been developed and submitted to government by the Sheffield City Region Mayor with a funding **ask of £1.72 billion** to support delivery.

The draft plan is attached at Appendix 2. The RAP is intended to concentrate on immediate relief actions to be delivered within 18 months and act as a bridge to the Strategic Economic Plan.

The high-level objectives and rationale for a focus on the three main areas of action are described below:

People - we will invest to ensure local people have the opportunity to develop their skills, and to find, stay and progress in work.

“The global and national economic outlook is widely predicted to be bleak, albeit it is difficult to quantify just how bad the economic impact will be. The potential impact on the City Region could be devastating for our communities, particularly the predicted rise of unemployment. There is also expected to be a significant loss of training opportunities, at least in the immediate term. This includes those made unemployed, forced into unemployment by personal circumstances, those currently on the job retention scheme though at risk of unemployment, and those to be made unemployed in the next 6 – 12 months”.

Employers - we will invest to ensure employers can survive, adapt and thrive.

“There are immediate concerns of the liquidity of many businesses in SCR. It is expected that as supportive measures reduce or are discontinued, the business base will face pressing cashflow, invoicing and investment challenges. There is a risk of widespread insolvencies, due to a lack of demand and/or inability to operate in the wake of COVID-19 impacts. This includes those businesses over leveraged through loans and Central Government support, who will no longer be viable once Central Government support ends”.

Place - we will invest to create jobs and thriving places, in a way that reduces inequality and enhances our environment.

“Our places are feeling the effects of social distancing measures and reductions in disposable income due to furlough measures or loss of income due to increased unemployment. This is most stark in our urban centres which are facing current challenges with their space configuration and mobility and could see longer term issues, particularly with property values. With the potential closure, or failure, of high street retailers our urban centres face an uncertain future. This includes the knock-on impacts on wider determinants of health and wellbeing, community, inclusion, transport, housing and employment / engagement opportunities”.

Rotherham's Response

The Council's planning on economic recovery is being developed in the context of the wider recovery strategy, and the action plan for The Year Ahead.

As part of the initial Government response, the Council's Finance Team, supported by RiDO, played a key role in the administration of Government grants, including over £46m of grants paid out to local businesses. This includes £2,479,000 that was made available to the Council to administer a local discretionary scheme; of this discretionary funding £2,467,837 has been paid out to local businesses.

National Scheme and Rotherham 'take-up'

Grant	Eligible Businesses	Amount	Number of Businesses Paid	Total grant amount Paid
SBBR GRANT	3,547	10,000	3,339	33,339,000
RETAIL <15k	313	10,000	250	2,500,000
RETAIL >15K	414	25,000	341	8,525,000
Total	4,274		3,930	44,415,000

Discretionary Local Scheme for Rotherham

Business Types	Claims	Grant Value	Total Paid Value
Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces	135	10,000	1,210,000
Bed and Breakfasts	0	1,000	-
Charities	33	10,000	330,000
Private Childcare Nurseries	16	10,000	160,000
Private Childcare Nurseries	19	25,000	475,000
Regular Market Traders	70	2,183	152,837
Totals	273	68,183	2,467,837

The Council has established an Economic Recovery Cell chaired by the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport. The cell has responsibility for coordinating economic recovery activity and sits with the Council's overall COVID emergency response structure. To date work on economic recovery has focussed on:

1. Co-ordinating local intelligence and response
2. Delivery of major projects
3. Re-opening the town centre
4. Developing the response to emerging funding opportunities
5. Co-ordination with Sheffield City Region to inform and develop the Renewal Action Plan

1. Co-ordinating local intelligence and response

As well co-ordinating data and intelligence from national and regional sources, RiDO is providing essential business support and advice at a local level. A number of companies across the borough have announced potential redundancies as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are also several large projects, creating jobs planned for the next year. RiDO is assisting with matching companies together to offset redundancies and economic impact.

2. Delivery of major projects

The most immediate priority has been to keep the major projects and regeneration priorities on track throughout the lockdown period, as these represent our most significant local economic interventions. The Council's year ahead plan sets out key interventions for the Council to deliver over the next year to support Economic Recovery

- Work proactively with the Sheffield City Region to ensure that the Economic Recovery Plan addresses local skills and business priorities
- Agree the Sheffield City Region Renewal Action Plan, and secure Rotherham's share of additional devolution and associated funding to support the local economy.
- Work with partners including DWP, colleges and providers to deploy new job coaches into local communities.
- Start construction of new Century business centre at Manvers.
- £425k of investment in the borough's other business centres.
- Complete essential infrastructure and enabling works on Forge Island, including the demolition of Riverside Precinct.
- Secure agreements to allow the construction phase of the Forge Island scheme to begin.
- Co-design Towns Fund proposals with local businesses and communities and submit to government a vision and strategy for the town.
- Develop a business case, secure funding and commence construction of a Towns Fund accelerated delivery scheme in the town centre.
- Secure funding to support redevelopment of the markets and central library
- Begin a major programme of public realm improvements to transform the appearance of the town centre
- Breathe new life into the town centre by progressing construction of 171 homes across three sites, with a variety of property types
- Deliver additional key schemes across the borough Greasbrough roundabout upgrade and begin Parkway widening scheme.
- Launch the partnership social value charter, encouraging anchor organisations to build social value into their commissioning and procurement activity.
- Identify opportunities for social value through procurement and regeneration programmes to ensure additional local jobs and apprenticeships are secured, and monitor progress.
- Centre for Local Economic Strategies report on supply chains and market analysis completed.

3. Re-opening the town centre

The Council has worked across a number of cells to ensure the safe re-opening of public spaces. This included risk assessments and the implementation of social distancing measures to support the opening of non-essential retail on 15th June, and the introduction of re-deployed staff and volunteers to act as town centre hosts.

The retail sector can be expected to experience a long period of gradual contraction and transformation and there can be no doubt that the impact of COVID-19 is accelerating the need to revitalise and adopt new town centre models that are less retail-centric. This will lead to increased pressures on the vitality and viability of many of the UK's high streets and towns that are currently over-shopped and over-reliant on retail.

Rotherham's town centre masterplan, adopted in 2017, already recognised and seeks to promote this change.

It is expected that in the post COVID world, successful town centres will be characterised by less retail space; but this contraction and consolidation does create the

opportunity to provide better quality, more varied, and more experiential uses and activities. There will also be the need for a greater range of High Street based services and community uses to meet the demands of growing town centre populations, particularly as redundant space is repurposed and redeveloped as homes.

The continued commitment of Muse, the Council's development partner on the Forge Island scheme and the active engagement from end users is extremely good news and has allowed the Council to continue to focus on the long-term objectives of the masterplan and pursue funding opportunities to reset the town centre around a quality housing and leisure offer.

4. Developing the response to emerging funding opportunities

The government has announced new funding streams to accelerate infrastructure delivery.

Towns Fund Accelerated Funding (£1m) – grant funding to deliver capital projects as part of the emerging Towns Fund proposals. The funding is for this financial year and is “particularly encouraging projects that will support towns in responding to immediate challenges, including:

- Improvement to or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links
- Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
- Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit”

Towns Fund proposals are scheduled to go to the Council's Cabinet in October for approval prior to submission to government.

Getting Building Fund (£6.68m) – part of the £33.6m funding allocated to the city region for 'shovel ready' local growth projects. In Rotherham £6.68m is proposed to deliver:

- Century II business centre in the Dearne Valley (£2m)
- capital investment in the town centre including new public realm (£2.18m)
- transport improvement scheme at The Whins, Greasbrough (£2.5m).

This funding is delivered through the Mayoral Combined Authority and comes with a requirement for spending to be complete by the end of the next financial year (2021/22).

Brownfield Housing Fund – a new opportunity to bid into a **£40 million** city region wide fund to encourage house building on brownfield land. Opportunities are being considered through the economic recovery cell and by Housing and RiDO £400m allocated to the regional authorities, including £40m to Sheffield City Region to support house building on brownfield land.

The **Transforming Cities** programme is bringing circa £166m to the City Region area in terms of public transport and active travel infrastructure schemes, with circa £29m identified for improvements in Rotherham, with key public transport elements such as the new Tram-Train stop at Magna being delivered by SYPTTE and key active travel elements such as the Sheffield Road improvements being delivered by RMBC. This programme is being delivered over 3 years 2020-23.

Funding has also been provided for an **Active Travel** programme this year as a result of travel pattern changes. Rotherham is receiving £265k of emergency active travel funding in tranche 1 for improvements to social distancing and safer cycling access to work. A tranche 2 bid of £1.5m is awaiting award but an announcement is expected to be imminent. Once awarded the tranche 2 funding will enable construction of a new dedicated cycling super-highway along Broom Road and include further works to provide a low traffic neighbourhood arrangement in surrounding residential areas improving the attractiveness of active travel opportunities.

5. Co-ordination with Sheffield City Region to inform the Renewal Action Plan

The Council has been working with the colleagues across the Sheffield City Region to co-ordinate data, intelligence and emerging issues and priorities.

This has led to a co-ordinated approach and consensus across the region on a joint Renewal Action Plan for economic recovery. Proposal for interventions, projects and programmes to deliver the plan (attached as an appendix to this report) are being developed through regional working groups.

3. Key Actions and Indicative Timelines

Renewal Action Plan

Proposals are progressing through SCR boards over September and October 2020.

Employment Support

The Council is working with the other City Region authorities and partners (including DWP and RNN) to develop and deliver a wide range of projects for those residents both seeking and already in employment. Delivery and timing is dependent on securing funds and European funds may be available to deliver some of this activity.

Business Centres

A Full Business Case for the Century II Business Centre was submitted to SCR on the 1st September 2020. This is expected to go through the SCR assurance process, and it is hoped that it will go before the next Infrastructure Board on 22nd October 2020. The project is planned to start on site in Spring / 2021.

Investment in the borough's other business centres require a range of works to be procured between Nov 2020 and July 2021 with all works to be completed by September 2021.

Forge Island Development

The development programme is subject to completion of agreements with end users. Interest from end users remains strong despite the impact of Covid 19 and agreements with key anchor occupiers are expected in the very near future.

Towns Fund

Towns Fund proposals are scheduled for presentation to the Towns Fund Board on 13th October and Cabinet on 19th October. Submissions to Government will be made by 31st October 2020 or 29th January 2021 (dependent on which cohort Rotherham's investment plan progresses in).

These proposals are currently out for public consultation at the link below:

<https://vpc.tetrachteurope.com/rotherham/>

Rotherham Markets Redevelopment (including Library)

Progressing the markets redevelopment as proposed is dependent upon a successful outcome to the Future High Street fund submission. The full business case was submitted on 5 June 2020 and a decision is expected in “autumn”. Subject to this decision, this would allow for approval of detailed designs in December 2020 and potentially a start on site in January 2022.

Rotherham Town Centre Public Realm

Indicative delivery programmes:

Site	Start	Finish
Bridgegate	September 2020	November 2020
College Street	January 2021	May 2021
Frederick Street	January 2021	June 2021
Howard Street	May 2021	July 2021
Effingham Street	February 2022	June 2022
Riverside Gardens Upper Mill	January 2022	September 2022

Town Centre Housing

Milestone	Completion Date
Start on site (enabling works)	Feb 2020
Main construction contract signed	Jul 2020
First tranches of Homes England funding (£4.3m)	Aug – Oct 2020
Demolition of Millfold House and associated buildings	Sep 2020
Final tranche of Sheffield City Region funding (£3.9m in total)	Autumn 2020
First home	Autumn 2021
Final tranches of Homes England funding (£1.4m)	Nov 2021 – Mar 2022
Wellgate Place	Early 2022
Westgate Riverside	Spring 2022
Millfold Rise	Summer 2022

Transportation Schemes

The LGF funded Greasbrough Village (Coach Road) scheme was approved by MCA on 27th July releasing £2.5m to fund the junction improvement at Coach Road. Construction is expected to commence in October 2020 with a planned completion date of Spring 2021.

Since then the Get Britain Building Fund (GBBF) has awarded a further £2.4m for the completion of The Whins Junction Improvement Scheme, to be commenced immediately. Procurement of additional external resource for both design and construction are well advanced with construction expected to start in March/April 2021 for completion by March 2022.

The A630 Parkway Widening Scheme has been planned for some years and the Full Business Case was submitted to government on 19th May 2020. The scheme has gone through DfT appraisal and is awaiting final Ministerial sign off prior to funding being

confirmed. If approved, construction could commence immediately with an expected completion date of Spring 2022. The scheme value is £45m and has been awarded to Balfour Beatty. Planning approval has also been granted for the construction of a new Motorway Service Area at M1 Junction 33, with links to this scheme – this will be delivered by a private commercial developer.

Appendix 1 – Summer Statement Summary

Skills and employment	
Job retention bonus	Businesses that furloughed staff will receive a £1k bonus payment for every employee they retain between October and January. The furlough scheme ends in October and there are currently no plans to extend it beyond this date.
Kickstart	Incentive scheme to encourage employers to create jobs for 16-24- year olds on Universal Credit. The funding covers 100% of the National Living Wage for 6mths plus overheads (e.g. pension, NI). Jobs must be new and must be for a minimum of 25 hrs per week.
Worksearch and Careers	£895 million to double the number of work coaches in Jobcentre Plus within 9 months. £40 million to fund a job finding support service: online, one-to-one service for those who have been unemployed for less than three months.
Apprenticeship Grant	Similar to the previous AGE grant in that businesses that employ apprentices will be given a £2k grant per apprentice (aged up to 25yrs) or £1.5k grant per apprentice (aged over 25yrs).
Traineeships	Businesses will be given £1k for each new work experience place they offer to young people
Business	
VAT cuts	From 20% to 5% for tourism, hospitality and leisure businesses (includes pubs, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, campsites, cinemas, theme parks)
Eat out to help out discount	Scheme to encourage the public to use restaurants between Mondays and Wednesdays in August offering a 50% reduction on food and non-alcoholic drinks up to £10 per person.
Arts and Heritage Loans and Grants	£1.57bn scheme.
Housing	
Green homes voucher	Making homes more energy efficient. The grant can be used to install low carbon heat, light and power systems or insulator measures (e.g. extra insulation, cavity-wall insulation, renewable energy system, double-glazing) in homes. Worth up to £5k per household but up to £10k per household for those on low incomes.
Stamp duty	No stamp duty to be paid on houses up to £500k (increased from £125k) - a temporary measure until 31 March 2021

Appendix 2 – SCR Renewal Plan (attached)



RENEWAL ACTION PLAN

SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT

**Sheffield
City Region**

BUILD BACK BETTER

The Sheffield City Region (SCR) has been hit hard by COVID.

In response, we have developed a **Renewal Action Plan** which aims to provide immediate help for our people, employers and places, while also contributing to our longer-term goals and the transformation of our City Region. It must make us:

- **Stronger** – an economic transformation to create not just a bigger economy but a better one: higher-tech, higher skill, and higher-value;
- **Greener** – a green transformation to decarbonise our economy, improve our environment, and revolutionise our transport; and
- **Fairer** – a transformation of wellbeing and inclusion, raising our quality of life, reducing inequality, and widening opportunity.

The investment we are asking for will not just help rescue the South Yorkshire economy, it will also help ‘level it up’.

It will back our people and our entrepreneurs when they need it the most, and create better, as well as more, jobs. It will accelerate the transition to Net Zero Carbon while making our communities stronger. It will help not just South Yorkshire, but the whole country.



This document gives a preview of our detailed Renewal Action Plan, which has been developed in close partnership with our business community, councils, universities and other partners.

It focuses on the immediate relief we must provide over the coming 12-18 months (*depending on how long it takes to fully control this virus*) and the seeds we must sow now to build back better. That support is targeted around three areas of action:

- **People** – supporting people adapt to the new economy and be better able to fill higher-skilled jobs
- **Employers** – supporting businesses to adapt, survive and thrive in the new environment
- **Places** – stimulating the local economy, create jobs, and transform our places.

Our approach in the next 18 months will:



Give a hand up for people to improve their skills, get back to work, remain and/or progress in work, or set up in business



Accelerate our Net Zero Carbon transition



Back our wealth and job creators



Get South Yorkshire moving by foot, bike, bus, tram and train



Put cranes in the sky and spades in the ground

“Our relief effort will be radical, wide-ranging and will stop at nothing to put South Yorkshire back on its feet. It’s a plan for small businesses, big businesses and the people and communities we serve.”

Dan Jarvis MBE MP, Mayor Sheffield City Region.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

We are a growing economy with huge untapped potential. We are home to world-class companies and universities and have powerful strengths in high-precision engineering and design, materials, manufacturing, healthcare, digital and creative technologies, future mobility and clean energy.

Our economic base is shifting towards a more productive and low carbon future, but that transition is far from complete – and the impact of COVID-19 threatens to undermine our progress.

The same capabilities that put the city-region at the heart of the world's first industrial revolution can put us at the centre of the fourth – producing new materials, new processes, and new answers to the environmental, social, and wellbeing challenges facing the UK and the world.

The public health impact of the disease has been particularly strong on deprived areas, BAME people, the disabled and other vulnerable people in South Yorkshire. The economic impact is also uneven – and centred upon our deprived communities and on women.

With our strong research capabilities, major employment sites, local engineering and manufacturing supply chains, and strengths in low carbon technologies, we are well-placed to help drive the Net Zero Carbon transition for the whole country.

Already, the city region has seen some communities face far higher levels of unemployment, furloughing and business closure than the national average. One in three of our 18 to 24-year-old employees (excluding students) have already lost jobs or been furloughed.



WHAT WE CAN DO, WHAT WE NEED

The investment we are requesting would create wide-ranging benefits: mitigating the worst socioeconomic impacts of COVID, getting 55,000 people in work or training, helping 25,000 businesses to adapt and innovate, and accelerating key strategic objectives like decarbonisation. Details and costing for each action to help our people, employers and places are set out below¹. To achieve this ambitious vision, we require £1.72bn of investment and we will invest our own funds as part of this.

Why we can deliver

- Strong and accountable leadership – through our MCA and directly elected Mayor, we have robust, transparent and democratically accountable leadership. This includes appropriate assurance mechanisms. The MCA works extremely closely with the LEP to combine the best of public and private sector leadership.
- Track record of delivery at scale – since 2012, the LEP and MCA have created 15,150 jobs and 2,200 apprenticeships; assisting 6,000 learners; leveraging £319m of investment and supporting 24,000 companies. The MCA is now two-thirds of the way through the delivery of its multi-year Growth Deal, which is forecast to eventually create more than 68,000 jobs, support 14,000 learners and leverage £1.6bn of investment.

SUPPORT PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	INVESTMENT REQUIRED ²	TARGETS AND OUTPUTS
Help people find jobs and adapt to the new economy	£770m	Helping 35,000 people re-engage with labour market, creating benefits such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 apprenticeships and other training positions • NEET levels below national average • Higher share of leavers/graduates in education or work within 12-18 months.
Support employers to adapt, survive and thrive despite COVID	£380m	Over 25,000 businesses supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-adapted working environments • Reduced carbon emissions • 15,000 jobs created through supply chain re-shoring / localising • Invoice and cashflow support • Investment to innovate and thrive.
Infrastructure investment to level up our economy, create jobs, and transform our communities	£570m	Strengthened communities and urban centres underpinned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained cycling and walking rates • Uplift in urban footfall and spend • Created/supported across 6,000 new jobs across infrastructure programmes • Improved local economy resilience and health and wellbeing.

¹ Detailed costs and benefits will be produced as the plan is developed further.

² This is the upper range of modelled cost estimates.

PLAN OF ACTION

PEOPLE:

HELP PEOPLE FIND JOBS AND ADAPT TO THE NEW ECONOMY

One programme, with four interventions, to upskill the workforce at scale, remove barriers to training and employment for vulnerable groups, support young people to progress and match people to skills gaps in strategic and growth industries like clean energy, health, and advanced manufacturing.

This suite of interventions will deliver circa £3 for every £1 invested³.

TRAIN TO WORK	
To do what	Give people the skills they need to get jobs and earn more. We will guarantee work experience, apprenticeships, and training for all those who need them, and support wages to reduce barriers to participation for both people and companies – reducing unemployment and helping people remain in work and progress to better jobs. We will also provide support to enable people remain in employment.
Delivery	Local institutions (e.g. HE, FE colleges and training providers and existing delivery mechanisms).
Targets	This intervention will target approximately 20,000 people .
Outcomes	We anticipate an increase of 3,000 apprentices and over 17,000 other education, training, and work experience positions in 18 months. The programme will also be structured to help fill skills gaps that hold back our tech companies, placing people in sustained employment.
Investment required	£375m - £450m is required over 18 months to subsidise training and apprenticeships, and top up incomes to the level of the living wage. Estimated unit cost will vary with an average of £12,500-£15,000 per person per year.

BACK TO WORK	
To do what	Facilitate a matching programme between growth sectors, job openings and unemployed individuals. We would also connect people with wider services to help remove barriers to employment not related to skills (e.g. disability support, health support).
Delivery	National delivery partners (JCP, National Careers Service etc) and local employment support services.
Targets	This intervention will target an initial 10,000 unemployed people .
Outcomes	This will contribute to SCR's unemployment rate returning to pre COVID levels (5% or lower). It will also contribute to a rise in economically active people in SCR.
Investment required	£2.25m - £3m over 18 months to support individuals out-of-work (who do not require re-skilling) back into employment. Estimated unit cost is £150 per person .

³ Modelling based on 'The benefits of tackling worklessness and low pay', JRF (2014) which included exchequer savings like reduced benefit payments, higher taxation, reduced health and crime costs, and higher output due to increased productivity and skill level.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SKILLS GUARANTEE (POST 16)	
To do what	Guarantee opportunities for our leavers and graduates who have seen a reduction in prospects. Also includes support for young people transitioning from one form of study to another and then into work. Will be supported by a careers information, advice and guidance provision.
Delivery	Education and training providers and local employment services.
Targets	This intervention will target 4,500 people .
Outcomes	Young job seekers will be supported to secure and remain in employment commensurate with their skills and ambition. It will ensure that NEET levels are below the national average . Success will be measured by a greater share of young people staying in employment or in education after 6 and 12 months .
Investment required	£1.5 - £3m over 18 months to support 16-24-year-olds into employment, training, or education. Estimated unit cost is £240 per person . This excludes apprenticeship and traineeship grants which are captured in the Train to Work programme.

OVERCOME BARRIERS	
To do what	This is about supporting social mobility and reducing inequality. We will use grants to support incomes for the most impacted cohorts not just in employment but in training as well, helping them overcome barriers such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Childcare and other care responsibilities 2. Digital assets and upskilling 3. Access to affordable and sustainable transport 4. Housing issues.
Delivery	LAs and third sector partners utilising existing structures, wherever possible.
Targets	Helping at least 15,000 people to re-engage with the labour market.
Outcomes	Specific targets will be dependent on nature of eventual support (e.g. caring responsibilities or digital skills). In addition to direct benefits to the exchequer, this will result in avoided costs for the NHS on physical and mental health, and local economic multiplier effects.
Investment required	£285m - £315m over 18 months to support individuals to re-engage with the labour market by overcoming multiple barriers. Estimated unit cost is £13,000 per person per year to top up existing income support during training.

EMPLOYERS: SUPPORT EMPLOYERS TO ADAPT, SURVIVE AND THRIVE AFTER COVID

Two investment programmes with a total of five interventions: specialist services, knowledge, and digital support to help adaptation and survival; direct flexible business investment to back innovation and supply chains and support to improve business leadership and management.

Detailed design of interventions is ongoing but similar programmes⁴ delivered in the UK have delivered high value for money, with BCRs between 2:1 - 5:1, excluding indirect and wider impacts like productivity and innovation.

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 1 - BACKING EMPLOYERS TO ADAPT AND SURVIVE

SERVICES AND KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT FOR POST-COVID ADAPTATION	
To do what	This is about giving businesses – especially SMEs – the knowledge support they need to adapt and survive. It includes scaling up our business support offer, especially around specialist areas like HR, legal, company formation and structure, health and wellbeing (especially mental health), and health & safety (including COVID adaptations). We will also provide intelligence to help companies make informed cashflow and invoicing decisions, negotiate terms and improve reliability in income projections, reducing the threat of cashflow problems to SMEs especially.
Delivery	Growth Hub, partner institutions across public and private sectors.
Targets	Support up to 10,000 firms navigate the end of furloughing/ redundancy, reduce cashflow threats, and adapt successfully to the health, wellbeing and safety challenges.
Outcomes	Arrest any decline in business stock and survival rates will improve. Anticipated impacts will include direct jobs created and safeguarded, and eventual sustained GVA and productivity rise.
Investment required	£2m-£2.5m to provide businesses with access to specialised COVID-19 adaptation support and invoice intelligence. Estimated unit cost is £110 per employer .

⁴ Government-funded business advice programmes delivered by Business Link and programmes run by the British Business Bank.

DIGITAL UPSKILLING AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION FOR COVID ADAPTATION	
To do what	This is about supporting employers (especially micro and small enterprises) to adapt to the new environment through digital upskilling, and accelerating technology adoption to transform operations. Its key elements will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grants to enable flexible/remote working scale up existing IT upskilling programmes enable access to cloud computing and cyber security provision.
Delivery	Growth Hub, LAs and digital skills providers.
Targets	Target 10,000 SMEs to adapt to the hybrid working environment.
Outcomes	Arrest any decline in business stock and survival rates will improve. Anticipated impacts will include direct jobs created and safeguarded, and eventual sustained GVA and productivity rise.
Investment required	£16m - £18m is required to support digitisation, productivity and competitiveness. Estimated unit cost is £1,600 per employer .

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2
BACKING INNOVATION AND ACCELERATING GROWTH

FLEXIBLE INVESTMENT AND RECAPITALISATION	
To do what	This is about deploying a range of flexible investment mechanisms to support the adaptation and survival of viable companies and accelerate growth. It includes grants, loans and patient equity investment to help companies struggling with short-term market conditions to survive; to seed innovation and encourage start-ups, and allow businesses to invest, adapt, and grow without over-leveraging. Support would be structured to incentivise and advance innovation from concept to commercialisation, support strategic growth sectors (including advanced manufacturing, health and wellbeing, modern methods of construction and clean energy), workforce upskilling and the Net Zero transition. Also includes support for business and entrepreneurs to explore different ownership models and structures (including equity/stock issues and mutualisation) and enabling changes to allow this.
Delivery	Via the Growth Hub and existing models, and with LAs and, where necessary, through special investment vehicles.
Targets	Support available to 10,000 businesses and significant investments (including equity stakes) in up to 500 businesses aligned with the policy objectives of the MCA. This will include organisations with different ownership structures like cooperatives and social enterprises.

FLEXIBLE INVESTMENT AND RECAPITALISATION - CONTINUED	
Outputs	Business stock will begin to grow. Increase business birth rate over the next 12 months. Significant contributions to reducing carbon footprint and improving social inclusion. Equity investments will seek competitive rates of return and induce local economic multiplier effects.
Investment required	£280m - £320m to invest as appropriate in grants, loans, equity and other support as necessary to help business survival and create the enabling conditions that drives productivity at scale. Estimated unit cost of will vary widely, with an average of £850,000 per employer .

EMPLOYER LEADERSHIP SUPPORT	
To do what	This is about supporting our business leaders to improve strategic decision making, helping accelerate growth while improving preparedness for the changes ahead, most of which were well underway prior to COVID. This includes support to enable decision making on investment in technology (e.g. AI), low carbon transition, employee health and wellbeing, social responsibility and to develop new markets.
Delivery	Growth Hub and HE.
Targets	Support up 1,000 businesses to improve overall business leadership and decision making.
Outcomes	Arrest any decline in business stock. Longer term impacts such as GVA and productivity rises will be quantified in accordance with timeframe and scope.
Investment required	£5m to support and improve business leadership and decision making. Estimated unit cost is £5,300 per business .

SUPPLY CHAIN AND PROCUREMENT SUPPORT	
To do what	This is to support our businesses to exploit supply chain opportunities that emerge. It is also about the MCA, local authorities and anchor institutions pooling and leveraging procurement wherever possible to shorten supply chains and drive up local content and social value.
Delivery	Delivery will be led by the MCA, LAs and other anchor institutions.
Targets	The target is to support 300 businesses initially and to protect 15,000 jobs .
Outcomes	The programme will utilise baseline figures on local spend and supply chains to identify improvements. The MCA will work with Department for International Trade to exploit re-shoring potential.
Investment required	£31m is required to re-shore supply chains and leverage economic and social benefits through procurement. Estimated unit cost is £100,000 per employer .

PLACES: INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TO LEVEL UP OUR ECONOMY, CREATE JOBS, AND TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITIES

Four interventions grouped into three investment programmes to help urban areas adapt to COVID and avoid decay; boost sustainable travel; and enable shovel-ready investment in decarbonisation and more broadly – creating jobs and growth while advancing our strategic economic, social and environmental goals.

The BCR for the interventions below range between 2:1 to 10:1^{5,6,7,8,9} This is based on evidence from similar programmes. Detailed design is ongoing significant wider benefits like increased social value, health impacts and biodiversity will also be delivered.

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 1

COVID-19 SPATIAL ADAPTION	
To do what	Reconfigure urban centres in order to increase vibrant activity, adapt to the new behaviours and restrictions, and forestall city centre decay; physical infrastructure changes (e.g. widening pathways, one-way pedestrian systems), commercial property use, strategic building and land acquisitions and flexible, responsive and proactive planning.
Delivery	Led by LAs.
Targets	Targeted support for cultural, community and social enterprises or start-ups. Interventions dependent on need and opportunities.
Outcomes	Baseline information for all urban centres to allow targets to be established based on support offered. This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall and vacant units – (e.g. No increase in empty retail premises by Q3 2021) • Day time/evening economy spend • Independent shops • Business density.
Investment required	£20m is required for an initial 12-month programme of strategic building and land acquisitions to regenerate and avoid decay in our urban centres, and to reconfigure local spaces in the wake of COVID-19 to help the local population adapt to restrictions and changes in how we interact and behave.

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL	
To do what	This is about providing a sustainable, affordable and safe means for people and goods to move efficiently in line with COVID regulations and beyond. Includes accelerating investment plans to enable and promote cycling and walking, and a commitment to support local development plans which enable more liveable, low traffic neighbourhoods. Also includes a commitment to improve local bus services.
Delivery	MCA and LAs working with key private sector partners.
Targets	Maintaining COVID lockdown active travel levels. As of the end of May, 64% of adults walked, and 14% cycled – representing an extra 100,000 cyclists. Increased public transport patronage (baseline increasing but targets linked to pre-COVID-19 levels).
Outcomes	Capital projects which contribute to 620 miles of accessible walking and cycling routes across SCR to enable people to leave their cars at home and support multi modal travel. Improvements to bus network coverage and patronage. Delivery will also have an indirect impact upon footfall and spend. Lastly, health and wellbeing data from PHE will be utilised to understand direct and indirect health outputs.
Investment required	£53m is required for an 18-month programme to trial a set of low-traffic neighbourhoods across the City Region, and to accelerate our Active Travel Infrastructure Programme to improve active travel rates. Estimated unit cost is £490 per person .

⁵ Sustrans (2017) Active Travel and Economic Performance A 'What Works' review of evidence from cycling and walking schemes

⁶ <https://whatworksgrowth.org/policy-reviews/area-based-initiatives/evidence-review/>

⁷ Passenger Transport Executive Group (2011) Value for Money & Appraisal of Small Scale Public Transport Schemes

⁸ Living Street (2018) The Pedestrian Pound: Updated report outlining the business case for better streets and places

⁹ ABI (2019) The Value of Flood Protection: Quantifying the Benefits of Defences Along U.K. Rivers

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 3 – ACCELERATING SHOVEL-READY INVESTMENT

SHOVEL-READY DECARBONISATION INVESTMENT	
To do what	<p>Accelerate our transition to Net Zero, while creating jobs, building up our high-value industries, and improving quality of life for our communities. We would do this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial programme of building retrofits • Supporting green energy projects, including solar, hydrogen, and heat pumps • Establishing a £40m carbon challenge fund, to incentivise and leverage private sector investment • Flood prevention works, bringing forward part of our £273m investment plan • A tree planting programme, closely tied to flood prevention but also to improving neighbourhoods and habitats.
Delivery	MCA, LAs , other key infrastructure or development partners.
Targets	Creation of 2,000 new jobs across all programmes and carbon emissions outputs in line with SCR's Net Zero by 2040 target.
Outcomes	<p>Key development indicators across all programmes such as employment, GVA and other wide indicators including indirect employment, social value delivery and biodiversity enhancement.</p> <p>This will enable SCR to progress against ambitions for a net zero City Region by 2040. Benefits will depend on which capital investment project are delivered, but will include reduced pollution, enhanced biodiversity, and health improvements.</p>
Investment required	£200m is required for the acceleration of shovel-ready decarbonisation, natural capital and clean energy investments.

SHOVEL-READY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT	
To do what	Acceleration of shovel-ready construction and regeneration activities that can help the economy recover, support levelling-up and strategic growth sectors, enhance the housing offer and drive urban centres to modernise.
Delivery	MCA, LAs, other key infrastructure or development partners.
Targets	Creation or safeguarding of 4,000 new jobs across all programmes and programme indicators.
Outcomes	Key development indicators across all programmes include employment, GVA and other wide indicators including indirect employment, social value delivery and biodiversity enhancement. Benefits will be specific to capital investment project, and additionally will induce local economic multiplier effects.
Investment required	£300m is required for the acceleration of shovel-ready construction and regeneration activities that will unlock growth and resilience in local economies.

FROM VISION TO REALITY



These investments represent an ambitious vision, in line with the government's own declaration of the need for a bold and transformative approach to the post-COVID recovery and to levelling up the country.

It is a down payment in a process of renewal that would truly change the fortunes of an area of the UK whose full potential was not being realised even before the pandemic – allowing some good to come out of the pain and disruption it has wrought.

This investment will deliver benefits several times greater than the initial costs - not just for Sheffield City Region, but for the whole country. It is a vision for a better future: now we ask the government to join us and help turn this vision into a reality.



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**Sheffield
City Region**

Improving Places Select Commission

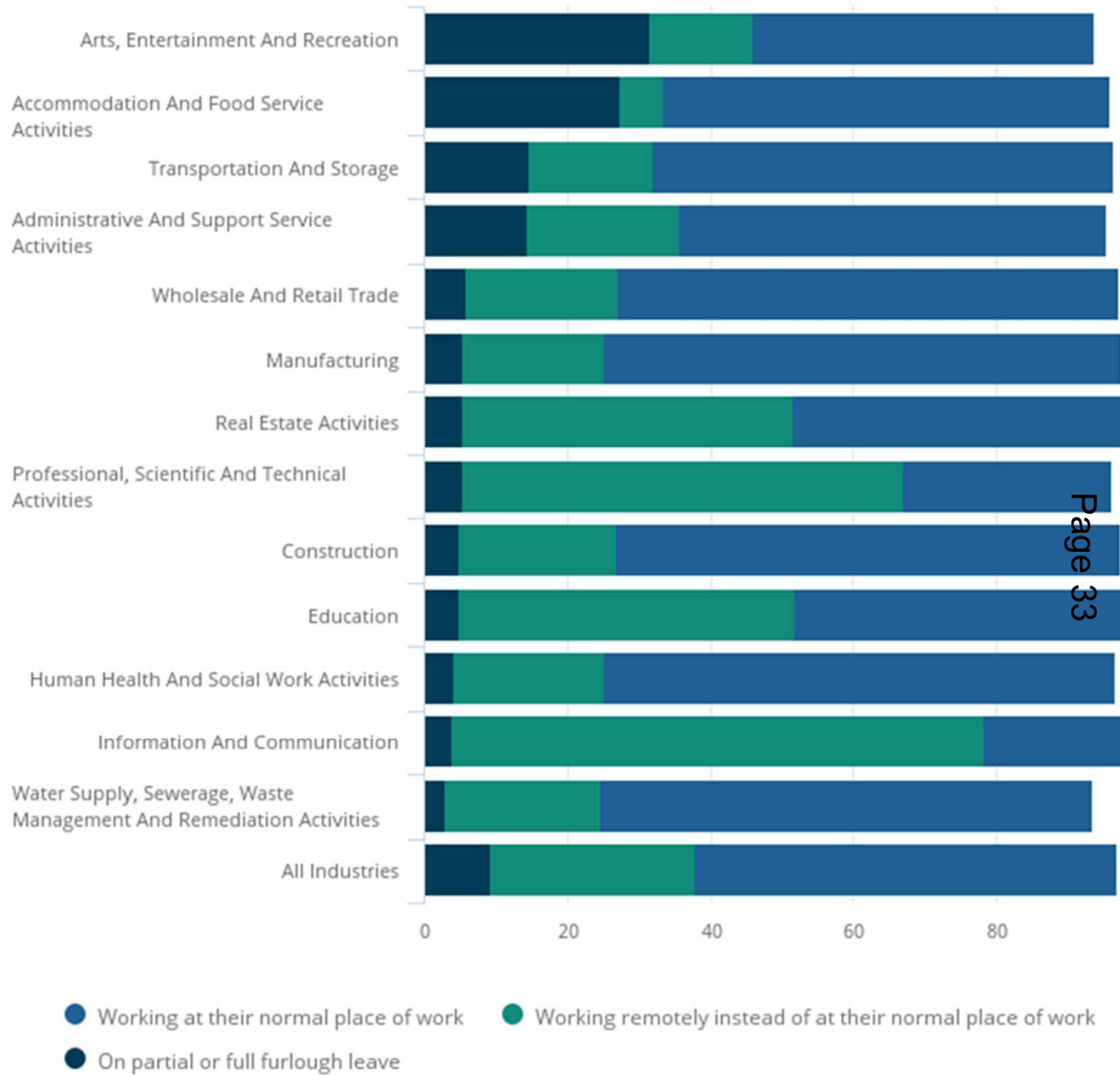
20th October 2020

Summary

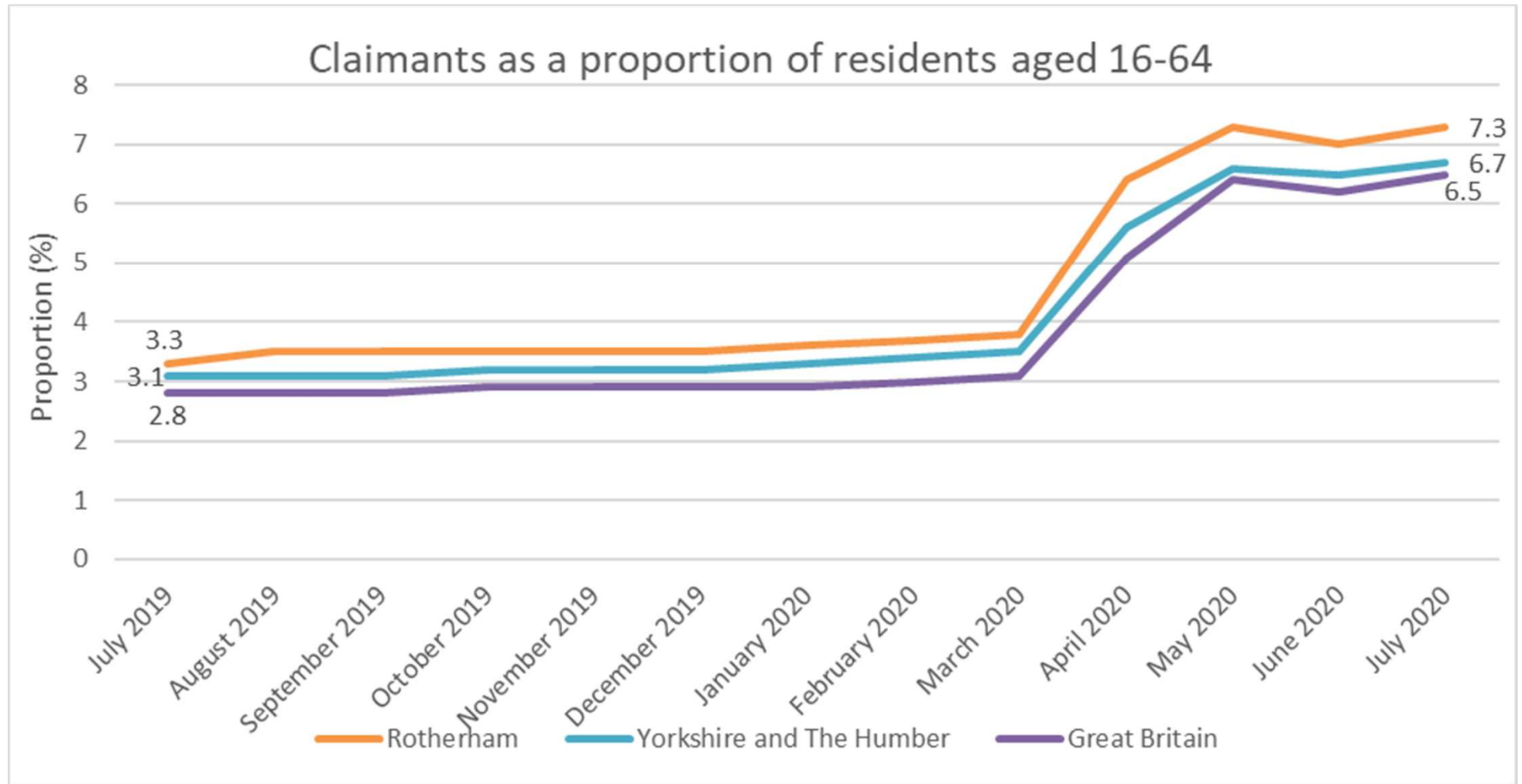
- Impact of Covid-19
- National Response
- Regional Response
- Local Response
- Key Actions

JRS by Sector

Source: ONS

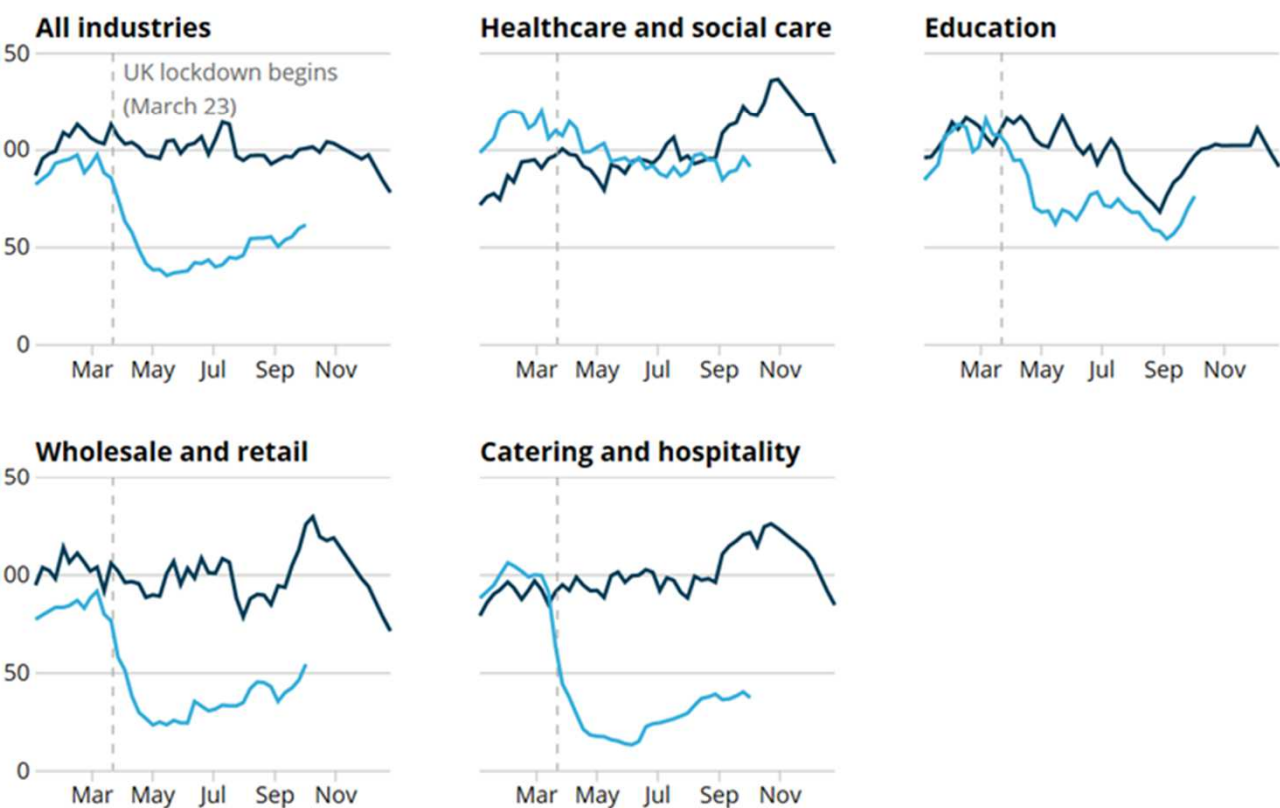


Benefits Claimants



Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 2 October 2020, index 2019 average = 100

— 2019 — 2020



National Job Adverts

Source: ONS and Aszuna

National Response

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Statutory Sick Pay rebates
- Deferral of VAT and self-assessment payments
- Business rates relief
- Business Support Grants for small businesses and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors
- Local Authority Discretionary Grants
- Self-employed Income Support
- Loans and loan guarantees for small and medium sized enterprises
- Loan guarantees and corporate financing for large companies

Government Funding with Local Relevance

- Towns Fund Accelerated Funding - £1m
- Getting Building Fund - £33.6m allocated to SCR
£6.68m proposed to deliver:
 - Century II Business Centre – Dearne Valley (£2m)
 - Town Centre Capital Investment (£2.18m)
 - Transport Improvement at The Whins, Greasbrough (£2.5m)
- Brownfield Housing Fund - £40m allocated to SCR

Regional Response – SCR Renewal Action Plan

£1.72 billion to support delivery

- **People** - invest to ensure local people have the opportunity to develop their skills, and to find, stay and progress in work.
- **Employers** - will invest to ensure employers can survive, adapt and thrive
- **Place** - invest to create jobs and thriving places, in a way that reduces inequality and enhances our environment

Local Response – Grants for Local Businesses

National Scheme and Rotherham 'take-up'

Grant	Eligible Businesses	Amount	Number of Businesses Paid	Total grant amount Paid
SBBR GRANT	3,547	10,000	3,339	33,339,000
RETAIL <15k	313	10,000	250	2,500,000
RETAIL >15K	414	25,000	341	8,525,000
Total	4,274		3,930	44,415,000

Discretionary Local scheme for Rotherham

Business Types	Claims	Grant Value	Total Paid Value
Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces	135	10,000	1,210,000
Bed and Breakfasts	0	1,000	-
Charities	33	10,000	330,000
Private Childcare Nurseries	16	10,000	160,000
Private Childcare Nurseries	19	25,000	475,000
Regular Market Traders	70	2,183	152,837
Totals	273	68,183	2,467,837

Local Response - Economic Recovery Cell

1. Co-ordinating local intelligence and response
2. Delivery of major projects
3. Re-opening the town centre
4. Developing the response to emerging funding opportunities
5. Co-ordination with Sheffield City Region to inform and develop the Renewal Action Plan

Key Actions + Dates

- Renewal Action Plan
- Employment Support
- Business Centres — Century II: Planned start Spring 2021
- Forge Island Development
- Towns Fund: Submission to government likely 29th January 2021
- Rotherham Markets Redevelopment (including Library): Decision - Autumn 2020.
Potential start January 2022.

Rotherham Town Centre Public Realm

Site	Start	Finish
Bridgegate	September 2020	November 2020
College Street	January 2021	May 2021
Frederick Street	January 2021	June 2021
Howard Street	May 2021	July 2021
Effingham Street	February 2022	June 2022
Riverside Gardens Upper Mill	January 2022	September 2022

Town Centre Housing

Milestone	Completion Date
Start on site (enabling works)	Feb 2020
Main construction contract signed	Jul 2020
First tranches of Homes England funding (£4.3m)	Aug – Oct 2020
Demolition of Millfold House and associated buildings	Sep 2020
Final tranche of Sheffield City Region funding (£3.9m in total)	Autumn 2020
First home	Autumn 2021
Final tranches of Homes England funding (£1.4m)	Nov 2021 – Mar 2022
Wellgate Place	Early 2022
Westgate Riverside	Spring 2022
Millfold Rise	Summer 2022

Transportation Schemes

- **Junction Improvement at Coach Road, Greasbrough:** Commencing October 2020, completion Spring 2021.
- **The Whins Junction Improvement Scheme:** Commencing March/April 2021, completion by March 2022.
- **A630 Parkway Widening Scheme:** Awaiting Ministerial sign-off, once approved construction will commence immediately with a completion date of Spring 2022.
- **New Motorway Service Area M1 Junction 33**

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 20 October 2020

Report Title

Community Energy Switching Scheme

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

David Rhodes, Environment, Energy and Data Manager
01709 254017 david.rhodes@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Cabinet approved an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement process to identify a potential partner to develop a Community Energy Switching scheme on 20th July 2020. The scheme aims to support Rotherham residents to change to cheaper energy tariffs. The tender was launched on 4th September 2020 and bids must be submitted by 9th October 2020. A report will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2021 to obtain award approval following the tender evaluation and moderation process.

Recommendations

1. That Improving Places Select Commission note the progress of the procurement process and development of the Community Energy Switching Scheme.

Background Papers

Cabinet Minutes 17/12/18; Cabinet Minutes 16/09/19; Cabinet Minutes 20/07/20

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Cabinet – 17 December 2018

Cabinet – 16 September 2019

Cabinet – 20 July 2020

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 11 September 2019

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Community Energy Switching Scheme

1. Background

- 1.1 A community energy switching scheme would be open to all Rotherham residents and the aim of the scheme is to reduce the number of households paying high tariffs for gas and electricity, and consequently to reduce fuel poverty. Cabinet previously approved:
- 17th December 2018 – OJEU procurement process to identify a potential partner to develop a community energy switching scheme.
 - 16th September 2019 – the development of a community energy switching scheme in partnership with Robin Hood Energy (RHE).
 - 20th July 2020 – Cabinet approved a new OJEU procurement process to identify a potential partner to develop a Community Energy Switching Scheme.
- 1.2 Since RHE was awarded the contract in September 2019, a new management team has been enlisted and their business model reviewed and changed. As a result of their review, RHE could not agree to the specification and terms & conditions set out in the procurement process and so the contract was not awarded.
- 1.3 However, the tender process provided a valuable insight into market conditions, including discussions with Robin Hood Energy, as well as an analysis of feedback from other potential bidders that decided not to submit a bid for the contract.
- 1.4 This resulted in the specifications and terms & conditions being amended and Cabinet approval for the contract to be re-tendered on 20th July 2020.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The challenge of fuel poverty remains and tendering a community energy switching scheme still represents a key opportunity to offer cheaper tariffs to a higher number of residents.
- 2.2 Following the previous tender exercise, RHE were not awarded the contract as they could not agree to the specification and terms & conditions set out in the procurement process.
- 2.3 Any changes to the terms & conditions would have been a material change that would not comply with procurement regulations, and so a new tender exercise was required to identify a scheme partner.

2.4 The tender was launched on 4th September 2020 with a closing date for bids to be submitted by 9th October 2020. A report will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2021 to obtain award approval following the tender evaluation and moderation process.

2.5 Key elements of the new contract specification now include:

- a. Removal of void Council properties due to the difficulties this caused potential partners.
- b. Removal of the requirement of the tariff to be in the top 20 available tariffs on the market. This requirement was deemed unworkable in the volatile energy market.
- c. Inclusion of quality KPIs based on OFGEM compliant reporting requirements for licensed suppliers as detailed below;

Performance Indicator	Reporting Period
Number of customers (meters) switched	Monthly
Number of pre-payment meters	Quarterly
Renewal rates and product breakdown	Quarterly
% below Prepayment Meter Price Cap	Quarterly
d. i. Complaints received including a % breakdown with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billing • Customer Services • Payment Issues • Customer Establishment • Metering 	Quarterly
Complaints resolved within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same day / next day • Within 4 weeks • Within 8 weeks 	Quarterly
Number of smart meters installed	Quarterly
% of invoices that are billed to actual readings	Quarterly
Number of AMR meters / Percentage of Rotherham portfolio	Quarterly
% of invoices billed to schedule	Quarterly

Inclusion of a 'rate rollover promise' which renews customers onto the cheapest comparable tariff at the end of their contract term (rather than rolling them onto an expensive standard variable tariff). This will be reviewed following responses from the market analysis.

- e. The requirement to provide a ‘green tariff’ from renewable energy.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 20th July 2020, two options were considered to take forward the community energy switching scheme:
 - Option 1 – Amend the specification and terms & conditions following a market engagement process to attract bids and re-tender the community energy switching scheme contract.
 - Option 2 – Develop and run an internal independent community energy scheme based on assisting residents to change tariffs through comparison websites approved by OFGEM.
- 3.2 The recommended proposal was to take forward both options, re-tendering a revised contract community energy switching scheme contract for the longer term, and in the shorter term running an internal switching scheme in parallel with the procurement process.
- 3.3 Since the recommended proposals were presented to Cabinet on the 20th July 2020, the primary focus has been on the re-tendering exercise, as this has the potential to impact positively on a greater number of residents.
- 3.4 In the meantime, the team has also commenced internally-led activities, starting with the delivery of outcomes for the National Energy Association (NEA) grant for the Smart Meter Scheme. This scheme communicates the benefits of smart meters to residents aged 65 and over in Rotherham, which runs until the 1st December 2020. The data, networks, contacts and reputation from the scheme will support any future community energy switching scheme.
- 3.5 Work will continue to expand the above activities to encourage and assist residents to change tariffs through approved comparison websites, until a partner has been secured to deliver a Community Energy Switching Scheme, while recognising the challenges of the ongoing pandemic which limits the range of marketing opportunities that are currently available.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 No additional consultations have been carried.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The timeframe for the procurement process and development of the scheme, including the launch date is:

Tender issued	04/09/2020
Deadline for receipt of tender queries	25/09/2020
Deadline to respond to tender queries	02/10/2020

Tender return date	09/10/2020
Tender Evaluation	14/10/20
Tender Moderation	21/10/20
Governance/ Approvals procedure – including submission to RMBC Cabinet scheduled for 25/01/2021	10/10/2020 – 25/01/2021
Notification of award	26/01/2021
Standstill period	27/01/2021 – 05/02/2021
Contract commencement	01/03/2021

5.2 The contract will be monitored and managed in accordance with the KPIs and management reports detailed in the specification.

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

6.1 The revenue implications for a community energy switching scheme were considered as part of the Report on the matter to Cabinet in September 2019. The scheme as designed proposed 2 community energy officers be appointed and part funded from the revenue returns obtained from the utility partner. Since the abandonment of the scheme with RHE the financial model has had to be amended and the budget has been reduced to fund 1 community energy officer together with a small marketing, communication and administration budget. The post has already been recruited to and is being funded from within the Service's approved revenue budget.

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

7.1 The comments indicated in the Cabinet Report approved on 20/07/20 are reiterated here. These were the following:

- As with the previous exercise, any re-procurement should be conducted as a concession opportunity. If the value to the successful operator is over £5m, then the Council would need to comply with the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016. If the value is below that threshold, those regulations would not apply. However, the procurement procedure would still need to meet normal public procurement requirements of transparency, equal treatment etc.
- As with the previous procurement exercise, Legal Services should be instructed to prepare a suitable contract for this procurement exercise.

In relation to the temporary internally delivered switching scheme:

- The Council would have the power to operate this scheme non-commercially (i.e. just with a view to covering its internal costs, with no profits) under its charging powers under the section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- If the Council wished to operate this scheme for commercial purposes (undefined legally, but this is generally understood to be 'with a view to a profit') under section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council would be required to operate the scheme through a company. The Council would not have the power to operate the scheme commercially in its own name. That company's profits would be subject to Corporation Tax like any other similar company. Also, any support provided by the Council to the company (e.g. loans, use of staff etc.) would need to be provided on an arm's length basis to ensure there are no breaches of state aid law. The company could still receive non-arm's length aid from the Council up to €200,000 over a rolling 3-year period without breaching state aid rules.
- The Council or the company (as relevant, depending on which one operates the scheme as discussed above) would need to obtain necessary Ofgem licences.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The scheme should benefit households to reduce the cost of energy and reduce fuel poverty.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be updated as more data, information and actions are obtained.

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 The implications for partners are positive with a service for residents and the reduction of fuel poverty.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 The Council or supplier cannot guarantee that a given tariff will always be the cheapest. Online comparison sites may (but not always) provide the best saving, however, a community energy switching scheme is aimed at residents that are unable or not confident enough to switch energy providers. The energy supply market is volatile and the cheapest market price can be superseded the next day by another provider.

12.2 There is a reputational risk for the Council if there are complaints about billing and the Council may receive criticism for any price increases set by the supplier. Customer service and customer retention performance would be regularly monitored.

12.3 There is a financial risk to the Council if the number of residents that sign up to the scheme is insufficient to cover the staff, marketing and administration costs. The energy cap introduced by the Government/OFGEM will increase the risk and householders may believe the cap results in the best saving. Marketing and communication will address this.

12.4 This will be a concession contract, so the majority of the risk is with the supplier.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

David Rhodes, Environment, Energy and Data Manager
01709 254017 david.rhodes@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Richard Young	25/09/20
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	01/10/20
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	30/09/20
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

Report Author:

David Rhodes, Environment, Energy and Data Manager
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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Improving Places Select Commission
	DATE:	20 October 2020
	LEAD OFFICER:	Katherine Harclerode Governance Advisor 01709 254532
	TITLE:	Updated Work Programme 2020-21 Municipal Year
1. Background		
1.1	<p>The remit of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) is to undertake scrutiny activity in respect of all matters pertaining to the borough of Rotherham as a place. In broad terms, this remit relates to business and economic development, employment, emergency planning, environment, housing, climate change, leisure, culture and tourism, transport and highways, as well as regulatory services such as trading standards and environmental health. The breadth of functions and services that fall within the Commission's remit is significant. The way in which the Commission discharges its scrutiny activity is a matter for itself, having regard to the provisions of the Constitution and any direction from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.</p>	
1.2	<p>Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of the borough.</p>	
1.3	<p>The IPSC has chosen to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work.</p>	
1.4	<p>The IPSC has six scheduled meetings over the course of 2020/21, representing a maximum of 18 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 3 hours per meeting. Members therefore had to be selective in their choice of items for the work programme. The following key principles of effective scrutiny were considered in determining the work programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve. • Value-added – Items had to have the potential to 'add value' to the work of the council and its partners. • Ambition – the Programme does not shy away from scrutinising issues that are of greatest concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental well being of local communities. 	

1.5	<p>Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility – The Work Programme maintains a degree of flexibility as required to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration during the year and to accommodate any further work that falls within the remit of this Commission. • Timing – The Programme has been designed to ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, its findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. The Work Programme also helps safeguard against duplication of work undertaken elsewhere. <p>The revised plan avails itself of a number of possible modes as appropriate, including but by no means limited to items on scheduled meeting agendas, Task Groups, and meetings with service Officers and Partners.</p> <p>In order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to which the Panel can make a direct contribution, the IPSC has chosen to take some “information only” items outside of formal Commission meetings, for example, by email.</p> <p>The Programme does need to maintain flexibility to accommodate additional or urgent items that may emerge during the year, and, if items are added, this may necessitate a review and re-prioritisation of the Work Programme. Furthermore, the scheduling of items may require some flexibility to take in to account the constraints on the capacity of officers and services currently responding to the active Covid-19 Crisis.</p> <p>With the postponed Whole Council election now scheduled to be held in May 2021, no meetings will be held in April 2021 during the pre-election period. The work of the Commission is therefore going to need to be completed by the meeting planned to be held in March 2021 before a new Council is elected for the 2021-22 municipal year.</p>
2. Key Issues	
2.1	<p>Some areas of recent scrutiny work that the Commission has previously completed may need to be re-examined in view of Covid-19, such as the implementation of changes by Dignity in respect of bereavement services. Other topics must be considered keeping in mind additional complexities that attend the pandemic, such as a cost/benefit analysis of Council buildings whose uses have diminished with the advent of working from home. Furthermore, the coming year is expected to see significant progress made on the Forge Island development and broader town centre public realm and housing improvements. These will continue to be matters of great interest to Members.</p>
2.2	<p>The work programme from 2019-20 had a number of items remaining which have formed the foundation of the 2020-21 work programme. These items were included as part of the initial compilation in Appendix 1 to this report.</p>
2.3	<p>The IPSC is free to determine its work programme as it sees fit. Good practice in respect of scrutiny work planning would involve seeking a range of suggestions from the public, partner organisations, officers and Members for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.</p>
2.4	<p>Whilst formal conversations with Cabinet Members and officers continue to take place, Members should be clear about expected outcomes, how realistic expectations are and the impact of their decisions on their wider work programme and support time. Members are free to incorporate into their work programme any other issues they think should be subject to scrutiny over the course of the year, with the same considerations in mind.</p>

3. Key Actions and Timelines	
3.1	Pending approval at this meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, formal discussions will take place as needed with the relevant Cabinet Members and Link Officers in respect of the revised Work Programme for 2020-21. Following these discussions, the work programme will be updated and presented at the next meeting in December 2020, for endorsement.
4. Recommendations	
4.1	That the updated Work Programme be approved.

Appendix 1 - Outline Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
9 June 2020	Housing Strategy Progress Update
	Initial Work Programme 2020-21
14 July 2020	Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy Update
	Housing Income and Service Charges Update
	Revised Work Programme 2020-21
Aug 2020 Workshop	Housing Maintenance and Repairs
8 September 2020	Town Centre Update
	Bereavement Services Update
20 October 2020	Economic Recovery
	Energy Switching Scheme
Nov/Dec 2020 Working Groups	MIP Review – Cllr Ken Wyatt, Chair Flooding Response – Cllr David Sheppard, Chair Building Use – Cllr Jeanette Mallinder, Chair
8 December 2020	Allotments Self-Management
	Cultural Strategy Implementation
	Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report
Jan/Feb 2021 Working Group	Homes Allocation Process – Cllr Rose McNeely
2 February 2021	Rotherham MBC Code of Practice for Highway Inspection and Assessment
	Council Plan Performance Measures - Exception Reporting
	Highways Maintenance
	Clean Air Zone
16 March 2021	Transportation – Active Travel, Transforming Cities
	Aids and Adaptations Tenant Scrutiny Review
	CCTV Update

