

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time :- Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 10.00 a.m.
Venue:- Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
Membership:- Councillors Clark (Chair), T Collingham (Vice-Chair), Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, A Carter, Cooksey, Cowen, Elliott, Pitchley, Tinsley, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

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

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 16 March 2022 and 20 April 2022 (Pages 5 - 26)

To consider the minutes of the previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 16 March 2022, and the 20 April 2022, and to approve them 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.

Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny

In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review in 2016, the following items are submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 20 June 2022. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

6. Finance Update (Pages 27 - 45)

Cabinet Portfolio: Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance

Strategic Directorate: Finance and Customer Services

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022/2025), Action Plan (2022/2023) and Annual Report (2021/2022) (Pages 47 - 151)

Cabinet Portfolio: - Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance

Strategic Directorate: Assistant Chief Executive

For Discussion/Decision: -

8. To review the recommendations from OSMB following receipt of the RSCP Board review (Pages 153 - 196)

To review the recommendations as discussed at the OSMB meeting held on 27 May 2022 following receipt of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report. These are listed below for your information:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Member and Democratic Support Panel, in conjunction with each of the Council's political groups draws up proposals in order to co-ordinate the training plan with regard to CSE and to maximise member attendance at training events.
- 3) That work be carried out with the Borough's Town and Parish Council's to raise Town and Parish Councillors awareness around issues related to CSE.
- 4) That as part of the overall scrutiny work programming processes that clear expectations are set to determine which reports will come to the Improving Lives Select Commission and that there is full partnership engagement with regard to these reports (including on health check issues).
- 5) That scrutiny carries out further work to examine the link between poverty and deprivation and all issues related to children's safeguarding, and in particular to issues around CSE.

- 6) That clear plans, with defined timescales be developed in order to increase awareness and confidence with regard to issues surrounding CSE be developed in consultation with all partners.
- 7) That clear plans, with defined timescales be developed in order to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to how the “voice of the survivor” is taken into account of and listened to across the partnership.
- 8) That work is carried out across the partnership to provide clarity with regard to processes surrounding the reporting of and escalation of concerns regarding CSE.
- 9) That work is carried out across the partnership to provide clarity with regard to processes regarding performance monitoring around CSE.

9. Operation Linden (Pages 197 - 246)

To consider the future monitoring arrangement in respect of the implementation of the IOPC report regarding Operation Linden.

For Information/Monitoring: -

10. Work Programme (Pages 247 - 252)

To consider the Board’s Work Programme for 2022-2023.

11. Work in Progress - Select Commissions

To receive updates from the Chairs of the Select Commissions on work undertaken and planned for the future.

12. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 June 2022 - 31 August 2022 (Pages 253 - 261)

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 June 2022 to 31 August 2022.

13. Call-in Issues

To consider any issues referred for call-in from recent Cabinet meetings.

14. Urgent Business

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

15. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on Wednesday 6 July 2022 at 10am at Rotherham Town Hall.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kemp." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 16 March 2022

Present:- Councillor T. Collingham (in the Chair); Councillors Baker-Rogers, A Carter, Cooksey, Cowen and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baum-Dixon, Burnett, Elliott, Pitchley and Wyatt.

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

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

120. WELCOME FROM COUNCILLOR COLLINGHAM, VICE- CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

In the absence of Councillor Maggi Clark due to illness, Cllr Tom Collingham welcomed everyone to the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in support of the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge. After an absence of two years, the Chair was delighted to welcome members of Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC), councillors and officers to the meeting.

121. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

The Leader, Councillors Brookes and Cusworth.

122. INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION FROM ROTHERHAM YOUTH CABINET - CLIMATE CHANGE

Josie Brown from Rotherham Youth Cabinet assumed the Chair for the meeting.

She began by welcoming everyone to the annual takeover meeting and introduced a short film to outline the work of RYC. The Youth Cabinet was made up of young people aged from 11 – 18 years, working together to make a positive difference to young people across Rotherham. It was highlighted that RYC undertook consultation, research and campaigns to improve services for young people. This included mental health provision in schools, transportation and tackling hate crime. Amongst its manifesto priorities for the forthcoming year were climate change, mental health and tackling homelessness and poverty. An overview of RYC's members' regional work and in the National Youth Parliament was given, including attendance at the COP 26 conference to give a presentation showcasing the impact of climate change and work with the Department for Education's sustainability climate board.

Prior to questions being taken, Curtis Yip outlined the rationale behind the

choice of climate change as the focus of the meeting and welcomed the opportunity to discuss with Councillors and Officer, the authority's progress towards achieving net zero.

123. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH OFFICERS

The Chair invited questions from RYC members to Cabinet Members, members of the Senior Leadership Team and officers.

1. What is being done within schools and council buildings to reduce the amount of energy being used? How can this be reduced further?

The Acting Head of Change and Innovation invited the Assistant Director for Education to respond. It was outlined that the Council worked collaboratively with schools and used its influence as it was key to promote the impacts of climate change whether in terms of curriculum or in the assets they used. Schools were supported to work in a more energy efficient way with all new buildings using technologies or low energy solutions to make sure that they were sustainable and working towards carbon neutrality. Retrospective energy saving solutions were also applied to older buildings. Asset Management supported schools and academies with whom it has a service level agreement to improve energy efficiency and manage utility contracts.

Recently the government produced its draft policy in this area, [Sustainability & Climate Change: A draft strategy for the education & children's services systems \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92424/sustainability_and_climate_change_a_draft_strategy_for_the_education_and_childrens_services_systems.pdf), to inform future planning in this area and there was an expectation that both academies/maintained schools would reduce energy use in the long term to support climate change challenges.

The Head of Asset Management described how energy efficiency had been a priority for the Council for some time, The Council had reduced energy consumption and CO₂ emissions from operational by 65% from 14,589 tonnes CO₂ in 2014/15 to 5,034 tonnes CO₂ in 20/21. In 2019 a target was adopted by the Council to reduce carbon emissions from Council controlled assets and services to net zero by 2030. A heat decarbonisation plan had been developed, that focussed on converting fossil fuel heating systems to low carbon alternatives and at the same time reducing the electricity capacity of building by insulation, improved controls, lighting upgrades (LED) and installing on site renewable energy where feasible (including solar units on roofs). The Council approved a budget of £6.4m to decarbonise operational buildings. The budget will be used to secure additional Government funding and integrated with maintenance and capital programme budget to ensure decarbonisation was carried out efficiently and real progress towards net zero could be achieved by 2030.

2. What is the plan to combat plastic pollution across Rotherham and how is local action promoted?

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment noted that the Council should lead by example to minimise single use plastics. To that end, work was underway to establish the extent of single use plastics across the authority so action can be taken to reduce this. As a result of this activity, Council catering facilities were using wooden cutlery, using more glass-based products, encouraging refills and minimising waste packaging. However, it was noted that whilst single-use plastics were a concern, plastic were used in a range of products such as clothing and medicines which added to wider pollution. Consideration needed to be given how these issues were to be addressed long-term.

The Strategic Director clarified the Council's communication campaign across social media and other streams, such as newsletters, to raise awareness. He welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Youth Cabinet to discuss on how plastic pollution can be tackled.

As an example of the Council's commitment to tackling plastic pollution, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment outlined that recycled plastics were being used as resurfacing material for roads. The product was carbon neutral and locally produced.

It was noted that single use plastics were being used in the Council Chamber and suggested that action should be taken to introduce more environmentally friendly products for use in Council buildings.

3. Locally, how much waste is being recycled? How do you plan on improving this?

The Assistant Director for Community Safety outlined that that Rotherham was performing relatively well compared with its South Yorkshire neighbours in the proportion of waste that was recycled. This was currently running at around 45%. It was noted that as more people were working from home during the pandemic that while recycling rates had increased, there was also an increase in general waste.

The Assistant Director highlighted that there were a number of changes to national legislation as detailed in the Environment Bill which would have an impact locally on waste and recycling. These measures included 'producers pay' whereby manufacturers and retailers would pay for disposal of packaging which is anticipated to reduce the amount of plastic used; a deposit scheme for return of recyclable products and separate collection of food waste. In Rotherham, food waste was already composted in the waste treatments facility so discussions were underway to clarify if Rotherham would be exempt from this measure.

The Council was developing a communication strategy to raise awareness across the general population, targeting young people in particular. It was noted that reducing the impact of waste on the climate

was essential however, key to this was the reduction in consumption.

Clarification was sought what activities the Council had planned to mark the International Day of Recycling. It was noted that the Manvers facilities would be running events and promotions. The Youth Cabinet were invited to be involved in raising awareness and sharing key messages around future events.

A question was asked about the amount of waste recycled from Council buildings. It was outlined that the Council produced relatively low levels of waste through initiative such as 'paperless' working.

Further details were sought on how the compost from waste treatment and garden waste collections was utilised. It was outlined that it was sold for larger scale use for agriculture or landscaping.

It was clarified that 45% of total waste is recycled. The Local Authority was legally obliged to track the waste noting where recycled material was distributed and how non-recyclable waste was disposed. It was noted that waste contamination such as items placed in the wrong bin or food contamination is a significant issue which impacts on recycling rates.

Details were sought if there were plans to support textile recycling as a means to tackle the impact of fast fashion? In response it was outlined there were no plans to establish a specific facility in Rotherham as textile could be recycled at local recycling facilities, through charity shops and clothes banks. However, it was noted that there should be wider awareness about fast fashion to minimise consumption.

4. Most schools do not have recycling facilities, what is the council doing to make recycling bins accessible for schools and is it possible to provide more recycling bins in streets and public spaces

The Assistant Director for Education noted that there was mixed practice in schools. It was observed that there were several schools which had developed policies, demonstrated good social values, had good recycling facilities and separation of waste, and participated in 'eco' awards scheme such as 'Keep Britain Tidy'. The Council was influencing schools wherever possible through its waste policies, citing work in Thorpe Hesley and Eastwood. It was noted that there was a strong level of engagement in the primary sector, however, it was observed that there was more to be done in secondary schools and further education establishments.

It was thought that the DfE strategy would assist in setting out expectations for schools. The Assistant Director gave a commitment to promoting this agenda in schools.

It was noted that most schools have commercial contracts for their waste collection, so the Council has limited influence on these contracts. However, it was anticipated that forthcoming Environment Bill would have

a positive effect in as much as businesses, including schools, will have to contract for recycling services. The Council was sharing these developments with schools. It was also noted that it made business sense to recycle as it cost less money to recycle than to dispose of general waste.

Clarification was sought on future plans for on-street recycling. It was outlined that should a deposit return scheme be introduced it was likely that the public would return their recyclable waste directly so the need for on-street facilities would be lessened. Further direction from Government was awaited.

A suggestion was made to incentivise students in secondary schools to recycle. Examples of schemes run elsewhere in country were given. Citing the forthcoming deposit return scheme, it was thought that this could be used as a basis for incentives as there was a monetary return on the waste. A commitment was given to looking into this further.

It was anticipated that the Environment Bill would come into force in 2023-24. It was noted that Government was consulting with stakeholders regarding how the legislation would be implemented.

5. How is the council encouraging schools and academies to have a consistent and dedicated climate curriculum and what plans do you have to improve climate education for young people across Rotherham, who is responsible for implementing these plans and by when?

The Assistant Director for Education outlined that the national curriculum was set by the DfE. There was some flexibility in parts of the curriculum such as the Personal, Health and Social Education and Citizenship which could focus on the wider impact of climate change and net zero. There was also scope within the life sciences and geography to cover relevant issues.

Referring to a previous question, the Assistant Director referred to some of the exciting developments within primary schools and examples of community-based approaches taken to raise awareness and cascade knowledge. The learning from this initiative has been shared with other schools in the wider multi-academy trusts. It was noted that the Strategic Director and officers met regularly with the Regional Schools Commissioner and there were opportunities to ask for this agenda to be prioritised and raise key issues.

Clarification was sought if Rotherham could develop its own award scheme, citing the Climate Leader's Award as outlined in the DfE's draft strategy. It was noted that Calderdale's Youth Cabinet had develop its own scheme that had been rolled out in schools. The Assistant Director indicated that he was happy to meet with members of the Youth Cabinet to look at how this could be applied in Rotherham.

6. How do you plan on involving the wider community ie adults, in tackling climate change and how are you raising awareness about the need to recycle and how to recycle?

The Council was developing a communication and engagement plan to canvas views from the public. The Council had set two ambitious targets for the Council to be net zero by 2030 and the wider borough to be net zero by 2040. The consultation process undertaken by the Council on its Council Plan indicated that there was a very strong view from the public that climate change was an important issue. However, this was not full understanding of the terminology around 'net zero'. There was a commitment to engage with communities to make it meaningful. Examples were given of engagement with community groups including the Youth Cabinet.

Wider work with the region were cited and assurance was given that best practice would be sought on a local, regional and national level. Work was underway with Council staff to promote their understanding of carbon literacy and increase knowledge. The value of ongoing engagement with forums such as the Youth Cabinet was cited.

Clarification was sought on what action would be taken to engage with Black, Asian and Minority Communities on these issues. In response, it was noted that existing networks would be involved and suggestions on how this work could be enhanced were welcomed.

7. What action is taking place to improve the reliability, accessibility and affordability of public transport given the huge role it will play in decarbonising our travel?

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment cited the tram-train network as a significant development in decarbonising transport. The Council was committed to working with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to pursue this agenda. It was noted that the MCA worked with the private bus companies regarding routes to ensure that there was coverage across the sub-region including those routes which may not be commercially viable. The Council was bidding for infrastructure projects to install bus lanes, a further tram-train stop and a new station on the Waverly development to improve reliability. It was noted that these developments would take some time to come on stream.

The Chief Executive outlined the disappointment of the South Yorkshire MCA at the amount of funding available from national Government for the sub-region. It was presenting a considerable challenge to maintain the reliability of current public networks and support the development of environmentally sustainable transport in the future.

It was noted that members of the Youth Cabinet also sat on the MCA Youth Cabinet and had influenced the introduction of the 'Zoom Day Travel Pass'. This was a concessionary pass for 18-21 years which, due to lack of funding, was not forecast to renew. It was noted by a Youth

Cabinet member that the free travel for under 18s was also very popular and a positive initiative to decarbonise transport for younger people. It was asked if the Council could advocate through the MCA and other forums, for their continued use.

The Chief Executive reiterated the challenges of keeping the network running had to be the key priority. She noted with regret that the lack of funding had meant that initiatives that would have been supported could no longer be committed to.

8. What has/is being done to improve the distribution of electric car charging points across Rotherham to ensure a smooth transition to net zero?

It was outlined that the distribution of charging points was key to encouraging more people to use electric vehicles (EV). The impact of EV was highlighted with a single vehicle over a 12-month period saving 2000kg of carbon. Therefore, if more people were to use EVs the impact could be significant.

Rotherham had been proactive in the introduction of charging points with 30 fast chargers for public use. There were an additional 32 for use for council staff and council vehicles. A number of these are net zero drawing power from solar panels.

£647k has been approved to extend the infrastructure for on-street hubs or hubs in the community. Plans were in place to introduce ultra-rapid points. It was also highlighted that partners had developed charging points for staff or customers. Several supermarkets had installed publicly accessible points as part of planning obligations.

The Council was keen to collaborate to ensure that there was a wide coverage of charging points across the borough and these were evenly distributed.

The development of street hubs was welcomed as it was anticipated that this would encourage more use of the electric element of hybrid vehicles. A further question was asked if the charging points used renewable energy. In response, it was outlined that this was encouraged as far as possible. Information was sought if the Council had any influence on the inappropriate use of free charging points. It was noted that Council charging points were metered for use. It was the responsibility of retailers to determine what action they wish to take to minimise inappropriate use of their facilities.

9. What green jobs are available for young people to either take as a vocational pathway or being created in Rotherham?

The wider skills agenda had created opportunities for “green jobs”. Rotherham was taking an innovative approach, for example building carbon neutral houses on the Waverly development. It was noted that the

new school in Waverly had been built to low-carbon standards. It was emphasised that the Council did not have statutory responsibility for this area however, worked with schools to influence the skills agenda. The “North Star” science initiative was bringing schools and industry together to work on projects that would lead to new jobs which would be aligned to low carbon or net zero targets. ‘T’ (technical) level qualifications would be introduced in some Rotherham in the next 18 months. These qualifications would be aligned to career pathways, particularly engineering. The MCA was developing its skills agenda which would reflect to its net zero ambitions. It was also noted that the National Career Service and associated websites, could direct young people to careers in low-carbon industry or services as a career option. For example, a career’s fayre was being hosted at Magna with jobs linked to low carbon industry, science and technology and the environment.

10. Can you explain what is being done in Rotherham to tackle the nature emergency and improve wildlife recovery?

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment highlighted that the Council had developed plans to address this issue and gave some practical examples as illustration.

- The work around Forge Island had found an otter living in the river which demonstrated that the river had a diverse eco-system.
- Money had been committed from the budget to continue the wildflowers planting by roadsides.
- Further discussions had taken place with ecologists to establish how planting can promote biodiversity. Additional funding had been allocated to tree-planting, with over 22,000 trees planted over the winter period by the Council and its partners.

The Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion outlined the other benefits of tree planting, namely soil enhancement, carbon capture, flood prevention, shading in urban areas as well as a positive impact on health and well-being.

11. How is the council working with other groups and organisations to tackle the intersectional factors around climate change?

The Council was committed to engaging with communities to ensure that action to tackle climate change and transitioning to net zero was done fairly and inclusively so that existing inequalities were not exacerbated. Examples were given of elected members working on local ward priorities.

Through her work with other local authorities and in coalition with organisations such as Friends of the Earth, the Chief Executive outlined examples of how Councils could influence and support Government policy. There was proactive work with Government to examine how pilots and funding streams can be used creatively however, necessarily there

would be areas of work that could not be progressed because other essential services and statutory responsibilities had to be prioritised. It was noted that a major challenge was to deliver the climate strategy within existing financial priorities and manage expectations accordingly.

It was highlighted that the Council had different roles at different levels. It had the power to deliver its climate strategy in areas where it had direct influence. It also had a role as a community leader to articulate its ambitions to the MCA, the region and Government. In terms of maximising private investment to create jobs, the authority could influence the debate but ultimately decisions would be made against the context of national policy and commercial interests. The challenge of delivering the decarbonisation agenda, was to ensure that issues within the Council's control could be delivered at scale and within financial resources and for areas outside its direct remit, for the Council to use its influence effectively.

12. Are there plans for schools and council buildings to have consistent approach to green technology such as solar panels?

It was noted that the Council did not have direct responsibility for the installation of green technology in existing school buildings. However, for new builds, these would need to be compliant with environmental standards, energy efficiency and use of sustainable materials. Some of the multi-academy trusts would have existing plans to install green technologies such as installation of LED lighting.

In respect of Council buildings, each asset was examined to see how green technology could be applied. The Head of Asset Management referred to an earlier response outlining the Council's decarbonisation targets. An investment of £1m had been allocated to develop a solar farm to offset energy use elsewhere. It was anticipated that this development would generate considerable financial savings as well as supporting the Council's net zero targets.

13. How are you ensuring that council houses are environmentally friendly and energy efficient?

The Strategic Director for Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health outlined that a fifth of overall carbon emissions were from homes. The Council owned and managed more than 20,000 homes (17% of total), therefore it was important that that council homes were as energy efficient as possible. This would contribute to meeting the net zero carbon target and help residents who were affected by fuel poverty and by rising energy bills.

The Council had invested into its housing stock in recent years, including programmes to replace boilers and district heating, lighting systems, home insulation, windows and doors, all of which improve energy efficiency. Partners were also required to have environmentally friendly waste disposal methods. Advice and support were provided to tenants on

how to reduce the amount of energy they use in their homes.

The Council has also successfully bid for approximately £3m from central government, to contribute towards a programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes in East Dene and Maltby. Further work was planned to focus on least energy efficient housing stock.

It was highlighted that over half of council homes did not reach EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) band C or better. To address this, the Council had developed a 'Housing Roadmap to Net Zero' to inform the Council of the type of works needed (for example air source heat pumps, solar panels and additional insulation). It had also identified what investment would be required to deliver this and how this can be achieved within allocated budgets.

It was noted that new Council homes built or acquired would have a higher EPC rating and levels of thermal efficiency. Consideration had been given to ensure that new homes are 'zero carbon' or 'zero carbon ready'.

Clarification was sought on the number of council houses that were properly insulated and had efficient boilers. Anecdotal evidence was provided which suggested that some people living in existing stock had inefficient heating and damp houses. In response, details were given of work undertaken to improve insulation. It was noted that around 12% of complaints across the stock concerned damp. Work was being undertaken with damp specialists to identify how this can be tackled. It was noted that boilers were replaced on a planned basis.

14. What consideration has been made to introducing alternatives to single use plastics in school canteens and public buildings, for example leisure centre vending machines, cafes etc

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment recognised that there was more to be done in this area and a commitment was included in the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan to tackle single use plastics across council buildings and events.

It noted the schools determined the requirements and specification of their catering contract either with the Council's Catering Services or other private sector providers. It was noted that school councils and the Youth Cabinet could have an influence on the use of disposable plastics. The Catering Service was working proactively with schools to minimise the common types of single-use plastics in the catering environment as appropriate. Similarly, the local leisure centres fell under an existing long-term contract with the private sector and so the Council had limited control over the purchasing of catering items.

However, within its own buildings and events, the Council had already made some good progress across our Culture, Sport & Tourism services,

such as Clifton Park Museum, Country Parks, and the Civic theatre. The changes that had already been made at these sites to replace plastics with paper or wooden alternatives.

The Senior Governance Advisor summed up the next steps. The notes from the meeting would be collated and the Youth Cabinet would meet to determine any formal recommendations they would wish to make to the Council for a response. Some points that had emerged were highlighted that could be the basis for recommendations:

- That Youth Cabinet are invited to visit the waste treatment centre at Manvers.
- That the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment meets with members of the Youth Cabinet to discuss plastic waste /pollution and action to minimise single use plastics
- That the Assistant Director for Education works with the Youth Cabinet to look at the feasibility of developing an environmental awards scheme for schools
- That Council officers work with the Youth Cabinet to strengthen its engagement strategy with young people, specifically young people from BAME communities or other hard to reach groups.

In summary, Cllr Tom Collingham thanked everyone for their attendance, contributions and amazing questions. He looked forward to working with the Youth Cabinet on developing their recommendations and report which would be submitted to this Board in due course. In addition to the draft recommendations, he asked that there was an examination of preceding years' takeover challenges and a report submitted on their impact in Rotherham.

Resolved:

1. To note the outcomes from the CCTOC discussions.
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny outlining the recommendations from the Youth Cabinet arising from this meeting.
3. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny outlining the outcomes and impact of previous Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenges.

124. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 11am on Wednesday 23 March 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 20 April 2022

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors T. Collingham, Baker-Rogers, Cowen, A Carter, Cooksey, Elliott, Wyatt and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baum-Dixon, Burnett and Pitchley.

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

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 23 March 2022 be approved as a true record.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

**18. OPERATION LINDEN - LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
UPDATE FROM SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE**

At the meeting held on 12 January 2022, Council considered a motion regarding the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) report *Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations*. It resolved that the progress of South Yorkshire Police against IOPC recommendations published in November 2021 be regularly monitored, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

The Chair welcomed Deputy Chief Constable Tim Forber and Chief Superintendent Steve Chapman from South Yorkshire Police who had been invited to the meeting to give an update.

A report from the Deputy Chief Constable outlining South Yorkshire Police's response to the IOPC recommendations for improvement was considered with a formal record of actions. The IOPC report was also submitted as background information to this item.

The Deputy Chief Constable introduced the report highlighting that the IOPC recommendations had been accepted in totality by SYP. In order to address the issues raised in its report, the approach that South Yorkshire Police had adopted in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and other areas of offending, was to focus on continuous improvement. This ensured that learning was embedded, and consideration could be given to the capacity of the force to respond.

The Deputy Chief Constable gave an overview of its thematic response to the recommendations:

- VICTIMS – the provision of quality victim care, informed by a trauma-led approach in line with the rights of victims laid down in the Victim Code.
- COMMUNITIES - trust and confidence built with local communities.
- PARTNERS – continuous improvements to partner collaboration and effective information sharing.
- OUR PEOPLE - ensure SYP staff have regular training and their skills were up to date.
- PROCESSES – compliance with Home Office Counting Rules when recording crimes related to CSE

The importance of engaging with communities to ‘spot the signs’ to ensure that children and young people were protected was stressed. This activity was supported through an ongoing cycle of campaigns working with professionals, businesses and the wider public. An example was given of work in hotels to raise awareness of the signs of abuse.

Examples of work with partners were outlined. Independent Sexual Violence Advisors have provided training to specialist frontline officers and further work was planned with first responders to enable them to work with victims sensitively. The Child Exploitation Tactical Group was a co-located multi agency partnership which was able to deal effectively with evidence and intelligence relating to CSE. It was noted that Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report (RSCP) had cited the work of the tactical group as an exemplar of good practice. An invitation was extended to Council Members to see the work of the Evolve Team.

SYP had reviewed the capability and capacity of the force and undertaken a training needs analysis to ensure that more officers were trained to respond to serious sexual assault at a specialist level. It was also noted that all SYP officers would attend its “Child Matters” training which focussed on wider child safeguarding issues and awareness of trauma-led approaches. An invitation to attend the training was extended to the Board.

The challenges of ensuring that crime data accuracy complied with Home Office counting rules were highlighted. It was outlined that crime data was subject to regular auditing to ensure required standards were met. However, IT issues remained a challenge as there was no ideal record management system to record and capture the nuance and complexity of CSE, particularly at the 'grooming stage'. This was an area for development which was being looked at with IT specialists.

In concluding his presentation, the Deputy Chief Constable referred to the recent review of processes and agencies in Rotherham undertaken by RSCP. However, whilst the draft findings of the review were positive, it was stated that South Yorkshire Police would not 'rest on its laurels'. It was noted that the pattern of offending seen during years of the Operation Linden investigation had changed significantly with online abuse now presenting greater and more complex challenges. It was highlighted that the police alongside the Council and other agencies and communities, had a collective responsibility to protect children and young people.

Clarification was sought on victims input into victim's support and care and how their experience was quality checked. It was outlined that at the start of Operation Linden, victims and survivors were initially reluctant to engage with SYP because of their trauma and often negative experience of policing. However, through the establishment of a victims and survivors panel by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2014, levels of engagement have improved slowly. The panel has informed SYP's approach and response. Chief Superintendent Chapman outlined the approach taken with all complainants or victims of crime and its consistent application has increased victim's satisfaction levels. The police case management system 'Connect' was able to track investigations if the victim has not been given an update within 28 days and action taken as appropriate. District Commanders had oversight of this process.

SYP and RMBC had sought the views of victims and survivors in cases that had not received a positive outcome (i.e. a charge or summons) through an independent agency, REMEDI, to see if improvements could be made to the way agencies had responded. This feedback had been used to influence the commissioning of services. Victims and survivors were involved in training and professional development as appropriate including work on violence against women and girls, child criminal exploitation as well as CSE.

The volume of CSE current investigations is relatively low compared with wider crime figures. In respect of the 37 active investigations relating to CSE, assurance was given that bespoke wraparound support was given to each of the individuals and through this engagement, there were greater opportunities for the victim's voice to be heard.

Assurance was given that there was a commitment to neighbourhood policing which would work in partnership with local authority structures.

The value of this approach was reiterated as it built confidence of local communities and key partners. Further clarification was sought of the preventative benefits of the roll-out of CCTV, particularly in respect of identifying risk areas and other 'hot spots' for child exploitation and organised crime. In respect of neighbourhood teams, details were sought of the number of officers who had received specialist training relating to CSE and sexual violence. It was explained that the specialist training was given to those officers who would be front-line responders, however, there was a commitment to raise awareness of ISVA services and related specialisms across neighbourhood teams. An example of ongoing multi-agency training was given which included neighbourhood teams, to outline how partners can problem solve and share intelligence to disrupt organised crime in local areas.

In respect of the work in hotels (Operation Make Safe), hotel staff had received training which was now being tested to ensure that awareness was embedded and staff responded appropriately to suspicious activity. If there were concerns raised, hotel management had been contacted to ensure that further work was undertaken with its staff. This would be a continuous process.

Reference was made to a previous inspection of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2018 had stated that crime had not been recorded when it should have been. Clarification was sought if this was still problematic and what had been done to address this. It was outlined that 'behavioural' crime (for example stalking or harassment) had not been captured properly in some instances particularly when there had been multiple incidents, however, assurance was given that victims were receiving a service and crime reports were responded to. The importance of restoring public confidence in crime reporting was recognised and performance across all areas were subject to rolling audits. Examples of work with missing persons were given to illustrate this proportionate approach.

It was observed that the IOPC report and SYP's response to its recommendations should be viewed as part of a wider suite of reviews of how CSE was tackled as a crime. Clarification was sought how SYP's response related to previous reports and how learning and progress is captured. It was noted that the IOPC investigation covered the period of the Jay Report (1997-2013) and had taken seven years to conclude. It was reiterated that the IOPC recommendations had been accepted in totality and the previous organisational failures of public services to protect vulnerable children and young people were recognised. There was an ongoing commitment across all agencies to ensure that previous failings were not repeated. However, in doing so, it was important that partnerships, including other police forces and local authorities outside of Rotherham and the sub-region, were forward focussed and able to respond to changing patterns of offending e.g county lines or online abuse.

In respect of online abuse, the importance of preventative work with children and parents was stressed as was work with schools and youth services. It was noted that digital access was constantly evolving and it was important that professionals were able to keep up-to-date with new developments. The Evolve Team was able to provide training and awareness raising to relevant agencies.

Details of what safeguards were in place by SYP to support the process of continuous improvement were sought. Governance arrangements were outlined including performance oversight, public accountability reports to the PCC, monitoring of complaints and reference to the victims and survivor's panel. The Deputy Chief Constable expressed confidence in the way that the SYP was responding to the challenges of protecting vulnerable adults and children and stated that he wished to see the partnership working across Rotherham at the forefront of good practice in tackling CSE and other forms of child exploitation in the future.

The Chair thanked Deputy Chief Constable Forber and Chief Superintendent Chapman for their attendance.

Resolved:

1. That the update of South Yorkshire Police in respect of progress to date against the recommendations of the Independent Office for Police Conduct report Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations be noted.
2. That following the consideration of the RSCP CSE Review by this Board, future monitoring arrangements are determined in respect of South Yorkshire Police's implementation of the IOPC recommendations.

19. ROTHERHAM CLIMATE EMERGENCY ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair welcomed the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment as sponsor for this programme and other officers in attendance. The apology of the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy who was unable to attend the meeting was noted.

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 25 April 2022. At its meeting on 30 October 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and produced a policy and action plan "Responding to the Climate Emergency". This set out key policy themes of Energy; Housing; Transport; Waste; Built and Natural Environment; Influence and Engagement.

At its meeting on 23 March 2020, Cabinet resolved to establish the targets of:

- The Council's carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2030 (NZ30)
- Borough-wide carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2040 (NZ40)

The report provided an update on progress against actions outlined in the 2021/22 Action Plan, with particular attention paid to baselining work, which was an important factor in the continuing strategic development of the Council's response to the climate emergency. The Board was referred to the baseline information outlined in the report.

The following themes were highlighted as a framework for action:

- Energy.
- Transport.
- Housing.
- Waste.
- Built & Natural Environment.
- Influence & Engagement.

The Strategic Director drew attention to the £6.4m of additional investment to support initiatives to improve energy efficiency in Council buildings and carbon reduction in Council housing stock. Reference was made to the cycling strategy and associated improvements to infrastructure. The report also cited the tree strategy which had recently been considered by Improving Places Select Commission. The Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge was cited as a key part of this year's influence and engagement activity. The Vice-Chair reiterated the value of this event and looked forward to working with the Youth Cabinet on their recommendations.

It was noted that the Council had set an ambitious target of net zero by 2030. It was felt that this was achievable within timescales although its success would be dependent on factors outside the authority's direct control such as technological developments.

Baseline information had been supported by the appointment of a data analyst who was a specialist in their field. The first phase had been to focus on emissions in the direct control of the Council. There was growing confidence in the accuracy of this information and this would be supplemented by national statistics, links with other councils, regional bodies and government. Information was sought on the contribution of the tree strategy to carbon dioxide capture. Questions were asked if there had been any comparison with other industries on how this information could be gathered.

Details were requested about the contribution that the cycling strategy would make to reducing carbon emissions. It was recognised that there was likely to be a small reduction of 2% to the transport element.

In respect of commercial waste recycling, information was sought how this would be rolled out and businesses incentivised to use this service. Modelling options were in development for introduction in April 2023.

Recycling schemes would be rolled out in Council buildings from May 2022. A request was made that further information on commercial waste recycling and incentivising businesses were referred to Improving Places Select Commission.

Further information was sought on the potential impact of the Environmental Bill on household waste recycling. Final details were awaited however it was anticipated that there would be an expectation that food waste would be collected. It was hoped that Rotherham would be given an exemption because of its waste extraction facilities. The deposit return scheme should have a positive effect on reducing street rubbish. However, until proposals were announced it was difficult to anticipate the full impact on households, however it was thought it would be significant. These details were requested to be provided to scrutiny in due course. It was noted that work was taking place with local retailers, including market traders, to reduce packaging and waste.

Clarification was sought on the reasons the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme, for Private Sector housing was unsuccessful. It was outlined that it was a competitive bid process however, the feedback would be used to support future bids. It was noted that housing was key to addressing climate change. It was outlined that work had been undertaken to understand the investment required to raise energy efficiency in existing council housing, focussing on the stock that had a lower rating. In new build, all homes were energy efficient, with additional measures such as electrical charging points being provided in some developments.

Details were sought on the potential location of the solar farm. A site in Kilnhurst had been identified and due diligence was in train to establish its suitability. Planning applications would be submitted should conditions be satisfied.

Clarification was sought if potential sites for tree planting would be utilised fully over the two-year funding period and if a business case was being considered to extend tree planting when the funding ends. The Strategic Director outlined that he was keen to engage with local ward members and communities to identify potential sites.

It was observed that embedding a culture of tackling climate change and making it "everyone's business" to consider climate implications was an ongoing challenge, however the annual report outlining progress to date was welcomed.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That developments related to the Environment Bill and impact on the waste and recycling strategies be submitted to Improving

Places Select Commission in due course.

20. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 25 April 2022. As part of the Department of Education work to address long term challenges in the High Needs funding within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), a small number of identified local authorities including Rotherham had been invited to have a financial agreement known as a 'Safety Valve.' The key emphasis for Rotherham's involvement in this programme was ensuring that more children with special needs can be supported to stay in mainstream education in the borough. Rotherham involvement also allowed appropriate Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision mapping in the borough to be developed and improve SEND outcomes. The finalised agreement set out an investment of £20.528m from the Department for Education across the lifetime of the agreement (2021/22 to 2025/26). This would remove the DSG deficit based on the Council's revenue assumptions.

It was highlighted that the Council was not unique, and a significant number of local authorities were facing challenges in respect high needs funding and DSG deficits. As part of the safety valve programme, capital bids had been submitted to support plans as significant investment was required to deliver the plan as outlined in the report. The financial targets as detailed had been met and it was anticipated that the position in future years would be on track.

Invitation to participate in the programme was dependent on local authorities having developed strategic plans to tackle the deficit and being able to demonstrate a positive trajectory in its financial position. Through the additional investment released, more children with additional needs could be educated and supported within the borough. Stakeholders, including school leaders had been fully engaged in the developments.

The work undertaken by Children and Young People's Services and stakeholders to reduce the deficit, map provision and transform services was warmly welcomed.

Clarification was sought on the development of alternative education provision and the impact this would have on supporting children with challenging behavioural needs in mainstream provision. It was noted that a Green Paper on SEND and alternative provision had been recently published, and the mapping of future provision in Rotherham is closely aligned with the aspirations set out by Government. It was highlighted that there would be a continuum of support to ensure appropriate input would be offered on a timely basis at the right level. This would include primary outreach service for social and emotional mental health needs (SEMH) and a similar service in secondary schools would come on-line from

September 2022. Pupil referral unit provision would be shorter term to support those who could be reintegrated into a mainstream setting or identify if other provision was required. For pupils with more complex or specialist needs, a SEMH Free School would come onstream shortly.

The funding elements of the safety valve programme were expanded upon. In respect of Rotherham's bid, the DfE had released funds to reduce the historic revenue deficit and also to support a dedicated team to manage related developments. Through the delivery of the SEND sufficiency strategy and management plan, there had been a steady reduction in Rotherham's deficit over recent years, unlike in many other authorities. However, Rotherham's delivery of the programme was predicated on approval of the capital bid.

It was noted that the Audit Committee had received regular updates on the DSG and the External Auditor was satisfied that the plans to manage the deficit were robust. It was asked that the Audit Committee be kept up to date on developments.

It was acknowledged that further work needed to take place with schools to ensure that early identification and a graduated response were in place to ensure that the appropriate level of support and resource was in place. It was noted that the Green Paper was helpful in strengthening support. Stakeholders would be engaged to develop the response to the consultation on the Green Paper, including the Parent's Carer's Forum. The forum has been closely involved in the co-production of services. The Council was committed to seeking best practice and share this with schools and academies and other local authorities.

It was noted that the terminology of the report did not articulate in plain language what this initiative would mean for the 'lived experience' of children and young people with special needs and their families. A commitment was given that this would be looked at to see how this initiative could be communicated in a more accessible way.

Clarification was sought on the democratic oversight of the decision to engage in the safety valve process and if it should have been made by Cabinet or through officer delegation. It was outlined that the governance arrangements were in line with those set out in the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation and were strictly adhered to.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That Audit Committee be provided with further updates on the implementation of the programme.

21. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme be approved.

22. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

Discussion of this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

23. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - APRIL 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2022

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022.

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

24. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

25. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

26. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 11am on Wednesday 11 May 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 June 2022

Report Title

Finance Update

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides an update to Cabinet on a number of financial matters, including those related to Covid-19. The report is provided as an interim update for Cabinet, following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report at Council on 2 March 2022 and in advance of the Financial Outturn 2021/22 and Financial Monitoring 2022/23 reports to be submitted to Cabinet in July 2022. This report also provides an update on the Council's administration of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment for 2022/23, Council Tax (Energy) Rebate and Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF).

Recommendations

1. That the update on the revenue budget financial outturn 2021/22 be noted.
2. That the Councils progress on the delivery of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment be noted.
3. That the Councils progress on the delivery of the Council Tax (Energy) Rebate be noted.
4. That the Councils progress on the delivery of the Covid Additional Relief Fund be noted.

5. That the Councils delivery of the Household Support Fund 2021/22 be noted.
6. That the Councils delivery of the Test and Trace Support Payments be noted.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Equality Screening

Appendix 2 - Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Budget and Council Tax Report 2021/22 to Council on 3 March 2021

December Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet 14 February 2022

Budget and Council Tax Report 2022/23 to Council on 2 March 2022

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Finance Update

1. Background

- 1.1 This report is provided to update Cabinet on a number of financial and budget matters following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report at Cabinet on 14 February 2022 and at Council on 2 March 2022.
- 1.2 The report is an interim update to Cabinet in advance of the more detailed Financial Outturn 2021/22 and Financial Monitoring 2022/23 reports which will be submitted to Cabinet on 11 July 2022.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Revenue Budget Financial Outturn 2020/21

- 2.1.1 The Financial Outturn 2021/22 report to Cabinet in July 2022 will set out the full details of expenditure against budget for 2021/22, revenue and capital, along with an updated analysis of revenue reserves and an updated position of the Capital Programme.
- 2.1.2 That report will also set out the use of the various Government grants which have been provided to offset the cost impact of Covid, together with an analysis of the grant funding available to continue to support the additional costs due to the longer-term impact of Covid which may continue to be incurred in 2022/23. The reserving of any Covid grant balances is in accordance with the following approval at Council in March 2022 “Approval to transfer any remaining Covid funding balances into the Council’s reserves to meet Covid related pressures and costs in 2022/23.”
- 2.1.3 The Financial Monitoring Report 2021/22 submitted to Cabinet on 14 February 2022 was based on the financial monitoring position as at December 2021, which outlined that the Council anticipated a balanced budget position for 2021/22 or a slight underspend. This forecast position was also outlined in the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report which was submitted to the same Cabinet meeting and also to Council on 2 March 2022.
- 2.1.4 Both reports set out the inter-relationship between the impact of Covid-19 on the Council’s level of spend and loss of income and the Government grant funding compensation for Covid impact, as known or anticipated at that time. The December forecast outturn position showed a Directorate forecast overspend of £8.2m with the plan to mitigate through use of government’s provision of COVID-19 emergency support grant (£13.6m) and Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation (£0.4m), total Covid grant support £14.0m.
- 2.1.5 The 2021/22 Budget was supported by the use of £7.5m from the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve, given the availability of the £14.0m of Covid Funding, a detailed piece of work was carried out to assess the financial impacts of Covid-19 on 2021/22. Following this the Council estimated that the

costs and income losses as a result of Covid-19 would be in excess of the resources provided by Government. Therefore, it would be appropriate to utilise during 2021/22 the maximum amount of Covid funding eligible. Therefore, as at December Financial Monitoring it was estimated that only £1.7m of the planned £7.5m Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve would be required. The remaining balance of £5.8m could be left in the Council's reserves.

2.1.6 The final outturn position reflects a positive movement of £4.1m in the Directorate outturn positions since December's Financial Monitoring position, reported to Cabinet on the 14 February 2022. The main reasons for the movements per directorate are indicated below, however, a more detailed narrative will be provided in the Financial Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2022. This positive improvement removes the need for the Council to use £1.7m of the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve to support the 2021/22 outturn position.

2.1.7 In addition, this improvement generates a £2.4m underspend as the Council remains able to use the full £14.0m of Covid grant to support the outturn position. This has therefore allowed the Council to transfer £2.4m into the Council's Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve, as per the recommendation within the Council's Budget and Council Tax report 2022/23, approved at Council 2 March 2022, "Approves the transfer of any 2021/22 revenue outturn underspend into the Council's reserves, to be held within the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve". This will help the Council to manage some continuing budget pressures in 2022/23 e.g. a further upward trend in the demand for home to school transport, along with the general pressures of the current high level of inflation and the significant increases in energy prices. Taken together, these issues are likely to impact on the 2022/23 budget at a level greater than £2.4m.

2.1.8 The main reasons for the improvement in the Directorate outturn position are as follows, though more detailed narratives will follow in the Financial Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2022:

- Children & Young People's overspend has reduced with the main savings relating to further reduced costs of £0.4m on Placements, and a £0.2m saving from the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency (SYRAA). The SYRAA is funded in part by contributions from Local Authorities. As the service has made a saving during 2021/22 an element of that has been passed back to partners.
- Adult Care, Housing & Public Health forecast underspend has increased as a result of the reduced financial impact of Placement costs, of £1.3m, due to increased income (mainly additional Covid grants). In addition, forecast PPE costs reduced by £0.4m following a full review of stock/valuations.
- Regeneration and Environment Services outturn overspend has improved following reduced costs within Asset Management spend on repairs and maintenance, £0.5m. In addition, there has been increased income generation within Green Spaces due to greater visitor numbers, £0.4m and Network Management where there was

an increase in chargeable work carried out by the Highways team, £0.4m.

- Central Services outturn position includes a £0.5m transfer to the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve in respect of 2021/22 Revenue Budget Investments where the delivery was delayed. Typically, these delays have centred around difficulties the Council is experiencing with recruitment. This £0.5m will be re-provided from the reserve when the 2021/22 investment plans have been completed.

2.1.9 These improvements in the Directorate forecast outturns represent a positive direction of travel for the Council's finances, with the level of cost pressures reducing across many of the key service areas and income generation beginning to recover post Covid. This prudent financial management will be important in managing future budget pressures given the known volatility in external factors.

2.1.10 In addition, the Council is able to report secured delivery of planned savings for 2022/23. The table below provides an update on the £11.5m of planned savings to be delivered over the medium term.

Table 1: Planned delivery of £11.5m savings

Saving	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & Total FYE	Secured as at 31st March 2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000
ACHPH	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,400
ACHPH – One off saving	500	0	0	500
CYPS	971	4,739	7,411	971
R&E	374	762	784	TBC
R&E Customer & Digital	200	500	500	TBC
Total Savings	4,845	8,801	11,495	3,871

2.1.11 This is a strong outturn position that includes a positive trend of cost reduction within some of the Council's key services, an increase of £2.4m into the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve, along some planned savings for 2022/23 already being achieved. This places the Council in a more robust position heading into the financial year 2022/23. Therefore, more able to mitigate against cost pressures and the financial challenges that were not evident at the time of setting the 2022/23 Budget, such as the War in the Ukraine and the significant rise in Energy prices and inflation and more able to manage the impact rather than needing to consider making cuts in services.

2.1.12 These financial challenges are being considered as part of the Councils ongoing Medium Term Financial Planning. The energy price rises, and inflation will impact the Councils costs in the provision of services. However, some of this cost impact will be mitigated in future years by increased core funding as business rates income is indexed to the rate of inflation. It is currently expected that the period of high inflation will last for two years before returning to a more normal level. As such the Council will face short term financial pressures that will need to be managed and mitigated through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Council's reserves. As such the Councils ability to build further capacity into those reserves as part of the 2021/22 outturn position is a benefit. The Council is currently reviewing the reserves balances as at the 2021/22 outturn to assess the capacity to provide this budget risk mitigation and will report further on reserves within the Financial Outturn report to Cabinet in July.

2.2 Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme 2022/23

2.2.1 Council approved as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report on the 2 March 2022, a Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme to run during 2022/23. The scheme provides an additional award of up to £112.65 Council Tax Support to working age claimants on the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23. The application of the scheme includes all those becoming eligible up to and including 31 March 2023. At the time of writing a total of £1.387m has been awarded across 14,567 accounts, with 10,403 of these accounts being reduced to nil. Those bill payers in receipt of this award have been provided with a Council Tax bill that shows the top up support from the Council along with a letter explaining the reason for the award.

2.3 Council Tax (Energy) Rebate

2.3.1 On 3 February 2022 Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in 2022-23. This included:

- A £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A – D, known as the Council Tax Rebate (property must be occupied and not a second home). This scheme is to be administered by Local Authorities.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund. This scheme is to be designed and administered by Local Authorities within predetermined parameters.

2.3.2 Cabinet approved a report outlining the Council's proposed approach to delivering this scheme on 28 March 2022. This set out that the Council intended to commence making payments to eligible households who pay their Council Tax via Direct Debit from the end of April and then make a cheque payment to eligible households who pay their Council Tax via other means from the end of May. Cabinet agreed to the approach of issuing cheques to

non-Direct Debit paying households, this should be a more efficient process than asking households to claim for the support. In addition, the report approved the use of the discretionary funding to be distributed equally across eligible households within Bands E-H. The Cabinet report estimated this figure to be £82, however, following review of eligibility the payment has been set at £90.

- 2.3.3 The Council commenced paying households that pay their Council Tax via Direct Debit from the end of April 2022, for both the Government's main scheme to Band A-D household (£150) and the Council's discretionary scheme for Band's E-H (£90). To date 74,143 payments have been made to Band A-D households and 6,415 discretionary payments to Band's E-H. In all cases households will receive a letter explaining the reason for the payment. Cheques started to be issued from the end of May, they will allow recipients 3 months to cash them. If households do not cash these cheques the Council may be able to apply the £150 to their Council Tax account, but only if they have a liability for 2022/23. If this is not possible and the cheque is not cashed, the household will lose the ability to claim the funding as Government requires the scheme and all related payments to be completed by the end of September 2022.

2.4 Covid Additional Relief Fund

- 2.4.1 On 25 March 2021 the Government announced a new COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) of £1.5 billion. The fund was made available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that had been ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. The Council's allocation is £4,851,486, to be used to provide business rates relief for the financial year 2021/22. The Council's scheme and eligibility criteria was approved at Cabinet in February 2022.

- 2.4.2 To ensure that businesses were given fair opportunity to apply for support, the Council's scheme opened for applications on the 1 March 2022 and remained open until the 30 April 2022. The scheme base award was to provide business rates relief of 50% of the business rates bill up to a maximum of £6k of relief. Where a business meets the eligibility criteria that the Council proposes within this report, the business will have its business rates bill re-issued, taking account of the rates relief awarded. If there was a residual balance at the end of the process, the Council would need to arrange for top up payments of targeted awards to fully utilise the funding. The following recommendation was approved in the February 2022 Cabinet report to allow for this.

"That the authority to make any final further payments to ensure that the Fund is fully utilised is delegated to the Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety & Finance and the Leader of the Council."

- 2.4.3 Following the closure of the applications process the Council has received and approved a total of 120 businesses, with a total relief value of £528k based on the Cabinet approved awards. Therefore, the Council needed to

agree an approach to topping up the businesses that did apply for the award to further utilise the funding and potentially, providing a smaller award to those businesses that could benefit from the scheme but haven't come forward for support. An officer decision was taken to allow the Council to increase the award for businesses that have been approved via the Council's application process to 100% businesses rates relief, up to a maximum of £30k. This will cost £1.9m. The remaining funding will then be used to provide a smaller payment to businesses that are eligible but have not applied, a payment of up to £2,900 per business will be made and it is estimated this will cost £2.9m. Businesses provided with an award will receive a revised 2021/22 business rates bill.

2.5 Household Support Fund 2021/22

2.5.1 Cabinet approved on the 22 November 2022 the Council's proposed delivery of the Household Support Fund for 2021/22. The Council's grant allocation was £2.489m and it was proposed to use the funding across the following themes:

- a) £1.1m for food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays through to Easter 2022.
- b) £1.3m to reduce Council Tax liability for working age households eligible for Council Tax Support on 31st October 2021.
- c) £30k to support local VCS organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas / New year as a supplement to the Crisis Support SLA.
- d) £30k to be available to meet eligible need for households not passported through means.
- e) £30k contingency to support the above grant programme.

2.5.2 As at 31 March 2022 the Council had fully spent this grant allocation, delivering over 11,000 Free School Meals vouchers across the school holidays during October half term 2021 up to and including Easter 2022, at a cost of £1m. Through the Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme, 16,730 applicants benefited from the support of up to £100, with 8,135 having their Council Tax bill reduced to nil. The total cost of LCTS support was £1.4m. In addition the VCS support scheme provided support to vulnerable households over Christmas and the New Year as planned, with £30k support fund for households referred in for emergency assistance seeing 385 households supported with hampers valued up to £100.

2.6 Test and Trace Self-Isolation Support Payments

2.6.1 From 28 September 2020, individuals having to self-isolate and losing income as a result became eligible for a Test and Trace Self-isolation payment. If they met the following criteria, they would be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500:

- Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested

positive. They should have a unique NHS Test and Trace ID number that they must provide for the application process.

- Are employed or self-employed
- Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
- Are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

2.6.2 The payment was designed to support people on low incomes, who would lose income as a result of self-isolating and to encourage them to get tested if they had symptoms. This was seen as important step to help stop the transmission of Covid-19 and avoid further economic and societal restrictions. The scheme was to last until 31 January 2021, however, due to ongoing restrictions and impacts of Covid-19, the scheme ran through to April 2022.

2.6.3 The Council had a main and a discretionary fund, the Council's approach to the discretionary funding was approved by Cabinet on 25 January 2022. The discretionary schemes still had to meet Government's base criteria, except for needing to be on a qualifying benefit. Government's guidance however, stated that discretionary schemes should only be aimed at those households in financial hardship. As such the Council also set up its own Local Test and Trace Support Payment, of £250 approved at Cabinet on 25 January 2022, so that households who had lost income but were not viewed as being in financial hardship were still able to receive some support for doing the right thing and self-isolating.

2.6.4 In administering the Government schemes the Council has reviewed and assessed over 11,000 applications, approving and paying 3,876 of these applications that met the Government's scheme criteria. Whilst there was a large number of rejections, these were applicants who did not meet Government's base scheme criteria, principally from applicants who did not lose income as a result of self-isolating or that did not have a valid NHS Test and Trace ID number as they had not engaged in the Test and Trace process.

2.6.5 However, due to the Council's Local Self-Isolation Support scheme, 1,851 of the rejected discretionary applications were able to be referred on the Council's local scheme and receive a payment of £250. The schemes have now been brought to a close and the Council is working with Government to work through the final reconciliation process. Additionally, the Council has been selected for a Government audit, there initial concerns about dashboard reporting (claims paid and rejected), however, the auditor expressed their view that the Council's process, approach and attention to detail on the Test and Trace application process was one of the best they had seen.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 This report is retrospectively updating on outcomes and outputs from the Councils revenue outturn position and a host of key schemes where the approach has already been approved by Cabinet.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Consultation with residents, business and partners was undertaken as part of the development of the 2021/22 budget setting and then again as part of budget setting for 2022/23.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The report is mainly an update on a range of financial matters.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications are contained within the main body of the report.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 No direct implications.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 No direct implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The report includes reference to the cost pressures on both Children's and Adult Social care budget.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 No direct implications.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 No direct implications.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The Council is maintaining close liaison and joint working with Partners on Covid matters, with particular regard to Health and Social Care.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1. Budget management and spending controls remain as set out within the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules. Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet will include information on Covid related spend and financial risk and also outline how this spend and risk is being managed and mitigated.

14. Accountable Officers

Rob Mahon – Head of Corporate Finance

Graham Saxton - Assistant Director, Financial Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	03/06/22
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	31/05/22
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	31/05/22

*Report Author: Rob Mahon, Head of Corporate Finance
Rob.Mahon@rotherham.gov.uk*

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

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Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

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

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

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an equality analysis.

Directorate: Finance and Customer Services	Service area: Finance
Lead person: Rob Mahon	Contact number: 01709 254518

1. Title:

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

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

The Council has a framework of budgetary monitoring and reporting that ensures budget management is exercised within annual cash limits.

Each month the Budget Manager receives timely information on income and expenditure to enable them to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities. Following the review of the budget information, each budget manager provides a forecast of their projected outturn position on each service. The Strategic Director subsequently provides a consolidated forecast for their directorate to the Chief Finance Officer and relevant Cabinet Member.

A budget monitoring report, which includes an up-to-date outturn forecast, information about significant variances from approved budgets and proposals for dealing with them, is submitted to Cabinet at least 6 times a year, culminating with the Councils Financial Outturn report.

Whilst the framework described above relates to revenue budgets, the capital programme is also similarly monitored and reported alongside the Council's revenue position.

The financial monitoring position report summarises the key variances for each directorate and considers the key financial pressures and risks.

This report is the penultimate financial report in the financial year, it sets out the Council's outturn position in brief as the full revenue outturn position is not presented to cabinet until July. The report also covers off any other key items to be noted at the time.

Given that the revenue and capital budgets have been approved by Council in February each year, when equality assessments would have been considered at that time in respect of the budget proposals, there are no further issues in respect of equality and diversity.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

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

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

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

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals prior to carrying out an **Equality Analysis**.

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

Please provide specific details for all three areas below and use the prompts for guidance.

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

n/a

- **Key findings**

n/a

- **Actions**

n/a

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Judith Badger	Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services	19 May 2022

6. Publishing

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

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

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

Date screening completed	19 May 2022
If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

User guidance:

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

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

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

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

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

As this report is a financial update on previous events, updates on levels of funding moving forwards and doesn't approve anything directly to happen, it does not have any carbon implications.

Supporting information:

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

Rob Mahon, Head of Corporate Finance, Finance and Customer Services.

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

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

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

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Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 20 June 2022

Report Title

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022/2025), Action Plan (2022/2023) and Annual Report (2021/2022)

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author

Steve Eling

Policy and Equalities Manager

Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

Steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Council Plan 2022/2025 sets out the Council's ambition to create an inclusive borough for people to live, work and enjoy. A borough where nobody is left behind and where all are welcome and treated fairly.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out the commitments that the Council is making to support those outcomes. It ensures that equality objectives truly underpin the themes of the Council Plan to ensure that achieving equality outcomes are embedded in everything that the Council does. It also commits to achieving the highest national standards set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Each year, as part of the Council's commitments under the Public Sector Equality Duty, an Equalities Annual Report is published. This provides an overview of equalities activity and achievements over the last year and forward commitments taking forward the priorities of the new EDI Strategy.

This report presents the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2025, action plan 2022/2023 and Equalities Annual Report 2021/2022.

Recommendations

1. That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2025 be approved.
2. That the Equalities Annual Report 2021/2022 be received.
3. That the Equalities 2022/2023 action plan and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion consultation findings report be noted.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2025
- Appendix 2 Equalities 2022/2023 action plan.
- Appendix 3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion consultation findings report.
- Appendix 4 Equalities annual report 2021/2022
- Appendix 5 Equality Screening (Form A).
- Appendix 6 Equality Assessment (Form B).
- Appendix 7 Carbon Impact Assessment.

Background Papers

Equality Act 2010 (c. 15)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (SI20112260)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2260/contents/made>

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI20170353)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/353/contents>

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022/2025), Action Plan (2022/2023) and Annual Report (2021/2022)

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council Plan 2022/2025 sets out the Council's ambition to create an inclusive borough for people to live, work and enjoy. A borough where nobody is left behind and where all are welcome and treated fairly.
- 1.2 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) sets out the commitments that the Council is making to support those outcomes. It ensures that equality objectives truly underpin the themes of the Council Plan to ensure that achieving equality outcomes are embedded in everything that the Council does. It also commits to achieving the highest national standards set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 1.3 Each year, as part of the Council's commitments under the Public Sector Equality Duty, an Equalities Annual Report is published. This provides an overview of equalities activity and achievements over the last year and forward commitments taking forward the priorities of the new EDI Strategy.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (c. 15) (the Act) requires the Council to be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty, by having due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.2 The Council delivers against its statutory obligations by publishing a set of equalities objectives at least every four years, which are documented within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- 2.3 The EDI Strategy 2022/2025 has been prepared to underpin the Council Plan to embed equalities into everything the Council does.
- 2.4 The Strategy is built on four equality objectives which are delivered through a set of Council wide projects and actions. These in turn inform Directorate service plans to embed equalities into daily activity. The four equality objectives with their supporting actions are:
 - Understanding, Listening to, and Working with Rotherham's Communities.
 - Listening to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve the evidence base that informs service delivery.
 - Enhancing the way that we engage with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure that all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.

- Sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Developing joint partnership approaches and activity including the use of intelligence to tackle inequalities, promote equalities and good community relations that have a positive impact.
- Delivering Accessible and Responsive Services that Meet Diverse Needs.
 - Communicating and engaging with residents so that they feel informed about council services and how to access these.
 - Listening to service users through consultations and complaints to produce evidence-based analysis that informs service design and delivery.
 - Strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting skills' to enable access for all.
 - Working together in partnership and in collaboration to deliver the Council Plan commitments to tackle inequality and disadvantage.
 - Continuing to improve the use of Equality Assessments in service design and delivery, capturing challenges and opportunities at the very beginning, ensuring barriers are considered and mitigated where possible.
- Providing Leadership and Organisational Commitment to Actively Promote Equalities.
 - Continuing to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies, to address issues around community safety including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.
 - Working in partnership with services, partners and communities to promote equality and good community relations.
 - Supporting awareness and understanding across communities to promote good relations across the range of protected characteristics.
 - Celebrating diversity within our communities and marking events.
- Ensuring a diverse and engaged workforce.
 - Ensuring all of our policies are up to date and reflective of our diverse needs and situations.
 - Flexible, fair and transparent pay and benefits.
 - Removing barriers to flexible working wherever possible.
 - Supporting staff with caring responsibilities.
 - Staff development and career progression that reflects individuals' needs and learning styles.

2.5

- The Council has set out its commitment to achieving and demonstrating the highest standards in equality, diversity and inclusion through aspiring to reach "Excellent" in the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG), which is the national standard. The New EDI Strategy and objectives support the achievement and then the maintenance of the "Excellent" standard. Appendix 2 brings forward an action plan to support this, across the four modules that are contained in the EFLG standard: Understanding and working with your communities.

- Leadership and Organisational Commitment.
- Responsive Services and Customer Care.
- Diverse and engaged workforce.

- 2.6 In addition to the quarterly report to Cabinet on the Council Plan KPIs and Year Ahead Delivery Plan progress, the monitoring and review of the EDI Strategy and action plan will be undertaken through the Equalities Annual Report. This will continue to be presented in June of each year.
- 2.7 The Equalities Annual Report will also continue to provide case studies to promote best practice both within the Council and with partners.
- 2.8 The Annual Report provides a review of achievements over the last year following the decision to structure these around the four modules of the EFLG. It includes key data and specific actions that demonstrate progress across all areas of equalities and includes case studies of good practice.
- 2.9 Looking ahead, the Annual Report sets out areas of actions taking forward the equalities action plan. Each year, the looking ahead section will form a cycle of review and forward planning over the lifetime of the EDI Strategy ensuring that actions are always informed and current.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The recommended option covers compliance with the Council's statutory duties and supports delivery of the Council Plan's priorities whilst striving for excellent under the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
- 3.2 The alternative option is to choose not to participate in the EFLG and as a result, to not undertake an external assessment of our progress.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 An extensive consultation process has been undertaken seeking views on three initial, draft objectives along with key actions and the approach to taking forward the EDI Strategy. The consultation responses have helped to shape the final four objectives and this is described further below.
- 4.2 The consultation involved:
- An online form available for anyone to engage via the Council's website.
 - External focus groups around protected characteristics.
 - Consultation towers and forms at libraries and community venues.
 - Eight sessions through community organisations helping people to engage with completing the consultation.
 - Over 30 VCS and faith organisations involved.
 - Internal staff group sessions covering:
Women.
 - LGBT+.
 - Carers.
 - Disability.

- Faith.
 - BAME.
- 4.3 The Survey sought responses on a scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” together with the option of “neither agree nor disagree”. It also provided for comments on each of the priorities too. The survey responses show overall support for the proposed priorities (objectives) and key actions with 85% showing agreement with all priorities and 6% against.
- 4.4 For each of the three priorities, the responses were as follows:
- Priority 1 - To understand, listen and engage across all communities, 84% either agreed or strongly agreed.
 - Priority 2 - Deliver fair, inclusive, and accessible services, 85% either agreed or strongly agreed.
 - Priority 3 - Empower people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations, 87% either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 4.5 In addition to the headline survey results, specific views were sought from both external focus groups and staff group meetings. These provided some extra context for taking forward the priorities and delivery of key actions.
- 4.6 Specific issues raised through external groups covered actions needing to be specific and asking about how the Strategy will be monitored and who will be accountable.
- 4.7 Issues around engagement were raised. These included the need for continued dialogue and exchange going forward together with more feedback. Views were also expressed on the importance to build on and facilitate the work of community organisations and partners.
- 4.8 A number of views were expressed about accessibility. These included issues around transport, toilets, leisure facilities and being aware of multiple barriers / intersectionality. Digital exclusion also featured as a concern. People expressed a desire to be involved in conversations on accessibility.
- 4.9 Visible support / celebrations were raised with people expressing views about how it was important for Council to show outward support for diverse communities including Pride.
- 4.10 Training and support for staff was seen as an important issue including awareness of issues, neurodiversity, LGBT+ issues, race. Hate crime was seen as serious issue, as well as lack of funded grassroots support for LGBT+ residents and other groups – many are volunteer led with limited capacity.
- 4.11 Internal consultation largely raised issues around disability / long-term health conditions, women and carers. These included adjustments and flexibility along with understanding of equality issues and organisational culture.
- 4.12 Taking account of the consultation outcomes, a fourth equality objective has been added into the Strategy to cover workforce and staffing along with some

emphasis changes to the other three objectives. This leads to four objectives as follows:

- Understanding, listening to and working with Rotherham's communities.
- Delivering accessible and responsive services that meet diverse needs.
- Providing leadership and organisation commitment to actively promote equalities.
- Ensuring a diverse, supported and engaged workforce.

A report on the consultation process and outcomes has been produced and is attached as an appendix to this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Progress and review of actions in delivering the strategy will be included in the Equalities Annual Report, presented to Cabinet in June each year.
- 5.2 Equalities progress will be monitored and reported as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will undertake review and challenge progress, including receiving equality screenings and assessments. This also contributes to the standards set out the EFLG Leadership and Organisational Commitment Module.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no readily identifiable direct financial implications arising from this report. In the event that any costs are subsequently identified in future, these will be highlighted and addressed within the Council's budget processes.
- 6.2 Achieving equalities outcomes through commissioning and procurement is taken forward by the Council's Social Value policy and accreditation as a "Living Wage Employer".

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 (c.15) sets out the statutory provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty along with protected characteristics and other related matters.
- 7.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (SI20112260) make statutory provisions for publication of information relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty and adoption and publication of equality objectives.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI20170353) make statutory provision for the publication of the gender pay gap.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are underpinning themes that will support successful delivery of the Council's updated Workforce Plan. In addition, HR will be supporting delivery of key actions linked to the workforce aspects of the Equality Framework for Local Government. This includes monitoring and taking action on workforce diversity, delivering inclusive strategies and policies, analysing and publishing workforce data, ensuring relevant learning and development provision is in place and ensuring health and wellbeing is supported across the organisation.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The EDI Strategy, underpinning the Council Plan, will support equality outcomes in theme three of "Every child able to fulfil their potential".
- 9.2 Age is a protected characteristic under the provisions of the Equality Act, which applies to children and young people as it does to other age groups.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Ensuring that the Council meets its equalities and human rights duties and obligations are central to how it manages its performance, sets its priorities and delivers services. This new Strategy aims to set out these duties and obligations within a single, corporate document and it will be important to ensure an ongoing focus on advancing the EDI agenda by services.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Partnership working is a central part to the Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy. The Council's aim with regard to equalities and diversity is to make sure, that all people have the same right of access to services and employment and benefit from them equally well. It is important that we remove barriers that prevent or limit people from accessing services; or from participating in employment; learning opportunities; social and leisure activities; or community and public life.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Risks arising will be addressed through the corporate risk management and performance management processes.

14. Accountable Officer

Steve Eling
Policy and Equalities Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	03/06/22
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	31/05/22
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	01/06/22

Report Author: Steve Eling
Policy and Equalities Manager
Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate
Steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

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

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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

AGE | DISABILITY | GENDER REASSIGNMENT | MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP | PREGNANCY & MATERNITY | RACE | RELIGION OR BELIEF | SEX | SEXUAL ORIENTATION

STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES 2022-25



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FOREWORD – Leader & Cllr. Alam

When we launched the Council Plan 2022/2025, we set out our ambition to create an inclusive borough for people to live, work and enjoy. A borough where no-one is left behind and where all are welcome and treated fairly. We want Rotherham to be a place in which everyone can achieve their hopes and aspirations. We want to ensure no-one is held back and that regardless of age, race, gender, or any other characteristic people can succeed.

This refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to set out the actions the Council is taking to support this journey. We are taking this opportunity to reflect recent impacts such as the global pandemic, in addition to the cost of living challenges faced by people across the borough.

The work we have been doing to embed equalities throughout our operations and in our decision-making and partnership working has made good progress. This has been reported each summer in the Equalities Annual Report and this progress will continue.

We are continuing to review our approach to equalities including our route map to reach ‘excellent’ under the Local Government Equality Framework, to ensure that we continue to improve our performance for those who have protected characteristics.

We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is linked across our strategies. This will include our approach to tackling health inequalities alongside economic disadvantage.

As a Council, we have adopted a positive and proactive approach to advancing equalities, including ongoing staff engagement and training, the development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion champions and

strengthening our conversations with our communities. We are in the process of establishing a co-designed approach to equalities with the voluntary sector, which aims to recognise the needs of all those with protected characteristics and to ensure that our work in this area is informed by the real-world experience of our communities.

We also recognise the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 has had on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Work by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)¹ notes that existing disadvantaged communities have been and will be disproportionately impacted by Covid. Our strategy continues to recognise the contributions that people from different backgrounds make, whilst actively working with partners and communities themselves, to tackle inequalities and foster good relationships.

As well as our firm commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the protected characteristics, our aspirations go further to include consideration of people in care, refugees and migrants, people with caring responsibilities and the inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. Whilst we recognise that the Council can’t do everything, we want Rotherham to be a fair, inclusive and safe place for everyone and for the Council itself to be an employer of choice which is more representative of the communities we serve. Our strategy sets out how we will deliver this ambition.



Chris Read,
Leader of
Rotherham Council



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

¹ 2020 -11-reviving-regions.pdf (cbi.org.uk)

VISION AND PURPOSE

Our vision for Rotherham is set out in the Council Plan 2022/2025

Our Vision is:

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

We want every neighbourhood to be a thriving neighbourhood, where people can work together to achieve a good quality of life. We want to empower everyone to lead fulfilling lives, whilst also keeping them safe from harm. Where everyone can prosper and plan confidently for the future regardless of who they are, to make Rotherham a welcoming place, where equality, freedom, fairness and opportunity are open to all.

The purpose of this strategy is to outline our plans to deliver our equality objectives. This strategy lays out a new set of commitments to guide us through 2022 to 2025 and is done so in the context of our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and our Public Sector Equality Duty.



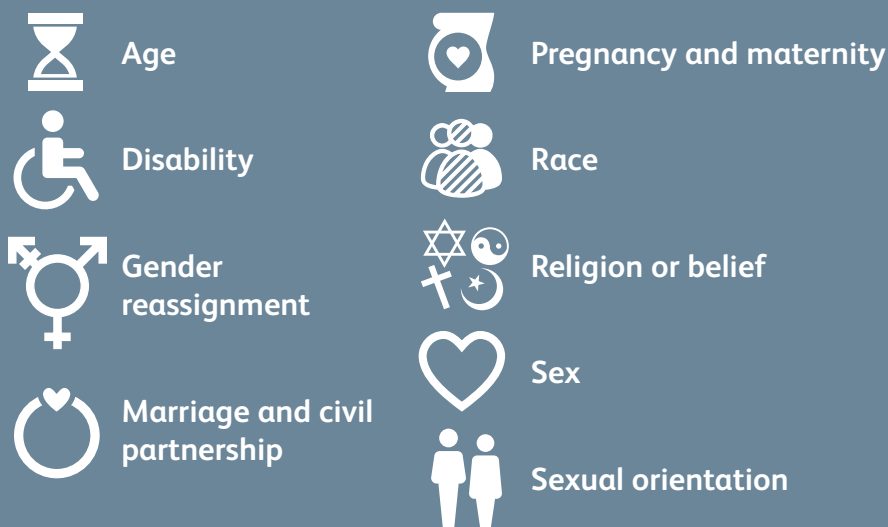
PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

What are Protected Characteristics?

What are Protected Characteristics? Under the Equality Act 2010 it is illegal to discriminate against anyone for any of the following reasons:



Under the Equality Act 2010, there are four main types of discrimination, which include:

- 1 **Direct discrimination.** This form of discrimination is when someone is treated differently or worse than someone else because of that person's protected characteristic.
- 2 **Indirect discrimination.** This form of discrimination occurs when a company put a general rule or plan in place, which puts some people with protected characteristics at a disadvantage. In the workplace, this general rule is only discriminatory when there's no justification for implementing it.
- 3 **Harassment.** This form of discrimination is where someone conveys negative behaviour towards someone else to harm that person's dignity. Typical forms of harassment include bullying, harmful nicknames, asking inappropriate questions and gossiping.
- 4 **Victimisation.** This form of discrimination is when someone becomes a victim of harmful behaviour because they support (or are expected to support) someone who possesses a protected characteristic. To be a victim of victimisation, you don't need to have a protected characteristic yourself.

There is also legal provision covering positive discrimination. This is a form of discrimination that favours someone by treating them differently in a positive way. An example is an organisation appointing someone from an underrepresented group into a role without considering whether they have right skills for the post over other candidates who are better qualified. Positive discrimination is unlawful.

The Council is committed to provide equal life opportunities for all our residents. We know that many things affect a person's ability to lead a fulfilling and happy life. This includes employment opportunities, good physical and mental health and access to educational opportunities.

Some residents are more able to access educational opportunities and employment than others, whilst some face additional barriers and challenges. We will focus upon tackling these inequalities, including considering our own recruitment practices. We will work with our partners to help reduce the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived

communities, support the improvement of educational outcomes and employment opportunities for people in Rotherham.

To do this, we will listen to our residents and our workforce and seek to involve all voices. We will celebrate the richness and diversity of the borough and the value this brings to the lives of the people of Rotherham. We will ensure that our decisions are informed by people's real-life experiences, learning lessons from what residents tell us to embed our equalities work into all we do. From these lessons we seek to continue to improve our services and our decision-making.

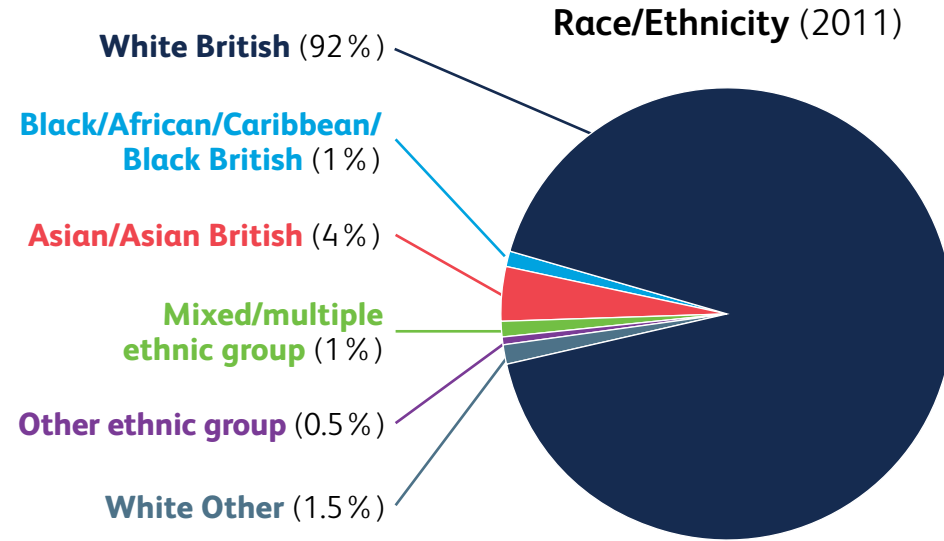


STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire. Our 25 Council wards cover a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas. 70% of Rotherham is open countryside. The borough has a population of 264,984 (2020) with an age profile resembling the national average.



There are fewer compared to average, young people aged 18-24 as a result of people leaving the area to study or work. Older people are the age group growing most rapidly, especially those aged 75+ who account for 9 % of the borough population. The borough averaged just over 2,900 births per year between 2015 and 2020.



The 2011 Census found that 92 % of the population are White British and 8 % are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. 7,912 (38 %) of Rotherham’s 20,842 BAME residents were from Pakistani or Kashmiri backgrounds. 29.3 % of the boroughs BAME population live in Rotherham’s three central wards.. In Rotherham schools, 16 % have a BAME background (2020) whereas only 2.6 % of pensioners (65+) are BAME.

There is no official data on the sexuality or sexual identity of Rotherham people, however, the Office for National Statistics (2018) estimate 2.7 % of the UK population are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). 2.7 % of Rotherham’s population would equate to 7,155 residents being LGB. Stonewall estimate 1 % of the UK population is transgender or non-binary. This estimate would equate to 2,650 people identifying as transgender or non-binary in Rotherham. In 2011, 103,287 residents were married, and 283 in a civil partnership.

The 2011 census showed that a relatively high proportion of Rotherham’s population have a long-term health condition and are otherwise disabled (56,588 residents). This amounts to 22 % of the Borough population compared with the English average of 17.6 %. Over 22,000 people (8.5 % of the population) claimed a disability benefit, well above the English average of 5.4 %. Two thirds of disability benefit claimants have a physical disability and a third have a mental health condition. The most common disabling conditions are arthritis (18.6 %), learning disability (15 %) and psychosis (6.6 %).

8,585 (5.3 %) of working aged residents claim unemployment benefits in 2022 with the majority being men (59%). 4.3 % of working aged women claim unemployment benefits compared to 6.3 % of men. Figures for both genders are above national average. Residents aged 25-49 account for the majority of people claiming unemployment benefits. 6 % of those aged 16-24 and 25-49 claim unemployment benefits compared to 2 % of those aged 50 and above.

Claimant count (unemployment) by **Gender** (2022)

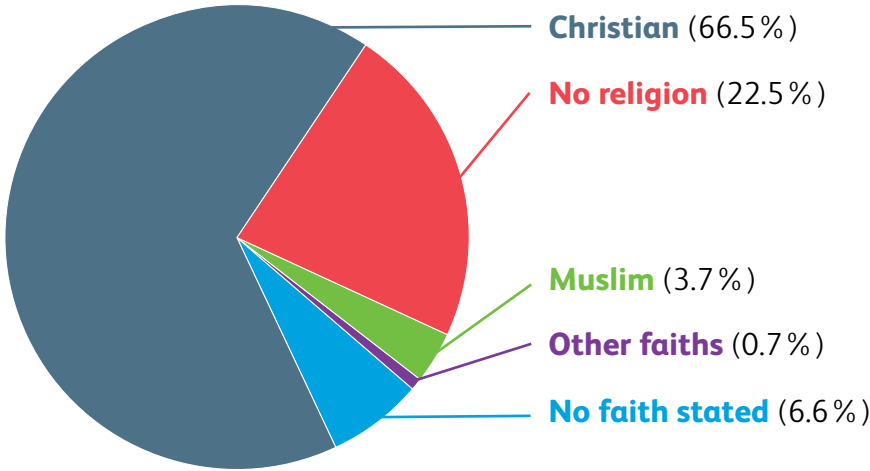
Gender	Claimant count	% of total claimant count
Male	5,070	59 %
Female	3,515	41 %
Total	8,585	100 %

Claimant count (unemployment) by **Age** (2022)

Age	Claimant count	Number of residents in age group	Claimants as a percentage of residents in age group
Aged 16-24	1,615	25,171	6 %
Aged 25-49	5,045	81,968	6 %
Aged 50-64	1805	54,023	3 %
Age 65+	120	52,388	0.2 %

The 2011 Census showed that two thirds of the Rotherham population are Christians and 4.4 % belong to other faiths, mainly Islam. 22.5 % of residents had no religion and 6.6 % did not answer. Almost all members of minority faiths belong to BME communities. 96 % of Christians are white British, 45 % of BME residents are Muslim, 33 % are Christians and 10 % have no religion.

Religion (2011)



22 % of Rotherham residents live within the 10 % most deprived areas of England. 12,667 children were living in “absolute poverty” (Department for Work and Pensions) in 2018/19. Life expectancy in the most deprived areas of Rotherham is 9.9 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women than in the least deprived areas. There are significant gaps in healthy life expectancy, meaning those from more deprived communities can expect to live for more years in poor health.

THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The council has set out an intention to reach and then maintain 'excellent' under the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), and the delivery of our Public Sector Equality Duty.

The EDI Strategy encompasses high-level actions to deliver this and shows how we will take them forward. It embeds our equalities duties and commitments through the Council's service plans, corporate projects along with community consultation and engagement.

The key components of the EFLG framework are:

- Understanding and working with your communities.
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment.
- Responsive Services and Customer Care.
- Diverse and engaged workforce.



THE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The Council's equality objectives have been developed to provide a high-level framework that takes account of our equality, diversity and inclusion journey so far and provides a clear direction for the next stage. The equality objectives and proposed key actions have been subject to extensive consultation. Responses to the consultation have been used to shape actions and plans under each of the objectives as set out.

The four equality objectives together with their key actions are set out here:

1 Understanding, Listening to, and Working with Rotherham's Communities

The Council's vision for Rotherham sets out that "we value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind."

How the Council understands, listens to and engages with our communities is critical to this, especially to help ensure that needs are recognised, and no-one is left behind. The Council will continue to develop its knowledge, understanding and engagement through multiple channels.

Where we are now

We have committed to working with communities to achieve the best outcomes for local people, recognising the importance of putting them at the heart of everything we do. That means involving local residents in the things that matter to them and making sure we design our services taking account of feedback from those who use them.

We have developed robust processes for engagement and consultation with communities a recent example of which was in helping to shape our new Council Plan. This includes having a consultation and engagement policy to ensure standards and consistency in how we consult. We actively engage service users, stakeholder groups and work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and faith organisations.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, we have continued to work with partners to focus on the needs of our communities. Engagement work took place in high-risk places including town centre neighbourhoods, with BAME communities and the working age population to reduce transmission risk and promote vaccination.

The Tenant Engagement Framework and Thriving Neighbourhoods' Strategy support and enable different levels of engagement within communities to take place, with opportunities for underrepresented groups to participate in Council decision-making. Other examples of engagement include the Housing Involvement Panel which enables tenants to challenge services, performance and ensures the Council learns from complaints.

To better understand the different stakeholders that may wish to take part in consultation on council services, we are developing a picture of the different people who use services and voluntary, community and faith groups.

In addition, equalities monitoring information is collected as part of service level consultations. The information gathered from both stakeholder feedback and monitoring information is critical to the Council understanding the uptake of services and identifying where there may be barriers.

To better understand the makeup of our communities, the council collects and analyses information from internal and external data sources including the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This range of data sources are shared

through the Rotherham Data Hub. Services are encouraged to use the data available for service planning, commissioning, decision making and preparation of strategic documents such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

To deliver our equality objectives we work with our communities and in partnership. Our policy on consultation and engagement aims to ensure that our objectives are meaningful and reflect the views of communities and partners. Recent examples include the carers' strategy which has been shaped by feedback from carers.

What the public consultation suggested:

- There are positive examples from some areas of the Council, in particular Early Help and around hate crime, where communication and engagement are considered to be working well
- Improving access to council representatives from social care and customer services is important to be able to raise concerns/share views more easily
- The Council should look to develop a better understanding of people's real-life experiences, to inform decision making

Where we want to be

We want to be able to effectively demonstrate how we have listened to all sections of the communities that we serve.

We would like to see more people from under-represented groups participating across a more diverse range of consultation activities and be able to evidence how improvements to services have been influenced as a result of this. Our ambition is that communities will be encouraged and supported to influence or shape decisions that affect them.

The Council is aiming to develop stronger intelligence, data and information relating to differing community needs across the borough to better understand the picture of challenges that exist within and between wards. Data will be used appropriately and accurately to help predict and measure demand for services so that we can plan and design our services to meet evidenced needs.

The achievement of outcomes will be measured through the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery plan, supported by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at a more detailed level. Over time, we will be able to track the progress of our work to narrow the gaps in the areas identified by local people as their priorities in our Council Plan.

How we will get there

- Listening to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve the evidence base that informs service delivery.
- Enhancing the way that we engage with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure that all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.
- Sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Developing joint partnership approaches and activity including the use of intelligence to tackle inequalities, promote equalities and good community relations that have a positive impact.



2 Delivering Accessible and Responsive Services that Meet Diverse Needs

The Council's vision for Rotherham sets out "to work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents."

The Council, as a major service provider and in exercising its leadership role, touches the lives of everyone in Rotherham. **In this, the Council demonstrates that public services are a force for good, advocating for equality and tackling disadvantage.**

The way services are designed, commissioned, and delivered contributes to ensuring that the needs of diverse communities are served and that nobody is excluded from accessing services.

The role of partnership working continues to be of real value in tackling socio-economic and health inequalities with key actions and tangible outcomes to be set out. The Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board and its strategy set out how health inequalities are tackled.

Where we are now

We have made real progress in redesigning services and introducing digital processes to improve both accessibility and convenience for our customers. We want to go even further through our Council Plan commitments, to improve customer standards across our services making them easier to access. This links back to objective 1, because to do this effectively, we will need to work in partnership with our communities and customers to really understand the challenges they face in using council services.

We have continued to ensure that equalities are actively considered in decision-making through the use of equality screenings or assessments which accompany every report through to Cabinet. We have trained and developed our managers and the wider workforce in the need to consider equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their early thinking on service planning, new initiatives or service redesign and provided the tools to support them in doing this.

We also look to advance equalities through our third-party contracts, and this is now included in a commissioning toolkit, tender documents and contract documentation.

We use the data and intelligence that we gather across our services including council complaints, to gain a better understanding of where there are challenges that need to be tackled, including where protected groups have raised issues.

We have real tangible examples of service developments, including those achieved through partnership working that improve accessibility and outcomes. These include a befriending service provided by Rotherham Federation; new lighting and CCTV in Clifton Park to help women and girls feel safer and better accessibility in our libraries, to name but a few.

Underpinning all of this are our 'One Rotherham' values that set out how we expect to work together and in partnership, whilst seeking to break down barriers, ensure a one team approach and put the customer at the heart of all we do.

Case studies of achievements are set out each year in the Equalities Annual Report.

The public consultation suggested:

- Ensuring that council meetings and the council website fully enables access and engagement
- Working with local communities, listening to and supporting underrepresented groups to ensure that services seek to remove and mitigate barriers to access that may exist

Where we want to be

The Council's ambitions includes that customers receive a consistent, high quality and efficient services from all areas of the Council. This will involve agreeing a new set of customer service standards to deliver an excellent customer experience, by improving the quality of our customer contacts.

As set out in the Council Plan, residents and communities are a key part of how we work collaboratively and in partnership to design services that are both inclusive and accessible. A new programme focused on the experience that our customers have when accessing council services, is at the heart of this and will result in consistent customer standards to help us deliver high standards of service. Digital inclusion is a major consideration in understanding the barriers that prevent people from being able to access services and activities online. We are committed to understanding these barriers better so that we can work with communities to effectively tackle them.

To achieve this, we will need to work with residents and customers to understand barriers that they may face and learn from their lived experiences to inform our service design.

We want to be able to take the evidence, analysis and learning from our equality assessments to inform future service design and to be able to better evidence the impacts that they have had in improving outcomes.

We also want to ensure that the assessments themselves are accessible and more meaningful. A recent example includes the Dementia Cafe for BAME people, where the outcome of equality assessment lead to service redesign.

We will build on our current approach to co-production and co-design with service users wherever possible, enabling services users' voices to be heard and for them to influence and shape outcomes.

How we will get there

- Communicating and engaging with residents so that they feel informed about council services and how to access these.
- Listening to service users through consultations and complaints to produce evidence-based analysis that informs service design and delivery.
- Strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting skills' to enable access for all.
- Working together in partnership and in collaboration to deliver the Council Plan commitments to tackle inequality and disadvantage.
- Continuing to improve the use of Equality Assessments in service design and delivery, capturing challenges and opportunities at the very beginning, ensuring barriers are considered and mitigated where possible.



3 Providing Leadership and Organisational Commitment to Actively Promote Equalities

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

This objective has two key elements. The first takes forward how we work across our services and with partners to tackle prejudice and discrimination. The second is about how people come together to celebrate what is good about the diverse communities in Rotherham and the common bonds across communities that make Rotherham a better place.

Where we are now

The Council is committed to tackling prejudice and racism in all its forms. We have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of anti-Semitism and passed a “Black Lives Matter” resolution with the aim of making Rotherham an “anti-racist town”.

There are established processes for Elected Members, partner organisations and our workforce to feed in information about issues that have the potential to cause community tensions. This enables actions to be taken as a result, and we work with Statutory Partners to respond to and monitor hate crime incidents.

We are progressing with our Building Stronger Communities Strategy empowering people by, working through a broad partnership. This is working to achieve people living and working in harmony, with a shared sense of community spirit, having respect for each other as citizens and respect for Rotherham as a place.

We use a range of communications and events to promote positive relations, that are important to local people and support understanding of diversity.

The public consultation suggested:

- Promoting equality and raising awareness of equality issues
- Getting involved should include arranging and attending cultural exchange events to share knowledge

Where we want to be

We have set out in both the “Every Neighbourhood Thriving” and the “People are Safe Healthy and Live Well” themes of the Council Plan, how the pandemic response helped to show the benefits of working together across partnerships and communities. We want to continue to build on this, with people coming together from all parts of the community to get involved and tackle the issues that are most important to them.

Through our ward councillors and neighbourhood working model, we will continue to play a strong community leadership role in bringing partners and communities together to tackle issues and tensions and to overcome barriers, whilst promoting harmony and cohesion. We will work with changing communities over time to ensure that everyone feels at home in Rotherham. We want to ensure that people do not face barriers and prejudice.

We will continue to build on the events we hold that have had the most meaning for our communities, and look to mark a broader range of dates that are important to people.

We will stand up to prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. We will always speak out to protect our communities and their best interests.

How we will get there

- Continuing to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies, to address issues around community safety including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.
- Working in partnership with services, partners and communities to promote equality and good community relations.
- Supporting awareness and understanding across communities to promote good relations across the range of protected characteristics.
- Celebrating diversity within our communities and marking events.



4 Ensuring a diverse and engaged workforce

As a Council we are committed to addressing the challenges faced by our workforce, residents and communities and our overall approach is detailed in the Council Plan 2022-25.

Our approach includes maximising opportunities to evolve the way in which we work, provide services to residents and communities and listen to feedback from our workforce on how we progress into the future, and how we build on lessons we have learnt over recent years. This will ensure we remain focused on providing the best services we can to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Rotherham.

Where we are now

We undertake regular monitoring of workforce data in relation to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to support the Council's commitment to transparency and fairness.

The Council's workforce has many women who work in part time roles, however the number of men working part-time has gradually increased to one in five, which compares to three in five women over the last five years.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees (BAME) representation in the workforce is 4.7 % which is below the 2011 census level (6.3 %) of the BAME working population in Rotherham. Two thirds of our BAME employees are under 49 years of age which is higher than the representation of non BAME employees in the same age group.

The representation of employees declaring a disability in the workforce is 9.2 % which is below that of the proportion of disabled people in Rotherham as a whole (18 %) reported in the 2011 census, but this pattern is not unique to Rotherham and is reflected nationally.

Over the last eight years the Council has seen significant reductions in its gender pay gap with the mean gap reducing from 18.2 % to 11.2 % and median from 21.8 % to 9.2 %

Ensuring equality of opportunity for our workforce and tackling workplace exclusion remain critical for the continued success of the Council. This sets an example for all other employers within the borough and these statistics have helped to inform the shaping of the strategy and annual workplan.

We are committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion within our workforce at all levels, ensuring that there is confidence in working together to deliver the best possible services for residents. To support this commitment, positive steps continue to be taken to improve workplace equality. Examples of some of the activity include:

- Ensuring all of our policies are up to date and reflective of our diverse needs and situations.
- Flexible, fair and transparent pay and benefits.
- Removing barriers to flexible working wherever possible.
- Supporting staff with caring responsibilities.
- Staff development and career progression that reflects individuals' needs and learning styles.

We recognise that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance, productivity and reduce stress. To support employees in achieving this balance, we have developed a wide range of

flexible and hybrid working arrangements. Hybrid working builds upon previous flexible working policies and supports a culture of working wherever, whenever, and however is most appropriate to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents.

The public consultation suggested:

- Offering council staff training and development to improve their understanding of people's lived experiences and to better inform service design and delivery
- Staff groups could be a valuable networking opportunity, a forum to come together to share concerns, with the importance to have deliverable outcomes, formalised structures and clear responsibilities, and the possibility to give feedback on progress on equalities.

Where we want to be

Our workforce is key to the successful delivery of the Council Plan and this underpinning EDI strategy. We would like to refresh our Council values and behaviours in conjunction with our workforce as these provide the framework that all Council employees should operate within. We would also like to increase our engagement from underrepresented groups through the development and support of staff networks.

We want to ensure that our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve and that we are able attract a diverse range of candidates for Council positions, by understanding and tackling any barriers that may exist. We want to ensure that people from all protected characteristics have a place within the Rotherham Council workforce. We would like to engage more with our young people in the borough to promote career opportunities that exist

within the Council and to create career pathways for the whole workforce, understanding that there needs to be flexibility in our approach.

It is important that as we move forward on our equalities journey, that we ensure more inclusive and accessible practices and policies that are easy to understand using plain language, but also available to those employees who require the information in different formats. We would like to continue to engage with individuals and groups within our workforce who have different types of needs to understand how we can best support them.

We want to ensure that we equip our workforce with the skills that help them to grow their capacity to learn and adapt, ensuring that we enable them to proactively embrace new ways of working, focusing on how they can add value. We recognise that the approach to doing this will need to be inclusive and will continue to consult and engage with our workforce in a variety of ways.

How we engage our workforce and recognise its diversity will not only ensure there are no barriers and that special needs are met, but also bring experience into the design of services and how we work on a daily basis.



How we will get there

Five workforce priorities along with some key actions have been identified to support the delivery of the Council Plan and the EDI Strategy:

- Being an Employer of Choice so that we attract and retain talented individuals.
- Progressing with our Ways of Working post-Covid, ensuring that we are innovative and agile, that our workforce policies are accessible and inclusive and that we have refreshed values and behaviours to underpin what we do.
- Driving forward our workforce engagement to include support for establishing stronger networks for underrepresented groups and facilitating new approaches to engagement that are accessible and inclusive.
- Developing our workforce development programme that takes account of different needs and also promotes equalities, diversity and inclusion as being at the heart of what we do.
- Building on our workforce Health and Wellbeing programme offer based on workforce feedback and national good practice.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS?

How Will We Measure Our Progress?

This strategy underpins and supports the delivery of the Council Plan which has equalities, diversity and inclusion at its very heart. On that basis, this strategy is guided by the Key Performance Indicators that are already contained within the Council Plan and will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis, in addition to more detailed operational service plans.

Measuring delivery of the strategy is also about our progress towards and achieving “excellent” under the Equality Framework for Local Government. This establishes the equality standards the Council works to. We will collect and share information on case studies to showcase best practice and make equalities about real life experiences as well as gathering data and outputs.

Our refreshed equality objectives are the starting point of our next chapter. They will be supported by an annual work programme which is monitored. An annual report of progress will be prepared and published on the Council’s website. Delivery of the activities within the work programme aspires and aims to bring people along on the journey that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Rotherham is taking. It is the role and responsibility of everyone at the Council to support the delivery our vision for equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Equalities Annual Report

The annual report is published in June each year. In June 2022, it will report the progress of the next steps and actions set out in the 2021 report and will take forward the workplan for 2022/23 as set out in this strategy. This will form the basis for future year reports, which will be published and considered by both scrutiny and Cabinet within the Council.

Conclusion

We recognise the diversity of Rotherham’s communities is expanding and that this should be welcomed and valued. There will be many opportunities and challenges over the next three years as we work with residents to improve their lives and reduce the incidences of discrimination and harassment. Our refreshed equality objectives will allow us to build on our previous achievements and continually improve.

APPENDIX 2: EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN 2022/2023

UNDERSTANDING, LISTENING TO AND WORKING WITH ROTHERHAM'S COMMUNITIES

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
<p>Two of the high-level actions under this objective are delivered through a range of linked activities:</p> <p>Listening to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve the evidence base that informs service delivery.</p> <p>Enhancing the way that we engage with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure that all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.</p>	Develop stronger connections and networks with both representative groups and organisations and with individuals themselves, to broaden our reach and our understanding of the barriers and the opportunities.	September 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	
	Refresh councils' consultation and engagement policy and toolkit.	November 2022		✓
	Use consultation and engagement activity to develop improved local intelligence relating to residents with protected characteristics and their participation levels.	January 2023		
	Develop and deliver a programme of consultation and engagement on the future supported accommodation offer for those with learning disabilities and autism.	Consult May 2022 Delivery May 2023	Assistant Director Independent Living and Support AC, H & PH	✓
	Deliver and launch the new Carers' Strategy.	June 2022		✓
	Carry out targeted engagement with families to increase take up of early education.	March 2023	Assistant Director Education and Skills CYPS	✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Implement KOOTH, the online mental health and wellbeing tool and monitor usage by young people.	October 2022	Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Quality and Performance CYPs	✓
Sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats.	As part of the refreshed consultation and engagement policy work, develop an improved understanding & issue guidance relating to how information can be made more accessible for all.	November 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	✓
	Increase the number of subscribers for the ward bulletins to 9,000 (25 % increase).	March 2023	Head of Communications and Marketing ACX	✓
	Increase the number of subscribers for the new 'Rotherham Round up' borough wide email to 9,000.	March 2023		✓
	Identify measures to improve digital inclusion through consultation with communities.	December 2022	Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital F & CS	✓
	Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy.	July 2023		✓
Developing joint partnership approaches and activity including the use of intelligence to tackle inequalities, promote equalities and good community relations that have a positive impact.	Produce ward plans with ward priorities informed by local communities.	June 2022	Head of Neighbourhoods ACX	✓
	Review Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy to address inequalities at the local level and build community intelligence.	July 2022		✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Refresh the Rotherham Together Plan.	August 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	✓
	Evaluate the current Team Around the School project to establish the impact on the sample schools and their pupils.	July 2022	Assistant Director Education and Skills CYPS	✓
	Work with children and young people across the borough to co-design the Children's Capital of Culture 2025 programme.	Up to 2025	Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement R & E	✓
	Agree a new universal Youth offer including the contributions of both the Council and voluntary sector partners.	January 2023	Assistant Director Early Help and Family Engagement CYPS	✓

DELIVERING ACCESSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE SERVICES THAT MEET DIVERSE NEEDS

	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
<p>Two of the high-level actions in this objective are delivered through a range of linked activities:</p> <p>Communicating and engaging with residents so that they feel informed about council services and how to access these.</p> <p>Listening to service users through consultations and complaints to produce evidence-based analysis that informs service design and delivery.</p>	Complete the new library at Thurcroft.	March 2023	Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation R & E	✓
	Work with partners to develop a prevention and health inequalities strategy and action plan.	April 2022	Director Public Health AC, H & PH	✓
	Refresh the partnership Loneliness Action plan and ensure the delivery of Council owned actions.	September 2022		✓
	Produce suicide prevention guidance for staff and Members.	May 2022		✓
	Delivery of new day opportunities for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs.	May 2022	Assistant Director Independent Living and Support	✓
	Implement the Rotherham Inclusion Pathway (a school-led, multi-agency approach to supporting young people at risk of exclusion).	July 2022	Assistant Director Education and Skills CYPs	✓
	Implement the 'Year of Reading' programme and evaluate its success.	July 2023		✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Complete delivery of the £100k Play Equipment replacement programme.	March 2023	Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement R & E	✓
	Launch a commissioning toolkit for commissioners, contract managers and suppliers. The toolkit will address equalities through social value in the commissioning and procurement of services and managing external contracts.	September 2022	Assistant Director Strategic Commissioning AC, H & PH	✓
	Commission new services to prevent financial exploitation.	March 2023	Assistant Director of Housing AC, H & PH	✓
	Complete a review of Rother Card.	June 2022	Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital F & CS	✓
	Reduce the number of homeless people housed in temporary accommodation as part of a broader approach to tackling disadvantage.	March 2023	Assistant Director of Housing AC, H & PH	✓
	Provide food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays through to October 2022 to support our most disadvantaged families.	April 2023	Assistant Director Education and Skills CYPs	✓
	Provide an additional reduction in Council Tax liability for working age households eligible for Local Council Tax Support during 2022/23.	Decision March 2022, delivery through 2022/23	Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services F & CS	✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Recommission domestic abuse services.	October 2022	Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene R & E	✓
Strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting skills' to enable access for all.	Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy.	July 2023	Assistant Director Customer, Information and Digital F & CS	✓
	Deliver public Wi-Fi to the new town centre library and markets building and investigate the feasibility of delivering Wi-Fi to other Council owned public spaces within the Town centre.	March 2023		✓
Working together in partnership and in collaboration to deliver the Council Plan commitments to tackle inequality and disadvantage.	Deliver the Enterprise Adviser Network programme, ensuring 75 % of schools and colleges are matched to an adviser from a local business and are demonstrating progress towards achieving the eight Gatsby benchmarks for good quality careers education information, advice and guidance.	March 2023	Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration and Transport R & E	✓
	Deliver the Business Education Alliance programme, with 33 SMEs engaging with schools and colleges to help raise aspirations through meaningful employer encounters.	December 2023		✓
	Work with partners to identify their local spending profile as well as promoting living wage accreditation.	September 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Ensure new in scope contracts are in line with Living Wage accreditation.	March 2023		✓
	Adopt a local labour policy to encourage and/or enable local people to access job opportunities arising from major development sites.	March 2023	Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration and Transport R & E	✓
	Deliver the European Social Fund 'Pathways to Success' employment support programme, to at least 450 residents who qualify, into training and work.	December 2023	Assistant Director of Housing AC, H & PH	✓
	Commence the delivery of the Advance project and provide assistance to 500 people in employment to enhance their career prospects.	December 2023	Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration and Transport R & E	✓
	Work with partners from the People and Skills Networking Group to set up work coaches and job seeker support across the library network.	March 2022	Head of Service Operations and Business Transformation R & E	✓
	Develop three social supermarkets and other measures as part of a preventative approach to help people avoid food crisis.	December 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
Continuing to improve the use of Equality Assessments in service design and delivery, capturing challenges and opportunities at the very beginning, ensuring barriers are considered and mitigated where possible.	Review and update current equality assessment process and guidance, with examples of best practice identified and showcased, to aid learning and development.	December 2022	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	
	Conduct equality assessment training for scrutiny members to support evidence-based decision-making.	June 2022		
	Update service plan templates to make equality objectives SMART.	April 2023		
	Ensure partnership initiatives and partnership groups have due regard to advancing equality and tackling inequality, through active promotion and engagement on the strategy, objectives and tools such as the Equality Assessment.	March 2023		

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATION COMMITMENT TO ACTIVELY PROMOTE EQUALITIES

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
<p>Two of the high-level actions in this objective are delivered through a range of linked activities:</p> <p>Continuing to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies, to address issues around community safety including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.</p> <p>Working with services, partners and communities to promote equality and good community relations.</p>	Refresh the EDI action plan that supports the Council's EDI Strategy on an annual basis.	June 2023	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence ACX	
	Publishing an annual report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and acting upon it.	June 2023		
	Explore opportunities to support cross-organisational learning on equalities through the Rotherham Together Partnership.	Ongoing (until 2025)		
	Taking the lead on prevention action and outwardly taking forward the Council's Black Lives Matter resolution, continuing to work with communities to understand the challenges faced.	March 2023		
	Continue to work with partners on the Safer Rotherham Partnership to strengthen the understanding of community tensions, build confident and cohesive communities in the refreshed Safer Rotherham Plan.	September 2022	Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene R & E	✓
Supporting awareness and understanding across communities to promote good relations across the range of protected characteristics.	Continue to work with partners on the Safer Rotherham Partnership to strengthen the understanding of community tensions.	March 2023		✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
Celebrating diversity within our communities and marking events.	Proactively promote recognised dates that celebrate diversity and support inclusion through the Council's website and social media such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black History Month. • International Women's Day. • Pride. • Holocaust Memorial Day. • Rotherham Show. • National Day for Disabled People. • South Asian Heritage Month. 	March 2023	Head of Communications and Marketing ACX	
	Hold cultural and sporting events across Rotherham to appeal to a range of ages and backgrounds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Euro 2022. • Rotherham Show. • Rotherham 10k. • Summer reading challenge. • Fun palaces. 	September 2022	Head of Service Creative Programming and Engagement R & E	✓

ENSURING A DIVERSE AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
Ensuring all of our policies are up to date and reflective of our diverse needs and situations.	<p>Continue to improve workplace equality and diversity through the delivery of the Workforce Plan 2022-2025 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement learning points identified from EOS feedback. • Evaluate feedback from exit interviews and identify areas for improvement. • Remove any identified barriers to recruiting, retaining and developing a diverse workforce through our people processes and policies. • Maximise workforce engagement from underrepresented groups through the development of staff representation networks. • Engage with young people to understand the barriers to employment. 	March 2023	Assistant Director Human Resources & OD, ACX	✓
	Continuously review each stage of the lifecycle (recruitment & attraction/induction & onboarding/ performance/learning & development & talent management/engagement/health & wellbeing/reward & recognition/employee transition or exit) to ensure it meets the needs of the whole workforce but with an emphasis on underrepresented groups.	March 2023		✓

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
	Ensure that policies and processes are clear and easy to understand using plain language.	March 2023		
Flexible, fair and transparent pay and benefits.	Act on feedback from the workforce and staff representation groups to undertake a review and refresh of the values and behaviours and develop a proposal for the future supporting new ways of working.	March 2023		
	Increase workforce engagement from underrepresented groups through the development of staff representation networks.	March 2023		
	Undertake regular EOS, pulse surveys and polls with the whole workforce to better understand the issues that matter the most.	March 2023		
	Seek feedback from our workforce and staff representation groups to identify recognised good practice.	March 2023		✓
	Continually improve the Discover Wellbeing Programme offer based on workforce and staff representation group feedback and national good practice; provide resources for the workforce to access.	March 2023		
	Seek feedback from our workforce and identify recognised good practice that supports EDI.	March 2023		
Removing barriers to flexible working wherever possible.	Review and refresh workforce policies, processes and practices to ensure they support underrepresented groups.	March 2023		

How we will get there	Activity	Key milestone dates	Service lead	Council Plan/ YADP activity?
Supporting staff with caring responsibilities.	Ensure the values are reflected across all core workforce policies and processes.	March 2023		
Providing staff development and career progression that reflects individuals' needs and learning styles.	Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff and delivered through the induction process and as a regular training refresh module.	March 2023		
	Evaluate L&D activity in relation to equality and diversity to ensure all learning is fit for purpose, meets the Council and learner needs and can be implemented into the workplace.	March 2023		
	Develop a corporate Learning & Development (L&D) annual and forward plan based on workforce intelligence and supported by behavioural insights that supports EDI.	March 2023		
	Utilise the workforce intelligence in relation to career aspirations, development needs and skill requirements to support the L&D forward plan and EDI.	March 2023		

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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

CONSULTATION FINDINGS



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I INTRODUCTION AND MAIN FINDINGS

In late 2021, Rotherham Council commenced the refresh of its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and its corporate equality objectives, as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty. This involved a 5-week public consultation period, including a survey and focus groups, to test and gather feedback on the proposed priorities and actions, and ensure these are the right ones for the council, the borough and its communities.

This report contains the methodology used, the engagement profile of respondents, main themes from the consultation, a quantitative analysis of survey results and finally a qualitative analysis of the findings from external and internal focus groups.

The three proposed key priorities consulted on were:

1 Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities

- Developing a network of equality champions both inside and outside of the council to be supporters and promoters of equality and inclusion
- Working together with partners, voluntary, community and faith organisations
- Publishing an annual report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and acting upon it
- Publishing the Gender Pay Gap report and plan to address the gap
- Sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats – available to all
- Leading by example and challenging what's wrong

2 Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services

- Making sure equalities are part of Council planning, including goods and services we buy

- Capturing equality issues and needs from the beginning
- Training staff to ensure they treat people with dignity
- Working together to tackle inequalities
- Supporting community-led social and economic projects e.g., social supermarkets and community enterprise

3 Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations

- Taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination
- Promoting a positive and inclusive culture across our borough
- Working together to tackle inequalities.
- The Council promoting and supporting key events and activities
- Action and cooperation across our partnerships to improve community cohesion togetherness/relationships
- Celebrating what is good about our different communities.

The feedback from the consultation was largely positive about the general themes, but respondents highlighted several issues:

- **The need for priorities and actions to be more specific and monitored**
- **The need for clearer and more consistent two-way communication on Council priorities and activities**
- **The need to improve accessibility and to improve engagement around accessibility**
- **The importance of Council staff having a good understanding of equality issues and diverse communities' needs.**

2. METHODOLOGY

The consultation ran from 10th January 2022 to 14th February 2022. During this time, Rotherham residents were consulted on the three proposed priorities and accompanying actions via a survey (online and print copies), through focus groups and other engagement activities, including information and promotion sessions. Three promotional towers were located around the borough and there was social media promotion of the consultation, and also promotion via internal communications.

The online survey was available on the council website and residents were encouraged to fill it in via e-bulletins and social media, as well as via the promotional towers in libraries and a series of engagement sessions. Print copies were also available in libraries and library staff were briefed on the consultation to be able to answer questions. A total of eight engagement sessions were held to ensure a wide range of people from protected characteristics groups were aware of the consultation, and several of these sessions supported participants in filling in the survey. This resulted in an improvement in the diversity of survey respondents in comparison with the Council Plan consultation survey in Summer/Autumn 2021.

Focus groups organised around protected characteristics were arranged through a range of community organisations, as well as internally with staff groups sharing protected characteristics, and with two strategic partners, the Strategic Housing Forum and the Clinical Commissioning Group's Equality Steering Group. See details on the groups involved in section 3 below.

The focus groups involved semi-structured conversations around the priorities and actions and following the close of the consultation, notes and written comments on the survey were analysed by identifying themes across responses, and survey responses were analysed statistically.

External and internal groups were keen to get involved and feed into the equality consultation, however, there were difficulties in reaching out to LGBT+ groups externally, and the issue of capacity amongst LGBT+ community groups in Rotherham. This was also raised in the LGBT+ staff focus group, who reported there was no funded provision for these communities, and the few groups that did exist were volunteer run.

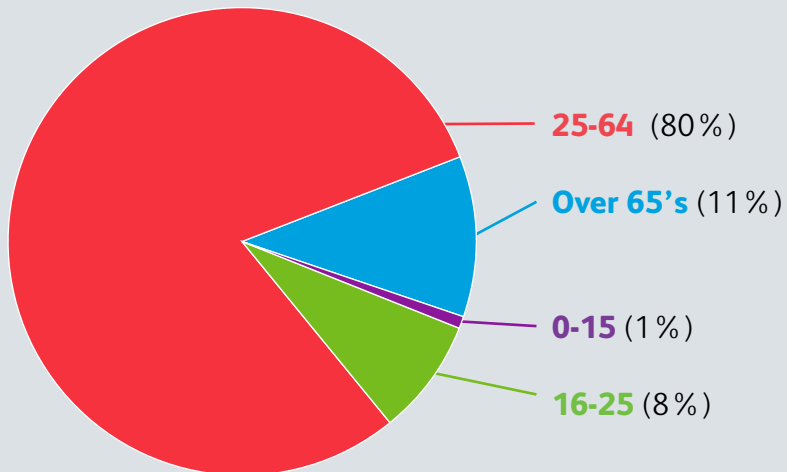
As always, learning has been taken from this exercise to help improve future consultations, in particular those with a focus on equalities and a key learning point is around the flexibility in approach. The consultation design would have benefited from different and more flexible approaches to reflect the different audiences.

In future consultations, the towers, which were used successfully during the Council Plan consultation to elicit responses could be used to better advantage, particularly as they provide participants with the ability to self-reflect, discuss topics and provide feedback in a more interactive way. In future, it may be beneficial to include a question in online consultations such as 'where did you find out about this consultation?' so we can learn about the best sources of engagement.

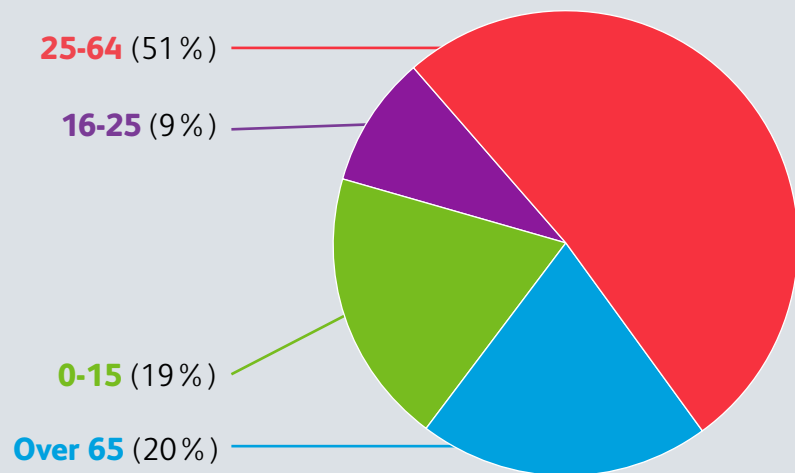
3. ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

There were **172 responses** to the online survey.

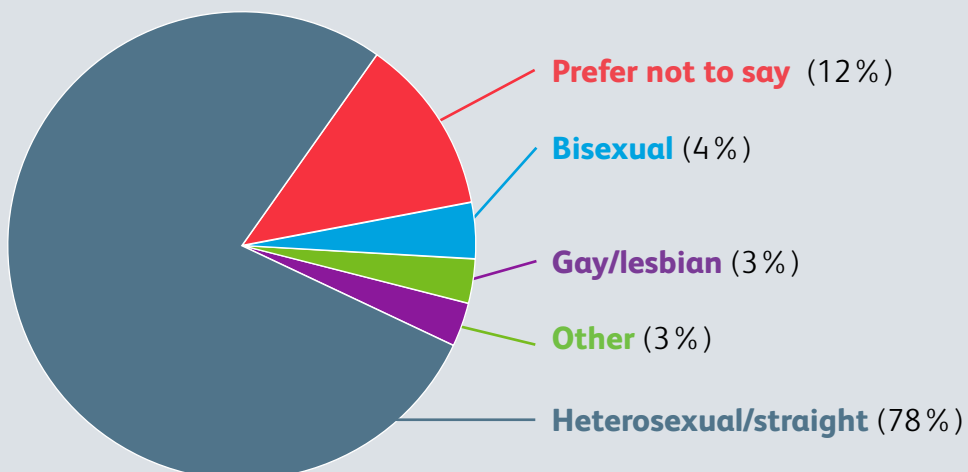
Age (all respondents)



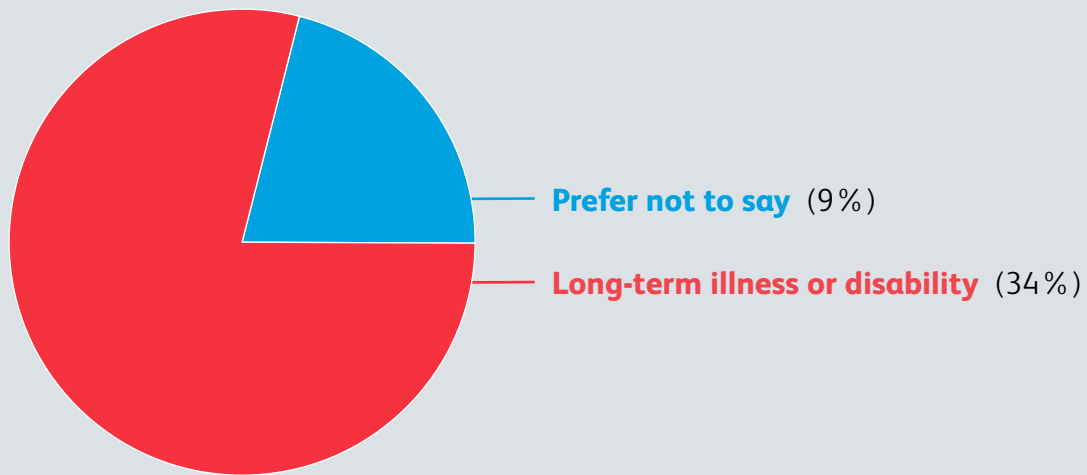
Age (Rotherham Residents)



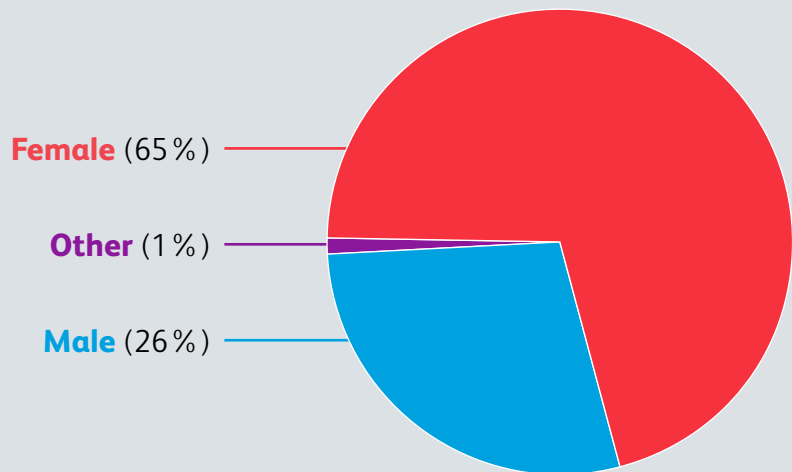
Sexuality (all respondents)



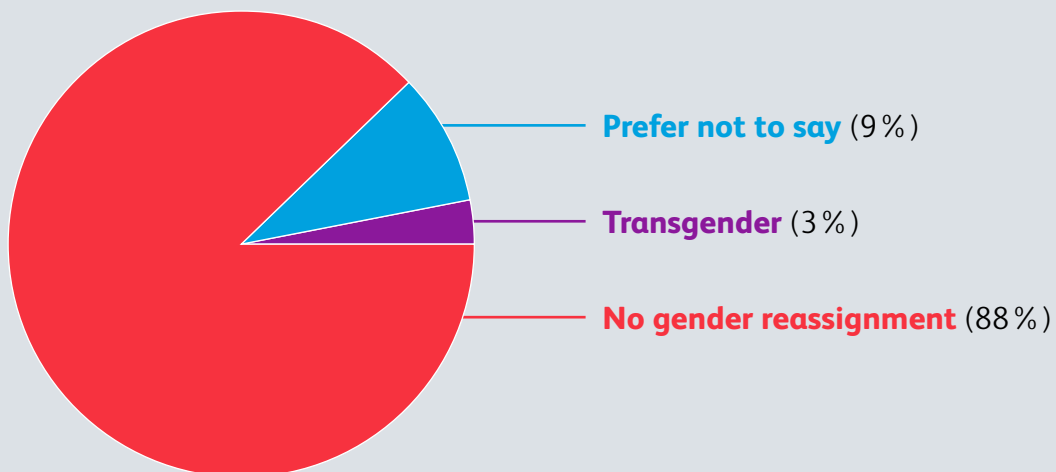
Disability (all respondents)

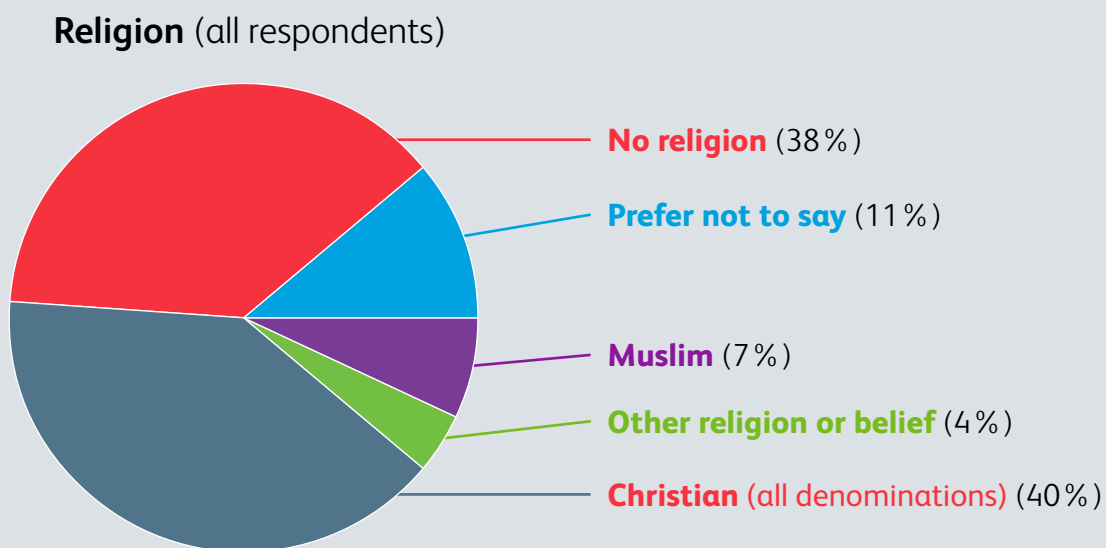
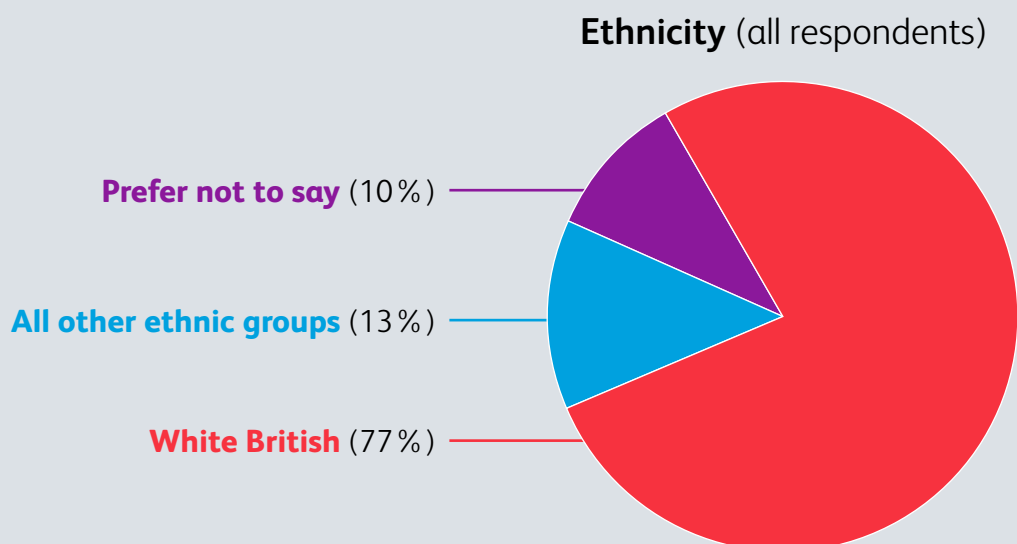
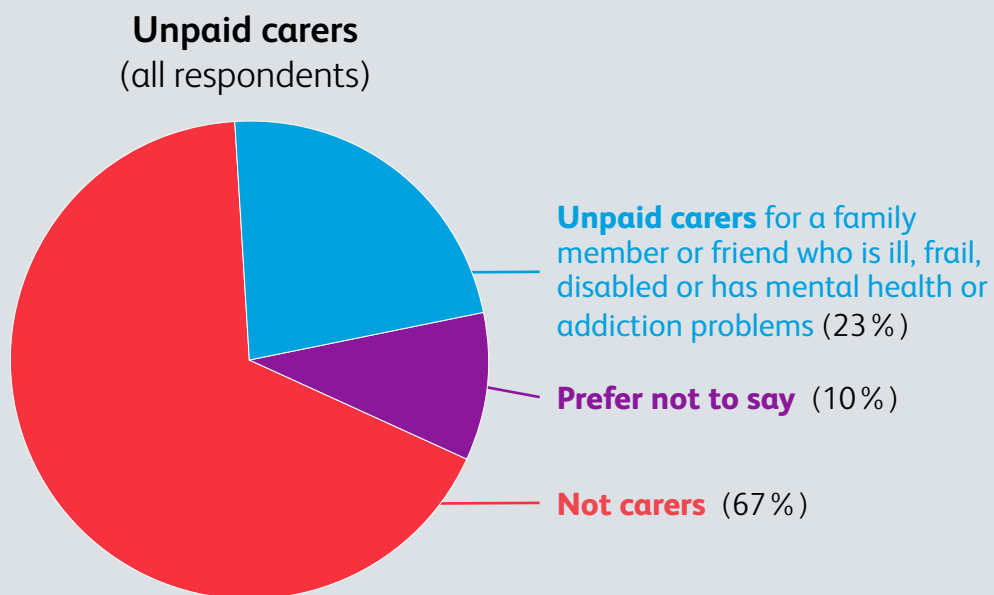


Gender (all respondents)



Gender reassignment
(all respondents)





Future consultations need to focus on improving the participation rates of children and young people, and elderly residents over 65, who are usually well-represented. Regarding other protected characteristics, the engagement profile compares well to borough figures, and national estimates, with many groups, such as ethnic minorities, Muslims, disabled people, who are often underrepresented in consultations, well-represented or even overrepresented in this engagement exercise.

The 8 focus groups, some virtual, some in person, engaged with borough residents on themes around ethnicity, gender, a range of disabilities (including conversations with carers), faith and older people, with approximately 30 VCS organisation involved. A BAME group was organised through Rotherham Ethnic Communities Network (RECN), which includes: REMA, RMCF, the Sudanese Community, Saifs Boxing and Fitness, Roma/Slova, Apna Haq, the Rotherham Interfaith Group. Three disability groups engaged: 1. users, carers and families around complex needs, through SENSE; 2. users, volunteers, staff, support workers around visual impairment through Sight and Sound; 3. members of the community support group for profoundly deaf Deaf Futures.

A focus group took place around Faith with Mosques, Methodist, Salvation Army, Liberty Church and Hope Church. Older people were engaged with through committee members of the Rotherham Older Peoples Forum, with includes Age Uk and HealthWatch. The women's focus group was held with service providers, including NHS, RUCST, Community Safety, Grow, Carers Forum and Rotherfed. The text below will report on these groups as: BAME, disability 1, disability 2, disability 3, faith, older people, women. There were between 5 and 18 participants in each focus group, with a total of 72 participants, and around 30 VCSE organisations represented.

The strategic partners consultation reached around 23 participants through the Strategic Housing Forum (referred to in the text as strategic housing) and 9 participants through the CCG Equality and Diversity Steering group, referred to in the text as CCG. 6 internal focus groups (women, LGBT+, carers, disability, faith, BAME) engaged around 45 staff, with between 2 and 12 participants per group.

4. FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

4.1. Common themes

A few common themes emerged across all consultation activities, including the open comments in the survey, and internal and external focus groups. These covered the need for clarity of priorities and actions, improving community engagement, staff training, the accessibility of council services and facilities and visible support and celebration of diverse communities.

Clarity of priorities and actions

Feedback on the overarching priorities was largely positive, with respondents agreeing with the broad agenda and direction. However, many of the groups and survey comments focused on the need for more clarity and specificity in the priorities and actions (survey, BAME, CCG, internal women, internal disability, internal BAME). 17 % of residents filling in open questions thought priority 1 needed greater clarity, wanting the priority to be more specific, whilst 16 % felt the same for priority 3.

How actions will be monitored and measured was also widely raised, for example by the internal women's group, and the CCG equality steering group proposed collaboration across partners to track issues and share equality data. There were also questions about who will be accountable for implementing the actions (BAME, Women), and whether there was a role for the VCS to play'.

Some groups held views that previous council strategies and their recommendations had not been effectively implemented, and they sought assurances that the new equalities strategy would bring about real change. To overcome this, groups expressed views that they wanted to see the council commit specific resources to the plan.

Communication and Engagement

Another point raised across groups was regarding the need to improve community engagement and dialogue (BAME, women, disability 3, older people, faith, survey, internal LGBT+). Some groups stated there was a general lack of feedback from the Council regarding suggestions made during consultations, with participants not knowing whether changes have been implemented or not (BAME, women, disability 3). Indeed, the Council's own Consultation and Engagement Policy, as well as best practice (e.g. from the LGA) all specify that this is an important component of consultations, so this feedback needs to be taken on board and reflected upon. There was a clear desire for more continued dialogue and exchange, and a platform for discussion, some suggested feedback every 6 months (women, older people, disability 3).

There were positive examples from some areas of the Council, in particular Early Help and around hate crime, where communication and engagement were considered to be working well (Rotherham Children and Young People Consortium). There is also a wider issue around clear communication, as there was some misconception around a few issues (availability of workforce monitoring information, analysing the race pay gap), which clear communication could quickly resolve.

Some groups stated a difficulty raising issues, with some viewing consultations as a tick-box exercises. Carers and those with complex needs stated they did not feel like they were being heard, and that carers views were not always taken account of (disability 1), while the faith group stated the need for the council to actively listen, find new ways to engage with these communities and value everyone's experiences. 10 % of key priority open comments in the survey suggested listening to minority groups as the most important way to achieve all 3 priorities.

“The Council should have service users at the heart of decision making and work with communities to find solutions.” (Faith)

There was also a desire for communities to be involved in decision-making as early as possible, in particular during policy reviews, to ensure that they feel their views and needs are represented. There was a view that the Council can do more to ensure feedback and challenge is both welcomed and received. Some groups stated that they used to have good contacts with senior staff (disability 2) and there was a desire for more engagement with RMBC senior management and especially as engagement returns to more physical forms after the restrictions of the COVID pandemic (older people, faith, disability 1, 2 and 3, BAME). There was a real desire to be involved and feed into council decisions going forward.

The internal BAME and women’s groups both raised questions about how the council will actively engage with its communities to enable people to participate and contribute towards council decision-making, and how to engage with women in communities considered ‘hard-to-reach’ and across protected characteristics. Specific further examples covered:

- A council representative on a steering group to ensure greater collaboration.
- Access to council representatives from social care and customer services to raise concerns/share views
- Looking for opportunities for the Council’s leadership to undertake shadowing so that as a council, we ensure we have better understanding of lived experiences.

Accessibility

Several groups raised issues related to accessibility. They stated views around more accessible transport, disabled toilets, accessible leisure facilities and parks, giving wheelchair users priority on public transport (disability 1), while the older people’s forum raised the issue of digital exclusion (Older people, BAME). Further comments highlighted the accessibility of written information

and communication, with the CCG group raising the importance of appropriate and accessible formats for all council information. The BAME group expressed the view that policies, rights (such as tenants’ rights) and processes can be particularly difficult to understand for people who have English as a second language.

“Equalities are part of Council planning. Therefore, when including goods and services they need to be accessible to all not just the IT literate.” (survey comment)

“...Some people would be unable to complete surveys such as this because they either don’t have the equipment to allow them to do it, or don’t have the skills/knowledge. Their opinions are still needed and valid.”

(survey comment)

Two groups also highlighted the need to be aware of multiple barriers, intersectionality, and inequalities within inequalities, such as gay BAME people, or BAME women (BAME and CCG). The BAME group expressed views around more awareness of specialised services and the barriers within universal offer/general approaches (also raised in Faith group), and there needed to be more support, in particular from people within those communities. The faith group raised that council policies should take into account the needs of faith groups. Disability groups specifically wanted to be involved in conversations on accessibility to feed in their views, in particular around planning and the built environment.

Some specific points were raised regarding accessibility on:

- Suggestions on improving council meetings and the council website.
- Improving accessibility in the complaints process.
- Use of information in customer services to ensure services and support are accessible.

Awareness/Training

A variety of groups stated that RMBC staff needed to be more aware of the needs of people with protected characteristics, of equality issues in general (Faith), with age mentioned specifically mentioned specifically as needing further awareness (Older people). Many comments expressed the view that training on neurodiversity, LGBT+ issues, race, disability should be improved, and for the training and communication methods to be more innovative (internal BAME).

“...They (council staff) need training in children/adults with disabilities especially parents with learning difficulties like Autism and ADHD.” (survey comment)

11 % of open comment responses for priority 2 mentioned wanting council staff to be given extensive training in understanding complex learning needs, local communities and unconscious bias. Two groups stated that they would like to see local organisations delivering training and that training should involve the community (BAME, CCG).

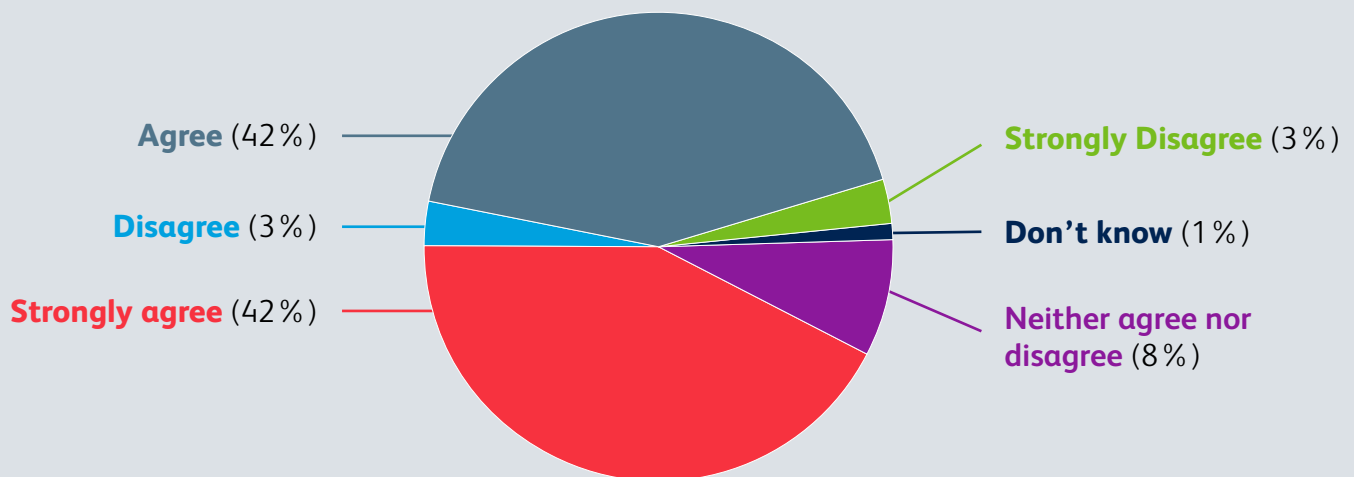
There was a view that high quality training was essential so that all staff are aware of equality issues recognise the diversity within equality categories and ensure people are treated with dignity ((internal LGBT+, Strategic Housing, internal women).

Improved training would enable staff to feel more confident about equality issues, to ask questions and to know when it is appropriate to ask questions, as well as heighten sensibility around equality questions (internal LGBT+). It was also raised that there should be further training for managers and HR staff to support staff when, for example, making reasonable adjustments (internal disability), or supporting staff returning from maternity leave (internal women).

4.2. Online Survey Results

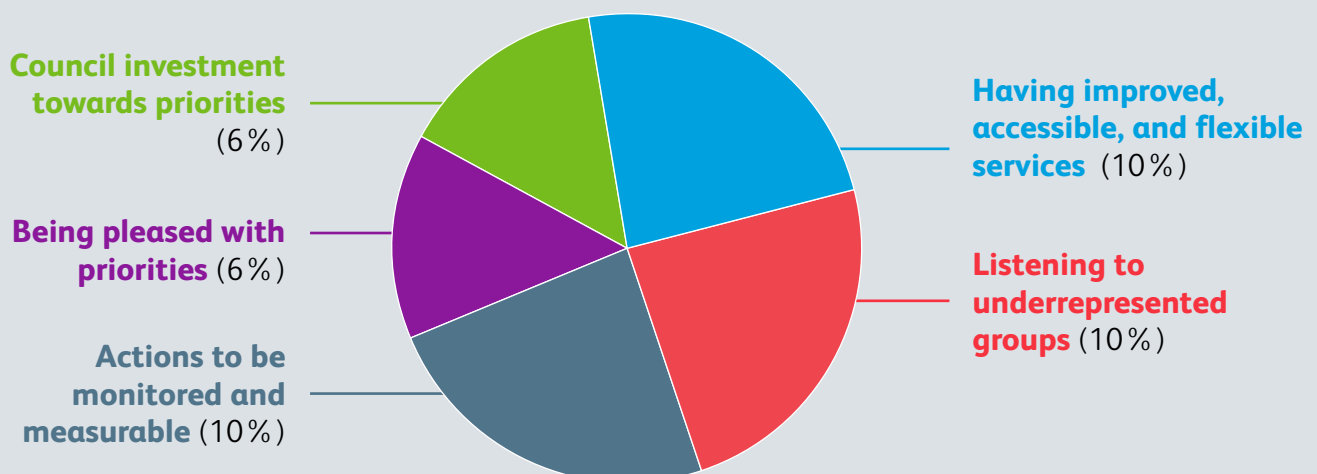
The equality consultation survey gathered **172 responses in total**. 100 respondents filled in 1 or more open comment sections.

Are these the right priorities for us to collectively work towards?

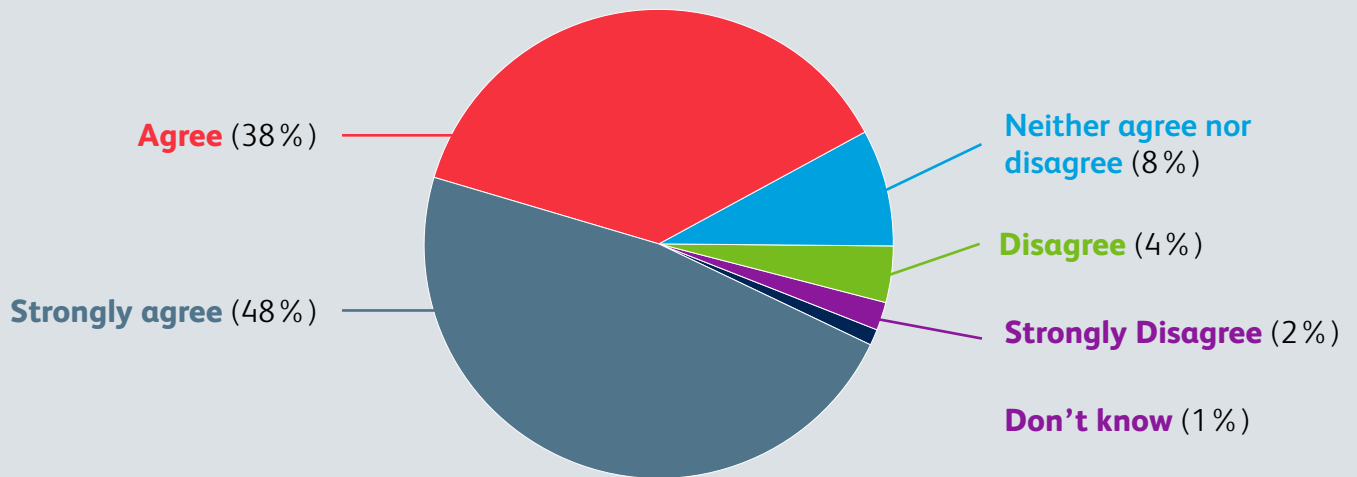


Comments

(number of respondents 45)

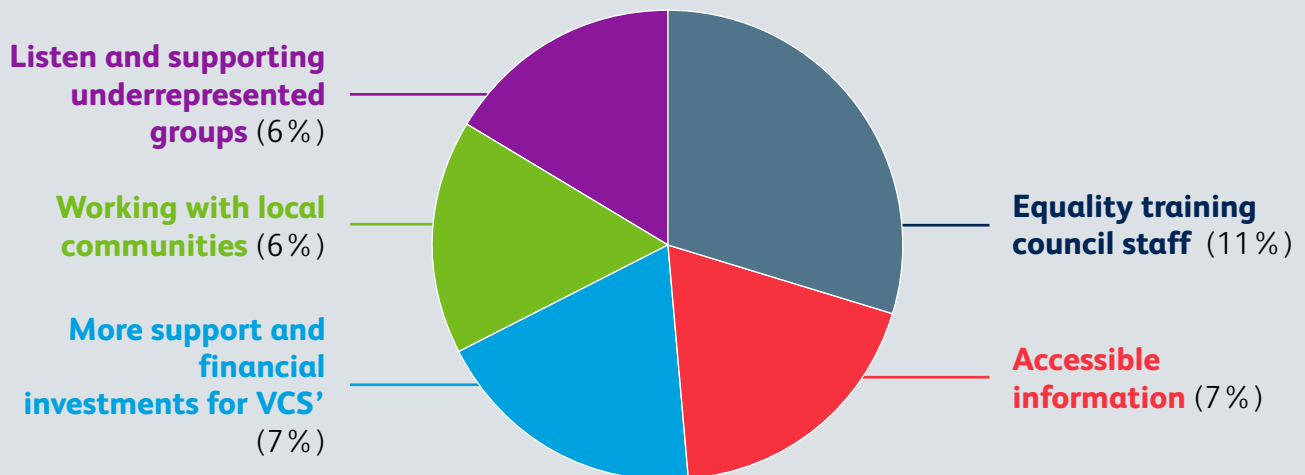


To what extent do you agree with **Priority 2** -
Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services?

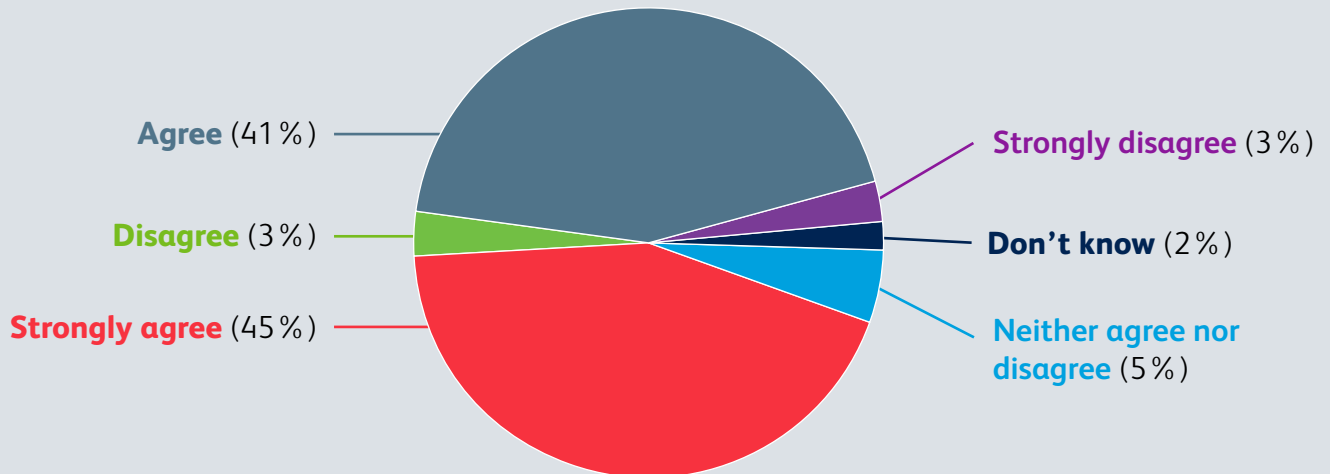


Comments

(number of respondents 33)



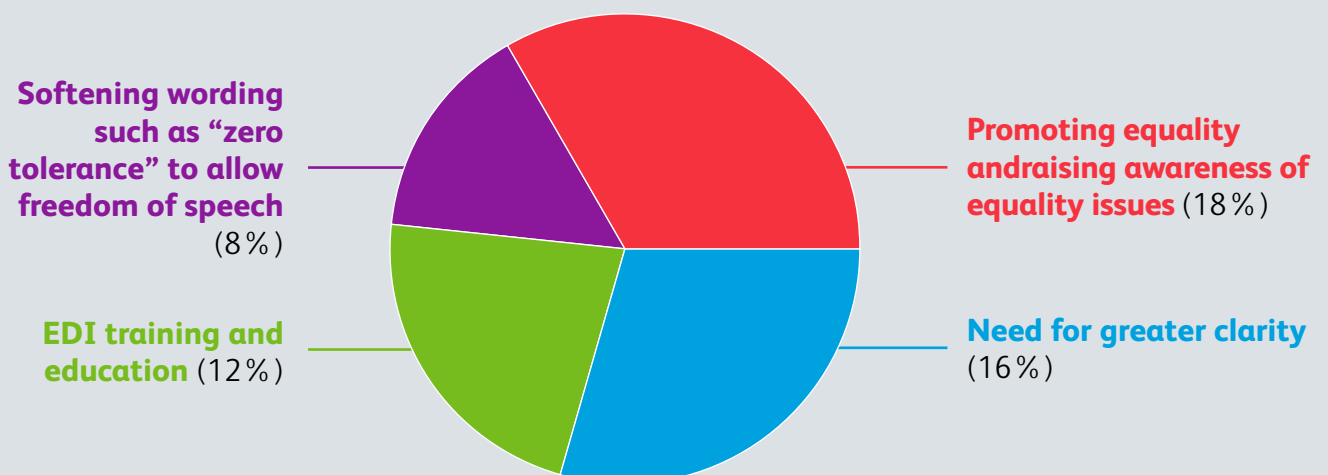
To what extent to you agree with **Priority 3** -
Empowering people to engage and challenge
discrimination and to promote good community relations



"The promotion of a positive and inclusive culture needs to be hands on, not just adverts and posters." (survey comment)

Comments

(number of respondents 47)

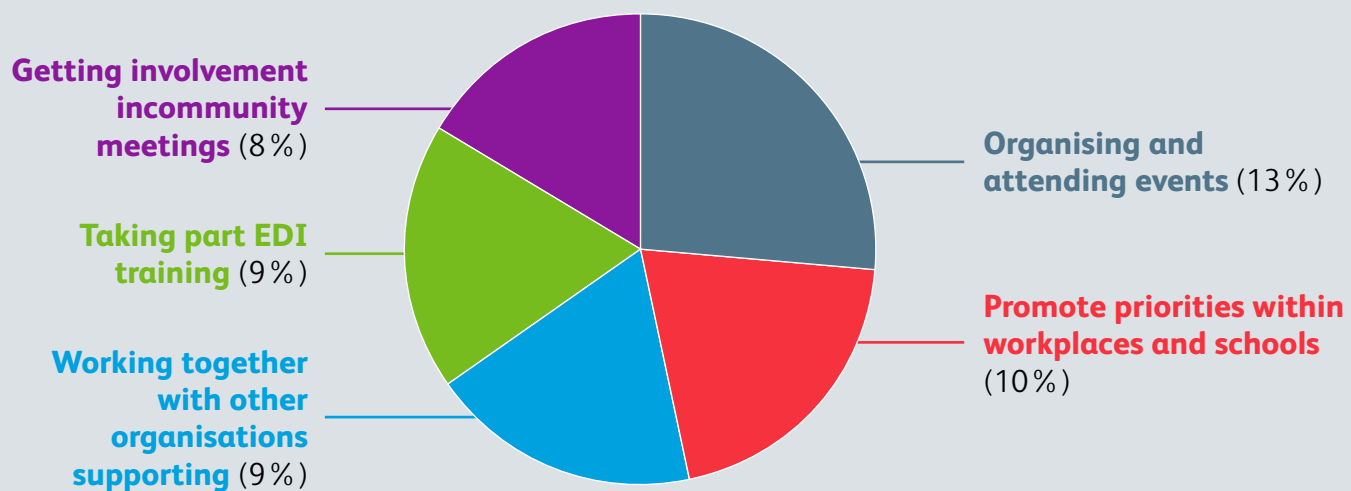


Getting involved

“Arranging and attending cultural exchange events to share knowledge and celebrate differences, include food vendors.” (survey comment)

How could you get involved to support the priorities and actions?

(number of respondents 54)



4.3. Focus Groups

Eight external and six internal focus groups took place within the consultation period. Various themes raised in focus groups are listed in section 4.1 above, but additional points can be found below.

One common point raised both internally and externally was around the council showing visible support for diverse communities and events, another around discrimination and hate crime, and a further point about information sharing.

Visible support and celebrations

Groups internally and externally raised the importance for the Council to show outward support for diverse communities (BAME, older people, disability 1 and 3, faith), as well as internally (internal LGBT+, internal faith). Externally, this was about supporting Pride (BAME, internal LGBT+), promoting BAME role models, putting out messages celebrating cultural events (BAME), getting staff and communities involved in events celebrating women's history (internal women). Older people would like to see a firm commitment to age-friendly Rotherham status. The internal women's group expressed the view that the Council has done exceptional work over the last 10 years to build cohesive communities, through education, raising awareness of hate crime and taking zero tolerance of prejudice, community events, with Rotherham Show bringing communities together.

Internally, actions that would create an inclusive environment were visible rainbow flags, rainbow lanyards, a "pronouns in email signature" initiative, allyship and messages online and throughout council buildings (internal LGBT+), as well as establishing and communicating about staff networks (internal faith).

Discrimination and Hate Crime

Some groups raised experiences of discrimination or exclusion within the borough (disability 2, BAME, older people, faith, internal LGBT+). LGBT+ staff mentioned not feeling comfortable to freely express themselves in the town centre or hold their partner's hand, as well as the need for diversity and representation on the hate crime scrutiny

panel. The other major issues discussed by this group were regarding the lack of funded support for LGBT+ communities. It was mentioned that the little support that did exist being volunteer-led and not widely enough known, which presents a critical problem, in particular with regard to LGBT+ people being victims of hate crime and needing support following this. The BAME group queried the support given after reporting a hate crime and stated that the reporting process itself needs to be better valued. The Faith group stated there was a need to define hate, as people have different perceptions of what it means, and the age group felt that the experience of older people experiencing hate crime was largely unrecognised.

Information sharing

Connected to the issue raised around improving communication, several groups raised questions about what information was collected by the council, and what data the council held regarding specific issues relating to the organisation, such as the race and disability pay gaps (internal BAME, internal carers), and other equalities data on disability or long-term health conditions (Faith) – and communities in the borough (age, disability groups), all of which are collected and analysed by the council.

External focus groups

These sessions included groups representing older people, people with disabilities, faith, race and women. There were difficulties in engaging with some groups, notably with groups representing the LGBT+ community – an action to strengthen and build relationships with these groups should be taken forward.

The groups were broadly supportive of and positive about the three proposed priorities; any reservations about the priorities stemmed from a belief that there may not be sufficient resources and funding available to fully implement them. Several groups commented that they had been asked similar questions in the past, yet no real change had occurred (disability 2, women). Generally, the groups stressed a real and genuine desire to work with the council to shape services to make Rotherham more accessible to their

communities. Any findings that were consistent with common themes across all methods of engagement are summarised in section 4.1 above. Specific points and actions raised by external focus groups not covered in section 4.1 are summarised below.

Accountability

In terms of accountability, there was a general feeling that to really effect change across the EDI agenda, that accountability for the strategy should sit with those who have the power to make change.

In addition, it was raised that there was the need for performance management on equality, and equality targets for commissioned community services (BAME). The women's session further queried how the priorities/outcomes contained within the strategy, as well as any equality peer reviews, will be monitored and scrutinised. They suggested community involvement in this to obtain a different perspective from the internal council view.

Positive developments

Groups highlighted some positive changes that had recently been made to council services and communications, including:

- Signing provision for performances at Rotherham Theatre (disability 2).
- Ward bulletins in an easier to read format (disability 2).

They also gave examples of work that partners had undertaken to make their services and buildings more accessible, including:

- Rotherham Interchange (disability 2).
- Rotherham Hospital.

Strength of local community groups

The BAME group called attention to the fact that there are a variety of very good community groups within Rotherham and groups and individuals have a lot to contribute and experience of working in and with communities. The main

feedback in this area was to highlight to the council that there is already a range of activity undertaken by the sector and wealth of specialist support and knowledge available and that duplication should be avoided.

Support

Some suggestions were received to support groups further, in particular around signing, interpreting, transcription and the use of Braille, digital access and disabled parking.

Tension between groups

Differences of opinion amongst groups was referred to in the faith group, who expressed that it needed to be ensured the 'zero tolerance' action does not limit freedom of speech (Faith). This highlights the importance that the council is aware of differences of opinion amongst protected characteristics groups and to be well-informed in order to respond.

Strategic partners

The Strategic Housing Forum and the CCG Equality and Diversity Steering Group were engaged with as strategic partners.

The main comments from the Strategic Housing Forum were around monitoring and specificity of action, as reflected in section 4.1 above. Additionally, they highlighted that the proposed objectives had no emphasis on race – particularly around the Black Lives Matter movement. This group also spoke highly of the council's autism strategy and its clear commitment to change.

Measuring outcomes

In addition to comments reported above on the need to monitor actions, the CCG Equality group had a strong focus on measuring equality outcomes and impacts, in particular regarding the delivery of accessible services.

'We need to be capturing data on access; on experience and on outcomes; having this data is the foundation, and without it, much other work falls.' (CCG)

There was a clear view that equality issues and progress against objectives needed to be measured, that quality equality information needed to be collected and impact evaluated on an ongoing basis, as well as identifying relevant information gaps and taking steps to fill these; and to be able to compare local data against regional and national figures/research.

‘Where inequality is found, we should take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics where they are different from the needs of other people.’ (CCG)

Place-based working

A few comments on working together were raised in the CCG Equality group, in particular about partnership and place-based working, with a comment on the possibility to work towards having a place perspective on equalities, together with local organisations. Data was considered one area where joint working would be beneficial:

‘Equality information/monitoring needs to be dynamic and available across partners and communities.’ (CCG)

Internal focus groups

6 focus groups for RMBC staff were held over January and February, covering groups on specific equality issues: BAME, women, disability or long-term health conditions, LGBT+, carers and faith. Amongst these groups, the women’s, BAME and LGBT+ groups were the most well-attended, while the faith group attracted least members.

Disability/long-term health conditions, women, faith and carers groups mainly raised internal and HR issues, while the BAME group discussed organisational issues – about RMBC as an employer within the borough, and the LGBT+ group reflected on the situation of LGBT+ communities across the borough.

Most external issues the groups discussed are covered above. Internally, participants were positive about participating in the focus groups, while requesting feedback and wanting to see where their input was going. Across the groups, there were some positive examples of supportive

line managers and supportive teams, the internal communications around wellbeing, and several respondents highlighted that their work at the Council was meaningful and important, that they felt the work culture and policies were better than in the private sector, or in their previous work experiences.

Internal issues raised by several of the groups covered: the importance of flexibility of the HR policies and practice, the importance of managers’ awareness and understanding of equality issues and improving staff engagement.

HR Policy and Practice

Several groups raised the importance of flexible HR practices to accommodate specific needs. Staff highlighted the policies supporting carers and increased flexibility as positives. They also raised that the online HR system is not always easy to use when on unusual work patterns, staff working on rotas, 24/7, or compressed hours. The feedback highlighted that the flexible policies needed to be facilitated through supportive line managers and HR staff, as well as through flexibility in online systems, to be most effective.

Manager support

The women’s, carers, disability and faith groups all raised the importance for managers to have a good understanding of equality issues. There were several examples of very supportive and understanding line managers, across the disability and faith groups, who had a high level of awareness of staff’s specific support needs, because of their religion or disability. This led to staff in the faith group reporting they would have the confidence to go to their line manager if they faced any problems related to equality issues. The disability group felt strongly that there needed to be extra support, as the quality of support was felt to be variable and whether managers understood or wanted to know what they were dealing with, and about what reasonable adjustments were required.

Staff Engagement

A further shared theme was around staff engagement. Groups discussed the idea of staff networks, with a comment in the faith group that this would give visibility to faith within the organisation and staff would be more engaged. An interest in participation in events across the council was also expressed (internal women). The LGBT+ and women's groups found that staff groups could be a valuable networking opportunity, a forum to come together to share concerns, with the importance to have deliverable outcomes, formalised structures and clear responsibilities, and the possibility to give feedback on progress on equalities. Carers in the council and their needs was raised, with staff networks seen as potentially supporting a continued dialogue.

Information was shared in the carers group on ongoing work internally in Adult Social Care, who are working on providing support to carers.

Accessibility of council facilities

A few issues were raised regarding the accessibility of council facilities. The LGBT+ group raised a request for gender neutral toilets in council buildings, providing better facilities for trans staff. The Disability group mentioned returning to the office as an issue in terms of the importance of adequate desk space to be available for staff with additional needs, rather than hot desking. Further, more communication is needed around facilities in Council buildings, such as the prayer room, as it was clear that groups were not always aware. This links to an earlier point raised in section 4.1 around the need for better general communication around equality issues and the provision available.

Carers

The carers group highlighted that the council should be aware of the needs of staff who are carers internally and provide support and flexibility.

Women

While this was not a universal experience, and many participants had positive experiences in their teams, a few participants raised concerns about culture of working witnessed in their own team and the need for best practice standards across the whole Council.

BAME

The BAME group particularly focused on the representation of BAME workers within the Council, and also raised equality reporting and analyses as issues.

Disability and long-term health conditions

The staff group on disability and long-term health conditions discussed issues reported above regarding the importance of support and understanding from a line manager, as well as issues regarding reasonable adjustments and support, discussed below.

Several participants raised issues concerning reasonable adjustments, saying the process of requesting these should be made easier. While there was mention of some supportive HR provision, there was a feeling that there should be more support and awareness.

'If we can't support staff, how are we going to get it right for the community?'

There was a feeling that the views that diverse staff and staff with different needs and conditions bring should be celebrated.

The comments and outcomes from this consultation have been taken forward in building the Council's strategic direction for equalities and specific issues raised have been fed back to relevant services. A further document outlining the Council's response to the consultation and how the consultation outcomes have been taken forward will be published and communicated to those involved in the focus groups.

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EQUALITIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



www.rotherham.gov.uk

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FOREWORD

Rotherham Council is committed to achieving equality for all and a cohesive society built on tolerance and mutual respect, where no-one is left behind. Our approach to agreeing policy priorities is underpinned by this, with a focus on tackling inequalities running through everything that we do.

I am proud that equality considerations have influenced and been embedded in our council plan. As reflected in this report, engagement with diverse communities has directly influenced our approach, and we have continued to work closely with the voluntary, community and faith sectors to mitigate the worst inequality impacts from the pandemic.

Of particular note, has been the work of the Council in obtaining Real Living Wage accreditation. This demonstrates that the Council is committed to ensuring staff and those employed on council contracts will be paid the living wage or above. Equalities have been embedded in service plans and our 2022-25 council plan. A corporate equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) steering group was created in 2021 to take the lead and monitor our progress across the council, to drive our equalities agenda forward.

Since the production of last year's annual report, I am pleased that our strategic approach and commitment to equalities has continued to move forward. Our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2022-25 has been produced, setting out our commitment to further embed equalities throughout the Council, whilst working with partners, voluntary, community and faith organisations to challenge discrimination and promote good community relations.

The commitment to achieve "Excellent" under the equality framework for local government (EFLG) remains a priority, as we want to be among the best in the country in our approach to equalities. This will be a major milestone for the council and will help to drive better outcomes for local people.

The past two years have been a challenging time for our public services, partners and our communities. We are now seeing a significant rise in the cost of living. Many families across our borough are struggling, especially those already facing barriers. As a council, we will continue to put equality at the heart of what we do and work with partners and communities to ensure Rotherham is a fairer and more equal place for all.

I invite everyone to join us in celebrating our successes to date and in our positive agenda for equalities, diversity and inclusion. As we continue to navigate a Covid-recovery environment, now is a critical moment for us all to come and work together for the benefit of all communities.



Councillor Alam

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services,
Community Safety and Finance

INTRODUCTION

The Council wants to see a borough that is based on social justice, where all residents have a good quality of life and can achieve their potential. This is underpinned by the recognition that individuals, families, and communities do not all have the same starting point or access to the same opportunities.

The past year has been a challenging year, as the council continues to recover from Covid-19 and deal with new challenges as living costs rise. The pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities, with the most disadvantaged communities being hit the hardest, and has also uncovered latent vulnerability within communities. Throughout the response to the pandemic, equalities remained a priority for the council, and it will continue to be a priority as the borough moves into recovery.

Publishing an annual equality report is part of the Council's public sector equality duty. The purpose of this report is to highlight the progress made over the past twelve months on the equality agenda, as well as outlining next steps. The report covers key achievements and case studies from across the council, focusing on the four themes of the EFLG:

Understanding and working with our communities.

Leadership and organisational commitment.

Responsive services and customer care.

Diverse and engaged workforce.

The "Looking ahead" section sets out our priority work for the coming year under each of the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy objectives.



ROTHERHAM CONTEXT

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire. The borough is divided into 25 wards covering a wide diversity of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Rotherham developed as a major industrial centre of coal mining and steel making, which have shaped the borough's character. Following the decline of traditional industries, regeneration has brought new opportunities to the area, including advanced manufacturing.



Rotherham's population has grown from 247,000 in 2000 to **264,984** in 2020. Population growth has resulted from natural increase (more births than deaths), net inward migration and longer life expectancy.

General demographic and socio-economic trends have included a growing and increasingly diverse population, with significant international migration, mainly from other EU countries. The population is ageing, which not only means more older people but also more disabled people. Inequalities persist for workless, disabled, and low paid people, who have been adversely affected by welfare reform since 2012. Health inequalities are also significant in Rotherham, where average healthy life expectancy in the borough is well below the national average.

The data available on population estimates indicate that the borough is becoming increasingly diverse. However, much of the data is becoming increasingly dated. The full data sets will be reviewed over the next year as information becomes available from the 2021 census, providing a new reliable set of baselines.

Rotherham is a diverse borough, and the ethnic profile continues to change. Based on the 2011 census, the proportion of residents from black and minority ethnic (BAME) communities increased from 4.1 % in 2001 to 8.1 % in 2011. Ethnic diversity is most evident amongst young people, as 16 % of school age children were from a BAME background (DfE 2020). The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after white British.

Rotherham's BAME population is very concentrated in the inner areas of the town whilst the outer areas were 96 % white British in 2011. 42 % of BAME residents live in areas that are amongst the 10 % most deprived in the country and for some groups the figure is higher. This compares with the borough average of 19.5 %.

Rotherham has 52,388 people aged 65 years plus or 19.8% of the population, above the national average of 18.4 % (2019). The population aged over 65 is projected to increase to 58,074 people by 2026, with the largest increase being in the number of people aged over 75.

Rotherham has a polarised geography of deprivation and affluence. The most deprived communities are concentrated in the central area whilst the most affluent areas are to the south, although the overall pattern is complex.

Rotherham is in the top 20% most deprived areas in England with 12,667 children living in “absolute poverty” (Department for Work and Pensions) in 2018/19 according to Department for Work and Pensions figures.

No local data is currently available for LGBT+, though census 2021 will provide this data. The Office for National Statistics (2018) estimate 2.7% of the UK population are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). 2.7% of Rotherham’s population equates to 7,155 residents being LGB. Stonewall estimate 1% of the UK population is transgender or non-binary and this would equate to an estimated 2,650 identifying as transgender or non-binary in Rotherham.

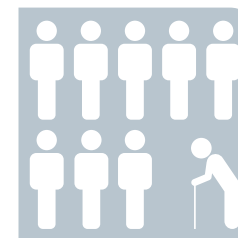
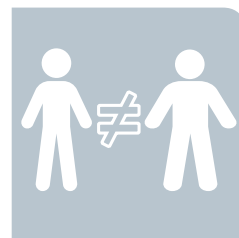
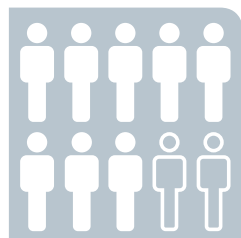
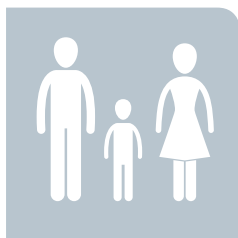
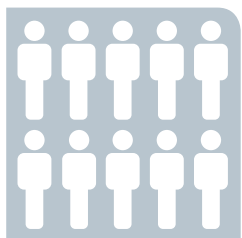
A continuing inequality is the pay gap between men and women, whereby male workers in Rotherham earn £13,409 more than female workers on average (median gross annual pay). Women’s pay in Rotherham is only 54.6% of men’s pay compared with 64.5% nationally. The pay gap for full-time workers is smaller at £9,705, but women still only earn 69.9% of male earnings, again lower than the

national average of 81.8%. Such differences in earnings also mean that pensions tend to be lower for women than men.

Rotherham has comparatively low skills, particularly at degree level, and struggles both to retain and attract graduates. Only 34.2% of working age people in Rotherham are educated to degree level or above, compared with 43.1% nationally.

Rotherham had 56,588 people, or 22% of the population, with a limiting long term health problem or disability in 2011, with 11.3% saying this limits their activity a lot, compared with the average of 8.3% nationally. Although there have been health improvements, health inequalities remain and in some cases are widening.

People in the most deprived parts of Rotherham experience poorer health and a higher mortality rate than residents living in the least deprived areas. Life expectancy in the borough is 77.9 years for males and 81.7 years for females, which is below the national averages. The gap between the most deprived 10% and least deprived 10% of Rotherham is 9.9 years for males and 9.5 years for females.



THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

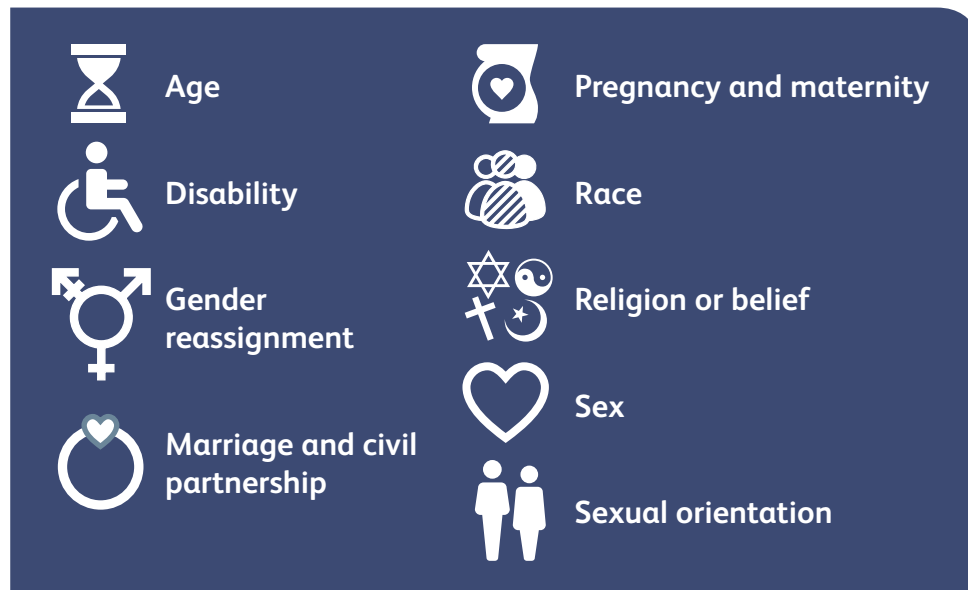
The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on the council and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not.
- **Foster good relations** between people.

The act reminds us that there can be no fair society if some groups and communities remain disadvantaged because of their legally protected characteristic. The stated protected characteristics are:

The equality duty requires the Council to take a proactive approach to embedding equality into everything we do. The council has a responsibility to ensure that suppliers also take a positive approach to equality. Furthermore, the duty encourages us to understand how different people will be affected by decisions.

In addition, the EFLG requires the council to consider socio-economic inequalities. This means ensuring that, when making strategic decisions about how functions are carried out and services delivered, there is a focus on reducing the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022-2025

In 2021, the council set out plans to refresh its equality objectives and take into account the impact of Covid 19 on local people. This has been achieved through the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which has been informed by consultation with elected members, council officers, partners and local communities.

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) 2022–2025 is a supporting document to the Council Plan 2022-2025 which has equalities, diversity and inclusion woven through it. The EDI strategy looks at what the Council has already committed to through an equalities lens and effectively maps out how the council aims to remove and reduce obstacles preventing some people from fully participating in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of the borough.

The strategy set out priority equality objectives with an alignment to the EFLG. The objectives inform an annual workplan set out in this annual report each year. As the strategy supports the Council Plan, many of the actions within the annual workplan are activities that the Council is already reporting on quarterly. The objectives are:

- Understanding, listening to and working with Rotherham's communities.
- Delivering accessible and responsive services that meet diverse needs.
- Providing leadership and organisation commitment to actively promote equalities.
- Ensuring a diverse, supported and engaged workforce.

The Aim For “Excellent”

Throughout the pandemic, equalities have remained high on the agenda and have been an integral part of both the Year Ahead Plan that ran from September 2020 to November 2021 and in the new Council Plan 2022-25. In 2020, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement led the Local Government Association (LGA) to further consult local authorities and officers nationwide to update the equality framework, making it more inclusive and relevant.

In late 2021, this consultation resulted in a revised equality framework with the LGA setting more challenging actions to reach “Excellent”. The council has embraced these changes and moved its target to reach “Excellent” to 2023, ensuring equality principles are not only embedded but that outcomes can be measured to reflect positive changes made. The Council's equality strategy aligns with the equality framework and supports our goal of reaching “Excellent”.

2021/2022

The Equalities Annual Report, published in June 2021 set out “next steps” for actions over the coming year, aligned to the modules of the EFLG. This report gives an overview of achievements since then with case studies that help to inform future policy and service developments.

UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

To reduce inequalities and challenge discrimination, it is essential that the council understands the needs and priorities of communities. This includes collecting and analysing equalities data, as well as engaging with local people, fostering good relations within communities, and supporting local people to participate in public life.

Key achievements in 2021/22 have included:

Establishing a more consistent approach to equalities data collection

Having a consistent approach to data collection is an integral part of “understanding and working with our communities”, so it is important to ensure that equalities monitoring is embedded as part of council systems and incorporated into the information we provide. Some examples of this include:

- Corporate consultation and engagement – all services are now using more in-depth equalities monitoring information (which includes questions covering all protected characteristics), as part of any consultation and engagement work undertaken.
- The joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) has been updated over the last year as part of an ongoing refresh. This data will be used to inform commissioning decisions and strategy development. In particular, the findings of the updated JSNA will inform the refresh of Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and the strategic approach to tackling health inequalities.

- Ward profiles have been updated in the past year to reflect the new ward boundaries. The profiles include demographic information, ethnicity, general health and disability information and lifestyle and health issues for each area. They are on the council website and available to members of the public.

Involving communities in the development of the new Council Plan 2022-2025

The new Council Plan sets out the strategic aims for the council, providing a foundation on which all council activities are based. To help inform this, a public consultation and engagement exercise took place from 9th August to 19th September 2021, seeking the views of residents and other local stakeholders.

The consultation used various engagement methods to capture residents’ views. This included:

- Focus groups with members of the public and staff from voluntary and community sector organisations, including Age UK, Rotherfed, Speakup, Rotherham Carers Forum, Victim Support and the Unity Centre. 48 people participated in total.
- Interaction sessions throughout the borough, including at Rotherham Show were held in September 2021.
- An online survey and postal survey, which included in-depth equalities questions covering the nine protected characteristics. There were 298 respondents in total online, and 52 postal survey responses were received.

Conclusion of the 5 year Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) programme

The CMF is a multi-agency programme involving the council, local schools, South Yorkshire Police, the NHS and local voluntary, faith and community sector organisations.

This programme has supported Rotherham Together Partnership's broader community cohesion strategy, Building Stronger Communities, which addresses a major policy priority for the borough. Although the ethnic minority population in Rotherham is well below the national average it has risen rapidly, with recent growth largely through migration from Eastern Europe. Rapid migration has placed demands on statutory and voluntary sector service provision. Underpinned by a partnership approach to community cohesion, the broad aims of the CMF programme were as follows:

- Maximise the positive impact on host communities and mitigate pressure on services.
- Improve relationships within communities (i.e., community cohesion).
- Improve relationships between communities and the council.
- Improve wellbeing (environmental, economic, social/family) for deprived communities.

Almost all outputs were delivered within timescales, with many targets exceeded (through creative use of resources). Highlights from the programme include:

- 6,968 people engaged in cohesion and community activities (target 3,000).
- 3,420 advice appointments (target 2,500).
- 548 adults gaining functional literacy skills (target 100).
- 565 members of the local community attending sessions to understand hate crime and how they can report it.
- 1,395 tenants supported to access help from statutory agencies appropriately (target 200).



CASE STUDY:

Active Regen CMF Programme

“Eric” is 21 years of age and lives with his mother and 5 younger siblings. Eric is originally from Ethiopia, in eastern Africa, and fled his homeland to escape the civil war, leaving behind his father and 14 other siblings. Since coming to the UK, Eric has learned English and entered the education system and is currently studying at college. In addition to his studies, Eric works at a fast-food chain to support his mother and family.

Eric was referred to the Active Regen CMF programme from the Yorkshire Sport Foundation. He successfully completed both the theory and practical elements of the community sports leadership award and participated in voluntary programmes at Maltby, Dinnington and Kiveton. Whilst completing his voluntary hours, Eric developed a strong relationship with the mentor team and was well liked by the children and support staff from the youth service and early help team. Eric engaged with the children and young people, taking the opportunity to share his experiences of life in Ethiopia and demonstrating how different life is in the UK. Active Regen observed that the children and young people were very interested in Eric’s experiences, listening intently and asking questions.

Eric gained the respect of the young people, which for a young Ethiopian man in a predominantly white British community is

commendable. He also helped to raise the aspirations of some of the young people that he worked with and helped to break down some of the cultural barriers that exist between the white British residents and migrants.

Since completing his training and voluntary hours, Active Regen have employed Eric on a casual coaching basis. He has now worked on various programmes in Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster.



CASE STUDY:

Easter Healthy Holidays 2022

The Holiday Activity and Food Programme (known locally as Rotherham healthy holidays) is funded by the Department for Education. The programme identified that school holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. This can lead to children from disadvantaged families being less likely to access organised out-of-school activities, more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health and more likely to experience social isolation.

Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people. It also shows they work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities, when they offer more than just breakfast or lunch, and when they involve children (and parents) in designing

and evaluating the activities. This programme required that free holiday places be made available for all children and young people from foundation stage 2 to year 11 who are eligible for the following:

- Benefit related free school meals.
- Looked after children.
- Asylum Seekers.
- Elective Home Educated.
- All children who have a Social Care or Early Help plan.
- Children who attend Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Education Provision.

The aims of the programme are that children and young people attending the clubs will:

- Eat more healthily.
- Be more active.
- Take part in engaging and enriching activities.
- Be safe and not isolated.
- Have greater knowledge of health and nutrition.

- Be more engaged with school and other services.
- Have greater knowledge and awareness of holiday club provision.

For Easter 2022, there were 31 providers running 50 programmes across the borough. Providers offered children and young people an array of activities from: arts & crafts, outdoor adventures, BMX biking, pottery, musical instruments, fitness classes, performing arts and many more activities.

All of the holiday clubs received fantastic feedback. There was feedback from schools stating that school refusers who attended holiday clubs have returned to school, there is a reduced attainment gap in learning when children have attended the clubs.

One parent advised how her child has loved mixing with new people at one of the open access groups and making new friends. Other comments included:

Children having **“Lots of fun”**, **“Food was yummy”**, **“I met lots of new friends”** and **“I hope it’s back on for Summer”**.



LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The council has a vital role to play as a local leader in promoting equality across the borough. This means considering equality and diversity in decision making, communications, partnership working, priority setting and policy development.

Key achievements in 2021/22 have included:

The Prevention and Health Inequalities Strategy

In April 2022, Rotherham Council and its partners across health and care in Rotherham agreed and signed up to The Prevention and Health Inequalities Strategy and action plan. The strategy aims to reduce health inequalities – both between the Rotherham population and the England average, and within Rotherham itself.

To achieve this, the strategy commits to taking targeted action to support those living in the most deprived communities, as well as a number of other inclusion groups, including ethnic minority communities, people with learning disabilities, neurodiverse people and carers.

Delivery of the strategy will be led by partners across health and social care, with strategic oversight from Rotherham's Place Board and Health & Wellbeing Board.

Formation of corporate EDI steering group

In 2021, the council established a corporate EDI steering group. The purpose of the group is to support the council with its commitment to integrate equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the organisation. The group oversaw the refresh of the council's Equality, Diversity and

Inclusion Strategy including aligning the equality objectives with the new Council Plan themes. Some of the group's responsibilities include:

- Steering the delivery of the council's aspirations and obligations in relation to equality and diversity.
- Raising awareness and reinforcing the message that equality and diversity is "everyone's business" by helping embed equalities in all organisational activities.
- Finding practical solutions to barriers hindering the council's EDI aspirations and obligations.
- Monitoring progress against the schedule of equality assessments.
- Influencing the council's training plan for equalities.

The Corporate EDI Steering Group will drive project outcomes to achieve "Excellent" under the EFLG.

Equality training for elected members

Following the local government elections in May 2021, councillors were provided with training on "roles and responsibilities of conduct" which incorporated equalities. Specific equality training was carried out in June 2021, giving elected members an overview of the importance of equality, diversity and the role members have in ensuring this. Scrutiny members have engaged in the review of the council's equality objectives and are working towards equalities playing a bigger role as part of the scrutiny agenda.

CASE STUDY:

Rotherham Youth Cabinet, Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge

Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC) is a group of young people aged 11 to 18 from across Rotherham, who work on campaigns and help make decisions which make a positive difference to the lives of young people in Rotherham.

On 16th of March 2022, RYC took up the Office of the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge and used the opportunity to explore climate change. Takeover Challenge was originally launched in 2007 as a fun, imaginative and exciting activity to encourage organisations across England to open their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles.

When it returned for 2022, RYC called a special meeting to question council officers on climate change. They also used the session to explore actions taken by the council to reduce emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change. During the two-hour session, questions covered a wide range of topics, including electric vehicles, waste and recycling, nature and energy efficiency at public buildings and council properties.

RYC member Curtis Yip said:

"The Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge provides an excellent opportunity for young people to directly hold local climate leaders and actions to account. For years, climate change has become an issue where many people talk at young people, about young people, but very rarely talk with young people. By involving youth cabinet members in the local decision-making process [this] will politically democratise young constituents across Rotherham."



RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE

Ensuring that services are accessible to customers and residents, including those with protected characteristics, is a core part of the council's equality duty. Equalities and inclusivity are a key part of the planning and delivery of council services, as well as commissioning and procurement.

Key achievements in 2021/22 have included:

Delivering social value through commissioning and procurement

The council agreed a social value policy in October 2019. This policy made it a requirement to incorporate social value commitments in tender specifications, procurement processes and the letting of contracts. In 2021/22 over £1.5m of local economic commitments were delivered. This means that council contracts are supporting the promotion of local skills and employment, the protection and improvement of the local environment, the capacity of the voluntary and community sector, and local spend in Rotherham. Some examples include that:

- 31 local employees were hired or retained as a result of the Council's social value policy.
- 2,558 tonnes of CO2e will be saved (up from 4.04 tonnes of CO2e in 2020/21).
- £14k of charitable donations will be made to local community organisations and £64.4k of equipment/resources will be donated to voluntary, community and social enterprises.

The approach to social value directly interrelates with equality objectives by helping to address socio-economic inequalities, aiming to build local economic resilience.

In May 2022, the Council launched a commissioning toolkit, providing guidance to help commissioners, procurers, and providers embed the principles of social value into the council's processes in a proportionate way. The toolkit contains an equalities section helping officers understand equalities and how designing commissioning plans with equalities in mind can help tackle inequalities, support local communities, and create a fairer society.

Real Living Wage accreditation

In September 2021, the council was formally accredited as a Real Living Wage (RLW) employer by the Living Wage Foundation. This underlines the commitment to paying staff a fair wage, supporting the local economy, tackling economic inequality, and encouraging other local employers and partners to follow suit.

Through the RLW, the Council will ensure contractors pay employees working on council contracts the RLW. Further work will be carried out this year to identify contractors not paying RLW on Council contracts and supporting them to navigate the RLW journey.



Service plans embedding equalities

In 2022, council service plan templates were updated to include a specific equalities section. Services are asked to provide actions taken during the previous year to improve outcomes for different communities and protected characteristics. Services are required to set out learning captured from

equality impact assessments and how this has informed service design and delivery, work being conducted to embed equality, diversity and inclusion and actions taken to ensure future priorities take account of the journey too.

By embedding equalities in service plans, officers will be held accountable for delivering fair and equal service outcomes for all, which will be integral to achieving 'Excellent' status against the LGA framework.

CASE STUDY:

Target Housing rough sleeper initiative - Queen Street service

The target housing rough sleeper initiative, managed by Target Housing, is an 8-unit accommodation service, comprising a 7-bed emergency accommodation and assessment hub, with scope to provide 1 additional bed space as an interim emergency night bed for single people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The number of local direct employees hired or retained is currently at 66.67 % and all staff are paid above the living wage. When setting up the service, Target advertised through local channels, including Voluntary Action Rotherham, and a team of 3 people

were appointed, all of whom were Rotherham residents. One team member had been long-term unemployed and had experienced a period of homelessness prior to being appointed.

Following their experience and the support they received working on the team, the employees have since been successful in applying for another role within the organisation, supporting the Housing First provision (which is also commissioned by the council). Although there have been limitations in the ability to source meaningful work placements and pre-employment courses throughout the pandemic, Target have engaged service users in weekly sessions looking at work aspirations and options.

This client group includes people who are furthest from the jobs market, with complex needs and a history of rough sleeping.

By dedicating time to deliver this support, Target are able to give them the tools and resources to take their first steps into employment. Where applicable, some service users have enrolled onto ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) courses and one service user secured voluntary work as a cleaner for the hostel, widening his experience for his CV and future employment opportunities.



CASE STUDY:

Dementia café for BAME people

An example of the effective use of an equality analysis is the carers support worker and dementia café service. This café was developed in 2010 to support people experiencing the symptoms of dementia and their unpaid carers.

In September 2020, an equality analysis revealed elderly people with dementia from a BAME backgrounds were not using the dementia café or accessing other dementia support services across the borough. When the service was recommissioned in 2022, there was a specific ask for services to be tailored to reflect the diversity of Rotherham and to ensure inclusivity.

Adult social care required its future dementia support provider to:

- Build upon existing links with BAME organisations and communities to create culturally sensitive memory Cafés & focus on supporting BAME carers and People Living with Dementia.
- Develop links with the Rotherham Ethnic Community Alliance & explore how they can work in partnership to overcome barriers and make a positive difference for families living with Dementia in local BAME communities throughout Rotherham.
- Explore, identify & apply for funding opportunities that will enable further development around increasing dementia service profile within local BAME communities and supporting carers and people Living with dementia.

An action plan was created aiming to quantify the numbers of people from the BAME communities who have a

diagnosis of dementia and what services they access. Adult social care hoped this would assist in establishing if there were gaps in this type of support for the BAME cohort.

Early in this year care provider Making Space successfully entered into a grant agreement with the council for dementia support. Upon consultation with BAME communities and service users the provider set up specific ethnicity minority dementia café for BAME men and women. These cafés launched in January 2022 taking place at the Tassibee centre, Rotherham.



DIVERSE AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE

The Council wants to have a diverse workforce at all levels, which is confident and competent in working together for equitable service delivery. This includes a commitment to supporting the workforce, in terms of inclusive working practices, health and wellbeing support and learning and development around equalities.

Key achievements in 2021/22 have included:

Staff from protected characteristic groups engaging in the equality strategy consultation

As part of the equality strategy consultation, six focus groups for council staff were held throughout January and February 2022, covering groups on specific equality issues: BAME, women, disability or long-term health conditions, LGBT+, carers, and faith. Amongst these groups, the women's, BAME and LGBT+ groups were the most well-attended, while the faith group attracted the fewest participants.

Disability/long-term health conditions, women, faith and carers groups mainly raised internal and HR issues, while the BAME group discussed organisational issues about RMBC as an employer within the borough, and the LGBT+ group reflected on the situation of LGBT+ communities across Rotherham.

Internal issues raised by several of the groups covered the importance of flexibility of the online HR systems, the importance of managers' awareness and understanding of equality issues, improving staff engagement, and the accessibility of council facilities.

Issues covered by individual groups were the importance of support for carers and awareness of needs, questions around BAME representation

within the workforce and the importance of support and expertise on disability issues and staff needs.

These issues will be considered in the review of the corporate learning and development offer. They have also been fed back to the HR team. Several groups voiced an interest in improved staff engagement, such as through staff equality networks. These networks are to be established over the coming year.

Apprenticeships and careers fairs to promote council opportunities to local people, including to young people, and people with special educational needs and disabilities

Throughout the year, up to 154 apprentices worked across the council at any point in time, with a total of 63 apprentices appointed under the government's Kickstart scheme. Apprenticeships offer opportunities for local young people (16–17-year-olds), as well as continuous development for existing council staff.

The council has also organised the annual LEAF Careers' and Jobs' Fair, an annual event held in partnership with the Local Employment Advisory Forum (LEAF). This event has been virtual for the last 2 years due to the pandemic and is planned to return to an in-person event for 2022. Exhibitors are from businesses across different sectors and local colleges.

All events are inclusive, LEAF is open to the public and all secondary schools in Rotherham including special schools and SEND units. A quiet room is provided for students/visitors, who may be overcome by the event. This is to ensure that these visitors do attend LEAF and do not miss out on employment/education opportunities. There are also,

specialist exhibitors such as Autism Plus who specialise in supporting adults with autism and other Neurodiverse conditions to live meaningful lives and Landmarks Specialist College who provide specialist education

and employment opportunities to adults with learning disabilities. A variety of additional jobs and careers fairs were held over the last year to improve access to jobs and employment for local people.

CASE STUDY:

BAME staff network

The BAME Network was relaunched by BAME council staff in April 2021 to positively help the council's commitment to seeing a borough based on equality and social justice. The network is open to all BAME workers within the council through an online forum and the BAME Workers Steering Group meets quarterly.

The network and steering group aim to inform and influence change that promotes diversity and improves the working lives of BAME staff within the council. Crucially, they are led and developed by BAME workers who are passionate about promoting positive action to deliver a diverse and engaged workforce for the council.

The role of the network is to identify and discuss emerging issues that affect members of the

network as workers and as members of the community. The group has identified a number of key actions relating to workforce equalities data and ensuring the council's workforce mirrors the local population in all areas.

The network also aims to influence new and existing policy and practice and suggest new practices to improve employment opportunities and retention. This includes issues such as:

- Recruitment.
- Retention.
- Career progression.
- Training and development (coaching, mentoring, role models etc).
- Cultural/religious issues.
- Employment rights.

In addition, the network acts as a forum for consultation on issues affecting BAME workers and was involved in the consultation on the corporate equality strategy in January 2022. It also functions as a forum for mutual

advice and support and hopes to establish links with other staff representative groups once these are set up.

The Steering Group has developed an action plan which is monitored and updated as appropriate.

Further work is ongoing to ensure that the identified issues are brought before the appropriate body (i.e., relevant cabinet member, strategic leadership team, directorate management teams). It is further envisaged that the steering group will inform and link in with the corporate equalities group to ensure BAME workers are influencing the council at a strategic level.

The BAME Workers Steering Group worked with HR and Communications to promote Black History Month in 2021 through promoting events in Rotherham and positive case studies about people in Rotherham from BAME backgrounds.

LOOKING AHEAD

The looking ahead section gives an overview of what appears in the EDI action plan for 2022/2023, working towards the medium-term priorities set out in the EDI strategy. The action plan draws primarily from the Council's "Year Ahead Delivery Plan" to identify where equality outcomes are embedded in Council Plan priorities. Other actions work to embed standards that will assist in the journey to achieving "Excellent" under the EFLG.

Understanding, listening to and working with Rotherham's communities

The Council will listen to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve the evidence base that informs service delivery.

Actions include building stronger connections with representative groups and individuals around equalities along with refreshing the Council's consultation and engagement policy and toolkit. This will enhance the way that the Council engages with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.

There will continue to be development of joint partnership approaches and activity including the use of intelligence to tackle inequalities, promote equalities and good community relations that have a positive impact.

New ward plans will be produced with ward priorities informed by local communities and a review of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy to address inequalities at the local level and build community intelligence.

The Council will work with children and young people across the borough to co-design the Children's Capital of Culture 2025 programme and

agree a new universal Youth offer including the contributions of both the Council and voluntary sector partners.

The Rotherham Together Plan will be refreshed by the Rotherham Together Partnership with equalities embedded within the priorities for the borough.

Delivering accessible and responsive services that meet diverse needs

The Council will work with partners in collaboration to deliver the Council Plan commitments to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

This will involve delivery of actions in service plans to achieve equality outcomes from service provision. This will build good practice from case studies and review that inform further service developments.

The Council will be developing a Digital Inclusion Strategy and delivering public Wi-Fi to the new town centre library and markets building and investigating the feasibility of delivering Wi-Fi to other Council owned public spaces within the Town centre.

Improvements to the use of Equality Assessments will aid in service design and delivery. They will enable capturing challenges and opportunities at the very beginning, ensuring barriers are considered and mitigated where possible. Service plan templates will be developed to make equality objectives SMART and support partnership initiatives and partnership groups to have due regard to advancing equality and tackling inequality. This will involve active promotion and engagement on around the EDI strategy, objectives along with tools such as the Equality Assessment.

Providing leadership and organisational commitment to actively promote equalities

The Council will continue to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies to address issues around community safety including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.

Actions will include refreshing the action plan that supports the Council's EDI Strategy on an annual basis and publishing an annual report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and acting upon it.

The Council, working with partners will develop interventions that seek to reduce hate crime and improve community safety by tackling harmful narratives.

Prevention action will take forward the Council's Black Lives Matter resolution, continuing to work with communities to understand the challenges faced.

There will be support for awareness and understanding across communities to promote good relations across the range of protected characteristics. Actions will also create a cultural programme including events, theatre, libraries, music and museums for residents aged 55+ to help with grief, mental wellbeing and physical conditioning.



Diversity will be celebrated with communities through a range of events, marking occasions that are of most importance to people.

There will be cultural and sporting events across Rotherham to appeal to a range of ages and backgrounds, including:

- Women's Euro 2022.
- Rotherham Show.
- Rotherham 10k.
- Summer reading challenge.
- Fun palaces.

Ensuring a diverse, supported and engaged workforce

The Council will continue to improve workplace equality and diversity through the delivery of the Workforce Plan 2022-2025.

There will be continuous review of each stage of the employee lifecycle (from initial recruitment and development to the point that people leave their role), to ensure it meets the needs of the whole workforce and with an renewed focus on underrepresented groups and those with particular needs.

The Council will act on feedback from the workforce and staff representation groups to undertake a review and refresh of the values and behaviours and develop a proposal for the future supporting new ways of working. There will be increased workforce engagement from underrepresented groups through the development of staff representation networks.

Regular Employee Opinion Surveys and polls will be undertaken with the whole workforce to better understand the issues that matter the most. There will be continual improvement of the Discover Wellbeing Programme which seeks to support individuals' health and wellbeing.

There will be evaluation of Learning and Development activity in relation to equality and diversity to ensure learning is fit for purpose, meets the Council's and learners' needs and can be implemented effectively into the workplace. A corporate Learning & Development (L&D) plan will be developed annually, that is based on identified needs and trends and which supports our EDI journey.



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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

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

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

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

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

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

1. Title

Title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/20255, action plan 2022/2023 and Equalities Annual Report 2021/2022

Directorate: ACX

Service area: PPI

Lead person: Steve Eling

Contact:
steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

Is this a:

☒ **Strategy / Policy**
☐ **Service / Function**
☐ **Other**

If other, please specify

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

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/25 is a refreshed strategy replacing the one approved in 2016. It provides is an important underpinning set of priorities and actions approach to the new Council Plan.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

The Equalities Annual Report is produced each year to provide progress on equalities issues over the previous year with the inclusion of case studies to promote good practice, and provides a forward look of high level actions for the coming year.

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

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

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

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

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

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be

considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

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

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

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

The core purpose of the strategy is to refresh Rotherham's equality objectives and take forward a strategic approach to equalities underpinning the new Council Plan and embedding equalities into everything that the Council does.

- **Key findings**

A consultation has been undertaken both externally and with directorates and staff on draft equality objectives and key actions over the medium term. The outcomes of the consultation have informed the final strategy and accompanying one-year workplan.

- **Actions**

The outcomes of the consultation have informed the development of the strategy and will now be used as the key driver for equalities across the Council over the medium term. An assessment against the key lines of enquiry of the Equality Framework for Local Government has resulted in a refreshed action plan which supports a strategic outcome of achieving the "excellent" standard under the framework.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	9 th May 2022
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	10 th May 2022
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Steve Eling Policy and Equalities Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Eling	Policy and Equalities Manager	9 th May 2022
Ruth Lucas	Acting Head of PPI	XX May 2022
Levi Karigambe	Policy Officer	10 th May 2022

6. Publishing

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

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

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

Date screening completed	9 th May 2022
Report title and date	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/25
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Cabinet, 20 th June 2022
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	10 th May 2022

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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

This form:

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

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

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

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2025, action plan 2022/2023 and Equalities Annual Report 2021/2022	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 10th May 2022	
Directorate: ACX	Service area: PPI
Lead Manager: Steve Eling	Contact number: 54419
Is this a: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, please specify	

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

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Steve Eling	RMBC ACX	Manager
Levi Karigambe	RMBC ACX	Policy Officer
Ruth Lucas	RMBC ACX	Acting Head

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance
Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

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

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

A mix of contextual equalities information, such as from the 2011 census, and consultation on the EDI Strategy is provided here.

Population

- Population estimates indicate that the borough is becoming increasingly diverse with significant international migration, mainly from other EU countries. Based on the 2011 census, the proportion of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities increased from 4.1% in 2001 to 8.1% in 2011 and will have grown further since to at least 10% by 2016. Ethnic diversity is most evident amongst young people illustrated by the 17.8% of school pupils who were from BAME groups in 2018. The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after White British, with 3% of residents in 2011 and 6.8% of school pupils in 2018.
- Rotherham's BAME population is very concentrated in the inner areas of the town whilst the outer areas were 96% White British in 2011. 42% of BAME residents live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country and for some groups the figure is higher. This compares with the Borough average of 19.5%.
- The population is ageing; Rotherham has 52,000 people aged 65 years or over or 19.7% of the population, above the national average of 18.4%. The population aged over 65 is projected to increase to over 21% by 2026, with the largest increase being in the number of people aged over 75.

Economy

- Rotherham has a polarised geography of deprivation and affluence with the most deprived communities concentrated in the central area whilst the most affluent areas are to the south, although the overall pattern is complex.
- Rotherham is one of the 20% most deprived areas in England with 12,667 children living in "absolute poverty" 2018/19.
- The inequality in the pay gap between men and women is substantial, whereby male workers in Rotherham earn £13,409 more than female workers, on average

(median gross annual pay). This means women's pay in Rotherham is only 54.6% of men's pay, compared with 64.5% nationally.

Health and wellbeing

- Rotherham had 56,588 people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability in 2011, with 11.3% saying this limits their activity a lot, compared with the average of 8.3% nationally. Although there have been health improvements, health inequalities remain and in some cases are widening.
- Health inequalities are also significant, both between the borough and the national average and between the most and least deprived communities in Rotherham. In addition to these factors, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the most disadvantaged communities being hit the hardest.

Neighbourhoods

- Using information from the consultation on the Council Plan, men are more likely to say they use parks daily (46%) than women (28%), while women are more likely to never use parks at all (7%), than men (1.2%).
- With regards to crime and community safety, tackling anti-social behaviour (79%), tackling crime such as car crime (67%), and protecting vulnerable older people (62%) emerged as respondents' top priorities, over preventing harassment and violence against women and girls (42%), and preventing hate crime (includes disability/ racial/ religious/ homophobic/ transphobic crimes) (35%) – which might partly be due to the age profile and the overrepresentation of older age groups, as well as the underrepresentation of religious and ethnic minorities.

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

The consultation process sought to ensure that there were no gaps in the information available in addition to the data available. It is accepted that some of the data is dated, especially that from Census 2011, however, data will be updated as information from Census 2022 is released.

Consultation Engagement Profile

There were 172 responses to an open access online survey.

65% of respondents identified their sex as female (Borough figure is 51%), 26% as male (Borough figure is 51%). 1% saw themselves another way and 7 preferred not to say. Regarding gender identity 3% identified as transgender and 9% preferred not to disclose their gender identity. 78% described themselves as heterosexual/straight, 3% described themselves as gay/lesbian, 4% as bisexual, 3% other and 12% prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation. 34% of respondents described themselves as having a long-term illness or disability with 9% preferring not to say. 23% were caring (unpaid) for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. 15 preferred not to disclose their caring status. 77% described their ethnic background as White British (Borough figure is 92%). All other ethnic groups combined accounted for 13% and 10% respondents preferred not to disclose their ethnicity. 40% stated their

religion as Christian of all denominations (Borough estimate 66.5%), 7% as Muslim (borough estimate 3.7%), 4% as other religion or belief, 38% as 'no religion' (borough estimate 22.5%) and 11% preferred not to disclose their religious status.)

The 8 focus groups, some virtual, some in person, engaged with borough residents on themes around ethnicity, gender, a range of disabilities (including conversations with carers), faith and older people, with approximately 30 VCS organisation engaged. A BAME group was organised through Rotherham Ethnic Communities Network (RECN), which includes: REMA, RMCF, the Sudanese Community, Saifs Boxing and fitness, Roma/Slova, Apna Haq, the Rotherham Interfaith Group. Three disability groups engaged: users, staff, carers and families around complex needs, through SENSE; users, volunteers, staff, support workers around visual impairment through Sight and Sound; members of the Community support group for profoundly deaf Deaf Futures. A focus group took place around Faith with Mosques, Methodist, Salvation Army, Liberty Church and Hope Church. Older people were engaged with through committee members of the Rotherham Older Peoples Forum, with includes Age Uk and HealthWatch. The Women's focus group was held with service providers, including NHS, RUCST, Community Safety, Grow, Carers Forum, Rotherfed. 6 internal focus groups (women, LGBT+, carers, disability, faith, BAME) engaged around 45 staff, with between 2 and 12 participants per group.

A report on the consultation process and outcomes has been produced and the findings have been used to develop the final strategy document and accompanying workplan. Feedback has been requested by groups, which will be provided in accordance with the Council's consultation and engagement policy.

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

Progress will be measured through a range of means.

In addition to the quarterly report to Cabinet on the Council Plan KPIs and Year Ahead Delivery Plan progress, the monitoring and review of the EDI strategy and workplan, will be undertaken through the Equalities Annual Report. This will continue to be presented in June of each year.

The action plan for the Equalities Framework for Local Government Key Lines Of Enquiry is subject to ongoing corporate monitoring and action.

The Equalities Annual Report forms a key part of monitoring progress and setting forward actions. It is also used to disseminate good practice through the use of case studies.

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

An extensive consultation process has been undertaken seeking views on new draft objectives along with key actions and the approach to taking forward the EDI Strategy.

The consultation involved:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online form available for anyone to engage via the Council's website. • External focus groups around protected characteristics covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race. ○ Women. ○ Disabilities. ○ Faith. ○ Older people. ○ LGBT+. • Consultation towers and forms at libraries and community venues. • Eight sessions through community organisations helping people to engage with completing the consultation. • Over 30 VCS and faith organisations involved. • Internal staff group sessions covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women. ○ LGBT+. ○ Carers. ○ Disability. ○ Faith. ○ BAME. <p>The Survey sought responses on a scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” together with the option of “neither agree or disagree”. It also provided for comments on each of the priorities too. The survey responses show overall support for the proposed priorities (objectives) and key actions with 85% showing agreement with all priorities and 6% against.</p> <p>For each of the three priorities, the responses were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 - To understand, listen and engage across all communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 84% either agreed or strongly agreed. ○ 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. • Priority 2 - Deliver fair, inclusive, and accessible services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 85% either agreed or strongly agreed. ○ 6% people disagreed or strongly disagreed. • Priority 3 - Empower people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 87% either agreed or strongly agreed. ○ 6% people disagreed or strongly disagreed.
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	<p>In addition to the headline survey results, specific views were sought from both external focus groups and staff group meetings. These provided some extra context for taking forward the priorities and delivery of key actions.</p> <p>Specific issues raised through external groups covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall comments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Actions will need to be more specific. ○ Questions about how monitored and who will be accountable. • Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More needed on continued dialogue and exchange going forward. ○ Consultation can be viewed as a ‘tick-box exercise’. ○ Groups want more feed back and engagement with community groups. ○ Important to build on and facilitate work of community organisations and partners. • Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues around transport, toilets, leisure facilities ○ Be aware of multiple barriers / intersectionality. ○ Digital exclusion. ○ Wanting to be involved in conversations on accessibility. • Visible support / celebrations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Important for Council to show more outward support for diverse communities. ○ Support Pride. • Training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff need to be aware of issues, improve training, neurodiversity, LGBT+ issues, race. ○ Hate crime as serious issue, as well as lack of funded grassroots support for LGBT+ residents and other groups – many volunteer led with limited capacity.
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Groups discussed the idea of staff networks, with a comment in the faith group that this would give visibility to faith within the organisation and staff would be more engaged. An interest in participation in events across the council was also expressed (women). The LGBT+ and women’s groups found that staff groups could be a valuable networking opportunity, a forum to come together to share concerns, with the importance to</p>

	<p>have deliverable outcomes, formalised structures and clear responsibilities, and the possibility to give feedback on progress on equalities. Carers in the council and their needs was raised, with staff networks seen as potentially supporting a continued dialogue.</p> <p>The engagement produced discussion around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Carers • Women • BME • Disability and long-term health conditions <p>There was general support for the creation of staff groups for engagement going forward.</p>
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4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

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

The EDI strategy underpins cross cutting equalities throughout the Council Plan.

Of the five guiding principles within the Council Plan, two in particular aim to meet residents' and communities' differentiated needs:

- Expanding opportunities for all
- Working with our communities

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

Furthermore, the underlying 'One Council' theme encompasses two specific areas, which ensure different needs are met:

- All customers at the heart of everything we do
- Engaged, diverse and skilled workforce who feel empowered to adopt new ways of working to meet the needs of all customers

• The EDI strategy supports the delivery of these Council Plan outcomes by ensuring that we consider the barriers and challenges faced by protected groups and wider sections of the community, that we take action to ensure we actively listen and engage

with communities and that we work in partnership to deliver accessible and inclusive services.

The strategy also takes forward the public sector equality duty of:

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

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

No problems or barriers have been identified. The strategy actively seeks to reduce and eliminate barriers and issues faced by communities and protected groups.

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

Yes, the strategy is about all aspects of equalities including removing barriers.

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

In taking forward the public sector equality duty, the strategy addresses the requirement to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

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

Title of analysis: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/25 and Equalities Annual Report 2021/22
Directorate and service area: ACX; Policy, Performance and Intelligence; Policy and Equalities Team
Lead Manager: Steve Eling
Summary of findings:
The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/2025 addresses equalities in every aspect, embedding equalities into corporate planning and underpinning the Council Plan. It addresses working with communities and engagement around equalities issues. It also directs a strategic intention to achieve “excellent” standard under the provisions of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor and develop equality outcomes from delivery of the Council Plan through the performance management framework	All	Quarterly
Achieve “excellent” under the KLOEs of the EFLG	All	By end of 2023 (peer review)
Review and report annual action plan and outcomes through production of an Equalities Annual Report	All	June each year

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

6. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Jo Brown	Assistant Chief Executive	
Councillor Chris Read	Leader	

7. Publishing

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

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

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

Date Equality Analysis completed	10 th May 2022
Report title and date	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/25 and Equalities Annual Report 2021/22, 20 th June 2022
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	10 th May 2022

User guidance:

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

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

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	N/A				
Emissions from transport?	N/A				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	N/A				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	N/A				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	N/A				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	N/A				

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

N/A

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

N/A

Supporting information:

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

Levi Karigambe, Policy Officer, Policy & Equalities Team, PPI

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 27 May 2022

Report Title

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership – CSE Review Final Report

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor
01709 822765 or caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

At the meeting held on 10 November 2021, Council considered a motion regarding *Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham*. It resolved to ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership considers the issues detailed in the motion and reports back to councillors on any changes, amendments to its Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation or additional activities that may be appropriate.

The report of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership outlining its findings and suggested recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. That the report of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership be noted.
2. That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board determines its response to the recommendations outlined in the report and forward these to the appropriate bodies for consideration.

List of Appendices Included

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Appendix 1 - | Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report |
| Appendix 2 | Motion – Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (as agreed by Council on November 10, 2021) |

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required.

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report

1. Background

- 1.1 Following a motion to the Council meeting held on 10 November 2021, *Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham* it was resolved to ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) considers the issues outlined in the motion on any changes, amendments to its Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation or additional activities that may be appropriate.
- 1.2 Chief Officers from RMBC, South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioned the RSCP to undertake an independent review to examine the concerns raised in an objective and transparent way.
- 1.3 The RSCP's review team appointed to conduct the review were selected based on their extensive experience in child safeguarding across the voluntary and statutory sectors, public protection and social work practice. The review team are as follows:
 - **Jenny Myers – Independent Chair of RSCP.** Ms Myers is a lead reviewer for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and has held the role of independent chair for RSCP since October 2019. She is a former independent chair of other safeguarding partnerships and led high-profile case reviews including around CSE.
 - **Matt Thompson – Police and Justice Lead.** Mr Thompson is a former Head of Public Protection for Derbyshire Police. He is currently Head of Direct Delivery of a UK charitable network who disseminate information, best practice and learning across voluntary and statutory services to inform, educate and prevent child exploitation and abuse.
 - **Jenny Coles – Independent Consultant.** Ms Coles is a registered social worker and is a former Strategic Director of Children. She was president of Association of Directors of Children Services. She is currently chair of the board of Trustees for What Works for Children's Social Care and a member of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The RSCP report is attached as Appendix 1. There are two stages to the report:
 - Stage 1 - addressing the specific concerns raised by Rotherham Council's Conservative Group in their briefing paper; and
 - Stage 2- ensuring that the individual points raised by the Council motion are addressed, namely:

- the multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear Child Exploitation (CE) strategy and senior management oversight and accountability;
- the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation;
- the strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff;
- RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE to ensure that it is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, and that the scrutiny was robust.

2.2 In respect of Stage 1 of the report, the review team concludes that the concerns raised by Councillors in their briefing paper have been taken seriously, acted upon and dealt with appropriately. It is assured that the response of the Rotherham Division of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Local Authority, regarding child sexual exploitation is effective and robust and that the specific allegations in the briefing paper are unfounded.

2.3 With regards to Stage 2 of the report, the review team further concludes that Rotherham has developed strong leadership, accountability and locally developed multi-agency relationships which takes a robust approach to tackling criminal exploitation, of which CSE is a part.

The review finds that the strategies and plans to tackle exploitation demonstrates a wide understanding of risk to children and reflects extensive partner agency relationships.

Each of the Council motion points appropriate to the RSCP has been addressed and explored.

2.4 Section 8 of the independent review identifies areas for improvement and learning. These are outlined in several suggested recommendations which cover the following areas:

- Induction and training of councillors
- Scrutiny
- Re-building trust and confidence
- Survivors
- Public awareness raising
- Keeping children and young people safe
- CE/CSE Strategy Review.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to consider the information herein; scrutinise the findings of the independent review and determine its recommendations in response to the issues raised.

Members of Improving Lives Select Commission have been invited to attend for consideration of this issue.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 All papers supporting this item are published on the Council's website.

4.2 There is no consultation required in respect of this item.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Any recommendations arising from this item would be forwarded to the relevant bodies for consideration and response.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this item. Any recommendations which may have financial or procurement implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this item. Any recommendations which may have legal implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have direct equalities and human rights implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for key partners will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Should this meeting not take place, opportunities to scrutinise areas of learning and improvement may be missed.

Accountable Officer(s)

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive
Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Report Author: Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor
01709 822765 or caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk
This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

CSE Review Final Report

1. Background and Introduction

The Rotherham Conservative Council Group published a briefing paper on 3rd November 2021 into ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The briefing paper raised several significant concerns which suggest that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council are responding to CSE effectively enough. A motion in response to the briefing was approved by the Rotherham Council on the 10th of November 2021 (Appendix 1).

The Chief Officers from the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who hold the responsibility for safeguarding children and young people are committed to supporting an objective and transparent review of the concerns raised around CSE in the briefing paper. As such, they asked the independent chair and scrutineer of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) to undertake an independent review.

The Terms of Reference for the review and methodology were agreed at the end of November 2021. These can be found in Appendix 2. The review was split into two stages.

Stage 1 of the review which was completed on the 14th March 2022, examined two aspects, firstly the **Police and Council's response to CSE concerns** and the actions taken by the responsible authorities on the information already passed to them by the Conservative Party Working Group between May 2021 to 31st October 2021 and secondly reports in the briefing paper that **Council staff** said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the Conservative working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out.

Stage 2 of the Review (included in this final report) and as agreed in the Council motion of 10 November 2021 asked the RSCP to consider the proposed actions in light of the current CSE/CE strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative group or others and reports back to councillors within three months on any changes amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity. This involved an examination of:

- **A comprehensive strategy for CSE and senior management accountability for its effective implementation.** To ensure that the policy and procedures for CSE in Rotherham are fit for purpose and that they are understood, adhered to, and accessed by RSCP front line staff.
- **The points laid out in the motion** as agreed at Council on 10th November 2021 and any changes or additional actions required.

Independent Review Project Team:

Name	Job Role/Title	Agency/Organisation
Jenny Myers	Independent chair of RSCP	Jenny Myers Consultancy Ltd
Matt Thompson	Police and Justice Lead	NWG Network
Jenny Coles	Independent consultant	JMC Consultancy Ltd

The project team have substantial child protection experience between them.

Jenny Myers is a registered social worker with almost 40 years' experience of working in both voluntary and statutory sectors on child safeguarding. She is a lead reviewer for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and has held the role of independent chair for Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership since October 2019. She has been an independent chair of two previous safeguarding partnerships, a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and vice chair of an international charity and led a number of high-profile case reviews including around CSE.

Matt Thompson is a retired police officer, his last role being as Head of Public Protection for Derbyshire Constabulary. He is currently Head of Direct Delivery and Deputy CEO of NWG. NWG is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 14,500 practitioners who disseminate information, best practice and learning through their respective service. They cover voluntary and statutory services working together to inform, educate and prevent child exploitation and abuse throughout the UK as well as inform and influence the development of national and local practice.

Jenny Coles is a registered social worker and recently retired after holding the role of Strategic Director of Children Services for Hertfordshire. She was also president of the ADCS (Association of Directors of Children Services) and has extensive senior leadership experience across Social

Care and Education, as well as in chairing strategic partnerships. Jenny is currently chair of the board of Trustees for What Works for Children's Social Care and a member of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Safeguarding Partnership Leads:

Name	Job Role/Title	Agency/Organisation
Suzanne Joyner	Strategic Director for Children and Young People Service (CYPS)	RMBC
Stephen Chapman	Chief Superintendent Rotherham District Commander	SYP
Samuel Blakemore	Detective Inspector	SYP
Sue Cassin	Chief Nurse	CCG
Phil Morris	Partnership Manager	RSCP
Jayne Watson	Business Support to the Project Team (PA to Chief Nurse)	CCG

2. Acknowledgments

The Review Team would like to express its sincere thanks to all those who have to date given up their time to support the review, the level of openness and transparency from all agencies, councillors and the enthusiasm to learn where possible. Special thanks to the project team without whom access to police processes and information would not have been possible.

3. Context and Background

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread for many years and it is widely acknowledged that it was largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police. Professor Alexis Jay's report was commissioned by the Council and

published in August 2014. Covering the period 1997 to 2013, it looked at how Rotherham's Children's Services dealt with child sexual exploitation cases. The report found evidence of sexual exploitation of at least 1,400 children in Rotherham in this period. Louise Casey was then appointed to carry out an inspection of Rotherham Council in relation to the exercise of its functions on governance, children and young people and taxi and private hire licensing. Louise Casey's report was published in February 2015 and found widespread failings across the council's culture and services.

Since 2014 progress has been made on many of the issues related to CSE including improvements in taxi licencing, work with hotels in the local area to improve awareness of indicators of CSE and Spot the Signs and other local campaigns. In addition, much has been done to drive better multi-agency partnership working, the development of a CSE strategy and access to both online and face to face training for practitioners and front-line staff.

However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham as in many other areas of the country and the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CE) and online child abuse and grooming becoming more prevalent. Therefore, it is essential that Rotherham continue to hold themselves up to the highest scrutiny to ensure that their previous history can never be repeated.

4. Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) and CSE Assurance

The RSCP was established in 2019 in accordance with statutory guidance and legislation. The multi-agency safeguarding children's arrangements are independently chaired and consist of three key agencies NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group, RMBC, and SYP and also includes all the agencies and organisations in the wider partnership providing services to children and families. The Rotherham Safeguarding Children arrangements and all partners named within them have a key role to play to ensure that children are kept safe and that all organisations work together effectively to promote their welfare.

RSCP are the leading body that drive the multi-agency strategy, action plan and partnership assurance for child exploitation, including child sexual exploitation. The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) is a key partner in supporting the work of the RSCP to achieve its CE strategy by increasing staff awareness, effective information sharing, targeted preventative measures and disrupting criminal activity in known hot spot locations. A CE delivery group and CE steering group

made up of representation across all key agencies including the voluntary sector sit under the structure of the RSCP and drive the work of CE strategy and partnership.

5. Executive Summary of Findings

The following is a brief summary of the findings from Stage 1 and 2 of the CSE review. A more detailed examination of both stages is provided in the body of this report.

The conclusion of Stage 1 demonstrated that the Review Team were assured that the response of the Rotherham Division of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Local Authority to information provided by the Conservative Councillors (Cllrs) regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE) was effective and robust and that the specific allegations from the Briefing paper were not founded. The Review Team found that SYP in Rotherham had a strong multi-disciplinary partnership approach to CSE embedded over a number of years. This was evidenced through examination of the local police systems, process and its meetings structure that provide a robust and holistic framework of a cradle to grave approach, to not just intelligence management but also to how it monitors the standards of investigations. All the information provided by the Conservative Councillors was able to be tracked and where appropriate, action was taken.

The Review Team have been allowed complete access and are therefore able to provide reassurance that these processes are not simply paper-based but active, embedded and protecting children and young people in Rotherham.

In relation to Council Staff, the Conservative briefing paper suggested that council staff said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the Conservative working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out. The Review Team have not been provided with any evidence during the course of this review as yet to substantiate these claims. They were only told by the Councillors of one RMBC council worker outside of Children Services who expressed concern about a culture of fear and speaking out about CSE as referenced in the Briefing Paper. The Review Team have offered to speak to the person (or any other person/s) and support anonymity, but as yet the individual mentioned does not feel safe to do so. The Review Team were clear that the offer to speak with them in whatever form that is helpful continued to be open for the period of the review. In addition, the Review Team suggested other ways of speaking out via Ofsted, Local Government or the RMBC whistle blowing process.

Stage 2 ensured that the individual points raised by the Council motion were addressed. The Review Team has found no evidence that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as the past. A

multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear CE strategy and senior management oversight and accountability for its implementation has been developed and embedded over a number of years following the Jay and Casey reports. A key factor in this is seen as co-location of police, children's social care and health professionals working together in both the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and EVOLVE, a specialist commissioned CSE service, including consultation support from Community Adolescent Mental Health Services, (CAMHS).

The review examined the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation. We have seen first-hand the police Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) and the Council-led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM) and how both complemented each other to both protect children from and disrupt Child Exploitation. The CETG is a weekly Intelligence led meeting chaired by SYP and covers all child exploitation matters, tracking between 12 and 20 young people at any one time where information has been received. Representatives from the SY Police Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (PVP), CSE teams, intelligence staff, neighbourhood policing team (NPT) inspectors), Children's Services, Evolve exploitation team staff and service manager, Housing, LA licensing, LA anti-social behaviour officers, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Barnardos. The groups meet to review all new intelligence submissions, try and understand the concerns, map, and put into place plans and actions to mitigate or eliminate the risk. Cases are kept on the schedule and actions issues and reviewed until the issue has been eliminated or there is more understanding.

There is a collegiate approach to full information sharing of full intelligence reports with all partners. Every piece of information is shared, considered, actions devised, followed up, and results recorded on an action schedule, all of which are retained and can be examined on request. All intelligence is discussed whether it relates to victims, perpetrators, locations, or vehicles.

We also saw the work of the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) that oversees the work of the RAM and CETG. The CEDG is Chaired by Rotherham's most senior police officer and justifiably calls itself multi-agency. The same can be said of the RAM and CETG in that the breadth of statutory and non-statutory agencies not only present but actively engaged was, to say the least, excellent. This is further evidenced with the close ties to Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership.

RSCP has a clear strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff and a learning prospectus. CSE and contextual safeguarding training is included and access to all of the resources is found

on the RSCP website. There has been a comprehensive range of training and information to members, including a focus on safeguarding and CSE for new members since May 2021.

The review examined RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE to ensure that it is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, and that the scrutiny was robust. The review does make some suggestions to further enhance the scrutiny of CSE/CE to ensure that the strong partnership approach to delivery of safeguarding services, sharing of information and assurance in Rotherham is evident to members, especially those new to the council and for timely face to face safeguarding induction of new council members.

6. A Comprehensive Strategy for CSE and Senior Management Accountability for Effective Implementation.

The review team member from the NWG undertook a benchmarking exercise to provide assurance that the current CSE/CE Strategy and policy and procedures of RSCP were fit for purpose, well managed and understood. While the format of the Conservative Group briefing paper separated the responses to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) by both Police and the Council it should be noted that both Working Together 2018 and the Wood Review expect and dictate that an area's response to the exploitation of children (which includes CSE) is a joint one between all agencies. This collective responsibility is discharged through the RSCP, its governance and policies.

A number of safeguards exist to check areas progress beyond any local scrutiny measures that may exist. HM Inspectorates, including OFSTED, undertake individual agency Inspections or they may and do come together, led by OFSTED, to conduct Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI).

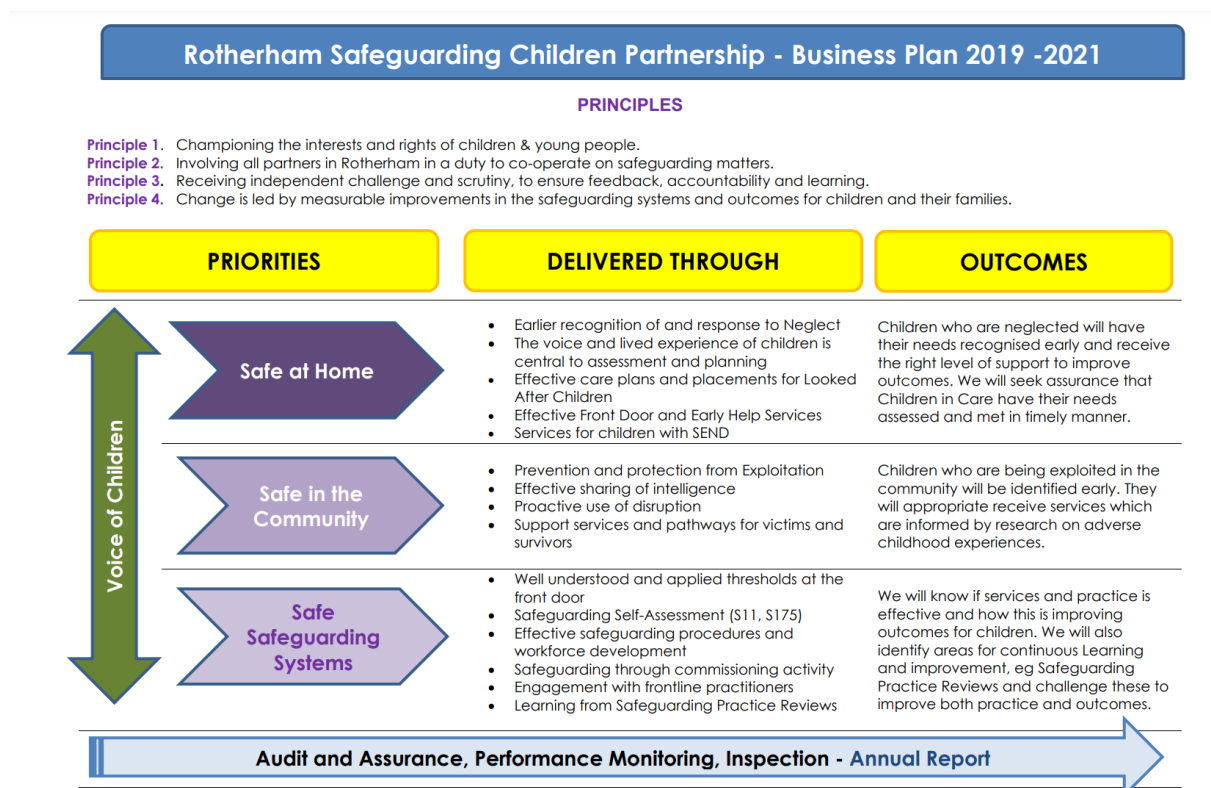
The day-to-day work of the NWG is the dissemination of best practise and the supporting of areas and professionals to develop and improve responses to CE. As a result, they are well placed to identify comparative areas against which to benchmark Rotherham and make a professional judgement regarding Rotherham's position and progress against a virtual national picture. To this end, the review selected four other areas for comparison that were known to the NWG and in which they have worked or continue to work with. Two of the areas are considered to be performing well in their response to CE as a result of either inspection or the development of best practise that is being widely adopted. Conversely the other two areas would be considered early in their journey to developing a comprehensive response to CE.

The benchmarking exercise undertook a critical look at the following:

- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Business Plan 2019-2021.
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to prevent child exploitation 2019-2022.
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Scrutiny Safeguards and Governance.
- Plans for the review and development of the above

Findings

The RSCP Business Plan 2019-2021 compares very favourably when set alongside those areas considered to be performing well in their response to CE. The document is strategic in nature and wider in scope than just CE. It is clear and easily accessible to the public via the RSCP website and is formatted in a way that the NWG often recommend i.e. a plan on a page. Lengthy business plans can lose sight of what they are intended to achieve. This plan identifies four principles that all agencies commit to and provides a clear journey from its priorities, how they will be delivered, and what outcomes will be sought to evidence that delivery.



The review finds that several key areas are addressed, such as, contextual safeguarding, the need to commission support services and identify pathways for survivors, the need to capture the voice of the child and of course the need to prevent and protect children from exploitation.

Stage 1 of the review has commented extensively regarding the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation. We have seen first-hand the police Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) and the Council-led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM), renamed MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) in March 2022 and how both complemented each other to both protect children from and disrupt CE. We also saw the work of the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) that oversees the work of the RAM and CETG. The CEDG is chaired by Rotherham's most senior police officer and in the view of the review is a group that justifiably calls itself multi-agency. The same can be said of the RAM and CETG in that the breadth of statutory and non-statutory agencies not only present but actively engaged was excellent. This is further evidenced with the close ties to Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership. Foreword thinking safeguarding partnerships have comprehensive strategies that identify the connections between gangs, serious youth violence and child exploitation. Recognising that community safety is a key partner to be involved in both prevention and disruption.

The CEDG is a subgroup of the RCSP Executive Group, made up of Chief Officer level staff from the statutory agencies. While this is not unique to Rotherham, this level of governance is essential to ensure that strategy is not only developed but translated to operational practice and that through scrutiny and audit the lives of children in Rotherham are improved. This is why the development, review, and implementation of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to Prevent Child Exploitation 2019-2022 document is delegated to the CEDG to progress. It should be noted that the scrutiny and audit provided through the oversight of this Partnership is separate and different to that referred to within the Conservative Group Report and is addressed elsewhere in this report.

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to prevent child exploitation 2019-2022 is similarly easily accessible via the RCSP website. The review has considered the content and approach in detail and spoken directly with the Chair of the CEDG. The review was also timely in that it established that the CEDG has organised a task and finish group to conduct an annual review of the document to set a new three-year commitment.

In considering the content and direction of the document the review has considered them against the four other areas identified and discussed above.

Overall, the review finds the document to be a very good example for the following reasons:

- The strategy does not shy away from the failings of the past in Rotherham and acknowledges this both in terms of recognising it as a learning opportunity as well as the chance to invest in local services to improve outcomes for children.
- The introduction on the website acknowledges the strategy to be a learning journey. A strategy that is considered to be a 'live' document is far more likely to be current and updated with improved practice and academic evidenced best practice.
- The introduction to the strategy is clear and recognises all forms of exploitation and a commitment to work with families to tackle extra-familial risk, something that is not seen in other areas who have weaker strategies.
- The introduction sets out a vision that remains 'seeing the child first – not the behaviour'. This child centred approach is only seen within strong strategies
- The review was pleased to see reference to the risks relating to Transitional Safeguarding. This is where children reach the age of 18 years and access to services can end abruptly despite little change in the child's circumstances simply because they have reached a chronological age. The review has seen Adult Social care present within the RCSP and clear consideration of this issue. Weaker strategies do not address this risk.
- The use of the 5P approach to delivery is also evidence of a strong commitment to push strategy through to operational delivery. (*PREVENT CSE, PROTECT children, PURSUE perpetrators, PROVIDE support to victims – historical and recent and to ensure we hear their voices and PARTICIPATION*). Increasingly more and more areas are introducing this model. Rotherham having had this since at least 2019 is an area followed by others in this respect.

There were very few areas where the review considered the strategy could be tighter. The strongest strategies set out strong early ownership and responsibility for the document and its delivery. Moving the Governance section of the strategy from its current position to the beginning would assist with this. Increasingly the public facing 'CE Strategy' is also made more of an easy to access and read infographic or 'plan on a page' with delivery as an appendix.

It was also recommended that consideration to an aligned communications plan may result in improved public confidence, understanding, and engagement. Rotherham has been and continues to successfully prevent and disrupt exploitation and communities should see that.

There should also be a stronger focus on Equality and Diversity, this should include a whole system approach evident in the strategy from accurate offending profiling, access to services and reach, and feedback from victims and survivors and their families to inform the development of services.

These improvements were discussed at length when the reviewer met with key staff who will be involved in the updating of the CE/CSE strategy. This Review was reassured from that conversation that the task and finish group will seek a clear term of reference, linked to the partnerships Business Plan, and seek out best practice to further strengthen Rotherham's response to child exploitation.

7. Consideration of Council Motion Points of 10th November 2021

Many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already being addressed by the RSCP Child Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022. The Review Team have however, considered every one of the 13 points raised and the next section of the report will address those that sit within its remit and responsibility and where we have not commented earlier in the report.

- (1) **Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.**

The Review Team has found no evidence that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as the past. A multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear CE strategy and senior management oversight and accountability has been developed and embedded over a number of years following the Jay and Casey reports. A key factor in this is seen as co-location of police, children's social care and health professionals working together in both the MASH and EVOLVE service, including consultation support from CAMHS.

In particular, there is evidence of a structure that places CE/CSE resources at a local level, as opposed to it being a centralised and wider SYP resource.

- (2) **Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.**

RSCP has a clear strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff and a learning prospectus. CSE and contextual safeguarding training is included and access to all of the resources is found on the RSCP website. Training is normally (pre Covid) both face to face and online. Additional training has been provided over the last 12 months by the Children's

Society and Barnardos. There have also been sessions delivered by Rotherham and Doncaster and South Humberside (RDASH) around child exploitation online and Community Safety around online safety and sharing nude images. In addition, to the above specific sessions have been delivered to schools in the borough on CSE by the Trauma Resilience Service (TRS).

A Competency Framework has been developed to ensure that managers and practitioners who work with children and young people can access the appropriate safeguarding training at the right level. <http://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/file/133/learning-development-prospectus-2021-22>

As part of this review consideration was given to the induction and safeguarding training provided by RMBC to support Councillors, firstly, in gaining understanding about safeguarding responsibilities and how the wider safeguarding processes and systems in place in Rotherham work and secondly being clear of expectations in terms of how their concerns will be dealt with and how they would know they were being addressed.

There has been a comprehensive range of training and information to members, including a focus on safeguarding and CSE for new members since May 2021. This has included:

- Introductory sessions on safeguarding and children's and young people's services as well as promotion of LGA seminars focusing on Children's Services held in May/June 2021.
- Circulation in Nov 2021 to all members of the RMBC, the Children's Safeguarding Referral & Escalation Protocol for Elected Members. This is a clear and concise document, detailing a three-stage protocol for members if they have concerns about how an issue is being responded to as well as including the referral process if a member is concerned a child is being harmed.
- The joint facilitation by the police and the Director of Children Services (DCS) in January 2022, of two 'in person' seminars. These were attended by 17 and 11 members and ran for 2.5 hours. The presentation had comprehensive information of national and the Rotherham Child Exploitation Strategy and how this is delivered by the RSCP and Safer Rotherham Partnerships, the role of the Children's Services and the Police, how children & families are supported and support services available including the specialist CSE teams and information on local campaigns e.g. Spot the Signs and Safeguarding Awareness week.

- Two follow up member seminars on safeguarding for children and families in March 2022 which covered a range of comprehensive information.
- Two dedicated briefings in Jan and March 2022 for Cllr Barley and Cllr Collingham on Safeguarding and Looked After Children & Care Leavers.
- Chief Executive Briefings and screen savers on CSE for Council Staff
- Provision of e-learning on CSE which is available for all RMBC staff.

It is important to provide members, particularly new members with broader, less detailed, information of how the safeguarding process and services operate in the local area before then holding more detailed presentations on more specific areas. The review found officers fully appreciate that for members in Rotherham opportunities to learn and discuss CSE and CE are an absolute priority and therefore wished to deliver the seminars in person rather than on a virtual basis. However, last year there was some time delay between induction and more in-depth training on CSE because of Covid-related issues.

Given the information being delivered the review would support having face to face training, though acknowledges that for some members who work full time or have other caring responsibilities in-person training is hard to commit to at times and maybe the seminars need to be recorded so others can access them as a more convenient time. It is also important that seminars for members continue to be delivered by the multi-agency partnership that delivers Safeguarding & CSE services.

(3) Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.

As part of this review the Review team met with lead officers from the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) to scrutinise what recent activity there has been around public CSE information campaigns. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a priority under the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP). Data is provided by South Yorkshire Police (SYP) each quarter and monitored by the Board including CSE linked referrals and intelligence reports. Following a decline in referrals in 2019/20, the objective for the SRP was to drive an increase in referrals and intelligence reports through training and awareness raising, which was subsequently achieved.

The following outlines some of the key activities.

- **Raising Awareness - Spot the signs** - This was originally a campaign from 2014 which has been recently relaunched and updated. Additional Spot the Signs training was delivered by Evolve for Safeguarding Awareness Week to frontline staff.
- Video produced with Evolve/SYP – shared via social media channels for Community Safety/RMBC/SYP and available on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAPilHa0YXU>
- **Op Makesafe** – safeguarding in hospitality. A video developed in 2020 has been re-circulated to hotels with printable guide and poster to be displayed in staff areas followed by assurance visits made to selected hotels by SYP to assess the impact and identify areas for further development..
https://youtu.be/Tht_bpskXko
- Social media shared throughout February and March 2021 via Community Safety/RMBC/SYP – reached over 11,500 on RMBC corporate channels and resulted in additional traffic to relevant pages on RMBC website
- Social media also shared with links to <https://stop-ce.org/> and <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- SYP alerts issued to around 8500 residents via text message
- Additional awareness raising on CSE Awareness Day (March 2021 and 2022) – included screensavers on all RMBC laptops and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) internal comms to staff via the Monday Briefing, relaunch of Spot the Signs. Plus, social media on Community Safety/RMBC/SYP reaching over 18000 people through RMBC posts and additional traffic to relevant pages on RMBC website, additional training for professionals from Evolve, RDASH and Community Safety covering child exploitation including online safety
- Sessions delivered to Elected Members (22 March 2021) covering the National Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 and the work of the SRP, Evolve and SYP
- Information cards printed for frontline workers including signs of exploitation and contact numbers for reporting and support available – distribution began through RMBC Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Police Teams
- Advert in Rotherham United Football Club (RUFC) community magazine (July 2021) which is circulated via schools, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, the RUFC shop and through corporate hospitality boxes

Staff interviewed as part of the review referred to a recent public consultation that has highlighted a preference for more printed awareness of CSE/CE on posters in prominent places, such as public noticeboards/bus station/doctors etc. Other plans include:

- Widening the reach of social media campaigns – encouraging wider sharing through partnership organisations through the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board (SRPB) and corporate comms teams.
- Promoting more positive outcomes to improve public confidence
- Ensuring public know how to make a report of any concern regarding CE/CSE.
- Continued training through Evolve on Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding and developing a short information session for frontline workers/partners/VCS/community which can be delivered in person to raise awareness of signs, promote reporting mechanisms and improve confidence
- Op Makesafe - Follow up work taking place with hotels exploring ways to further develop awareness in hospitality and training for other licensed premises around safeguarding responsibilities.

The Review Team suggest that any public information campaigns must take account of equality and diversity to ensure the widest possible reach especially to those communities where English is not their first language. In addition, consideration should be given to further work in schools and colleges with young people, perhaps using theatre groups, something that has been successful in the past. Further training and awareness must be provided that recognises the changing landscape of CE/CSE to more online abuse to ensure that all children and young people and adults at risk including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are also provided with awareness that ensures they are given information that can help them keep safe.

Motion points (4-7) -these have been robustly addressed in depth in Stage 1 of the review and commented on earlier in this report. A brief response is provided below.

- (4) **Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.**

The Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) is a Police-chaired multi agency meeting through which new police information is shared, discussed and where appropriate actions are allocated across the partner agencies. While primarily driven by police intelligence the benefit of the meeting is that this provokes wider agency sharing. The Review Team were provided with previous minutes of the weekly meeting, through which we were able to see the journey of the information provided by the Councillors. The minutes demonstrated the following:

- Tasks allocated to local policing units to both develop further intelligence and ensure local patrol strategies factored in the issues discussed.
- Intelligence sharing and joint discussions between police and social care to assess risk and progression to the Social Care led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM)
- Discussions that not only considered single agency disruption but multi-agency opportunities, for example, where suitable other enforcement agencies such as Environmental Health and Licensing Teams were tasked. While tasking such teams is not uncommon in such meetings around the country, what was of particular interest to the author was that representatives from these wider agencies and team were present and active participants of the meeting.
- The actions of the previous meeting were reviewed, and updates discussed. Where those updates could be further progressed, they were, and when there were no longer opportunities to develop this, the matter closed to the meeting. It is important to state that this does not alter the fact the matter is recorded within police intelligence systems and where new information from any source is received the process starts again.

The NWG review team member also attended (virtually) a CETG meeting where he explored with the attendees their concept of escalation and timeliness. He was reassured that all staff knew what escalation routes were available and specifically to policing, that there was a pathway open to the Detective Inspector to progress significant intelligence that required a more immediate consideration of resources or specialist tactics.

The Review Team were pleased to see that the CETG meeting had also reviewed incidents of children reported missing over the previous period. This is good practice and clearly recognises the links between missing children and child exploitation.

In addition, members of the Review Team attended (virtually) two Risk Assessment (RAM) meetings. These meetings are Social Care chaired (by the Team Manager from the specialist CSE EVOLVE Team) with an equally well attended and diverse multi-agency membership. Its focus was on reviewing risk and interventions for individual children open to the meeting. There is a specific risk assessment tool used by social workers for CSE and systems in place to monitor quality and timeliness for completion. Of note to the author was the good practice of a representative from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

The specialist social workers in EVOLVE co-work with social workers in locality social care teams to bring their expertise to working with families and young people. The Review Team saw evidence of service allocation at the Risk Assessment (RAM) meeting (now renamed MACE -multi agency child exploitation) and the CAMHS Trauma Pathway which is a positive practice. This review has seen strong evidence by SYP in Rotherham and RMBC not just of a robust performance framework and effective pathways for intelligence but also identified areas of good practice that the NWG Network will be happy to point to in its work with other police forces.

- (5) **Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.**

These points have been addressed in both Stage 1 and earlier in the report. The Children, Young People and Families Consortium (CYPF) considers itself to be well embedded within Rotherham safeguarding CE/CSE structures due to its Strategic Representation on the safeguarding boards and sub-groups by the Consortium Strategic Coordinator, Consortium Member organisations and Trustees. They sit on all key groups, including the RSCP CE delivery group, Stovewood bronze delivery group, and multi-agency child exploitation meetings.

- (6) **Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities' act.**

The Evolve service have a weekly multi-agency child exploitation meeting (MACE) which involves the assessment of children regarding their risk of exploitation. A maximum of three children are discussed and includes sexual and criminal exploitation. Attendees include the CSE team DS, Evolve social work manager (who chairs the meeting), Youth Offending Service, Education worker, sexual health nurse, Child mental health services (CAMHS), Barnardo's, DIVERT drugs and alcohol service and the children's locality social worker. In the meeting, the social worker will give details on the child, their background and the concerns, and the attendees have the opportunity to ask questions. A CSE assessment and tracker matrix is used as a framework to ask questions, assess risk and look at the trigger factors that would suggest the early indicators that a child is being exploited. Following the information gathering, each attendee is asked to give their opinion on whether the child is at high, medium, or low risk of exploitation, with different actions being

attributed to the risk e.g., medium and high are allocated an Evolve CSE social worker. Other actions are also suggested, such as sexual health nurse to work with the child/ren, referral to the Divert service, referral to CAMHS. This ensures that there is a pathway for practitioners who do have exploitation concerns for the children they work with. The criminal model for perpetrators continues to develop with more cases involving online grooming and abuse and agencies are having to revise and develop better ways of working to address changing risks.

The MACE provides a good example of proactive work that enables practitioners picking up on those early signs of CSE to jointly work with partners to solve issues for that child and gather information that might assist in criminal investigation or disruption.

(7) Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.

Rotherham police have an active child exploitation briefing site on Connect where updates around locations and individuals are regularly detailed for the knowledge of all officers. The site is actively updated by intelligence unit staff and there is active information published around high-risk nominals, priority patrol areas and locations, and overarching intelligence requirements. Through partner engagement at CETG the police have developed and continue to push partner information/intelligence submissions direct to the single point of entry (SPOE). With a dedicated form developed for this, they regularly refresh training to partners (last session delivered during CETG in October 2021) and request cascade training within their organisations and have provided them with training materials to support them in doing this with a view to driving information submission from partner agencies.

(8) Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.

EVOLVE undertake exit interviews for all children who have gone through their services, and their views are important feedback that informs future service development. The Council commission three separate voluntary sector services to provide post abuse support for children and adult survivors of CSE (Rotherham Rise, GROW and ROTHACS.) These services are scrutinised by Improving Lives and the Council receive regular updates on their effectiveness. In addition to this there is a quarterly meeting chaired by commissioning and with the Head of Service for Safeguarding for children and the three providers, to review the contract measures and

outcomes and capture any themes. This activity supports wider conversations around post abuse support offer and how this can be further developed.

- (9) **Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and consider improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistle blow to.**

Managers from RMBC Children Services that were interviewed by the Review team stated they considered there was an open culture where staff are encouraged to raise concerns. There are regular reminders where and how staff can raise concerns and the analysis of the Council staff survey from November 2021 is expected to be completed by the end of Spring 2022, so should provide further feedback. The Review Team have assessed current whistle blowing policies within RMBC which appear to be fit for purpose and in line with national guidance. There are also several other options for whistle blowing to independent bodies including Ofsted, the LGA, and NSPCC. These should be promoted to ensure that everyone feels able to report to someone if for whatever reason they don't feel safe to do so within the current council processes.

- (10) **Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.**

The review considered the following opportunities for members over the last two years to scrutinise the partnership response to CSE. This included information from:

- The range of reports presented to Improving Lives Scrutiny on CSE
- Other reports presented to members
- Training/seminars and briefings for members following the May 2021 election
- Meetings with Cllr Pitchley, chairperson of Improving Lives Scrutiny and Cllr Cusworth, Lead Member for Children's Services
- Discussion with Suzanne Joyner DCS and Stephen Chapman the Divisional Commander for Rotherham SYP on delivery of members' training and presentation of performance data.

It is important to acknowledge that in May 2021, 20 new councillors were elected, many whom had no experience of Council scrutiny processes or a wider understanding of CSE and the move towards a wider strategy around Criminal Exploitation (CE). The review team found in conversation that new councillors who authored the Briefing paper were not aware of the wider partnership responsibility for CE and the processes and systems that support the work including

the responsibilities of the RSCP to ensure children are kept safe and information is shared and acted upon appropriately. Whilst there were some CSE/CE briefings and training available to support new councillors, as discussed earlier, there was a time gap between initial induction and more in-depth training on CE/CSE. It is clear that not all councillors can attend the initial safeguarding sessions as they sit alongside a large amount of wider induction necessary for new councillors. However, the sessions were recorded and are available on the member website. The review team felt that key safeguarding training should be provided much earlier in the induction programme. There is also a need for existing councillors to attend refresher training.

In addition, changes were made to the chairing of Improving Lives and OMSB which changed some of the way in which scrutiny of CSE was tabled from May 2020-21. For new councillors the wider examination of CE may have resulted in it appearing that CSE had dropped off the agenda as it was not specifically included in the forward plan. Some of the performance reports have been too detailed making it hard for some members to quickly digest information and makes sense of the current picture.

However, a range of reports have been presented to members on CSE in the last year. In March 2021 the Leader chaired a meeting which gave an update on the Rotherham CSE Strategy alongside the launch of the national strategy. The outcome of the subgroup work into Support for Survivors was presented to the Improving Lives subgroup in December 2021. The report had been commissioned in March 2020 and had been delayed by the pandemic but was commissioned as some councillors wanted more evidence that the right services were being commissioned for survivors and that they were effective.

There have also been 2 confidential updates by the National Crime Agency on Operation Stovewood chaired by the Leader of the Council in August 2021 and March 2022. An update on the CSE Strategy and ongoing work is due to come to Improving Lives in June 2022. CSE is now on the forward plan and a specific spotlight on CSE is being planned for later in 2022.

The Improving Lives Scrutiny receives regular performance reports from Children's Services which include analysis of data and performance information which relate to vulnerable children e.g. children going missing. All members receive performance data in relation to children's services and the review understands there is currently work led by the DCS to present the data in a more focused way to support members' scrutiny of performance.

The RLSCP annual report is also presented to the committee by the RLSCP Independent Chairperson which includes a detailed section on CE assurance.

- (11) **Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.**

The review team does not feel able to comment on this other than to say in interview with the CEX and Leader of the Council, it understands and has seen written evidence of a considerable number of public apologies to survivors and their families made by the Council over the last few years. It would be trite to say an apology makes things better as it takes a whole range of actions, including a culture change and a trust and confidence that it can never happen again. Rotherham does continue to commission support services for survivors and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to ensure support is available.

- (12) **Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.**

The survivor voice must be at the heart of everything Rotherham does to respond and improve services and outcomes for those that have experienced harm. There is unlikely to be just one survivor voice; all those who were harmed have had very different experiences of post-abuse support and sadly for some that lack of trust and animosity will never go away.

The review felt that there could well be a difference between those who receive commissioned services now, and whose abuse was more recent and where there is good evidence of positive outcomes from the services they receive and those who are survivors of past historic abuse, many who rightly feel very let down. There are clearly some survivor services that sit outside of those commissioned by the Rotherham Council, and the join up of an offer to all those who have experienced harm could be better promoted and the contribution made by other voluntary sector services valued.

In discussion with the Children and Young People and Families (CYPF) Consortium for this review, it was suggested that the CYPF Consortium is in a strong position to add value to work around CSE due to its experience delivering the 2015 BASE Project funded by the Ministry of Justice. The

health commissioned Trauma and Resilience Service (TRS) also includes the three voluntary services as part of the TRS HUB wrap around services. The CYPF Consortium also has experience in delivering CSE awareness training to staff and public as commissioned by the Safer Rotherham Partnership, as well as conducting research and analysis into CSE support needs. A mapping of commissioned and non-commissioned support for CSE victims and survivors is recommended to complement and elaborate on the trauma pathway.

- (13) **Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.**

The review team found no new evidence that SYP in Rotherham currently deny that CSE is a continuing problem. The processes such as the CETG and RAM continue to show how the partnership, including SYP, takes every report they receive seriously and follows up on concerns alongside a proactive response to targeting known CSE locations and perpetrators. Stage 1 of the review looked in detail at a schedule of information that included details of dates and subjects of information which examined the journey of the information through the police's processes and systems. The material provided by the Councillors related to 17 documents from which 37 pieces of information were established. This was examined thoroughly and a separate matrix¹ developed that distilled every piece of information into separate strands of intelligence that the Review Team considered could and should be assessed by the Police.

In many cases, but not all, the information was non-specific in the sense that the information raised local concerns that child exploitation (CE) and or child sexual exploitation (CSE) was 'happening in Rotherham'. In other cases, the information was able to highlight individual names, locations and one piece of information provided the registration number of a vehicle. This is in no way a criticism of the sources of this information as most community intelligence is non-specific in nature. The work of the police and other agencies is to take that information, research any already known intelligence, and where possible task activity and develop the intelligence. The aim is to create a bigger picture where agencies can then plan disruption and or prevention activity.

¹ This matrix contains sensitive intelligence and personal details and in order to protect that is not attached as an appendix.

The briefing paper by the Conservative Group expressed a lack of confidence in the approach and response by agencies because of their experiences when sharing information. It was, therefore, key to this Review, having established the scale of the information shared, that the current processes were tested. The Review Team worked alongside the police to track and trace each of the 37 pieces of information from the point it was received by the police through to its conclusion. Each of the 37 intelligence items were found to have been received and more importantly recorded onto police intelligence systems. The Review Team were able to see how each item received an initial assessment and further research by experienced and trained staff. Where appropriate (and in this case the majority) they then progressed to a multi-agency meeting for discussion and action. Of the ones that did not progress the review team were satisfied that they would not have met the threshold for progression.

The following statement is taken from the Conservative Group briefing paper *“It was hoped that after thorough investigation, the working group could conclude that CSE was no longer a problem and that all possible steps were being taken by RMBC and SYP to tackle CSE...”*. This is of course correct; in that we all aspire to a time where CE including CSE are eradicated. However, sadly as we know we need to be cautious of any reduction in resource or focus on CSE/CE due to any unrealistic claims that, CSE could no longer be a problem. This review has seen strong evidence by SYP in Rotherham and RMBC not just of a robust performance framework and effective pathways for intelligence but also identified areas of good practice that the NWG Network will be happy to point to in its work with other police forces. In particular, it saw evidence of a structure that places CE/CSE resources at a local level, as opposed to it being a centralised and wider SYP resource. Local ownership with locally developed multi-agency relationships, and locally scrutinised, does in the opinion of the Review Team, show evidence of a robust multi agency partnership approach.

Any further judgement about the SYP’s past approach and effectiveness to CSE will be made following their response to areas for improvement identified through inspection and their action plan following the publication of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in the Operation Linden report Nov 2021 (<https://policeconduct>).

Summary and Conclusion

In November 2021 the Conservative working group published a briefing raising several significant concerns which suggested that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council were responding to it effectively enough.

The concerns were taken extremely seriously by senior leaders, and this independent review was commissioned to examine the points raised. For new opposition councillors coming into Rotherham, it was appropriate for them to want to understand more about the current situation around CSE in Rotherham. They had shared with the police a number of concerning bits of information and quite rightly wanted assurance that they had been acted upon.

Stage 1 of the review examined and tracked every one of the reports and found they had been acted upon and dealt with appropriately. There was evidence within the material of further contact by SYP, with the Councillors often asking if further information was available or if the source of the information was able to speak directly to the police. It is, however, difficult and resource intensive to provide updates for all information provided as to how it's been developed and what it has led to. However, for those Councillors making the reports it is a reasonable expectation they should have some brief acknowledgement that action has been taken and if this had been managed at the time, alongside some better induction and support into local safeguarding processes, it may have reduced a growing escalation and perception that CSE was not being managed effectively. The Councillors made it clear they do not expect operational updates to that level of detail, but some brief feedback and a more strategic and periodic framework of assurance would be welcome.

Stage 2 built on the findings of Stage 1 and has found that significant progress has been made in Rotherham in its response to CSE and that it has developed strong leadership, accountability and locally developed multi-agency relationships and scrutiny that does show in the opinion of the Review Team, evidence of a robust multi-agency partnership approach to criminal exploitation, of which CSE is one key part. In terms of its strategies and plans to tackle exploitation not only did the Review find what it would expect to see but additional content that displayed a wide understanding of risk to children and the need for wider than 'normal' partner agency relationships. Each of the Council motion points appropriate to the RSCP has been addressed and explored.

However, there is always some learning and areas for improvement. Whilst the review is not making any firm recommendations it does make some suggestions for improvements that the Council, RSCP and SYP may want to consider in order to form an action plan.

8. Suggested Recommendations

1) Induction and training of Councillors

Whilst there has been a good range of reports and safeguarding training provided to members over the last year (2021-22) more detailed training for Councillors on local safeguarding systems and processes and CE/CSE could have been provided earlier. It is acknowledged that the Covid pandemic did disrupt an already busy member-training programme, but new Councillors must quickly be given information as to how to make a report and share information with the police around CSE using the SYP information record or any other safeguarding concern to MASH in the most appropriate way. They also need to understand how to escalate their concerns if they don't feel assured that they have been dealt with. The review found that there was confusion by some councillors as to the difference between intelligence, information and what form to use when referring their concerns. The review suggests continuing to ensure any presentations, reports or training on CE/CSE are delivered to members by the RSCP/Safer Rotherham Partnership, but earlier in the induction programme. The chairpersons of both partnerships need to have oversight of the reports/presentations. A quick and updated '*what to do if sheet*', with links to the local services and forms should also be available and circulated to all members alongside a programme of refresher safeguarding training.

2) Scrutiny

The responsibility for CSE sits firmly with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safer Rotherham Partnership, and as such any assurance reporting to Improving Lives should be from a partnership perspective. Traditionally assurance around CSE to members may have been seen as primarily the responsibility of Children's Services. The Review Team after discussion with key council members now recommends that all CSE assurance provided should be presented from the Partnership to include each partners contribution including specific updates from the police.

Since the May 2021 elections, there has been scrutiny of CE, but the chair of Improving Lives has indicated that CSE is now on the scrutiny forward plan and that a specific spotlight is to be held on it, led by a targeted subgroup who will examine CSE, reports, actions, outcomes and what constraints there are. It should also include some survivor's feedback.

Children's Services and the police with the RLSCP/SRP should consider how more meaningful data and performance information on CE/CSE is included in performance reporting for members.

3) Re-building public trust and confidence.

The Police and RMBC will need to work on this for a considerable time as the impact of Operation Stovewood on local families' and children's lives continues to be experienced as Operation Stovewood investigates historical allegations. The failings exposed following the Jay and Casey reports cannot be mended quickly and the public need to know that their concerns will be heard and that they will be kept safe if they report them. The review suggests that the mechanisms for public reporting of their concerns regarding CE/CSE are reviewed to ensure that they are effective and understood. In addition, building a more open dialogue with the public and local press about what is working well and what things are improving could help. The review suggest that a communication plan is developed in partnership with the RSCP and the SRP that actively promotes better public engagement both in CE/CSE awareness campaigns but also in good news or other stories on positive outcomes of investigations. The review suggest that any communication plan should take account of equality and diversity to ensure the widest possible reach especially to those communities where English is not their first language.

SYP's response to the recommendations by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in the Operation Linden report (Nov 2021) into non recent child sexual abuse reports (2013-2018) (<https://policeconduct>) are key to building more trust and confidence. In particular recommendations 8 and 11 which refer to the need for SYP to undertake a mapping exercise, *'that continues to engage with communities to strengthen and build trust and confidence in the police service to encourage a willingness to provide information/intelligence to help tackle local issues, and for SYP to consider how it can assess and demonstrate the impact of action taken to address issues in handling child sexual exploitation.'* This should include, *'how it understands whether actions have achieved the intended effect and considering how they inform the community of progress made to help improve public awareness and confidence.'*

4) Survivors-

The review team felt that whilst there is some good practice from Evolve working with children who have been victims of CSE, currently the voice of adult survivors is not fully heard or represented enough. Whilst acknowledging that this is difficult to achieve there should be a more concerted and joined-up effort to hear as many voices as possible, even those dissenting ones. The Review

Team suggests that RSCP and the Adult Safeguarding Board work with all local partners to support this work and develop a programme to achieve a regular and consistent way to collate views and feedback to inform future development and commissioning of services.

The recommendation following the Improving Lives Select Commission subgroup report into post CSE support for survivors (Dec 2021) should be implemented including the transfer of CSE services to Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health directorate to enable the greater integration and co-ordination of support pathways for adult survivors of childhood CSE in Rotherham. In addition, there should be some further work on a mapping of commissioned and non-commissioned support for CSE victims and survivors. This is recommended to complement and elaborate on the TRS pathway and recognises that adults may choose to engage with a service outside of the Council until better trust and confidence is achieved.

5) Public awareness raising

There needs to be a continued programme of CE public awareness that recognises how the public like to receive information, not only in written form but in social media campaigns. The reach of these by the SRP should be widened to ensure that as many parts of the local diverse community and the voluntary agencies that support them are involved and engaged in their development, including parks and leisure, sport clubs, and housing. There should also be clearer information that explains not only signs and indicators but also the definitions of child exploitation and where CSE sits within this. The continued promotion of local campaigns such as Spot the Signs should be evaluated for its effectiveness to ensure that it is making a difference.

6) Keeping children and young people safe.

The Review Team suggest that consideration should be given to funding some further awareness work developing a rolling programme in schools and colleges with young people, perhaps using theatre groups. Further training and awareness must be provided that recognises the changing landscape of CE/CSE to more online abuse to ensure that all children and young people and adults at risk including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are also provided with awareness that ensures they are given information that can help them keep safe.

7) CE/CSE Strategy Review

This review has demonstrated that Rotherham's partnership approach to CE/CSE is well developed and that it compares very strongly when benchmarked against similar areas. The review of the

Rotherham CE strategy is underway and plans for a development day have been made. Suggestions for improvement include:

- Moving the Governance section of the strategy from its current position to the beginning.
- Developing a CE strategy as a plan on a page for easy reading and access, with delivery as an appendix.
- Developing an aligned communications plan with a stronger focus on Equality and Diversity, to include a whole system approach evident in the strategy from accurate offending profiling, access to services and reach, and feedback from victims and survivors and their families to inform the development of services.

Date of approval by RSCP Executive Group: 12/05/22

Signature of the RSCP Chair:

Jenny Myers MA CQSW

Date this Report submitted to the Council, South Yorkshire Police, the South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner and NHS Rotherham CCG: 13/05/22

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CAHMS	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CETG	<p>Criminal Exploitation Tasking Group:</p> <p>This is a weekly Intelligence led meeting chaired by SYP and covers all child exploitation matters, tracking between 12 and 20 young people at any one time where information has been received. Representatives from the Police (PVP, CSE teams, intelligence staff, NPT inspectors), Children's Services, Evolve exploitation team staff and service manager, Housing, LA licensing, LA anti-social behaviour officers YOT, Barnardos etc., meet and review all new intelligence submissions, try and understand the concerns, map, and put into place plans and actions to mitigate or eliminate the risk. Cases are kept on the schedule and actions issues and reviewed until the issue has been eliminated or there is more understanding.</p> <p>This is a whole way of working, sharing full intelligence reports with all partners, a collegiate approach of full information sharing. Every piece of information is shared, considered, actions devised, followed up, and results recorded on an action schedule, all of which are retained and can be examined on request.</p>

	All intelligence is discussed whether it relates to victims, perpetrators, locations or vehicles.
CE	Child Exploitation (this includes Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Radicalisation, Modern slavery, Human Trafficking and Honour Based Violence)
CYPF Consortium	Children, young people and families Consortium
EVOLVE	EVOLVE is a multi-agency team who work in Rotherham to ensure the safeguarding of children from CSE. It is a source of help and advice to practitioners, provides training and takes a lead role in case work with vulnerable children where it is needed.
IOPC	Independent office for police conduct
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MACE	MACE - Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting The purpose of MACE is to provide a clear and consistent identification and assessment of children at risk of child exploitation. The meeting promotes information sharing across a variety of agencies across the local area to highlight vulnerabilities, threats, and to establish and reduce risk by increasing safety around a child/young person.
Operation Linden	A report relating to complaints of police conduct during their investigations of non-recent child sexual abuse and exploitation in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.
OMSB	Overview management scrutiny board
PVP	Protecting Vulnerable People. The combined responsibilities of the Domestic Abuse Unit, Child Protection Unit & Public Protection Unit.
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
RAM	Risk Assessment Meeting
RSCP	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership
SPOE	Single Point of Entry
SYP	South Yorkshire Police
TRS	Trauma and Resilience Service

APPENDIX 1:
APPROVED MOTION ROTHERHAM COUNCIL 10TH NOVEMBER 2021
ONGOING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM

This Council notes:

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.
- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
 - That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019.

Therefore, we ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity:

1. Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
2. Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
3. Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.
4. Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
5. Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
6. Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
7. Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
8. Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.

9. Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
10. Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
11. Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
12. Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
13. Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

APPENDIX 2

Terms of Reference in response to CSE Briefing and Council Motion by the Conservative Group.

The Rotherham Conservative Council Group published a briefing report on the 3/11/2021 (Appendix 1) into ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The report raised several significant concerns which suggest that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council are responding to CSE effectively enough. A motion in response to the briefing was approved by the Rotherham Council on the 10th November 2021 (Appendix 2).

The Chief Officers from the Rotherham Metropolitan Council (RMBC), South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and Rotherham and Barnsley CCG who hold the responsibility for safeguarding children and young people are committed to supporting an objective and transparent review of the concerns raised around CSE in the briefing. As such they have asked the independent chair and scrutineer of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) to undertake a review.

Scope

Stage One; This first stage of review will address two specific strands:

I. The Police and Council's response to CSE concerns

The actions taken by the Police and Council on the information already passed to them by the Conservative Party Working Group between May 2021 to 31st Oct 2021.

II. Council staff

Council staff said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out.

Methodology

Stage One

This stage of the review will be undertaken by:

1. A deep dive into the information reported by the Conservative Party Working Group to the Police and Council and whether the response of those authorities was effectively managed. Including whether policies, procedures were followed, intelligence shared, and best practice applied in line with local and national guidance, protocols, or expectations.

2. Quantifying and investigating the staff concerns provided to the Conservative Party Working Group and identify any actions that need to be taken. This will include a review of and confidence in the current whistle blowing processes. The review team would welcome meeting with or receiving any information from council staff to reassure them.

Stage Two

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) will from the findings of the Stage One review and any other relevant information, consider any changes or amendments required to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation.

In doing this, it will consider and respond to points laid out in the motion, as agreed at Council on 10th November making any recommendations to strengthen the partnership practice and identify any additional activities that may be appropriate in line with good practice to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection. (Appendix 2 Council Motion).

Stage Two will address two specific strands:

A comprehensive strategy for CSE and senior management accountability for its effective implementation. To ensure that the policy and procedures for CSE in Rotherham are fit for purpose and that they are understood, adhered to, and accessed by RSCP front line staff.

The points laid out in the motion as agreed at Council on 10th November 2021 and any changes or additional actions required.

This stage of the review will be undertaken by:

1. Consideration from the findings from Stage One to inform a desk top review of current local CSE strategy, policy, procedures, and other key documents.
2. Scrutiny of the current pathways to CSE, vulnerable children's meetings, the local problem profile, escalation process and intelligence data alongside the multi-agency processes, accountability, and implementation of the Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) /CSE strategy. To

also review the current training offers of the Police and Council and the information provided to scrutiny.

A report will be provided by the Safeguarding Partnership to the Council within 3 months.

Timescale

The review would hope to complete all the work and have a first draft of the report for chief officers by the end of March 2022. An initial report into Stage 1 of the review should be submitted by the end of January 2022.

Resources required.

The independent chair will require additional support with the review to ensure timescales are met and she has the appropriate additional and independent expertise.

Experienced consultants have been identified by the chair to work with her. One is an ex-police officer and previous head of public protection and one an experienced reviewer and academic with expert knowledge of conducting reviews into youth violence, CCE/CSE. In addition, a serving or ex Director of Children's Services with experience of developing strategies and actions to tackle child sexual exploitation will participate in the review.

The chair will require some dedicated admin support from chief officers to assist with organising meetings/focus groups, obtaining information, note taking and general support.

Limitations

There are some aspects of the review that will need to be met elsewhere or as part of Stage 2. These will be discussed and then agreed by Chief Officers and the Council. The timescale is tight and may be impacted on by Christmas leave, capacity, and availability of staff.

Estimated Budget

The estimated time for this review is up to 25 days (can be considered and revised based on above) to include the write up of a concise draft report. A budget of up to 20k has been reserved out of the existing RSCP budget.

Any additional costs will be negotiated with chief officers.

Jenny Myers MA CQSW -Independent Chair RSCP

1/12/2021

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APPENDIX 2

Item 16 – FINAL MOTION – ONGOING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM (as agreed by Council 10 November 2021)

This Council notes:

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.
- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
- That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019.

Therefore, we ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity:

- Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
- Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
- Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.

- Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
- Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
- Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
- Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
- Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.
- Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
- Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
- Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
- Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
- Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

Public Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 20 April 2022

Report Title

Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations: Update from South Yorkshire Police

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor
01709 822765 or caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

At the meeting held on 12 January 2022, Council considered a motion regarding the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) report *Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations*. It resolved that the progress of South Yorkshire Police against IOPC recommendations published in November 2021 be regularly monitored, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as a matter of urgency. South Yorkshire Police have been invited to this meeting to give an update.

A progress report from South Yorkshire Police with details of actions in response to the recommendations is attached in Appendix 1

Recommendations

1. That the update of South Yorkshire Police in respect of progress to date against the recommendations of the Independent Office for Police Conduct report *Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations* be noted.
2. That consideration is given to future monitoring arrangement in respect of the implementation of the IOPC report.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 - South Yorkshire Police progress report to the IOPC Operation Linden Recommendations
- Appendix 1A Section 10(1)(e) recommendation record
Section 28A recommendation and response record
- Appendix 2 *Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations*, IOPC November 2021

Background Papers

- Motion – Current concerns over the South Yorkshire Police response to Child Sexual Exploitation as agreed by Council on 12 January 2022

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required.

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Operation Linden - Learning and Recommendations: Update from South Yorkshire Police

1. Background

- 1.1 Operation Linden was the name given to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation of a significant number of complaints and allegations relating to the police response to non-recent child sexual exploitation in the Rotherham area. Operation Linden began in 2014 and included 91 separate independent investigations, involving 265 separate allegations, covering the period from 1997 to 2013. There were 51 complainants, 44 of whom were survivors of abuse.

The report was published in November 2021 and identified areas for learning and made recommendations for improvement to South Yorkshire Police and other key agencies, including the Law Commission and National College of Policing. These are detailed in the IOPC report attached as Appendix 2.

The Operation Linden hearings have recently concluded and a final report from the IOPC on the findings and outcomes of the investigations is expected shortly.

- 1.2 Following a motion to the Council meeting held on 12 January 2022, it was resolved that the progress of South Yorkshire Police against IOPC recommendations published in November 2021 be regularly monitored, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as a matter of urgency.

The meeting has been scheduled at the earliest possible opportunity.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The report from the Deputy Chief Constable outlines South Yorkshire Police's response to IOPC recommendations for improvement and is attached as Appendix 1. The formal record of actions is detailed in Appendix 1A.

- 2.2 In broad terms the recommendations highlight the following themes:

- VICTIMS – the provision of quality victim care and updates in line with the rights of victims laid down in the Victim Code.
- COMMUNITIES - continue to build trust and confidence with local communities.
- PARTNERS - build strong working relationships with Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) and continue to improve how we collaborate with partners and effectively share information.
- OUR PEOPLE - ensure SYP staff have regular training and their skills are up to date.
- PROCESSES – compliance with Home Office Counting Rules when recording crimes related to CSE.

In addition, the report also highlights next steps and challenges for South Yorkshire Police.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to consider the information herein; scrutinise progress to date and determine any recommendations in relation to the progress of South Yorkshire Police against the recommendations and learning outlined in the IOPC report.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 All papers supporting this item are published on the Council's website.
- 4.2 There is no consultation required in respect of this item.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Any recommendations arising from this item would be forwarded to the Chief Constable and other relevant agencies for consideration and response.

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 There are no financial implications arising from this item,

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

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this item. Any recommendations which may have legal implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have direct equalities and human rights implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for South Yorkshire Police and other key partners will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Should this meeting not take place, opportunities to scrutinise areas of learning and improvement may be missed. South Yorkshire Police's co-operation and attendance ensures that these issues can be explored fully.

Accountable Officer(s)

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

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

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ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

DATE 07 APRIL 2022

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE PROGRESS REPORT TO THE IOPC OPERATION LINDEN RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

Purpose of the report

Operation Linden was the name given to the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation of a significant number of complaints and allegations relating to the police response to non-recent child sexual exploitation in the Rotherham area between 1997 and 2003. This report is to give an update as to the progress South Yorkshire police has made in relation to the recommendation made by the IOPC Operation Linden.

Linden Recommendations

Several recommendations were made, some of which directly relate to South Yorkshire police and others to other relevant bodies such as the College of Policing and Law Commission.

The recommendations that directly relate to South Yorkshire police and our response to them are included in Appendix A, but in broad terms the recommendations highlight the following themes.

VICTIMS - We provide quality victim care and updates inline with the rights of victims laid down in the Victim Code.

COMMUNITIES - Continue to build trust and confidence with local communities.

PARTNERS - Build strong working relationships with Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) and continue to improve how we collaborate with partners and effectively share information.

OUR PEOPLE - Ensuring our staff have regular training and their skills are up to date.

PROCESSES - We are compliant with Home Office Counting Rules when recording crimes related to CSE.

VICTIMS

Compliance with the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) has been extensively promoted and is monitored through our performance and governance processes. We routinely audit and map the victim journey from initial contact right through to resolution and finalisation focusing on the quality of interaction with victims.

The QATT reviews (Quality Assurance Thematic Testing) features specific areas for VCOP compliance including regular meaningful victim updates that comply with and exceed the requirements laid down. These reviews are DI and DCI led, report into the Investigations Governance Group and Force Performance Days and are designed to ensure that the force provides a quality service to the public it serves.

To further enhance victim care, SYP are developing a trauma informed approach to victims, placing trauma at the centre of how we deliver a compassionate and engaged service through six key principles:

- Safety – keeping and supporting victims to feel safe
- Trust & Transparency – being clear and transparent with victims to build their trust
- Peer Support – providing victims with access to peers who are best placed to support them through shared similar experiences
- Collaboration – continue working with relevant partners to support the victim
- Empowerment – ensuring the victim is allowed to recover and move on in their life
- Humility & Responsiveness – ensuring we listen and act on feedback when we make mistakes

Some staff have received some focused training which involves developing a greater understanding of trauma and we are in the process of planning how we will educate our entire workforce in the coming months. Whilst we do this the principles of trauma are being used to develop other improvements to our service, with the development of a new victim information and support booklet which we hope to develop further to a dedicated smart phone app.

COMMUNITIES

We have invested heavily in Neighbourhood policing and pride ourselves on our engagement with communities. Dedicated neighbourhood policing posts have risen from 268 in 2017 to 450 now. We make use of a raft of dedicated social media channels, use WhatsApp as well as holding face to face community meetings. These channels are used to post activity, raise awareness of issues and to request the assistance of the community in tackling all crime including CSE.

Districts have Youth Independent Advisory Groups that they run with Youth Services to engage with younger members of the community. All NPTs have monthly webchats where officers and staff can engage directly with the public. NPTs also conduct surveys which feed into local priorities. Each NPT maintains a profile on the community it serves.

Tackling CSE is a high priority for Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) who work with Children's Social Care and investigation teams to proactively tackle CSE and safeguard vulnerable children from exploitation. Intensive problem-solving work is carried out with children who are frequently reported missing and reassurance patrols take place to protect vulnerable women in the night-time economy as part of the force's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan. The force is building on this work and continues to raise awareness of CSE in the community and a new campaign designed to encourage third party reporting of exploitation and suspicious activity is about to be launched.

Led by the Media Team, there will be an internal and external element of this which will have the primary aim of continuing to raise awareness for all forms of exploitation, whilst providing the public and professionals with the right information for them to become more confident in identifying and reporting concerns or incidents to the Police/Partnership. Spotting the signs, using professional curiosity and effectively responding to all reports of CSE will be the focus of the internal campaign, as well as promoting the submission of intelligence for Police and partners.

The SYP Media Team constantly review outcomes, including positive prosecutions with a view to promoting the excellent work conducted by the organisation. Not only does this send out a positive

message about what work is being done, but it is shown that this gives confidence to both victims and survivors to engage with Police and report any abuse or exploitation that has occurred.

Op Makesafe is the national response to raising awareness of child sexual and criminal exploitation to the hotel and leisure industry. It focuses on ensuring that people working within these sectors are aware of the warning signs of CSE/CCE and know to how and when to report concerns to Police. SYP has an Op Makesafe SPOC and is a prominent member of the Op Makesafe National Working Group.

All Districts have plans in place to partake in Op Makesafe activity during 2022. Rotherham District has recently conducted a test purchase operation at local hotels to test compliance and knowledge of the process.

PARTNERS

South Yorkshire Police are working hard to enhance engagement with the ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) service and collaborate with them to improve its service provision to victims. The Rape and Serious Sexual Assault (RASSO) force lead is the single point of contact with the service managers within the ISVA services across all areas of South Yorkshire and regular contact is maintained. The ISVA managers attend the quarterly partnership RASSO Steering Group meeting which is aimed at improving standards and service provision.

South Yorkshire Police have recently established a specialist cadre of front-line officers who have received additional training on the initial response to rape and serious sexual offences reports. Three training events took place in December with further events planned for early 2022. Representatives from the ISVA service were keen to be involved in the training and on each training day, ISVAs delivered an input to attendees. This focussed on what the service could offer, the importance of initial and ongoing victim contact and regular liaison with the ISVA, particularly at key stages of the investigation.

The inputs have been so well received that the long-term plan is to extend the training provision across the force to ensure that all staff understand the ISVA role and how they can assist in providing support to victims. Planned CPD events and supervisor training throughout 2022-23 will also be used to embed the role of the ISVA service.

The RASSO Force lead has recently refreshed the South Yorkshire Police RASSO delivery plan which incorporates planned surveys and victim feedback through ISVAs for the force to continuously improve our service to victims. The first survey has taken place throughout December and January 2022 and we will use this feedback to enhance our service provision through training and CPD events and through scrutiny at local level with district RASSO Champions.

Rotherham have a weekly Child Exploitation Tactical Group (CETG) in place. This is an intelligence led meeting where Police and partners attend to review all new and ongoing intelligence submissions, with a view to identifying and understanding the risks and concerns, along with any safeguarding, evidential or disruption opportunities. Information is shared and actions and plans are identified to mitigate/eliminate risks or create further intelligence development avenues. Missing children deemed to be at risk of exploitation are also considered during this process. Partners who attend the CETG include – Police, Children's Social Care, Health, Youth Offending Services, Barnardo's, Local Authority CSE Teams, Housing, Licensing, ASB Officers.

All four Districts have a monthly Child Exploitation Subgroup Meeting, which falls out of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships. In Rotherham this is known as a Child Exploitation Delivery Group. Here strategic decisions are taken with regards to the delivery of child exploitation across the partnership, which are reported back to the LSCPB for sign off.

SYP and our partners have embedded and tested multi-agency processes for any child identified as being subjected to or at risk of exploitation, as per 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. This can take the form of a multi-agency Section 47 (child at risk of significant harm) Strategy meeting, Child Protection Conference or referral to MACE – Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting. All four Local Authorities have Child Exploitation Teams which work closely with Police to identify, safeguard and support victims.

The primary mechanism for multi-agency oversight on cases involving Child Exploitation is the MACE process. This is a national framework and is embedded across all four Districts of South Yorkshire. All Districts hold a weekly MACE which is well attended by multi-agency professionals, including Education, Health, Social Care, Police, Probation, Youth Crime Prevention, Youth Offending Services and Psychological services. Children most at risk of exploitation are referred into the MACE process, which includes children subjected to both CSE and/or CCE. Action relating to safeguarding, diversion, prevention, and additional support are outcomes from MACE, which is a victim focussed process.

OUR PEOPLE

South Yorkshire Police has been continuously working to develop and improve detective skills and training for a number of years. There is a national detective shortage and significant work is ongoing to encourage officers to join the detective career pathway. The force has increased the number of Specialist Child Abuse Investigation Development Programme (SCAIDP) trained and accredited detectives in force. There has also been a real focus on investing in the support available for the development of detective skills through the crime training department.

In 2018 / 2019 a detective training course was developed in conjunction with Sheffield University and delivered to police staff Investigating Officers, many of whom were posted to Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) teams. In addition to SCAIDP, as part of its Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) improvement plan, the force is planning to deliver the College of Policing SSAIDP (Specialist Sexual Assault Investigation Development Programme) training course to detectives involved in the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences.

The force has recently worked with the NSPCC, the College of Policing, and the National Police Chief's Council lead on child protection to develop a bespoke child protection training course called Child Matters. This is being delivered to all front-line police officers and police staff.

Crime training have delivered several Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training events over the last year. These are delivered through Bitesize Training videos and a Wednesday Webinar. Bespoke CPD masterclass events for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) investigators are now scheduled on a 6 monthly basis. The first of these events took place in March 2022 and included presentations from Operation Hydrant on national best practice. Further CSE related CPD events for the wider workforce are in development as part of the forces plans around trauma training and the vulnerability campaign referenced earlier in this report.

PROCESS

Crime Data Accuracy (CDA) is a high priority for the force and performance is monitored through regular meetings chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (Crime). In the 2018 inspection on CDA, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that the force performance on the recording of rape was a high 95% compliance rate. The report highlighted this as being a 'credit to the force'. South Yorkshire Police continues to develop and improve its CDA compliance and recent work in this area includes a peer review by the Force Crime Registrar from West Yorkshire Police, significant audit work around PVP teams and Local referral Units and targeted training and internal communications designed to address identified areas for improvement. In the most recent CDA audit on recorded crimes for Protecting Vulnerable People, a 95% compliance rate was achieved which would put the force in the 'good' category. Development work is also ongoing with the Force Control Room and Force Crime Bureau and the CDA Hub to ensure that all crimes (including CSE) are recorded accurately and in a timely manner in accordance with the Home Office Counting rules. Crime Data Accuracy performance is monitored through the CDA Gold Group, Force Performance Days and Quarterly Performance Reviews and forms an integral part of our Qualitative Auditing and Thematic Testing work.

NEXT STEPS

In addition to the findings and recommendations of the Linden Report a number of challenges remain.

The application of CSE keywords continues to be a challenge. This is a national issue, which is mostly due to the subjective nature of the CSE definition. Nationally the NPCC Group Based CSE Offending Group is looking at this issue with a view to producing guidance at a point in the future. In the meantime, audits are taking place along with training delivered by the Force Thematic Lead to reduce the impact of this issue.

Online offending continues to present challenges to Police and Partners. Due to the nature of offending, in that it mostly takes place behind closed bedroom doors and out of the sight of parents/carers, this will inevitably be vastly under reported. Online offending is an intelligence gap for SYP and requires officers to be professionally curious when engaging with children. This is a national issue, and the Home Office are fully aware of the challenges. Legislation around tech companies is currently being reviewed to place a burden on them to reduce this occurring.

The securing of orders (Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs)) continues to be a challenge. Due to the relatively low prosecution rates for CSE offenders, this reduces the prospect of obtaining SHPOs on conviction. Whilst SROs have been obtained, these are relatively low in number, primarily due to the high threshold required for applications to succeed. This is a national issue, not just bespoke to SYP.

Following the recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), forces are being asked to collect data on all known or suspected CSE cases involving groups or networks. This creates a challenge for all forces including SYP, as we currently don't have a search facility or keyword that will easily capture this data on our current system. SYP's Strategic Delivery Unit are currently reviewing systems to identify a resolution to this, which is also compounded by the ongoing CSE keyword issue as mentioned, due to the subjective nature of the CSE definition.

SYP continues to promote positive outcomes through successful prosecutions and convictions. This is proven to give victims and survivors more confidence to report their own abuse. In addition to this,

SYP conduct regular victim surveys and receive national updates about how they can improve engagement with victims/survivors. Training and CPD for officers and staff ensure knowledge and awareness and SYP maintains close working relationships with partners to tackle this together. Whilst continual improvement is sought to improve the overall response to CSE, including outcomes, challenges still exist especially with regards to victim engagement for those who are actually going through the exploitation.

In 2021 out of the 336 outcomes applied, there were 30 that resulted in a charge/summons and 1 in a caution (alternative offence). This shows clearly the challenges that exist in SYP and elsewhere in obtaining positive outcomes.

Our CSE Delivery Plan is designed to tackle these ongoing challenges and drive ongoing improvement activity that encapsulates the Linden recommendations and will further strengthen the forces position outlined in this report.

South Yorkshire Police is committed to do everything possible in conjunction with our partners to tackle CSE offending, to identify emerging issues as they arise and to continue to learn and improve our response so that children are safeguarded.

Chief Officer Lead: Deputy Chief Constable Tim Forber

Report Author: Detective Superintendent Pete Thorp

END

Appendix A

- SYP 10 recommendation Operation Linden
- SYP 28A recommendation and response record Operation Linden

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Section 10(1)(e) Recommendation Record

To	Detective Superintendent Delphine Wareing
Copied to	Dr Alan Billings
Date sent	5 November 2021
Case name	Operation Linden
Case type	Independent
Case reference	2014/040112
Recommendation from	Steve Noonan
Police case reference	

We have identified organisational learning for South Yorkshire Police and make the recommendation below.

Reference	Recommendation
2014/040112/013	<p>The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police considers how it can assess and demonstrate the impact of action taken to address issues in handling child sexual exploitation. This should include how they understand whether actions have achieved the intended effect and considering how they inform the community of progress made to help improve public awareness and confidence.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Police Response:</p> <p>The force is constantly looking at ways in which it can improve the trust and confidence the public has in its ability to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), rape and serious sexual offences. The most recent</p>

	<p>HMICFRS independent inspection assessed the force as 'good' at Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP). The current PVP review will deliver improvements in the way the force investigates all serious sexual offences including rape and CSE and the current work ongoing to improve our response to rape has victim engagement and support as one of its key pillars.</p> <p>The success of this work will be measured not only through the successful prosecutions secured through these improvements but will also be assessed through our proactive preventative work and through surveys with victims. These surveys will request feedback on how well victims have been dealt with by the force and the agencies supporting it. Victim feedback will be key to monitoring the success of our improvements and this feedback will be obtained directly and through commissioned services such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisors.</p> <p>The Head of Professional Standards is working collaboratively with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner implementing a process to monitor all public complaints including those relating to CSE. This will ensure that learning is captured, recorded and actioned. This is reported directly into the Organisational Learning Board chaired by The Deputy Chief Constable.</p> <p>The force is held to account via the Public Accountability Board where it is periodically required to report specifically on CSE. This links directly with our delivery plan on Violence Against Women and Girls. The force media team run regular updates on CSE particularly relating to the successful prosecution of CSE perpetrators. Through a campaign called 'Don't be Exposed', the force uses SnapChat to focus on parents of young people, warning them of the signs of exploitation. The force has a public facing web page on CSE:</p>
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	<p>https://www.southyorks.police.uk/find-out/crime-prevention-advice/child-sexual-exploitation/. This is regularly updated with news, advice and guidance for the public. The media team are planning a new campaign this year focussing on vulnerability. A large part of this will be on CSE, highlighting early signs of CSE and CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation) encouraging the public to take action and make reports to police.</p>
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28A recommendation and response record

To	Detective Superintendent Delphine Wareing
Copied to	Dr Alan Billings
Date sent	22 November 2021
Deadline for response	17 January 2022
Case name	Operation Linden
Case type	Independent
Case reference	2014/040112
Recommendation from	Steve Noonan
Police case reference	

We have identified organisational learning for South Yorkshire Police and make the recommendations below under Paragraph 28A of Schedule 3 to the Police Reform Act 2002¹.

¹ In the case of contractors, Regulation 81 of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (Complaints and Misconduct) (Contractors) Regulations 2015 applies

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You are required by law to respond, in writing to us by the deadline specified above (56 days from the date this recommendation has been sent to you) and should do so using this form. Paragraph 28B of Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act sets out the requirements in relation to the response.

On receipt of your response, we are required to publish it within 21 days and send a copy to any person who was sent the original recommendation (as listed above). If you have any representations why this response should not be published, e.g. if it may prejudice ongoing proceedings, please let us know.

To be completed by IOPC			To be completed by recipient	
Reference	Recommendation	Previously sent as an informal recommendation?	Do you accept?	Details, to include a) action to be taken, b) reason for no action, or c) reason not accepted
		Date sent		

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2014/040112/0 15	The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police ensures knowledge and skills of those involved in CSE work are kept up to date as part of their continuous improvement cycle. This should include: regular training to take into account staff turnover continuing professional development needs any emerging issues and new developments in best practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>South Yorkshire Police has been continuously working to develop and improve detective skills and training for a number of years. There is a national detective shortage and significant work is ongoing to encourage officers to join the detective career pathway.</p> <p>The force has increased the number of SCAIDP (Specialist Child Abuse Investigation Development Programme) trained and accredited detectives in force. There has also been a real focus on investing in the support available for the development of detective skills through the crime training department. In 2018 / 2019 a detective training course was developed in conjunction with Sheffield University and delivered to police staff Investigating Officers, many of whom were posted to Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) teams. In addition to SCAIDP, as part of its Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) improvement plan, the force is planning to deliver the College of Policing SSAIDP (Specialist Sexual Assault Investigation Development Programme) training course to detectives involved in the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences. A detective skills audit has identified training needs going forward and there is also a timeline for the recruitment and training of detectives force wide. Crime Training and Accreditation for PVP teams is regularly monitored via the PVP Performance meeting.</p> <p>The force has recently worked with the NSPCC, the College of Policing and the National Police Chief's Council lead on child protection to develop a bespoke child protection training course called Child Matters. This is being delivered to all front-line police officers and police staff.</p> <p>Crime training have delivered a number of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training events over the last</p>
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					<p>year including ones on RASSO investigation. These are delivered through Bitesize Training videos and a Wednesday Webinar. Bespoke CPD masterclass events for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) investigators are also planned for the first half of this year and will continue every 6 months thereafter. These will include presentations from Operation Hydrant on national best practice.</p>
2014/040112/005	<p>The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police takes steps to ensure that crime recording practice in its public protection departments is compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Crime Data Accuracy (CDA) is a high priority for the force and performance is monitored through regular Gold group meetings chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (Crime). In the 2018 inspection on CDA, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that the force performance on the recording of rape was a high 95% compliance rate. The report highlighted this as being a 'credit to the force'.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Police continues to develop and improve its CDA compliance and recent work in this area includes a peer review by the Force Crime Registrar from West Yorkshire Police, significant audit work around PVP teams and Local referral Units and targeted training and internal communications designed to address identified areas for improvement. In the most recent CDA audit on recorded crimes for Protecting Vulnerable People, a 95% compliance rate was achieved which would put the force in the 'good' category. Development work is also ongoing with the Force Control Room and Force Crime Bureau and the CDA Hub to ensure that all crimes (including CSE) are recorded accurately and in a timely manner in accordance with the Home Office Counting rules. Crime Data Accuracy performance is monitored through the CDA Gold Group, Force Performance Days and Quarterly Performance Reviews and forms an integral part of our Qualitative Auditing and Thematic Testing work.</p>

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2014/040112/06	The IOPC recommends that South Yorkshire Police ensure they have a way of effectively monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code. This should include the quality of interactions between itself and others and not just a 'tick box exercise' of the various entitlements being made available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The force has an Assistant Chief Constable executive lead on victim care and a Chief Superintendent thematic lead. Compliance with the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) has been extensively promoted and is monitored by South Yorkshire Police through Force Performance Days and Quarterly Performance Reviews. The thematic lead for victim care chairs a strategic Complete Victim Care meeting with key departments, stakeholders and representatives from districts. This meeting maps the victim journey from initial contact right through to resolution and finalisation. The quality of interaction with victims is key to this meeting rather than merely complying with the requirements of the code. Regular online training events take place to promote and explain the requirements of the code of practice. Through this work the force is confident that it is complying with both the aims and the specific requirements of VCOP.
2014/040112/07	The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police take steps to ensure that victims are regularly updated, and at least once every 28 days, in line with expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The executive lead and thematic lead on victim care ensure that frequent VCOP audits take place and are planned into the Performance and Governance calendar. The QATT reviews (Quality Assurance Thematic Testing) features specific areas for VCOP compliance including regular meaningful victim updates that comply with and exceed the requirements laid down. These reviews are DI and DCI led, report into the Investigations Governance Group and Force Performance Days and are designed to ensure that the force provides a quality service to the public it serves.

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2014/040112/08	<p>The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police continues to work with the local ISVA service to improve their working arrangements. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a named point of contact at South Yorkshire Police for use by the ISVA service • ensuring that SYP representatives who have contact with victims and survivors fully understand the ISVA service's role and can explain this to others when needed • agreement on how updates are provided to victims and survivors • how the ISVA service could be involved in South Yorkshire Police training to help raise awareness about its role and responsibilities and how they can work together 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>South Yorkshire Police are working hard to enhance engagement with the ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) service and collaborate with them to improve its service provision to victims.</p> <p>The Rape and Serious Sexual Assault (RASSO) force lead is the single point of contact with the service managers within the ISVA services across all areas of South Yorkshire and regular contact is maintained. The ISVA managers attend the quarterly partnership RASSO Steering Group meeting which is aimed at improving standards and service provision.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Police have recently established a specialist cadre of front-line officers who have received additional training on the initial response to rape and serious sexual offences reports. Three training events took place in December with further events planned for early 2022. Representatives from the ISVA service were keen to be involved in the training and on each training day, ISVAs delivered an input to attendees. This focussed on what the service could offer, the importance of initial and ongoing victim contact and regular liaison with the ISVA, particularly at key stages of the investigation. The inputs have been so well received that the long-term plan is to extend the training provision across the force to ensure that all staff understand the ISVA role and how they can assist in providing support to victims. Planned CPD events and supervisor training throughout 2022-23 will also be used to embed the role of the ISVA service.</p> <p>The RASSO Force lead has recently refreshed the South Yorkshire Police RASSO delivery plan which incorporates planned surveys and victim feedback through ISVAs in order for the force to continuously improve our service to victims. The first survey has taken place throughout December and January 21 and we will</p>
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					use this feedback to enhance our service provision through training and CPD events and through scrutiny at local level with district RASSO Champions.
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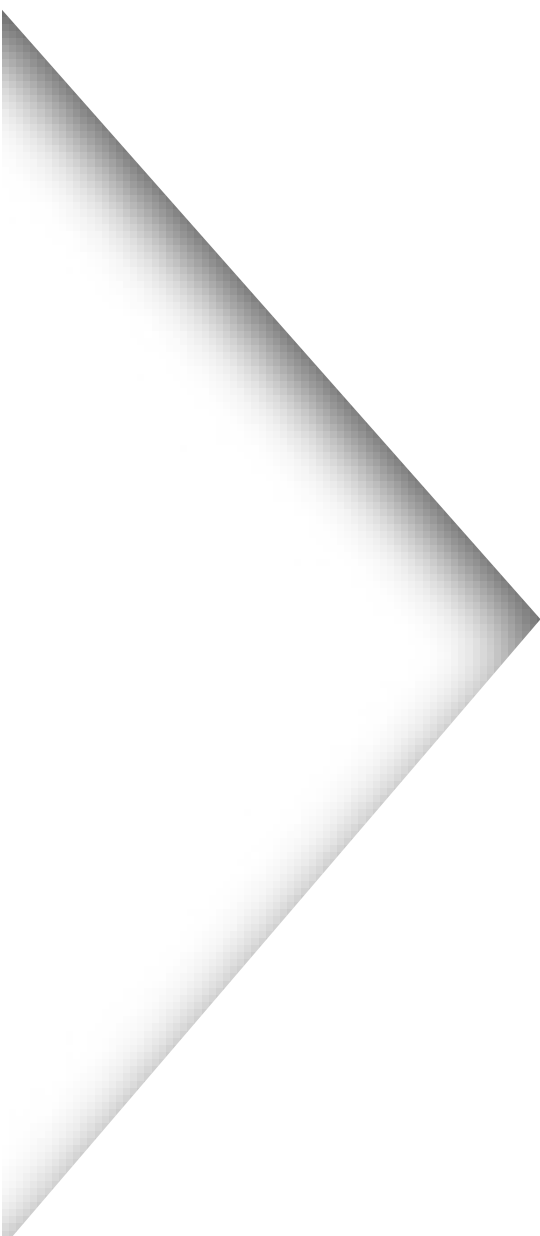
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2014/040112/09	The IOPC recommends that during its mapping exercise South Yorkshire Police continues to engage with communities to strengthen and build trust and confidence in the police service to encourage a willingness to provide information/intelligence to help tackle local issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>South Yorkshire Police has invested heavily in Neighbourhood policing and prides itself on its engagement with communities. The number of police officers and Police Community Support Officer posts specifically dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing has risen from 268 in 2017 to 450 now. The force has various means at its disposal to engage with communities with all Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT's) having Facebook accounts, Instagram Twitter and Whatsapp as well as holding face to face community meetings. These sites are used to post activity, raise awareness of issues and to request the assistance of the community in tackling all crime including CSE. Districts have Youth Independent Advisory Groups that they run with Youth Services to engage with younger members of the community. All NPTs have monthly webchats where officers and staff can engage directly with the public. NPTs also conduct surveys which feed into local priorities. Each NPT maintains a profile on the community it serves.</p> <p>Tackling CSE is a high priority for NPTs who work with Children's Social Care and investigation teams to proactively tackle CSE and safeguard vulnerable children from exploitation. Intensive problem solving work is carried out with children who are frequently reported missing and reassurance patrols take place to protect vulnerable women in the night time economy as part of the force's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan.</p> <p>The force will build on this work and continue to raise awareness of CSE in the community conducting media campaigns that will encourage third party reporting of exploitation and suspicious activity.</p>
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Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations

November 2021

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A report relating to complaints of police conduct during their investigations of non recent child sexual abuse and exploitation in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.

Introduction

Operation Linden was the name given to the IOPC investigation of a significant number of complaints and allegations relating to the police response to non-recent child sexual exploitation in the Rotherham area.

Our work began in 2014 and continued to grow until 2018, when five new complaints were received. Operation Linden resulted in 91 separate independent investigations started between 2014 and 2018, the last of which concluded in 2020.

The operation investigated 265 separate allegations, covering the period from 1997 to 2013. There were 51 complainants, 44 of whom were survivors of abuse. We are grateful to those complainants and survivors whose bravery in coming forward has enabled us to shine a light on the failings of the past.

Operation Linden investigated the conduct of 47 officers: eight were found to have a case to answer for misconduct and six had a case to answer for gross misconduct. Five have faced sanctions from management action up to a final written warning, while one hearing is still outstanding. A full report on the findings of the investigations and the outcomes will be published following the conclusion of the final misconduct hearing in 2022.

Police understanding of this type of offending has evolved significantly in recent years and we must acknowledge the efforts made to improve the way these cases are dealt with. However, there is still work to do and we have issued these recommendations to South Yorkshire Police, national policing bodies and others so that the bravery of those who came forward and supported our investigations can result in lasting change and that mistakes of the past are not repeated.

Learning and recommendations

Learning identified during our investigations helps improve policing practice, and prevent similar incidents happening again.

We have two legal powers to make recommendations under the Police Reform Act¹ and have outlined these in this learning report, along with other learning we considered but did not make recommendations on.

Our learning looked across the 91 investigations we have completed so far under the umbrella of Operation Linden to identify any recurring themes or issues. We listened to feedback from survivors, and discussed learning with South Yorkshire Police, interested stakeholders and our own staff who worked on these investigations.

Given the lengthy time period over which the events we investigated occurred, we considered whether the learning we identified was still an issue now or whether policing policy and practice had changed since the events under investigation.

A number of inspections and reviews have taken place specifically in relation to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, numerous recommendations made to South Yorkshire Police and the broader focus on child sexual exploitation across policing and social care, such as the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

We also recognise that understanding and awareness of child sexual exploitation has developed and improved over time.

While the learning we identified relates to investigations of child sexual exploitation, it may have wider relevance to other types of crime. In particular, there is a great deal of crossover between child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation or 'county lines'. Child criminal exploitation was a subject most frontline officers we

¹ Under paragraph 28A, Schedule 3 of the *Police Reform Act* we can make a recommendation in relation to any matter dealt with in an investigation report, appeal or review. These recommendations can be made to police forces (one or a number) or police and crime commissioners. We can also, in certain circumstances, make recommendations for other organisations that are relevant to the investigation, appeal or review. The force or organisation we make a recommendation to must provide us with their response within 56 days unless there are valid reasons not to. They can also request that we extend the time they have to respond. Both the recommendation and the response must be published.

Section 10 of the *Police Reform Act* allows us to make recommendations more broadly about police practice that appear, from the carrying out of our functions, to be necessary or desirable. This does not carry the same legal requirement for the recipient of the recommendation to respond, or for the recommendation or any response to be published.

spoke to raised as an area of concern and they expressed a clear desire to get things right.

Formal learning recommendations

The following recommendations are made under paragraph 28A, Schedule 3 of the *Police Reform Act*. The police force or organisation we make a recommendation to must provide their response to us within 56 days.

Ensuring police officers and staff are equipped to deal with child sexual exploitation

Our investigations found officers and staff without the right skills were often expected to lead on child sexual exploitation investigations, and individuals were given tasks they were not trained to carry out.

There have been many improvements in child sexual exploitation training nationally. South Yorkshire Police advised us they have implemented their own new measures to help ensure officers and staff receive appropriate training to deal with child sexual exploitation. This was acknowledged by HMICFRS in its [2018/19 PEEL report](#) which said South Yorkshire Police “develops its workforce and leaders well and understands the skills and capabilities that it needs now and for the future. The force has good professional and leadership development programmes in place...”.

However, there is more work to be done to build on and maintain the knowledge and skills of South Yorkshire Police officers and staff. Police officers we spoke to said they would welcome more refresher training that also includes more recent, and challenging exploitation cases, to help them consider new issues that they will need to be prepared for.

Recommendation 1 – The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police ensures knowledge and skills of those involved in child sexual exploitation work are kept up to date as part of their continuous improvement cycle. This should include:

- ***regular training to take into account staff turnover***
- ***continuing professional development needs***
- ***any emerging issues and new developments in best practice***

Listening to and understanding survivor experiences can be a powerful way to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation-related issues in training sessions and develop empathy. We are aware that South Yorkshire Police considered an offer from a survivor to participate in its training sessions but did not take this up because it was concerned it would distress the survivor.

While reliving their experience during a number of training sessions could be traumatising, there are other approaches which could incorporate the voices of survivors without causing trauma, allowing survivor experiences to be heard and showing officers the impact of police handling of an investigation. For example, South Yorkshire Police has used contributions from a survivor's parents and have shown a video describing one victim's experience.

Recommendation 2 – The IOPC recommends the College of Policing looks for further opportunities to incorporate the ‘voice of survivors’ in national training about child sexual exploitation and provide guidance on how the ‘voice of survivors’ can be incorporated into local training by forces.

While the issues we examined happened between 1992 and 2013, and there has been a great deal of work in this area by the police service since, we are concerned that some issues still exist today, and there are still lessons to be learnt from this across policing.

Real examples, or case studies based on actual examples, can help bring some of these issues to life and help officers and staff consider what they would have done in that situation.

Recommendation 3 – The IOPC recommends the College of Policing looks for opportunities to use any elements of Operation Linden in future training (for example case studies).

Crime recording

We found many instances where crimes were not recorded when they should have been, including reports of sexual assault or sexual activity with a child. South Yorkshire Police has provided us with detailed information on action to improve crime recording practice. In its [2018 crime data integrity inspection in South Yorkshire Police](#) HMICFRS found that South Yorkshire Police had improved crime-recording processes since the previous report in 2014 and that there was ‘a commitment to crime recording that is victim-focused’. A significant improvement in the recording of sexual offence crimes since 2014 was noted and some good practice in scrutiny and auditing by the force crime bureau and force crime registrar was highlighted. The report also said that vulnerable victims were supported through the force's safeguarding arrangements, even in those cases that had not been recorded.

However, the 2014 inspection highlighted a cause for concern about crimes involving vulnerable adults and children reported directly to South Yorkshire Police's public protection department (mostly through professional third-party reports) were not all

being recorded. We are concerned that HMICFRS' [re-inspection of crime data integrity in South Yorkshire Police](#) (2020) found there had been no discernible improvement to this. In particular, inspectors found significant under-recording of crimes committed against vulnerable children.

Recommendation 4 – The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police takes steps to ensure that crime recording practice in its public protection departments is compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

Working with victims and survivors

Our investigations highlighted many issues with how police officers and staff dealt with child sexual exploitation victims and survivors. South Yorkshire Police has told us about the changes made to improve practice in this area.

The Victims' Code is an important tool to help criminal justice agencies, including the police, ensure they are providing an appropriate level of service. We note that the Victims' Commissioner's national review in 2018/19 found that monitoring of compliance with the Victims' Code had been almost non-existent across all forces.

Recommendation 5 – The IOPC recommends that South Yorkshire Police ensure it has a way of effectively monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code. This should include the quality of interactions between itself and others and not just a 'tick box exercise' of the various entitlements being made available.

South Yorkshire Police told us that IT system changes mean that once a crime is recorded using Connect (the police records management system) the investigating officer is now prompted to keep victims updated regularly, and at least once every 28 days. However, when we spoke to the local independent sexual violence advisor (ISVA) service manager¹⁰, they told us that the updates do not always happen in practice. They said ISVAs regularly receive calls from victims complaining that they have not been updated.

Recommendation 6 – The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police take steps to ensure that victims are regularly updated, and at least once every 28 days, in line with expectations.

South Yorkshire Police provided us with information recognising the importance of working with specialists such as ISVAs and child independent sexual violence advisors to support child sexual exploitation survivors, help police maintain contact with survivors, and help officers gather evidence.

They described the process they follow to make a referral to these services, explaining the need to obtain a victim or survivor's consent or that of a parent/guardian.

However, the local ISVA service manager told us that when an investigating officer does not fully understand or explain the ISVA role, this can directly impact whether or not someone provides consent for their contact details to be passed on. This has the effect of delaying any contact with and support from the ISVA service.

Additionally, ISVAs are not always used as effectively as they could be. Sometimes they are used just to pass on updates instead of there being any direct contact between the officer and the survivor. Sometimes they are not used at all.

Recommendation 7 – The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police continues to work with the local ISVA service to improve its working arrangements. This should include:

- ***a named point of contact at South Yorkshire Police for use by the ISVA service***
- ***ensuring that South Yorkshire Police representatives who have contact with victims and survivors fully understand the ISVA service's role and can explain this to others when needed***
- ***agreement on how updates are provided to victims and survivors***
- ***how the ISVA service could be involved in South Yorkshire Police training to help raise awareness about its role and responsibilities and how they can work together***

Working with the local community

When investigating the handling of child sexual exploitation in South Yorkshire, we found there were missed opportunities to approach community leaders for their views on how to develop community cohesion and/or identify any actions South Yorkshire Police could consider to help tackle child sexual exploitation.

South Yorkshire Police told us it has started a mapping exercise across its four districts to ensure it has contacts in all identified communities to respond more promptly in the future to their needs, understand the potential impact of any national or international incidents on them, and to offer reassurance and support when necessary.

Recommendation 8 – The IOPC recommends that during its mapping exercise South Yorkshire Police continues to engage with communities to strengthen and build trust and confidence in the

police service to encourage a willingness to provide information/intelligence to help tackle local issues.

Areas for further consideration and recommendation

In addition to the recommendations detailed above, we identified further areas we invite forces and policing stakeholders to reflect on and consider whether further action needs to be taken. Recommendations in this section are made under Section 10 of the *Police Reform Act*.¹¹

In light of the public concern about Operation Linden, we would strongly encourage named organisations to provide a written response to the additional recommendations we have made under section 10.

Long-term impact on survivors of exploitation

Many survivors we spoke to during our work on Operation Linden now have criminal records as a result of their actions when they were being exploited. The Crown Prosecution Service recognises in its [Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse](#) that:

“victims may sometimes commit what is called ‘survival crime’, i.e. committing crime to find safety or committing crime to ensure justice. An example of this is damaging property belonging to the offender or an associate. Offending might also be a reaction to the abuse which a child or young person is suffering, i.e. externally expressing their internal trauma. The victim may also have committed an offence whilst under the influence of the abuser and this may be used by the abuser as a means of controlling the victim and deterring them from making a complaint about the abuse they are experiencing.”

As a result, survivors’ lives have been adversely impacted and this has affected issues like employment.

The criminalisation of exploited children also crosses over into child criminal exploitation. If a child is viewed as a ‘criminal’ this may affect the way they are dealt with by the police and the likelihood of appropriate safeguarding action being taken.

Looking beyond criminal actions to the underlying reasons behind them is a key part of police officers using their professional curiosity. However, we also recognise that there is a difficult balance to strike in that if the police took no action against children and young people this could make them more vulnerable to exploitation.

Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 created a non-prosecution principle for victims of trafficking or modern slavery, however this does not apply clearly to child sexual exploitation. The [national protocol on reducing unnecessary criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers](#), published jointly by the Department for Education, Home Office and Ministry of Justice in 2018 states: *“Every effort should be made to avoid unnecessary criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers, including through prevention activity. This is in recognition of the fact that looked-after children’s experiences can contribute to behaviours that make them particularly vulnerable to involvement in the youth justice system, potentially affecting their future life prospects.”*

It recognises that looked-after children and care leavers can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and states that *“any decision to charge and prosecute a young person should take into account whether their actions are due to such exploitation or human trafficking or modern slavery.”*

The same considerations in terms of both prevention and decisions about charging and prosecution could be applied more widely to other children and young people who are at risk of, or victims of, exploitation in addition to those who are looked-after or care leavers.

Recommendation 9 – The IOPC recommends that the Law Commission reviews the legislative framework around offences committed while a child or young person is being groomed or exploited to identify whether any changes to legislation would be appropriate to reduce the impact on their future life prospects. This should include both the availability of substantive defences and the potential to filter convictions which occurred in such circumstances during criminal records disclosure.

Sharing information across force borders

In some of our investigations, girls were found in cars with older men. South Yorkshire Police has provided information about the steps they have taken to equip officers to understand the potential risks to children and young people in this situation and what questions should be asked of the occupants when this happens. We spoke to some roads policing officers who confirmed this is the case.

However, the roads policing officers also said they sometimes encounter incidents of this type where someone had crossed the border from another police force area. They described the threshold for sharing information in this situation as ‘quite high’ and told us that individual police force systems are generally not visible to officers in another area.

Once someone crosses a force border, they are only able to see any information that is on the Police National Computer (PNC). To access any additional information they would need to email a request to the other force and wait for a response, which could take a while and expose vulnerable children and young people to further risk. This is a significant issue as it has the potential to delay any opportunities to protect and safeguard a child who has been taken across a force border.

Recommendation 10 – The IOPC recommends that the Chair and CEO of the Police Digital Service consider whether existing ICT solutions could be used differently or any changes to ICT (and any other supporting systems and protocols) are required to enable frontline officers to have more immediate access to relevant information from other forces to enable them to more effectively protect and safeguard vulnerable people. This should include working with the NPCC to encourage good practice across forces.

Ensuring learning is actioned and embedded

South Yorkshire Police has told us about many changes it has made since the matters we investigated took place. We have not assessed whether these changes have led to improvements in practice but remain worried that despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern.

South Yorkshire Police was the subject of an HMICFRS national child protection inspection in May 2014¹² and a post-investigation review in April 2015. The post-inspection review recommended that South Yorkshire Police continue to work to put into effect the recommendations made in 2014 to ensure that they were fully implemented. No joint targeted areas inspections have been carried out in the South Yorkshire Police area to date.

Additionally, the ISVA service manager told us that although they had seen some improvement in 2015-16, there had been some deterioration since then.

We have shared these recommendations and in due course will share our full report with HMICFRS to inform any future inspection work in relation to South Yorkshire Police.

It is important for public confidence that local communities and stakeholders understand the progress that South Yorkshire Police has made and continues to make in this area since the cases we have investigated. Through its community and stakeholder engagement, South Yorkshire Police can not only provide this reassurance on an ongoing basis but also understand the experiences of those who have had contact with the police and use this to feed into continuous improvement in this area.

Recommendation 11 - The IOPC recommends South Yorkshire Police considers how it can assess and demonstrate the impact of action taken to address issues in handling child sexual exploitation. This should include how it understands whether actions have achieved the intended effect and considering how they inform the community of progress made to help improve public awareness and confidence.

One of the key findings in Operation Linden was that the issues around child sexual exploitation were not recognised quickly enough and officers were not equipped sufficiently with the skills or experience they needed to deal with the problems they were faced with. Training and development activity can play a key role in preventing this happening in future, particularly with new or less common crime types.

We acknowledge that the policing landscape means that police forces, either individually or collectively, receive requests from multiple sources to provide extra training on different priority areas of policing and demand will often outstrip capacity. A more strategic and collaborative approach to identifying and responding to priorities across England and Wales could support police forces, provide more consistency and streamline the work required to develop and deliver resources and training.

Recommendation 12 - The IOPC recommends that the College of Policing and NPCC work together to explore the creation of a forum to identify the major issues for policing, agree priorities for learning and development at a national level and provide leadership, advice and support to police forces. It is anticipated that such a forum would involve as a minimum the College of Policing, NPCC, IOPC and HMICFRS. Such an approach would also need to take into account the need for individual chief officers to make their own decisions about priorities taking into account local context and issues.

Other areas of learning we considered

We are not an inspectorate and South Yorkshire Police's current practice did not form part of our investigations under Operation Linden. However, it was important for us to identify policing practice had changed sufficiently in areas of concern. We sought assurance from South Yorkshire Police, stakeholders and information available from inspections carried out by other bodies and concluded there was little benefit in making additional recommendations.

For transparency, the additional areas we considered are detailed below.

Leadership

An absence of strategic leadership was an issue which was raised across multiple Operation Linden cases. We considered whether to make a recommendation about leadership and specific points of focus for child sexual exploitation at a senior level.

In 2019, HMICFRS published a thematic report on national child protection inspections it had carried out.³⁹

A section about the roles of leaders and leadership states that "in every force we have visited we find senior leaders, PCCs, frontline officers and staff who are committed to keeping vulnerable children safe".

It also says that "Without exception, PCC police and crime plans, and force priorities reflect an unambiguous commitment to the protection of children and other vulnerable people".

While the report recognises some issues still exist including capacity, the ability to develop more preventative approaches and a lack of consistency, it also notes that police leaders are more aware of the need to ensure governance and processes support better outcomes for children, forces know more about the wider context surrounding child abuse and understand the need for plans to tackle all the different features of the abuse and exploitation of children.

Each police force in England and Wales has a member of the Senior Command Team who has responsibility for child protection, often as part of a wider portfolio of protecting vulnerable people or safeguarding. South Yorkshire Police has an Assistant Chief Constable who as part of their responsibilities for Specialist Crime Services, is responsible for Public Protection and Safeguarding. It also has a strategic lead for child abuse at detective chief inspector level.

Professional curiosity

In many of the cases we investigated we found a lack of professional curiosity on the part of officers. Rather than looking at the broader picture and identifying potential safeguarding concerns, officers often focused only on looking at specific crimes. We considered how the approach to professional curiosity had changed in South Yorkshire Police and more widely.

At a national level, the College of Policing developed and began delivering a one-day vulnerability training package in 2018. The package encourages frontline officers and staff to look beyond the obvious and feel empowered to use their professional curiosity when dealing with those who are vulnerable. The training focuses on early intervention by equipping frontline officers and staff to identify signs of vulnerability and take effective action at the earliest possible opportunity.

This training package, among others, is used by South Yorkshire Police to train relevant staff. At the time we spoke to South Yorkshire Police training had been delivered to all Protecting Vulnerable People Officers (160), Uniform Response and Neighbourhoods Officers (1138), PCSOs (143), Investigations Officers (87), Enquiry desk staff, Operational Support Services, Atlas Court Communications staff, Special Constables (70), Custody Staff (106) partners from NHS (149) and the Fire Service (340).

Use of protective orders

We had concerns about South Yorkshire Police's use of Risk of Sexual Harm Orders and Abduction notices. We found that South Yorkshire Police had the option of using these orders during the period we have investigated but found little evidence that it was. Officers in Sheffield appeared to be using them but officers in Rotherham were not. We asked South Yorkshire Police if these orders were used now, by whom, if there were any guidance documents and policies regarding their use, how the Public Protection Unit (PPU) staff use them and whether districts are now working together and communicating regarding the use of orders.

In 2015, Civil Risk of Sexual Harm Orders were replaced by two new civil orders – Sexual Risk Orders (SRO) and Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO). A Sexual Risk Order is used to impose restrictions on a person's behaviour where the police consider that they pose a risk of sexual harm to the public. This does not require there to have been a criminal conviction. Sexual Harm Prevention Orders are generally used following a conviction for a sexual or violent or other dangerous offence listed in Schedule 3 or Schedule 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

South Yorkshire Police told us its primary aim would be to secure a criminal conviction and Sexual Harm Prevention Order so there is a larger number of these than Sexual Risk Orders. It advised it is now a routine consideration for investigators within the Protecting Vulnerable People teams to apply for a SHPO as part of a criminal prosecution for relevant offences.

While there is no force policy on the use of SHPOs, South Yorkshire Police told us how it promotes its use through staff development. This includes a training session aimed at all Protecting Vulnerable People investigators including details on how and when to apply for an order, effective SHPO conditions and case studies to demonstrate best practice. The use of SHPOs is measured in force through the senior leadership group and forms part of the performance framework which is currently under development.

South Yorkshire Police also told us how it uses Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN) as a safeguarding tool. It advised that between April 2015 and March 2020 a total of 588 CAWNs were issued across the force area. A review and audit of the use of CAWNs was carried out by the Protecting Vulnerable People Performance and Governance team in 2020 which prompted revision of a force procedural instruction. South Yorkshire Police is currently developing training for frontline officers and staff to highlight these revisions.

The College of Policing has [Authorised Professional Practice](#) which provides guidance on SHPOs, SROs and CAWNs.

The Home Office also provides [statutory guidance on Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) which includes a chapter on civil orders. This covers both SHPOs and SROs and includes what the orders are, applying for them, specific information about gangs, interim orders, the role of the CPS, time limits, procedure in court, legal aid, reporting restrictions and various other topics. When making an application for a SHPO or SRO, officers are obliged to have regard to this guidance.

Earlier identification of children at risk of or victims of child sexual exploitation

Early identification of children who are at risk of or victims of child sexual exploitation can enable appropriate support to be put in place and for them to be diverted from committing offences themselves rather than being criminalised. We considered whether to make a learning recommendation to address this alongside our recommendation about a review of the statutory framework surrounding offences committed while a child is being exploited.

As part of our consideration we consulted with a range of bodies and looked at the work and initiatives that are already ongoing that may contribute to this.

In January 2021 the Government published the [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy](#). This sets out a whole-system response to all forms of child sexual abuse. It sets out measures for early intervention and prevention, including equipping frontline safeguarding partners with the tools and training to identify CSA, and raising awareness through communications and engagement with parents.

The £13.2 million Trusted Relationships Fund is currently funding 11 local authority-led projects across England working with children and young people, aged 10-17, who have been identified locally as at risk of child sexual exploitation or abuse, child criminal exploitation and peer on peer abuse. The work is aimed at building resilience to harm through fostering health, trusting relationships with responsible adults. It also aims to improve understanding emerging local threats and reduce victimisation of children at risk of exploitation. Evaluation of this will add to the evidence base on what works to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation and feed into future policy making.

The Home Office is funding a prevention programme, delivered by the Children's Society which works with a range of partners across England and Wales to tackle and prevent CSA, CCE and Modern Slavery Human Trafficking. This involves work at a local and regional level to combat exploitation and deliver tailored interventions, based on police intelligence, to improve collaboration in prevention of exploitation, help identify hot spot locations, priority areas and specific threats in each region. It has helped increase professional understanding of exploitation, leading to increased victim identification and is seeing a shift in local areas responding contextually, holistically, and more proactively to extra-familial threats.

In addition to this, work has been carried out within policing to increase the likelihood of early identification and intervention of those at risk or victims of child sexual exploitation. This includes improved guidance and training as referenced elsewhere in this report and the police-led Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) to improve the strategic policing responses to vulnerability at a local and national level, leading to longer term reductions in threat, harm and risk in all vulnerability threat areas.

Case ownership and supervision

In some of our investigations we found there was a lack of supervision. It was unclear who was responsible for the police investigations, the allocated actions and finalisation of the investigation. We asked South Yorkshire Police how it ensures it is clear who is responsible for a case and any other allocated actions and roles. We

also asked how investigation plans are developed, how line management review cases and what checks are made before a case is finalised.

South Yorkshire Police told us a supervisor (detective sergeant rank) will allocate investigations to individual officers and investigators. The allocated officer is recorded on the Connect computer system and clearly shown on the first page of an investigation report.

A bespoke investigation plan is completed on the Connect system. Cases are reviewed every 28 days by the supervisor and this is documented. These reviews include consideration of both lines of enquiry and welfare.

The supervisor goes through the investigation plan with the allocated officer and looks at what they still need to do. An inspector rank will review any active cases that are over four months old, documenting the progress of the investigation and any outstanding lines of enquiry.

When an investigation is finished, South Yorkshire Police advised a closure report is completed by the allocated officer detailing the action taken against each point of the investigation plan. These closure reports are then reviewed by the supervisor. Dip sampling of cases is carried out to monitor quality.

In 2020 the College of Policing consulted on guidelines for supervisors. These will provide guidance on how to effectively support people across all levels of policing, staff and volunteers. The IOPC provided feedback as part of this consultation based on what we have seen in Operation Linden investigations and other areas of our work.

Multi-agency working

Information about concerns was shared in multi-agency meetings but social workers were often left frustrated at the lack of direction and action from South Yorkshire Police. Roles and relationships between different agencies were not always clear.

We considered various aspects of multi-agency working and whether any recommendations may be beneficial including structural aspects, more collaborative leadership and collective problem solving to address these issues. We asked South Yorkshire Police how it now works with partner agencies to safeguard children.

South Yorkshire Police told us it has Local Referral Units (LRUs) in each of its four districts. The officers and police staff who form the LRU are co-located with partner agencies within the four Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), one in each local authority area, which operate in accordance with the [Working together to safeguard](#)

[children statutory guidance](#). Each local authority also has individual arrangements to reflect local need and demand.

South Yorkshire Police advised the LRUs receive and research all reports of concern for children and share information with statutory partners. This shared information is used to make a joint risk and safety planning assessment. If it is believed that a child is or may be at risk of significant harm, a strategy meeting will be convened with the required core partners and any other persons able to share relevant information or assist in addressing identified risks. They also said that South Yorkshire Police should encourage its partners to submit intelligence on an ongoing basis and not wait until the next multi-agency meeting.

From the feedback provided by South Yorkshire Police, all partners agree that the hubs are working extremely well. They have facilitated timely and detailed information sharing, enhanced shared assessment of risk and much broader safety planning to protect children.

An Ofsted [focused visit to Rotherham children's services](#) in October 2020 found that *“Effective multi-agency working in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the wider partnership means that children and families receive an appropriate service to identified need”* and that *“Management direction and decision-making in the MASH are timely, appropriate and, in most cases, clearly recorded.”*

Reports of Ofsted to visits to [Sheffield](#) (2019) and [Barnsley](#) (2018) contain similarly positive comments. The report in relation to [Doncaster](#) (2020) said that the response to contacts and referrals was not yet consistently timely but that partnerships are developing and this is contributing to improved information sharing and consideration of thresholds.

South Yorkshire Police also advised its child sexual exploitation officer has developed strong links with all four local authority areas across South Yorkshire and encouraged partner agencies, business and local communities across the region to identify and act upon the signs of child exploitation. This has included work with Barnardo's and Fearless⁴⁰ and raising awareness in hotspot communities across South Yorkshire.

Training and involving other agencies in training

Many officers told us they had no knowledge or understanding of child sexual exploitation at the time of the events we investigated, and they were not informed in briefings about issues in the area.

We asked South Yorkshire Police what improvements in training it had made since 2013, including training jointly with other agencies. They detailed various training programmes that have taken place in relation to child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.

Detectives working in child protection must attend the accredited Specialist Child Abuse Investigator Course (SCAIDP) to be an accredited child abuse investigator. SCAIDP is jointly trained with police officers and social workers to reflect real life where they would be working together.

The College of Policing [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\) on Major Investigation and Public Protection](#) sets out expectations for training in relation to investigating child abuse and safeguarding children.

The child sexual exploitation training delivered by South Yorkshire Police was developed with the College of Policing and Barnardo's and incorporated the learning points from the Jay report. Joint training has been carried out with an academic from Sheffield University which helped with looking at how complex models of child sexual exploitation were. The training included the different routes and pathways of child sexual exploitation and some of the situations young people might find themselves in where they are entrenched in the exploitation, unable to get themselves out and unable to tell anyone.

South Yorkshire Police is working on joint training with children and adult services around exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery. It has worked with local councils, the National Police Chiefs' Council and other police forces to identify and share good practice. They also told us they are delivering joint training to vulnerable people, children and organisations to educate others about child sexual exploitation.

Record keeping

Our investigations saw issues where previous versions of South Yorkshire Police operational policing policies, job descriptions or other documents were no longer available and hampered us from looking at the procedures and standards expected of officers and staff at the time.

We were also unable to review older records such as the operational intelligence system and missing persons records as they had been deleted. We asked South Yorkshire Police several questions about record keeping including how it stores previous versions of documents, how long for and how people know which is the current version of a policy.

South Yorkshire Police advised it has a policy which is compliant with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), National Guidance on the Minimum Standards for the Retention and Disposal of Police Records which directs that policies should be kept for 10 years. It told us that previous versions of policy documents are now archived in a central drive with access restricted to members of the policy team.

All policies and procedures are published on the force intranet and only the current version of the document can be accessed. Each time an amendment is made, the system automatically saves the previous version of the document in full. Each document has a date stamp at the bottom of the page which also details who made the amendment.

South Yorkshire Police created a Chief Information Officer role in May 2018. This role is responsible for Management of Police Information (MoPI), data quality, legacy data systems and decommissioning, creating and updating policy on retention and disposal of paperwork, property and electronic data in line with the NPCC National Retention Schedule. The Chief Information Officer is also responsible for creating and building a force archive to store paperwork and property which the force is under a legal duty to retain.

As well as the NPCC documents mentioned above, the College of Policing has published Authorised Professional Practice on the Management of Police Information.

We also reviewed HMICFRS inspections of South Yorkshire Police over the last five years. Record keeping was not noted as an issue.

Tracing individual officers

In one of the cases we investigated, the complainant did not know the name of the traffic officer who had stopped the car she was in with a child sexual exploitation perpetrator but described them as Asian. We were unable to identify the officer because records from the time could not be searched by officers' department or ethnicity. South Yorkshire Police has told us that its systems do now allow for HR systems to be searched by individual characteristics, such as age, rank, location/department and ethnicity. More steps could be taken to identify officers if a complainant was only able to provide limited information.

Authorised Professional Practice

We considered whether any of the issues arising from Operation Linden investigations would require amendments to Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

APP is guidance authorised by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. Police officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities unless there is a clear rationale for deviating from it.

APP is subject to regular review by the College of Policing either on a scheduled basis or as required. At the time of writing, the APP on child sexual exploitation was last updated in January 2020 and the broader major investigation and public protection APP within which it sits was last updated in March 2021.

We did not identify any areas that required updates to APP.

To find out more about our work or to request this report in an alternative format, you can contact us in a number of ways:

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Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg

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Work programme 2022-2023 – Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Purpose/ Outcomes	Recommendations
11 May 2022	Petition – Improve Road safety on Cumwell Lane	To consider the petition referred from Council 13 April 2022	
	Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund: Update and Implementation	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting 16 May.	
	Household Support Fund	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting 16 May.	
27 May 2022 – Special Meeting	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.	To consider the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.	
15 June 2022	Finance Update	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting on 20 June 2022	
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022/2025), Action Plan (2022/2023) and Annual	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting on 20 June 2022	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Purpose/ Outcomes	Recommendations
	Report (2021/2022)		
	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.	To review the recommendations as discussed at the OSMB meeting held on 27 May 2022 following receipt of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.	
	Operation Linden	To consider the future monitoring arrangement in respect of the implementation of the IOPC report regarding Operation Linden.	
6 July 2022	Annual Housing Development Report 2022-23	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting on 11 July 2022	
	Recommendations from the Overview and Management Board relating to Road Safety concerns Cumwell Lane / Kingsforth Lane Petition	Pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet meeting on 11 July 2022	
14 September 2022	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery	That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board continue to monitor performance against the	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Purpose/ Outcomes	Recommendations
	Plan Progress report	objectives contained in the new Council Plan by receiving the quarterly performance reports produced for Cabinet as part of its pre-decision scrutiny role.	
12 October 2022	Social Value Mid-Year Review	Following review of the Social Value Annual Report by OSMB in March 2022, it was agreed that a further report is submitted to OSMB in six months outlining mid-year position.	
16 November 2022	Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report.	Annual item for the Board to receive the Safer Rotherham Annual Report in its role as the Council's Statutory Crime and Disorder Committee, as defined by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.	
14 December 2022	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report	That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board continue to monitor performance against the objectives contained in the new Council Plan by receiving the quarterly performance reports	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Purpose/ Outcomes	Recommendations
		produced for Cabinet as part of its pre-decision scrutiny role.	
	Annual Complaints Report	Annual item	
19 January 2023	TBC		
8 February 2023	TBC		
22 February 2023	TBC		
15 March 2023	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report	That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board continue to monitor performance against the objectives contained in the new Council Plan by receiving the quarterly performance reports produced for Cabinet as part of its pre-decision scrutiny role.	
	Children's Commissioner Take Over Challenge	Annual Item	
19 April 2023	TBC		
10 May 2023	TBC		

Items pending schedule or removal

Item	Details	Status	Officer
Rothercard		One off briefing to be scheduled	
Finance/Budget Setting	<p>Resolved at the 14 July meeting:</p> <p>That a report be presented at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that details how the changes that have been made to how the Council operates and provides services as a result of the pandemic have informed budget management procedures, and whether these changes to how the Council operates have highlighted any new opportunities where future budget savings could potentially be made.</p>	To request a briefing note	
Domestic Abuse	Resolved at the 3 November meeting to add to Work Programme.	To be scheduled as a one-off session Combined session with Modern Slavery	
Modern Slavery	Resolved at the 3 November meeting to add to Work Programme.	To be scheduled a one-off session Combined session with Domestic Abuse	
CYPS Performance monitoring	Workshop session on CYPS Performance monitoring	To be scheduled – Meetings with CYPS have taken place. To be delivered April 2022. Joint activity with ILSC	
CYPS Invest to Save	To scrutinise the impact of “Invest to Save” initiatives across CYPS	To be scheduled.	

Item	Details	Status	Officer
Foodbank Provision	To scrutinise foodbank services across the Borough. Requested at the 9 February meeting.	To be scheduled.	
Adult Care Services Commissioning	To look in further detail the commissioning process for adult care services. Requested at the 9 February meeting.	Scope of work to be considered by Chair and Vice-Chair.	
Social Value -	6 month update. Requested at meeting of 23 March	October 2022 – Added to the work programme above.	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny		
Annual Housing Development Report 2022/23	Pre-decision scrutiny		

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
1 June 2022 – 31 August 2022

This is formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of Key Decisions due to be taken by the Authority and of those parts of the Cabinet meeting identified in this Forward Plan will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

Contact Information:-

Democratic Services
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Email: governance@rotherham.gov.uk
Tel: 01709 822477

What is the Forward Plan?

The Forward Plan contains all the key decisions the Council expects to take over the next three months. It will be refreshed monthly and will give at least 28 days' notice of any Key Decisions and, if applicable, the Cabinet's intention to discuss an item in private. This gives you the opportunity to submit relevant documents to the decision maker concerning any individual Key Decisions and draws to your attention any relevant constitution process.

What is a Key Decision?

A Key Decision is one which is likely to:-

- relate to the capital or revenue budget framework that is reserved to the Council, or
- result in income, expenditure or savings of £400,000 or greater, or
- have a significant effect on two or more wards

A Key Decision can be made by the Cabinet. The Forward Plan also includes some matters which are not Key Decisions under the heading "Decisions which are not Key Decisions".

What does the Forward Plan tell me?

The plan gives information about:

- what key decisions are to be made in the next three months.
- the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made.
- who will make the key decisions.
- when those key decisions are likely to be made.
- what documents will be considered.
- who you can contact for further information.

Who takes Key Decisions?

Under the Authority's Constitution, Key Decisions are taken by the Cabinet. Key Decisions are taken at public meetings of the Cabinet. The Cabinet meets once a month on a Monday at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall. Meeting dates for 2022/23 are:

20 June 2022	19 September 2022	21 November 2022	23 January 2023	20 March 2023	15 May 2023
11 July 2022	17 October 2022	19 December 2022	13 February 2023	24 April 2023	

Further information and Representations about items proposed to be heard in Private

Names of contact officers are included in the Plan.

If you wish to make representations that a decision which is proposed to be heard in private should instead be dealt with in public, you should contact Democratic Services by no later than five clear working days before the meeting. At the end of this document are extracts from the Local Government Act 1972 setting out the descriptions of information which may be classed as "exempt", and the definition of confidential information.

The members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility are: -

Councillor Chris Read	Leader of the Council
Councillor Sarah Allen	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working
Councillor Saghir Alam	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance
Councillor Dominic Beck	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Councillor Amy Brookes	Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Victoria Cusworth	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Local Economy
Councillor David Roche	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor David Sheppard	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 JUNE 2022								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Housing Strategic Acquisitions	April 2022	To approve the acquisition of new homes.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and Exempt Appendix	Aughton & Swallownest, Dinnington, Keppel, Rotherham East and Rotherham West	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022-25), Action Plan and Annual Report (2021-22)	July 2021	To approve the Council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Also includes approval of new Equality Objectives.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Members, partner organisations, VCS and faith organisations through targeted consultation and the general public through open consultation.	Report and appendix	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
Finance Update	April 2022	To note the Council's outturn position for 2021/22 prior to the more detailed outturn report being presented to Cabinet in July.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Transport Capital Report 2022-23	February 2022	To approve the Transport Capital Programme for 2022/23.	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and Appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Public Space Protection Order	April 2022	To consider the re-designation of a Public Space Protection Order in the Fitzwilliam Road area of Rotherham.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	Boston Castle; Rotherham East	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 JUNE 2022								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Cabinet Response to the Outcomes from the Health Select Commission Review Group on the Rotherham Community Hub	April 2022	To consider Cabinet's Response to the outcomes and recommendations of the Health Select Commission review of the Rotherham Community Hub.	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders. Council.	Report	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
First Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan January - March 2022 Performance	April 2022	To note progress made against the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan January to March 2022.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
Appointment of Councillors to serve on Outside Bodies	April 2022	To approve the appointment of Councillors to serve on Outside Bodies, as detailed on the schedule.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES								
Cabinet Response to the Outcomes from the Review Group on Support for Young Carers	April 2022	To approve the Cabinet's response to the Outcomes and recommendations of the Health Select Commission on Support for Young Carers.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders. Council.	Report	All Wards	Open	Suzanne Joyner Tel: 01709 247617 suzanne.joyner@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
BT proposal to permanently remove the public phone box at the junction of Wensleydale and Teesdale Road, Rotherham	April 2022	To note the officer delegated decision regarding the request from BT to remove the phone box.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders Public Consultation.	Report	Greasbrough	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Cabinet Response to the Outcomes from the Review Group on External Funding	April 2022	To approve the Cabinet's response to the Outcomes and recommendations of the Places Select Commission review on External Funding.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders. Council.	Report	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Application for Business Rates Discretionary Relief - Rotherham & District Citizens Advice Bureau	June 2022	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates Discretionary Relief.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 11 JULY 2022 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Annual Housing Development Report 2022-23	March 2022	To approve the 2022/23 annual housing development programme.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
Housing Strategy	March 2022	To approve the new Housing Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers, Stakeholders, Public Consultation.	Report	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Drug and Alcohol Treatment 2022/23 to 2024/25	May 2022	To consider and approve the proposals for utilising the funding grant to support improvements in the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment 2022/23 to 2024/25.	Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health	Relevant Members, Officers, Stakeholders, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities OHID.	Report with exempt appendices	All Wards	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Household Support Fund	April 2022	To consider progress made and make allocations from Household Support Grant reserve fund.	Leader of the Council	Council service providers / partners.	Report	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
Finance Outturn 2021/22	April 2022	To approve the unaudited revenue and capital outturn for 2021/22 and note the impact on reserves.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Treasury Management Outturn 2021/22	April 2022	To note treasury management activity during 2021/22 reviewed against the approved strategy, including the outturn position for the prudential indicators.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
May 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report	April 2022	To note the current revenue and capital monitoring position and agree any required actions.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Household Waste Recycling Centres	May 2022	To consider options for the future delivery of Household Waste Recycling Centres.	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Draft Supplementary Planning Documents	April 2022	To approve public consultation on draft Supplementary Planning Documents, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developer Contributions SPD Biodiversity Net Gain SPD Trees SPD Soils SPD Development in the Green Belt SPD (minor amendment to existing SPD) 	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and stakeholders, Public Consultation.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 11 JULY 2022 OR LATER								
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Recommendations from the Overview and Management Board relating to Road Safety concerns Cumwell Lane / Kingsforth Lane Petition	May 2022	To receive the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board relating to Road Safety concerns Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane Petition.	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders. Council.	Report	Bramley & Ravenfield; Dinnington; Hellaby & Maltby West; Thurcroft & Wickersley South	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
Outcomes from the Children's Takeover Challenge	May 2022	To receive and respond to the recommendations of the Children's Takeover Challenge.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	November 2021	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
NO MEETING IN AUGUST 2022								

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 SCHEDULE 12A
ACCESS TO INFORMATION: EXEMPT INFORMATION
PART 1
DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

PART 2
QUALIFICATIONS: ENGLAND

Paragraphs 1-8 repealed.

- 9 Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.
- 10 Information which –
 - a. falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - b. is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
SECTION 100A(3) – DEFINITION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Confidential information means –

- a. information furnished to the council by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and
 - b. information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a court;
- and, in either case, the reference to the obligation of confidence is to be construed accordingly.

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