

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

- Date and Time :-** Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 1.30 p.m.
- Venue:-** Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
- Membership:-** Councillors Atkin, Barley, Burnett, Cowen, Ellis, Havard, Hughes, Khan, Jones, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Pitchley, Reynolds, Sansome, Tinsley, Whomersley, Wyatt (Chair).
- Co-opted Members:-** Mrs. K. Bacon, Mrs. M. Jacques.

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

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

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2021 (Pages 3 - 6)

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2021, as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Questions from members of the public and the press

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

5. Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

6. Town Centre Update (Pages 7 - 39)

To receive an update in respect of regeneration in Rotherham Town Centre.

7. Allotments Self-Management Update (Pages 41 - 62)

To receive an update on the self-management of Rotherham allotments.

8. Findings from Spotlight Review of External Funding (Pages 63 - 75)

To receive findings and recommendations from a spotlight review on external funding sources for regeneration and transformation.

9. Work Programme (Pages 77 - 84)

To consider and approve an updated scrutiny work programme.

10. Urgent Business

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

11. Date and time of the next meeting (Page 85)

The next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 1 February 2022, commencing at 1.30 pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 2 November 2021**

Present:- Councillor Wyatt (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Burnett, Cowen, Havard, Jones, Keenan, McNeely, Mills, Sansome, Tinsley and Whomersley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bacon, Barley, Khan, Pitchley and Reynolds and from the co-optee, Mrs. Bacon.

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

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

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2021

Resolved:-

1. That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 September 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

31. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

32. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report comprising updates on progress in delivering the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Neighbourhood Working model from May 2020 to May 21. The report forms the fourth annual report to be brought for scrutiny. The presentation highlighted delivery on the 5 key themes of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy: Engage & Develop the Workforce; Councillors as Community Leaders; Communication & Engagement; Asset Based Community Development; and Integrated Place Based Working; which includes collaborative working with our Parish Councils. Initiatives and schemes were highlighted under each theme. The challenges presented during the period of the report were noted, as were exemplary efforts made by the Neighbourhoods service in response, such as in setting up the

Community Hub resource and in refreshing the Ward Housing Hubs interface, among others.

In discussion, Members requested clarification of national housing finance rules, which officers provided, noting that residents who pay a tenant levy are the target recipients of projects funded by that levy.

Members expressed the desire to see increased benchmarking with other authorities in respect of Neighbourhoods Services, to ensure that the service continues to progress. The response from officers acknowledged the place of sharing best practice and affirmed the ongoing advancement of the service and the substantive progress it has made. Members further requested that efforts be undertaken to ensure all Members have a solid understanding of how Neighbourhoods works, so that this service can be leveraged to the maximal benefit of residents in answer to deprivation.

Members further noted the difficulty in accessing crime information ahead of meetings, and the difficulty in holding effective meetings with police representatives. It was hoped that better IT coordination could help.

The request was made for more options in enhancing engagement in Ward newsletters. The answer from officers invited Members to make representations to the Neighbourhood Coordinator in respect of any desired communications changes, whether this involved revised content or mode of distribution, etc. The response noted that provision is available for flexibility in the delivery of ward bulletins to respond to the specific needs and expectations of the individual wards.

The Chair noted ongoing review work into the methods by which information is routed back to Wards, the result of which would be welcomed with interest.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Neighbourhoods Service benchmark with other authorities to share and collect good practice with a view to continuous improvement.
3. That the outcome of the ongoing review work on information flow around Ward Housing Hubs be reported back when available.
4. That provision for inclusive Ward communications be established whereby the cost of small print runs would not be deducted from Ward project funds.

33. PROGRESS ON LIBRARY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to an update report in respect of progress against the Library Strategy 2021-2026 and the associated action plan which was approved by Council on 11 November 2020. The report set out how the Strategy and new service offer was enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory duty under the Public Library Act and meet the needs of the community through the delivery of the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Service.

In discussion, Members expressed interest, in respect of the successful Brinsworth Library transition, whether more libraries may follow suit. The response from officers noted that as a result of the success of this test case, there was a possibility for further locations to make a similar transition in future.

Members noted the need for specialised services in person such as for Blue Badge renewal, Job-seekers' assistance, or the upcoming Business and Intellectual Property Advice, and for the availability of these to be publicised to Members so that residents can be directed to the closest service. The response from officers noted that this suggestion would be fed back to officers in Customer Services.

Members requested clarification around the practice of charging fees for the use of space in the building. The response from officers noted that if the proposed use helped achieve the outcomes of the library service, the service would then seek to support the request to use the space for free.

Members also requested an update on some aspects of delivery which had been postponed during the pandemic, such as the Anne Frank exhibition, kickstarter apprenticeships, and after school clubs. The response from officers noted that the exhibition was planned to be delivered soon either virtually or physically. The apprenticeships were also both working with partners and at the Council itself as an employer, with further information on this available from Human Resources. After school clubs were also on the horizon to return soon.

The Chair also wished to record his compliments to the library staff for their resourcefulness, imagination and initiative.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

34. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Chair outlined changes to planned sub group work reflected on the updated work programme.

Resolved:

1. That the updated work programme be approved.

35. URGENT BUSINESS

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

36. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 14 December 2021 commencing at 1.30 pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

TRANSFORMING ROTHERHAM

**Improving Places Select Commission
Town Centre Update Report
December 2021**

Town Centre Masterplan

ADOPTED IN 2017.

The Town Centre Masterplan sets out an exciting number of developments that will transform and revitalise the town centre, with a vibrant leisure scheme on Forge Island, attractive outdoor spaces, revitalised markets complex and high-quality riverside and urban living.

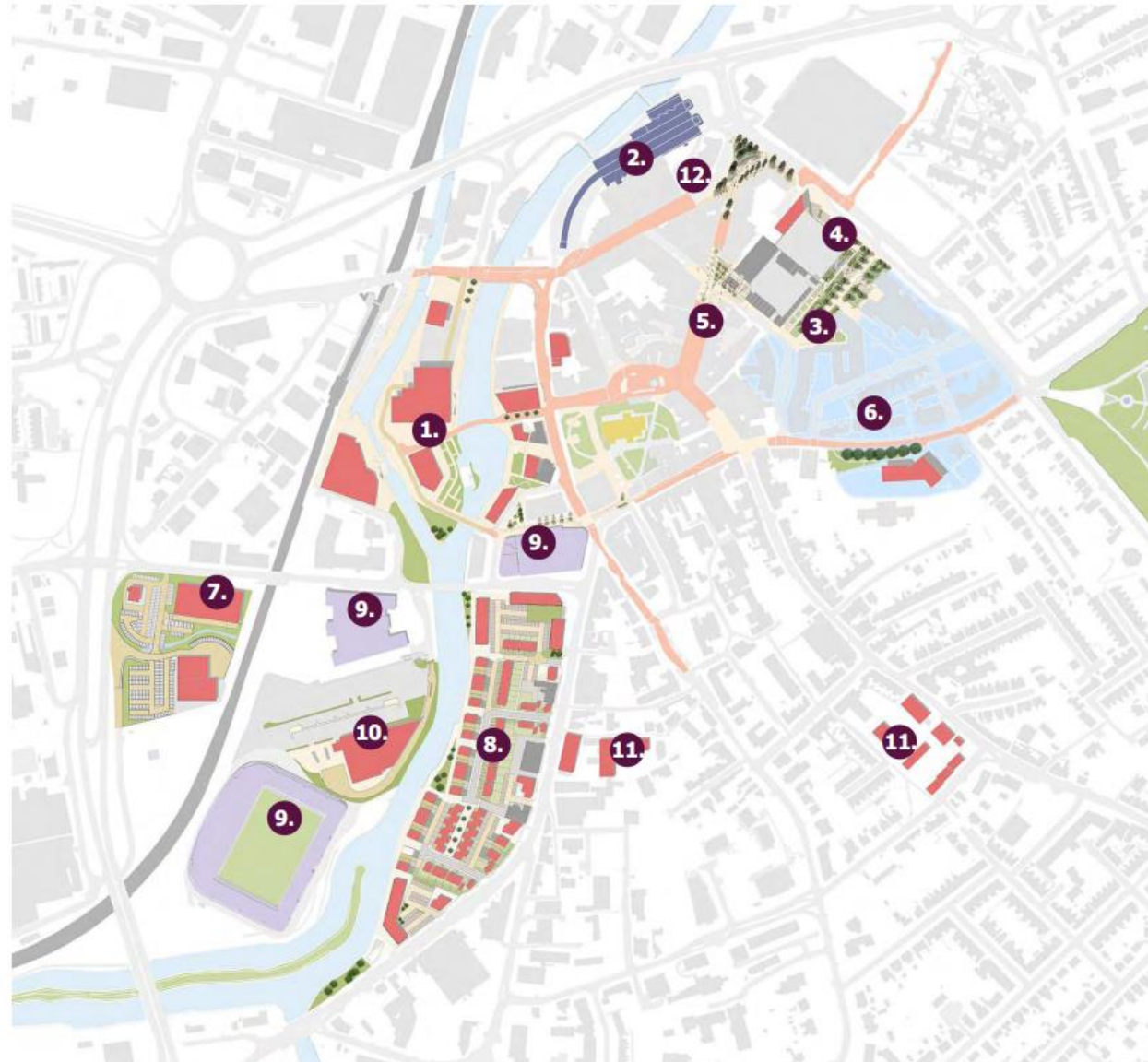
The plan is bold but it is also realistic. The opportunities for growth and regeneration have been identified and are translating into key projects which can bring about transformational change. These include:

- moving to a more diverse mix of uses
- focus on residential and leisure
- quality open spaces
- better connectivity.



The Masterplan

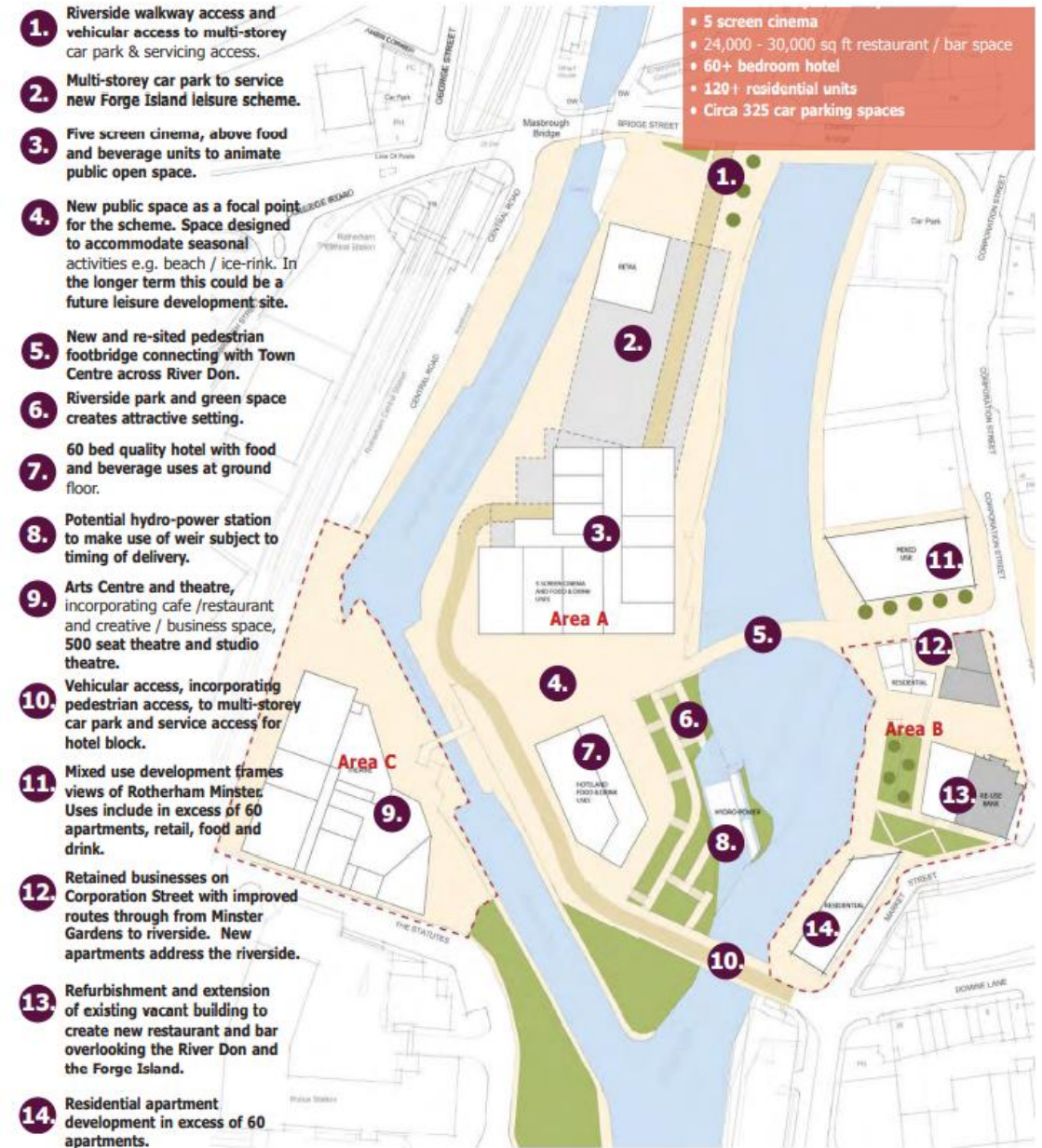
1. Forge Island will become a major leisure destination and will include a new cinema, theatre, quality hotel and food and drink offer. Residential units will support these uses.
2. Refurbishment of interchange building and associated car park.
3. College Fields to form a key open space within the College Campus.
4. Rotherham Markets will be opened up through the removal of buildings adjacent to Doncaster Gate. A new building will form a strong feature at the junction with Henry Street.
5. The access to the indoor market will be enhanced through public realm improvements to Market Square.
6. Rotherham College Town Centre Campus to include a new Centre for Higher Education Skills building.
7. A new foodstore and drive-through unit will front onto Main Street.
8. Up to 279 high quality riverside residential units will be provided, to include a mix of apartments and houses.
9. Recent investment has been made in Rotherham Town Centre, including the New York Football Stadium, Riverside House and Westgate Chambers.
10. The former Guest and Chrimes building will be partially retained to create a leisure destination within the vicinity of the football stadium.
11. Two starter homes sites will be brought forward within the Town Centre.
12. Effingham Square will become an area of green space within the Town Centre, complementing the green space at Minster Gardens.





Progress

1. Forge Island will become a major leisure destination and include a new cinema, theatre, quality hotel and food and drink offer, Residential units will support these uses



Forge Island Flood Alleviation and Enabling: Phase 1 Completed November 2020

Eric Wright Civil Engineering began flood defence and enabling works on Forge Island in September 2019.

In addition to the flood mitigation measures, improvements have been made to provide high-quality public realm to encourage access around the canal and open up the waterside to visitors, creating a welcoming gateway into the town centre, as well as providing a key link to the Forge Island development.

The final phase of works will see the introduction of flood defence gates with works now underway and completing early next year.



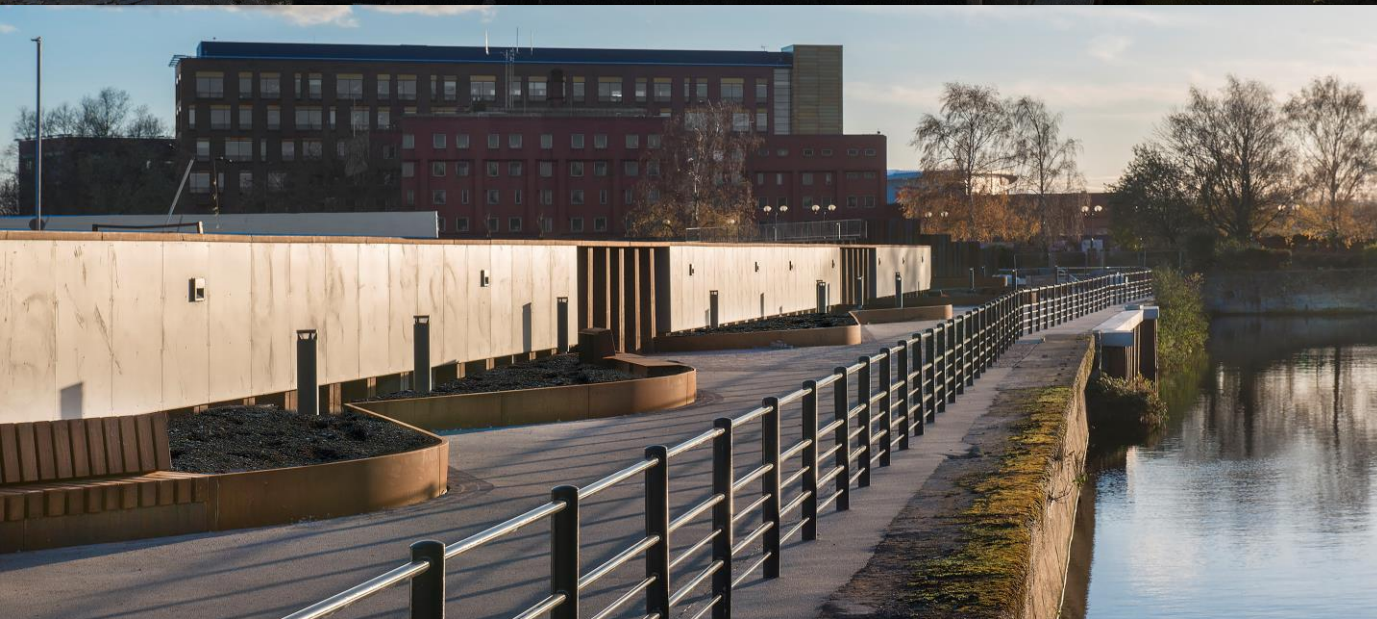


Forge Island Fish Pass: Completed May 2020

Improvements to the quality of the River Don have seen the return of salmon migrating to their traditional spawning grounds upstream of Rotherham. This migration has been facilitated by the introduction of fish passes to weirs along the river. Work on the last weir began in January 2020 at Masbrough Weir adjacent to Forge Island.

The Council has helped facilitate the project, led by the Don Catchment Rivers Trust, with support from the Environment Agency and Canal and River Trust ahead of the development of Forge Island. Work on the pass was successfully completed in May 2020.





Forge Island

Approval was granted at Planning Board in June 2020 for the Forge Island leisure scheme.

In January 2021, boutique operator The Arc Cinema signed a deal for a long-term lease with development partners Muse.

The boutique cinema operator has six sites across the UK and Ireland, with a further two UK sites under construction and specialises in providing a VIP cinema experience for the price of a standard ticket.

Following the deal with The Arc Cinema, the latest big-name chain to confirm its involvement is hotel giant Travelodge. Contracts have been exchanged to deliver a 69-bedroom hotel, which will complement the restaurants, bars and attractive public spaces, creating an exciting mixed-use destination. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2022.





Leisure & Cultural Quarter

- **Corporation St Phase 1:**
 - Former bank buildings
 - Mixed use leisure and residential scheme
 - Private sector owner
- **Corporation St Phase 2:**
 - Land acquisition and redevelopment costs included in Towns Fund
 - Pre app submitted for residential scheme - 3 townhouses and 14 apartments
 - **Potential for Theatre Site** – Feasibility study underway
 - **Riverside Gardens**
 - **Connectivity**



Snail Hill Pocket Park

The Council purchased the former Primark building on High Street in November 2020, using funding from the Towns Fund Accelerator programme.

Planning permission to demolish the building and replace it in the short term with a pocket park and high-quality public space was granted on 1 February 2021.

Subject to necessary planning consents, longer term plans include developing the site for town centre living.

Demolition works have been completed with the landscape works to follow starting early in 2022.



2. Refurbishment of interchange building and associated car park:

The £12m upgrade and refurbishment was completed in April 2019, with key infrastructure further enhancing the local transport connectivity of the town centre.

The work included replacing the old seating, lighting and flooring and installing improved CCTV and free public wi-fi. New surfacing and larger parking bays suitable for modern vehicles were among the changes to the car park, as well as solar panels to provide 70 per cent of the electricity needed to power the building.

Completed April 2019

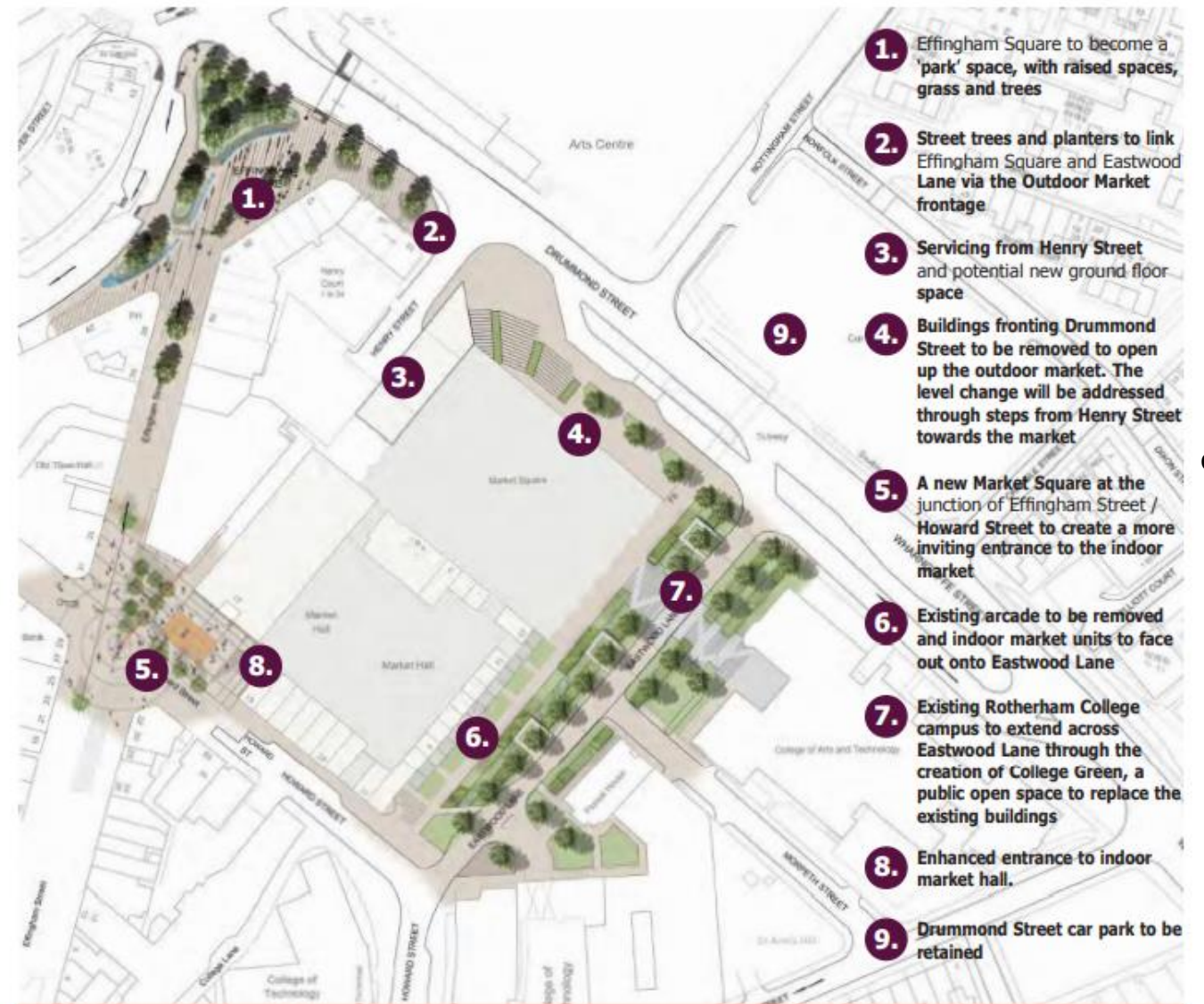




3. College Fields to form a key open space

4. Rotherham Markets will be opened up

5. Access to the indoor market will be enhanced through public realm improvements to market square



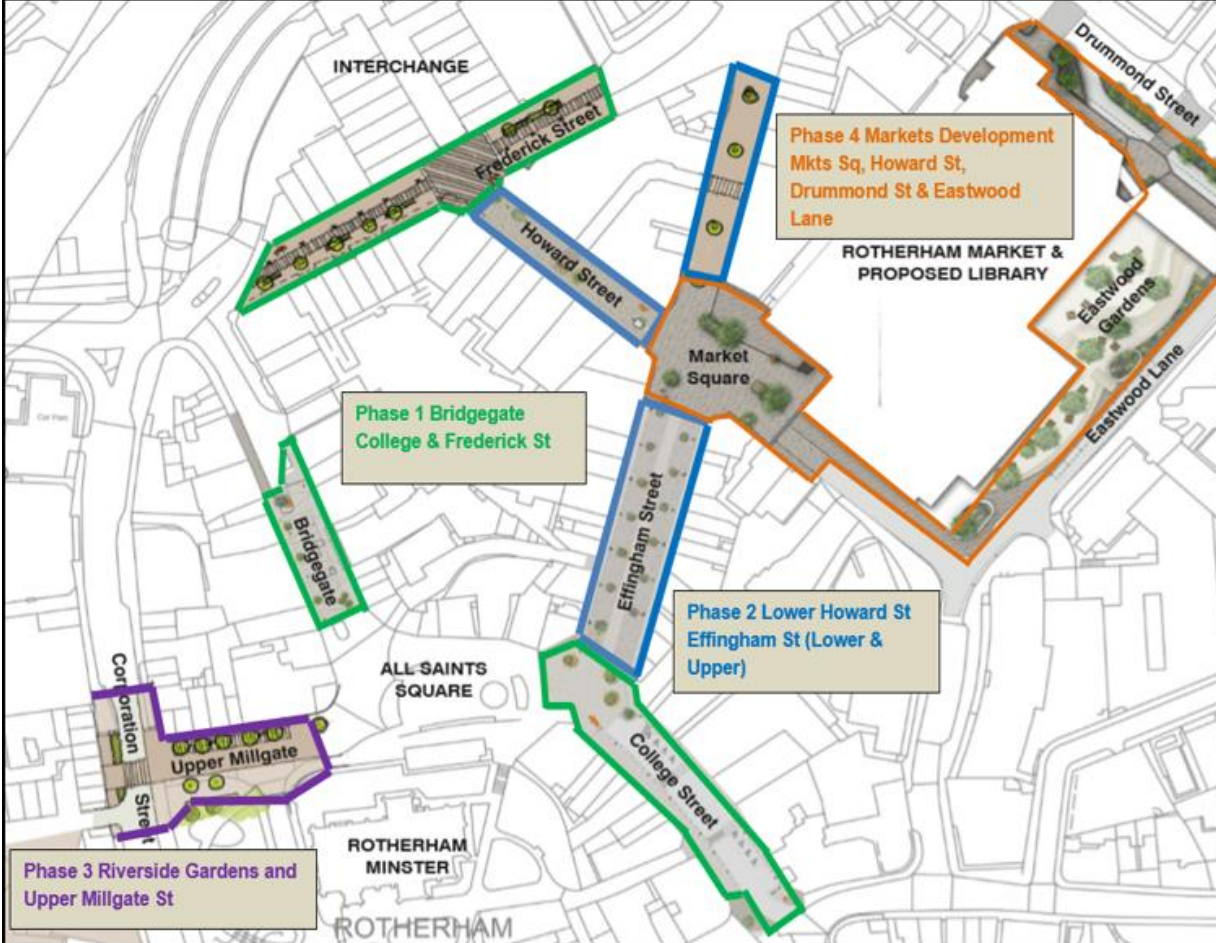
Markets Redevelopment and Library

RiDO is overseeing the development of plans for the redevelopment and re-purposing of the Markets complex as part of the Masterplan.

The proposals include a relocated central library, new community hub, extensive public realm and improved links to the town centre and college. Investigation works have been undertaken, as well as stakeholder engagement with market traders and businesses within the wider Markets complex.

Architects have been appointed to help prepare development plans and options through to RIBA 3 – Detailed Design. With the success of the Future High Street Fund bid the detailed design is now in progress in preparation for a planning application.





6. Rotherham College Town Centre Campus to include a new centre for higher education skills



University Centre Rotherham: Opened September 2018

Delivered by Rotherham College in partnership with Hull University, the brand new £10.5m campus opened in September 2018 offering a range of degrees and professional training qualifications in a state of-the-art teaching facility.

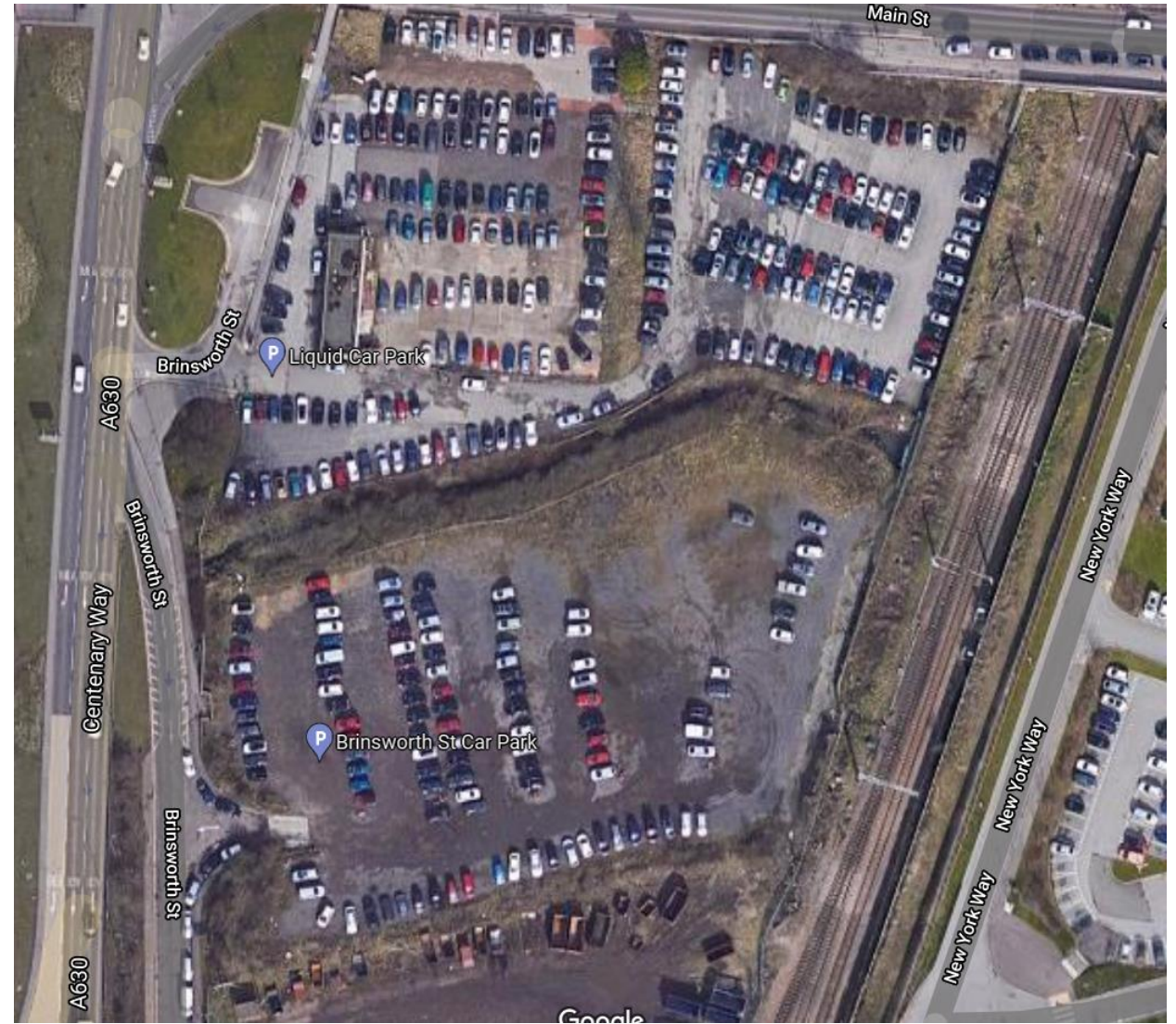
This is Rotherham's first University Centre which saw over 650 learners enrolled in the first year.

Sheffield City Region has supported the creation of the new centre with a grant of £3.5m from the Local Growth Fund. Visit the website [here](#).

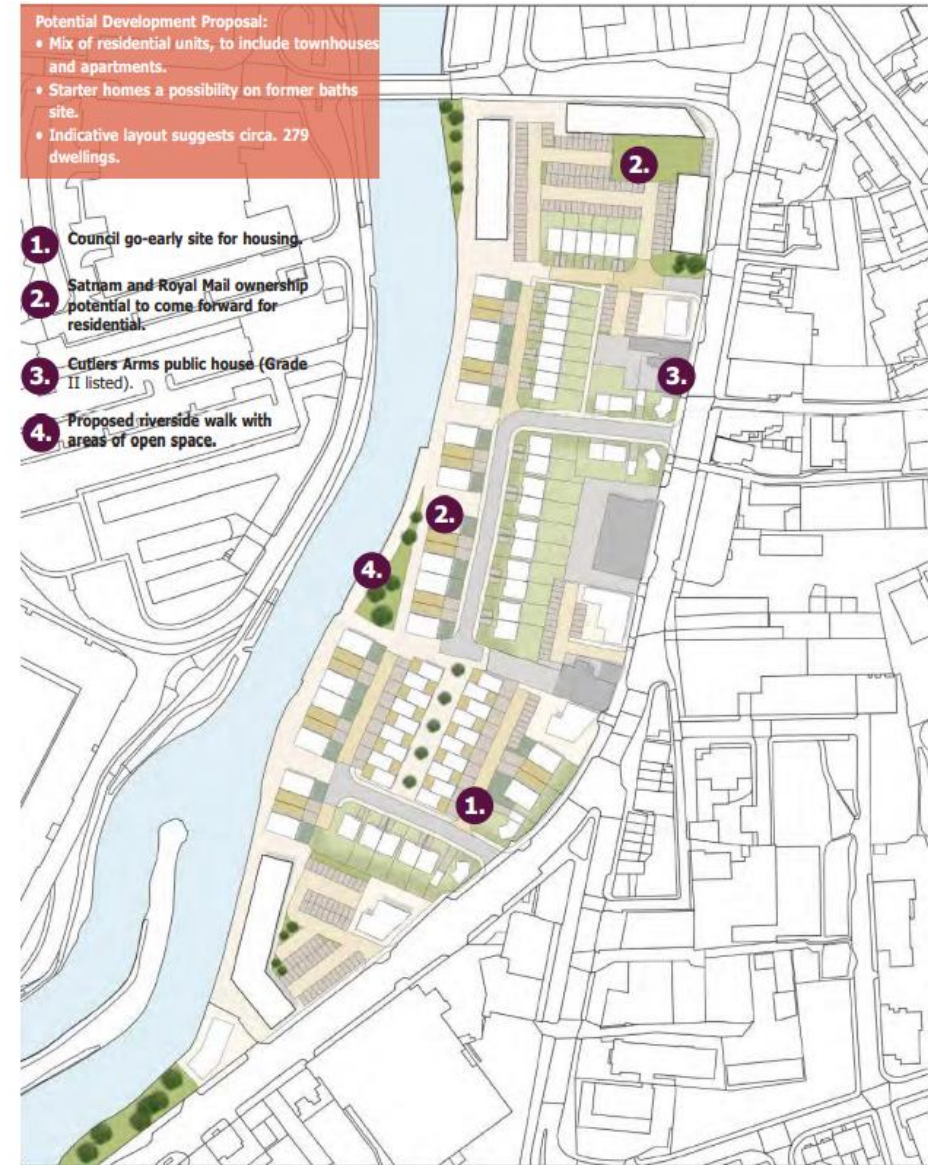




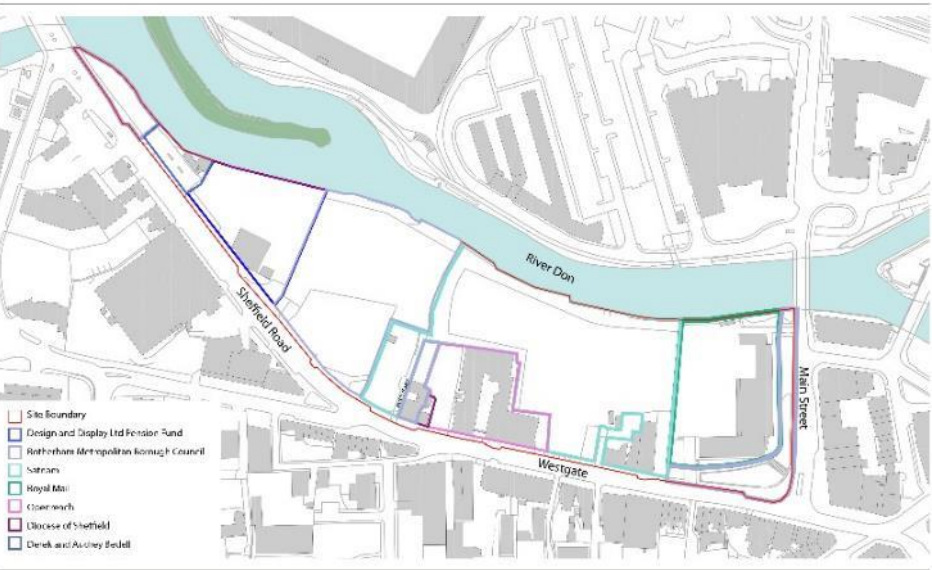
7. Potential site at the Main Street and Centenary Way junction



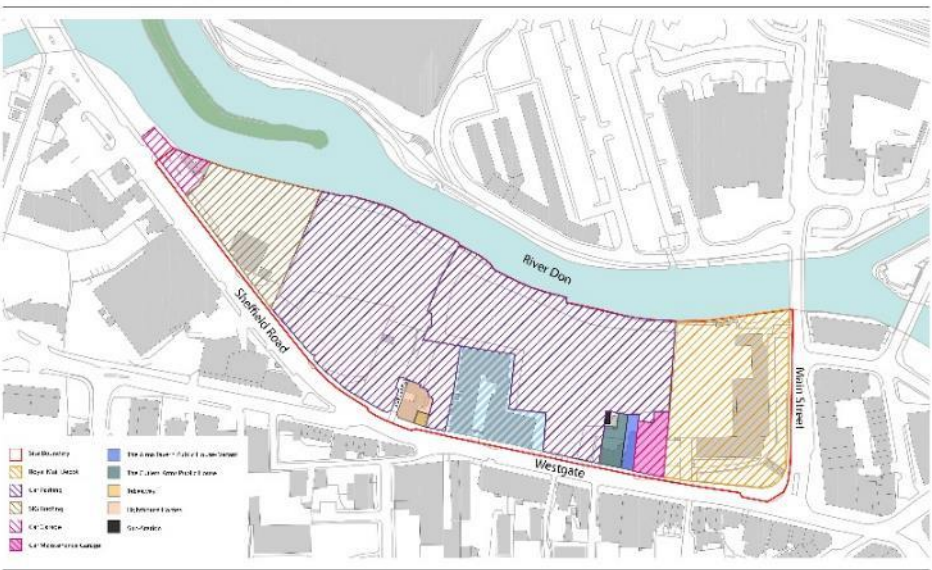
8. Up to 279 high quality residential units will be provided, to include a mix of apartments and houses



CONSTRAINTS: OWNERSHIP PLAN



CONSTRAINTS: CURRENT LAND USE



Funding:
Town Deal
Levelling Up
HRA
Homes England
SYMCA
Brownfield
Transforming Cities Fund

MOVEMENT AND DESIRE LINES





INTERNAL MEWS



SECONDARY RIVER ACCESS





9. Private Investment

Westgate Chambers

Developers HMP Bespoke Construction Ltd. are undertaking a significant revamp of Westgate Chambers, which will see the creation of a showcase commercial, retail and residential development offering 61 modern apartments. The £10m scheme involves renovating six buildings that surround a landscaped internal courtyard, including a superb Georgian Grade II listed building. The first phase of apartments have recently been brought to the market with significant interest received.

Keppel Wharf

Following Modernistiq Developments purchase of Keppel Wharf, Old Market and the Grade II Listed Imperial Buildings in 2019, work is now complete on increasing the residential space at Keppel Wharf overlooking the river.

George Wright Boutique Hotel, Bar & Restaurant

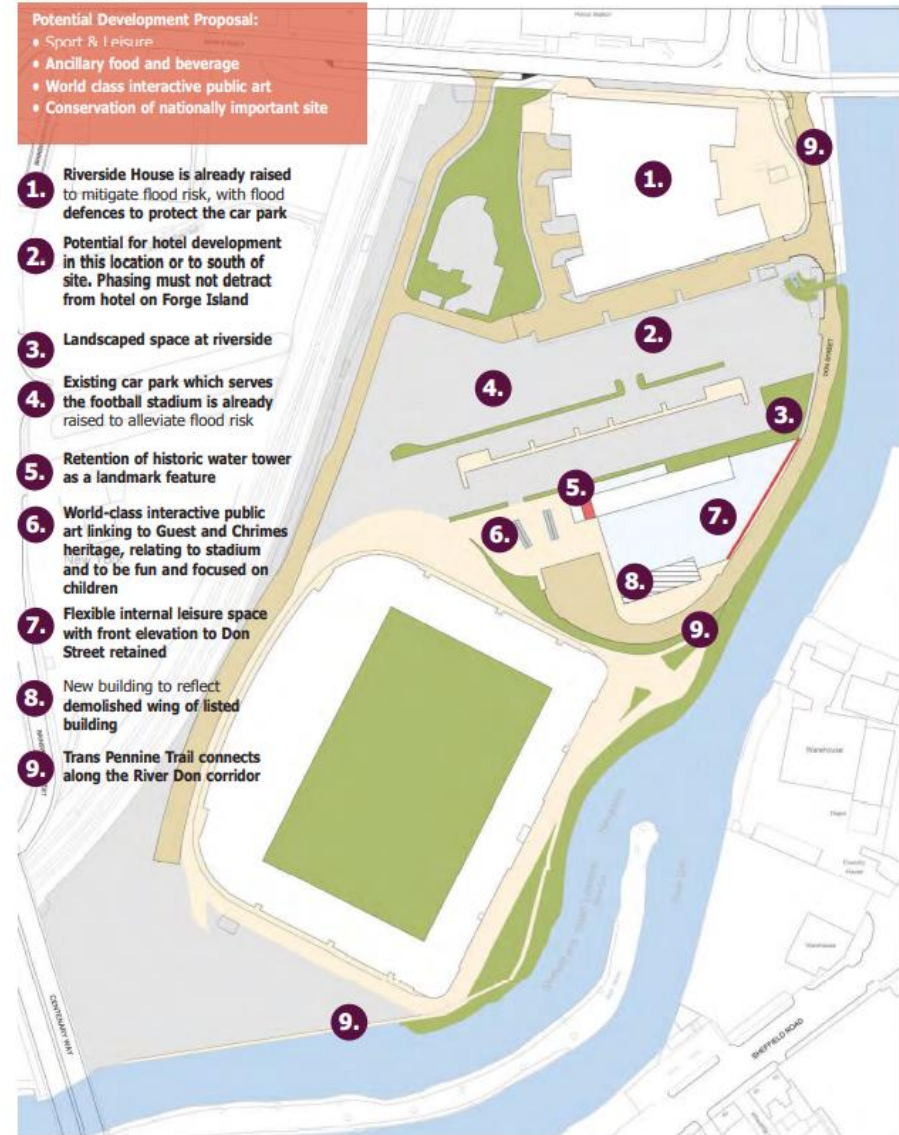
The early 19th century Grade II listed George Wright building opened in 2018 as a boutique hotel, bar and restaurant following extensive renovations. This iconic hidden gem is located at the rear of High Street and is Rotherham's first boutique hotel.

Westgate Chambers



George Wright Hotel, Bar & Restaurant

10. The former Guest and Chrimes Building will be partially retained to create a leisure destination within the vicinity of the football stadium





THE BRIDGE MICRO-BREWERY

NY - TAP!

FROM ROTHERHAM
TO NEW YORK CITY

11. Two starter homes sites will be brought forward

There are 171 new homes currently being built in a £30m+ investment, breathing new life into the town centre.

The developments include a mixture of council homes for rent and shared ownership, and private properties for sale at Westgate Riverside, Millfold Rise and Wellgate Place.

The three sites are in prime locations with three-quarters of the property's affordable homes.

The first homes will be available by February 2022.



12. Effingham Square will become an area of green space within the Town Centre, complementing the green space at Minster Gardens

Priority Spaces

Effingham Square



108



Help for Small Businesses

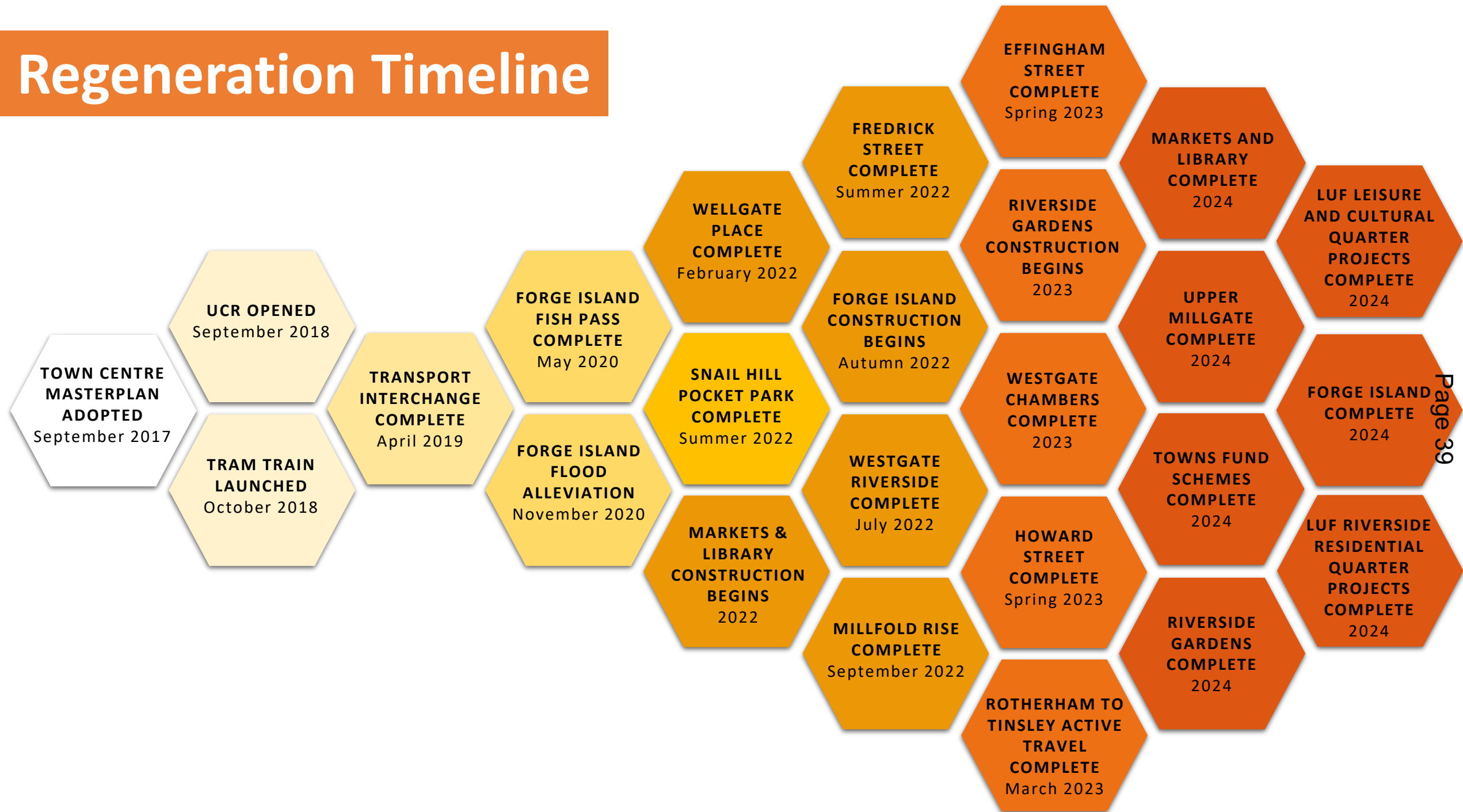
Wherever possible the Council is seeking to support and retain existing traders who may be impacted by redevelopment proposals within the town centre.

This has included assisting with identifying suitable premises for relocation – an approach that will continue particularly during the redevelopment of the market.

Funding has also been secured through the Welcome Back Fund to appoint three “High Street Business Advisors” to work with and support retailers. The Advisors started in post at the beginning of September 2021.



Regeneration Timeline



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Public Report
Improving Places Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 14 December 2021

Report Title

Allotments Self-Management Update

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Andy Lee, Green Spaces Manager
01709 822457 or andy.lee@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report updates the Improving Places Select Commission on progress towards transfer of operational responsibility for the management of the Borough's allotments from the Council to a community benefit company, Rotherham Allotment Alliance, and supersedes a previous report made to the IPSC on the 8th December 2020.

Recommendations

Improving Places Select Commission are asked to note the progress of the transfer and comment on any arising issues.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Service Level Agreement

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Cabinet – 09 July 2018

Improving Places Select Commission – 24 October 2019

Improving Places Select Commission – 8th December 2020

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Allotments Self-Management Update

1. Background

- 1.1 At the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the 9th July 2018, Members agreed to adopt a new vision and specification for allotments in which the Council approved the transfer of Council-owned allotments to a new borough wide self-management body and to establish a Community Benefit Society for this purpose.
- 1.2 Members last received an update on the transfer of the Allotments service at the Improving Places Select Commission meeting of 8th December 2020.
- 1.3 Officers were asked to provide a further update in December 2021 following the transfer of the allotment management responsibility to the Rotherham Allotments Alliance (Ltd) (RAA) from January 1st 2020.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Progress to date

Since October 2019, significant progress was made on the transfer process, with the key achievements as follows:

- The transfer of all existing tenant data and management information to the RAA.
- Transfer of allotment management software.
- The employment of an Allotment Administrator, seconded to the RAA from the Council. This was initially for a 15 month period but was extended in April 2021 and continues until December 2022, when this arrangement will be subject to further review.
- Access by the RAA to a £100,000 Capital funding provided by the Council to be drawn down in grants for agreed works
- The development of a Service Level Agreement and head leases.
- The RAA provided its first annual report to the Council in line with its company and service level agreement requirements. The 2020 annual report is attached at appendix 1.
- Issues raised in the RAA's 2020 annual report have been subject to further work between officers and the RAA during 2021, to find suitable solutions or compromise, this has included:
 - The RAA and their tenants were initially critical of the grounds maintenance service they continued to receive directly from the

Council. This criticism was due to misunderstandings regarding scope of works and schedules which transferred over to the RAA from the Council's own operation of allotments, compounded by lack of staff during covid lockdown. Officers with direct responsibility for providing this service have met with the representatives of the RAA and agreed new schedules which better meet the needs of the RAA and their tenants.

2.2 Governance and Decision-Making

2.2.1 The operational management of the Allotments transferred wholly to the RAA on the 1st January 2020 in line with previous reported expectations.

2.2.2 The Rotherham Allotment Alliance (Ltd) was registered with the Financial Conduct Authority on the 2nd April 2019. The Alliance became a legal entity in its own right at this point and a Board of Directors was appointed. Former Cllr Brian Steele was elected as Chair, Mr Jack Taylor as Secretary and Mr Al Dean as Treasurer. Although a small number of the initial RAA Directors resigned for personal reasons within the first operating year, the core of the company's officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) has remained constant, and this has had a stabilising effect allowing the RAA to develop in the first year of operation.

2.2.3 The Board of Directors as of 14th December 2021 is as follows:

Chair – Mr B. Steele
Secretary – Mr J. Taylor
Treasurer - Ms A. Howard
Vice Chair – Mr J. Palmer
Member - Mr M Hirst
Member – Mr M. Suleman
Member – Ms A Parry
Councillor Representative – Cllr. D. Sheppard
Councillor Representative - Vacant

The appointment to the vacant Councillor representative position on the board of Directors has been discussed with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, who is in the process of seeking a further Councillor to join the board. The Councillor positions on the board are important and are enshrined in the RAA's company rules to ensure probity and that the Council's core values are upheld.

2.3 Financial Arrangements

2.3.1 The RAA has invoiced its tenants directly from 1st April 2020.

2.3.2 An approved capital budget of £100,000 has also been made available to the RAA by the Council from 2019/20 for the benefit of improving allotments. This is on a drawdown basis, and the funding is monitored by Green Spaces and

Financial Services to ensure it is being used for the agreed purposes and the spending conforms to financial regulations and capital accounting rules. To date £97,663.50 has been requested and approved from the initial £100,000 allocation. Approximately £74,000 of spend was agreed in 2021 compared to the £23,600 allocated in 2020 and identified in the RAA's 2020 report (appendix 1). Capital works have included the removal of an asbestos building, bringing unused areas under cultivation providing a number of new plots and new security fencing to allotment site boundaries and internal pathways. Some initial set up costs have also been covered, including production of a new web site.

2.4 Legal Considerations

- 2.4.1 The head lease from the Council has not yet completed and is currently in the hands of the RAA's solicitors for checking and advice to the RAA. Legal completion is expected in early 2022. This will complete the legal transfer of all 27 allotment sites from the Council to the RAA allowing new sub-leases to the existing and any future allotment societies to be entered into by the Alliance.
- 2.4.2 The lack of progress in finalising the head lease by solicitors working for the Council and the RAA remains the biggest concern. Lack of progress stems from changes in staff within the RAA's legal team leading to agreements made by previous solicitors being overturned by incoming staff and a request for the form of lease to be reconsidered. This is not the view of the Council's own legal representation. As the Council is responsible for the legal costs of both parties a financial cap has been agreed for RAA's legal fees with their solicitor at £7,500.
- 2.4.3 A Service Level Agreement (SLA) has also been developed to sit alongside the lease which identifies the scope of service the RAA will provide, the support the Council will give, management arrangements, the requirement for two councillors to sit on the board of directors (as agreed in the original decision making meeting of the 9th July 2018), performance information and dispute resolution procedures.
- 2.4.4 Green Spaces retains a legacy role as the Statutory Allotments Authority function under the Allotments Act. This function cannot be transferred to the RAA and must remain with the Local Authority in non-parished areas.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Not applicable.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 This report is for information only. The original proposal to transfer the allotment service was consulted upon as set out in the report to Cabinet on 9th July 2018 and this report sets out progress on the implementation of that decision.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Officers in Green Spaces continue to maintain a good working relationship with the Directors of the RAA.
- 5.2 Completion of the head lease from the Council to the RAA is expected to be achieved by 31st March 2022.
- 5.3 The SLA will come into effect once signed by both parties, which is expected to be at the same time as the completion of the head leases.
- 5.4 Officers have an ongoing commitment to help the Rotherham Allotment Alliance establish and future formalised monitoring will take place as detailed in the SLA and agreed by both parties. Monitoring meetings were suspended during lockdown and need to be re-established by January 2022 and thereafter on a quarterly basis in line with the RAA's reporting cycle and key points in the growing season.

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 Section 2.3 sets out the financial implications arising from this report. To date £97,663.50 has been requested and approved from the initial £100,000 approved capital budget allocation. Revenue expenditure continues to be expended on legal fees on behalf of the Council and the RAA.

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

- 7.1 Legal implications are set out in the body of the report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 The RAA employ a part time Allotment Administrator on a secondment basis from the Council. The secondment route was agreed with the Council's HR service to ensure that the employee was subject to the Council's terms and conditions and to allow the Council to provide HR and Payroll support to the RAA in the early stages of its operation. However, the Allotment Administrator is managed by the Chair of the Allotment Alliance on a day to day basis.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 None

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The Rotherham Allotment Alliance is committed within its own company rules to the following statement: “The Rotherham Allotments Alliance will provide, promote and develop allotments in Rotherham so that they offer people of all backgrounds and abilities opportunities to enjoy gardening in safe, secure, accessible and environmentally sustainable surroundings. In doing so, it will make efficient use of available resources to ensure that the service is financially self-sufficient whilst remaining affordable to those who want to use it.”

This same statement also features as an agreed objective within the draft Service Level Agreement with the Council.

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 None

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 As new communities are developed across the Borough, the requirements for allotments to serve these new and existing communities will also change and develop.

12.2 An ongoing dialogue between the Council as Statutory Allotment Authority and the RAA will need to be retained with a mind to adding or removing sites from the RAA portfolio to ensure there is an appropriate level of allotment provision to meet demand.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

Andy Lee, Green Spaces Manager
Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human		

Resources (if appropriate)		
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	Click here to enter a date.

Report Author: Andy Lee, Green Spaces Manager
01709 822457 or andy.lee@rotherham.gov.uk
This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

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11. Summary

Introduction

As Chairperson of Rotherham Allotments Alliance Ltd, I am pleased to welcome you to the first Annual General Meeting and thank you for reading this annual report which outlines the operational activity of the Alliance in 2020.

I would like to thank the board of directors for their commitment in managing to set up the alliance working on behalf of all allotment holders. Each director brings to the table their own skills and knowledge on our allotments should be administrated. I would also like to thank all the directors that have resigned their position but also gave hundred percent commitment to the organisation.

I would like to place on record special thanks to our administration officer, Donna Bushby. During this first year we have overcome many hurdles and have had to sort out many problems which we never expected. Without good administrative support we would not have been able to achieve what we have in the last 15 months since taking over the running of the allotments on behalf of Rotherham Council.

The pandemic has made things difficult for the Alliance and societies to meet. We should have held this Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April 2020. Unfortunately, the lockdown prevented this happening. We are still within legal guidelines of the constitution in holding this AGM at this time.

We hope that following our AGM, we are able to achieve our objectives in 2021 and make improvements to the allotment sites as planned.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B Steele', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Brian Steele
Chairperson – Rotherham Allotments Alliance Ltd

Site Statistics

Society Sites

<u>Societies</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Plots</u> <u>Let</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Vacant</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Unlettable</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Decommissioned</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Waitlist</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Occ</u>	<u>% Occ less unlettable / decomm</u>
Barnsley Road & Wet Moor Lane	94	88	2	2		2	25	94
Broom Valley New	73	72	1				1	99
Broom Valley Old	74	73	1				2	99
Clifton	133	130	2	1			5	98
<i>Clough Bank*</i>	66	52			14	8	79	100
Hartley Lane	73	73				6	100	100
Herringthorpe Valley Road	60	58	1		1	17	97	98
<i>Kimberworth Park*</i>	29	29				6	100	100
Queen Street North	32	32				3	100	100
Queen Street South	48	48				2	100	100
South Street	30	29			1		97	100
Vicarage Field	71	50		7	14	1	70	100
Wharf Road	20	20				6	100	100
Wood Street	35	35				21	100	100
	<u>838</u>	<u>789</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>103</u>	94	lets / total plots
							98	lets / total plots - decommissioned
							99	Lets /total plots cultivatable

**Tenant details not submitted so estimated based on recent visit*

Site Statistics

Direct-Managed Sites

<u>Direct Managed</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Plots</u> <u>Let</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Vacant</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Unlettable</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Decommissioned</u> <u>Plots</u>	<u>Waitlist</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Occ</u>	
Avenue Road	83	75	2	5	6	0	90	
Greasbrough	78	65	8	3	2	5	83	
High Street	37	31	6	0	8	8	84	
Highfield Road	5	5	0	0	0	0	100	
Lowfield Avenue	13	13	0	0	0	1	100	
Moor Road	19	16	0	3	1	3	84	
Psalters Lane	22	7	9	1	0	3	32	
Rectory Field	64	46	2	13	1	8	72	
Rosehill Park	28	28	0	0	0	18	100	
St Leonards Road	14	14	0	0	0	1	100	
65 new lets done in 2020	363	300	27	25	18	47	83	lets / total plots
							89	lets / total plots - decommissioned
							94	Lets /total plots cultivatable

All Sites	1201	1069	34	35	50	150	89	lets / total plots
							93	lets / total plots - decommissioned
							96	Lets /total plots cultivatable

Principal Achievements and Challenges

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

New Societies

The formation of 3 new societies for 4 previously directly-managed sites (Barnsley Rd & Wet Moor Lane, Avenue Rd and Vicarage Fields). This has enabled the sites to better manage the day-to-day running of the sites and have all worked hard to get uncultivable areas back into cultivation. 2 of the 3 also have started their own on-site shops, with the 3rd site starting one next year. This has brought great benefits to the tenants on these sites.

Website

The RAA now has a fully functioning website which contains a lot of information regarding the allotments. There are also pages that encourage tenant contribution such as a recipe page and a 'diary' of growing on an allotment plot. The plan for the website is to develop it further and add more information about what the RAA is planning for the future. There is also a Facebook page which contains the same information as the website. The Facebook page currently has 486 'followers'. Both the website and Facebook page are useful for getting information out to tenants instantly.

Building Relationships with Tenants / Societies

The ASA has worked hard this year to build and maintain relationships with both directly-managed and society site tenants / committees. This has been valuable for the development of the Alliance in order to learn how sites operate and identify where changes/improvements are necessary. The regular availability of a dedicated contact has been beneficial for all sites when any problems have arisen or advice is needed.

Identifying Improvements

The RAA sent out a 'wish-list' request to all society sites asking what they would like to be improved on their sites. This identified a number of areas including path/roadway improvements and addition of facilities such as compostable toilets. The RAA were then able to make a list of the work needed, making health and safety items a priority. The removal of asbestos was a big priority for most sites and this was undertaken. The biggest removal was an asbestos shed that stood on a plot on Vicarage Field site, making the plot unusable for a long time. A list of improvements on directly-managed sites was drawn up using tenant feedback and observations from site visits. This included the clearing of a fly-tipped area to create space to be used for car parking.

Funds for Future projects

Due to limited costs in 2020 and being mindful of the budget during the first year, the RAA have been able to accumulate a surplus amount of funds which is to be used on future allotment projects, match-funding some capital expenditure and beyond.

Collection of Rents

Despite initial problems with payment, the collection of rents has been successful due to the chase procedure carried out by the ASA. 100% of society rents have been paid and 93% of direct-managed sites equating to £669 outstanding. Overall collection stands at 98.5%. Most of the outstanding amount has either been credited, with good reason, or resulted in the termination of the tenancy. There is still a small amount that is being chased by the ASA.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

Information

The ASA found that some of the information held by RMBC was out of date. Some of the maps given did not reflect the current layout of some sites/plots so were incorrect. This also related to some of the information on the management system, Colony. Tenants details were also out of date as RMBC had not been informed of the changes by the tenant, such as change of contact details or wishing to give up their plot.

Invoice Payments

Some tenants found paying invoices difficult as the RAA does not have the same payment facilities as RMBC. This meant that some people could not pay at the Post Office. This payment method has now been resolved. Some tenants were also unable to pay via online banking as they did not use it or were reluctant to send payments this way. There were tenants who also wanted to pay by monthly payments. This was possible but they would need to set up a standing order with their bank. This was not possible for some tenants due to not having online banking and being unable to visit a bank in person due to self-isolation and branches being closed. Overall, over 97% of rental payments were submitted.

Coronavirus Pandemic

The pandemic had both a positive and negative effect on the allotments and the RAA. During the first lockdown, the ASA was unable to visit sites due to childcare. This meant that site viewings could not be done. It also meant that the planned improvement projects had to be put on hold until government restrictions allowed for people to be able to work. Any vacant plots were left unattended which resulted in them becoming overgrown. On a positive note, people who were furloughed or those who had to work from home had more time to spend at their allotment so some sites saw a great improvement in cultivation and sites were busier than they had been for a number of years. Unfortunately, there were a small number of plot holders who were unable to visit due to self-isolation.

Distrust of tenants / societies

The general consensus of the allotment service provided by the Authority was not particularly favourable. This opinion was unfortunately transferred to the RAA. Some tenants did not think that the RAA could make the allotments any better than the current provision based on past neglect and decline. The RAA continuously reassured any tenants who questioned this. It has been found that in some cases, the tenants who are long-standing are reluctant to change. It was found that some tenants did whatever they wanted on sites – fly-tipping on other plots and entering other gardens without permission. The RAA have worked towards reminding all tenants of what the allotment rules are.

Difficulty with transfer of utilities/contracts

Due to the way the water bills have been set up with RMBC, the ASA found it difficult to obtain information regarding water charges. The sites with water were supposed to be transferred to the RAA but this was not the case. This caused a delay in calculating water charges to go on rental invoices, thus invoices going out later than planned.

The grounds maintenance contract with RMBC was continued for 2020 as finding another contractor wasn't possible due to covid. Taking on this contract identified that the work done was not done to a high standard and sites / tenants reported that this has been the case for some time. This issue has been raised with the relevant Officers.

Communication

Communication from tenants has been difficult. There is a lot of 'hearsay' on the sites and messages get passed round between tenants. Rather than contacting the RAA direct, they choose to listen to others who may not necessarily have the correct information.

Summary of Work Completed

<u>Site</u>	<u>Work Completed</u>
Avenue Road	Clearance of derelict areas to put back into cultivation Clearance of parking area to create more parking space
High Street	Clearance of Fly-tipped areas Clearance and rotivation of plots Repair of damaged water pipe
Barnsley Road	Removal of 25 fridge carcasses used as raised beds left by a past tenant
Herringthorpe Valley Road	Repair of damaged water pipe
Greasbrough	Leak detection survey and repair of 3 water leaks onsite Repair of vandalised gate lock
Vicarage Field	Removal of asbestos garage
Various sites	Removal of asbestos

<u>Skips provided to:</u>	
Vicarage Fields	Greasbrough
Kimberworth Park	Broom Valley Old
Queen Street South	Clough Bank
Avenue Road	Moor Road
Barnsley Road	Wharf Road

Complaints Summary

REPORTED BY	SITE	ISSUE / COMPLAINT
Site Secretary	Clifton	Asbestos on site
Tenant	Rectory Field	Site not secure due to gap in fence and neighbouring gate being secured by a tie-wrap
Tenant	Greasbrough	Shed set on fire on site – gate lock had to be cut off
Resident	Lowfield Ave	Vine from site encroaching into resident's garden on covering their shed roof
Tenant	Greasbrough	Tenant wanted to move plots due to intimidation from other tenants
Secretary	Clifton	Tenant trespassing on plots and questioning tenants about not following procedures
Resident	High Street	Bonfires causing nuisance to nearby residents
Resident	Broom Valley New	Trees at the back of site growing into resident garden
Resident	Broom Valley New	Resident complained that tenants are intimidating them. Had work done on house which spilled into allotment which the tenant was not happy about
Resident	Rectory Field	Cockerel Noise Nuisance
Resident	Psalters Lane	Bonfire nuisance
Tenant	Clifton	Concern about new secretary being appointed without a site meeting and also someone deliberately putting nails in people's tyres on car park.
Resident	Psalters Lane	Bonfire nuisance complaint
Resident	Vicarage Fields	Brambles growing through fence blocking off access to back of houses – tenants have thrown brambles into the alleyway.
Tenant	Greasbrough	Shed been burnt down – arson – 2 nd time this year – thinks being targeted
Tenant	High Street	Other tenants dumping rubbish at the end of his plot where rubbish from his plot is currently sitting
Not specified	Greasbrough	Tenants having parties and smoking cannabis
Resident	Rosehill Park	Bushes / brambles growing into resident's garden
Tenant	High Street	Found used needles on plot
RMBC Enforcement	Rosehill Park	Complaint been sent to RMBC regarding fire and noise nuisance from the site (nothing reported to the RAA)
Tenant	Clifton	Concerns about the way the society / site is being run
Tenant	Moor Rd	Flooding on plot – fruit trees ruined and attracting mosquitos
Resident	Rectory Field	Cockerel is still causing noise nuisance.
Tenant	Greasbrough	People who have been using plot 45 to store scrap metal have cut the lock off / damaged gate to gain access.
Resident	Clough Bank	Overgrown trees on allotment have brought down a boundary fence
Resident	Rectory Field	Seen rats in her garden, coming from allotments
Site Secretary	Queen Street North	Site has been broken into – number of gardens / sheds been damaged.
Tenant	Avenue Rd	Tenant using plot to store scrap metal
Tenant	South Street	Small section of fence missing allowing access from outside
Site Secretary	Herringthorpe Valley Rd	Tenant has been digging up a dockleaf and damaged a waterpipe
Resident	Rosehill Park	Tree/bush with sharp spikes is growing through fence.
Site Secretary	Queen St South	Tenant's husband is removing items from a soon-to-be vacated plot and leaving it in a mess.
Tenant	High Street	2 break-ins. Pigeons been stolen and lock cut off plot.
Tenant	St Leonard's	Car park is overgrown and needs attention
Site Secretary	Barnsley Rd	People getting onto site over the wall where the building has been knocked down.
Resident	Greasbrough Scrooby St	Complaint about fires – black smoke.
Resident	Psalters Lane	Rat problem on site

Directors Attendance

Directors: Chair – Councillor Brian Steele
 Secretary – Jack Taylor
 Treasurer – Al Dean
 Vice Chair – John Palmer
 Mohammed Suleman
 Mick Hirst
 Councillor Emma Hoddinott

	Cllr Brian Steele	John Palmer	Jack Taylor	Al Dean	Mohammed Suleman	Cllr Emma Hoddinott	Mick Hirst	John Callaghan	Mike Farrell
06.01.20	1	1	1	1	1				1
20.01.20	1	1	1	1	1				1
03.02.20	1	1	1	1	1				1
17.02.20	1	1		1	1	1			1
16.03.20	1	1		1	1	1			
Break in meetings due to covid – following meetings taken place on Zoom									
11.05.20	1	1		1					1
26.05.20	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
08.06.20	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
22.06.20	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
06.07.20	1	1	1	1			1	1	
20.07.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
03.08.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
07.09.20	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	
28.09.20		1	1	1	1		1	1	
12.10.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
26.10.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
09.11.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
23.11.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
07.12.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
21.12.20	1	1	1	1	1		1		
Total Attendance	19	20	17	20	18	2	14	6	8
% Attendance	95	100	85	100	90	10	100	46	89

Policy Review and Amendments

The Board of Directors have reviewed the current policies and have proposed the following amendments:

Tenancy Agreement:

New clause to be added to give new tenants a probationary period – the following proposed as new clause 3.1 – (current clauses 3.1 to 3.3 to be renumbered 3.2 to 3.4).

Add new clause as 9 Transfer of tenancy – (current clauses 9 to 11 be renumbered 10 to 12).

Allotment Rules:

2.1 – Insert new clause regarding perimeter fences.

9.1 – Confirming a specified size for buildings in the existing clause.

Code of Conduct:

Directors details amended.

Section 3 – clause added regarding director intentions if meetings are missed without notification.

Financial regulations:

Section D – Buying Good and Services – obtaining quotes of over £500 from 3 sources added.

I -Insurance – this section will be updated once the legal process is finalised.

Section to cover Internet banking protocol to be added once the facility is fully confirmed with Co-Operative Bank.

Standing Orders:

15 – Proper Officer confirmation – this has been amended to state the ASA as the Proper Officer.

16 – Proper Financial Officer confirmation – this has been amended to state the ASA as the Proper Financial Officer.

16C – Finance – The RAA Financial regulations should also be considered in relation to the financial controls and management of the Alliance has been added.

18 – Staff Handling Matters – added policy on the employment and line management of the ASA.

These can all be found on the website for your perusal.

Future Plans

The table below summarises the work required as identified on each site by asking for 'wish lists' and visiting the sites. The RAA endeavours to carry out all required works, where appropriate, using the capital expenditure budget, rental revenue and sourcing outside funding. Other areas of improvement for all sites include water conservation, increased security and re-instating of unlettable plots. Better site management in terms of grass/hedge cutting, waste removal and pest control will also be considered.

<u>Avenue Rd</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track / Path improvement Barrier Tree removal Clubhouse / toilet block Water supply 	<u>Barnsley Rd & Wet Moor Lane</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track / Path improvement Notice boards Change uncultivable plot to storage area Compostable toilet Pipe / tap replacement 	<u>Vicarage Fields</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turning circle at bottom of site
		<u>Clifton</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace parts of missing fence Top Path improvement Clear unusable area
<u>Broom Valley Old</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path from top to bottom of site, and top gate (visually impaired tenants) Path at bottom entrance of site 	<u>Broom Valley New</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve car parking area Clear 'market garden' area and put into use 	<u>Herringthorpe Valley Rd</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path from top to bottom of site
<u>Clough Bank</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put area of site back into cultivation Car parking area Pathway improvement 	<u>Hartley Lane</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be decided 	<u>Queen Street South</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded perimeter fence that borders Queen Street Clear overgrown plots
<u>Kimberworth Park</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be decided 	<u>Queen Street North</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be decided 	<u>Wharf Road</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water on site
<u>Wood Street</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piped water Secure fencing on the end plots 	<u>South Street</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace asbestos roof on garage Replace 8 rotting wooden shed doors Clear area inside of gate for car park Make presentable unoccupied plots Remove rubbish end of drive 	<u>Highfield Road – needs visiting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fence to residential boundary
<u>Greasbrough Scrooby St</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncultivable plots put back into use Notice board(s) 		
<u>Lowfield Avenue</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vine removal / creation of plot Notice board 	<u>High Street</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car park creation Track / Path improvement Uncultivable plots put back into use Notice board 	<u>Psalters Lane</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fence around top end to prevent access for fly-tipping Plots put back into use – trimmed / rotavated / Rubbish removed
<u>Rectory Field</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plots put back into use – trimmed / rotavated / Rubbish removed Car park / drive surfacing Notice board(s) 	<u>Moor Road</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drainage works to alleviate flooding Plots put back into use Path/entrance levelling / hardcore Notice board 	<u>Rosehill Park</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice board
		<u>St Leonard's Road</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice board

Finance Report

INCOME and EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - For the period from Inception 8.11.19 to 31.12.2020. (unaudited)

Information	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
New Account 8.11.2019 Inception.			£ -
RMBC Capital transfers		£ 22,991.83	
Sandymount	£ 1,552.86		
ASA	£ 15,503.23		
Rents received		£ 47,797.47	
returned	£ 66.26		
discount	£ 509.59		
Royal Mail PO Box 819. x 2	£ 547.50		
Parker Rhodes Hickmott - Solicitors fees deposit	£ 1,000.00		
GET Services Website	£ 1,000.00		
Colony	£ 1,454.92		
NSALG 2021 Subscription	£ 66.00		
ZOOM	£ 57.56		
Domain renewal	£ 14.39		
Microsoft	£ 45.12		
Intuit	£ 177.60		
Telephone & insurance (Tesco)	£ 269.78		
Office Costs ASA			
Stationery & office equipment			
incl Computer battery	£ 1,035.93		
HP Laser Printer	£ 210.83		
Postage Stamps	£ 825.00		
Pettycash & sundries	£ 157.52		
Security 2 x CCTV cameras	£ 191.50		
Skips TKL x 9	£ 1,755.00		
Coral Design logo signs	£ 40.00		
Business Stream Water Scrooby	£ 654.89		
JT Sundry purchase. Padlock keys. Scrooby & High St	£ 158.70		
Information Commissioner x 2 registration	£ 80.00		
GMS Services. 2 x strim & rotavate, Rawmarsh	£ 240.00		
Stansfield Rawmarsh	£ 62.00		
S&R Services Avenue Road	£ 5,400.00		
Parkway Sheet Metal Gate @ Scrooby	£ 72.00		
L&N Waste High Steet	£ 1,200.00		
Aquaforce Scrooby	£ 180.00		
Pest Control Rosehill wasp nest	£ 49.00		
Balance c/f 31.12.2020	£ 34,577.18	£ 70,789.30	£ 36,212.12
<i>Please note that these accounts are currently not audited due to delays relating to covid. The audited account and statement will be distributed before the AGM.</i>			

Capital Expenditure

The Alliance was granted £100k capital expenditure to be spent on allotment improvements in 2020/2021. The following table outlines what has already been spent.

Site	Company	Job	Net Cost		VAT	Total Cost	
Various	Rhodes Asbestos	Asbestos removal	£	5,620.00	£ 1,124.00	£	6,744.00
Hartley Lane	KCM	Skips for polytunnel removal	£	812.50	£ 162.50	£	975.00
N/A	GET Internet	Website design	£	1,000.00		£	1,000.00
N/A	Printerland.co.uk	Printer for ASA	£	210.83		£	210.83
Avenue Road	S & R Services	Plot clearance / car park improvements	£	5,400.00		£	5,400.00
High Street	L & N Waste	Remove waste from top & bottom areas	£	1,200.00		£	1,200.00
Clifton	Parkway Sheet Metal	Install fencing	£	2,680.00	£ 536.00	£	3,216.00
Greasbrough	Lightmain	Fencing to correct encroachment	£	3,765.00	£ 753.00	£	4,518.00
High Street	Parkway Sheet Metal	Perimeter fencing	£	3,105.00	£ 621.00	£	3,726.00
			£	23,793.33	£ 3,196.50	£	26,989.83
			£	76,206.67	REMAINING BALANCE TO BE SPENT		

Summary

In summary, the first year of operation for the RAA has been difficult for a number of reasons. The covid-19 pandemic severely affected progress on site improvements due to lockdown restrictions. Board meetings had to be paused until the online facility Zoom was set up. Zoom has enabled the Board to still meet regularly and conduct business where possible. The transfer process hasn't always been smooth and there have been a number of obstacles to overcome.

Not being able to have meetings with tenants onsite has meant that the RAA has been unable to form relationships with some tenants but luckily there has been a number of tenants across most sites who have actively worked with the RAA during the year to help solve issues etc. This is much appreciated as the Alliance has been able to gain valuable knowledge about sites and how they operate.

From a financial point of view, the Alliance is in a very positive position having retained more surplus funds than expected. These funds can now be spent on projects on sites, alongside the Capital Expenditure work that has been planned. Research into outside funding streams has also been carried out so this can be considered.

Overall, 2021 should be a more productive year but there is a lot of work to do. The RAA will be working towards completing site improvements, establishing maintenance contracts and looking at other areas of improvement. Another focus will be utilising social media more, promoting what the allotments have to offer and therefore increasing interest and plot occupancy.

We also want to engage with tenants and societies more to ensure they are getting the best possible service. This will be looking at introducing new societies and re-instating them where possible.

Public Report
Improving Places Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 14 December 2021

Report Title

Findings of IPSC Spotlight Review on External Funding – 12 November 2021

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)

Katherine Harclerode, Governance Advisor
katherine.harclerode@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

To summarise findings from the IPSC spotlight review which met on 12 November 2021 to scrutinise external funding sources for regeneration and transformation.

Recommendations

1. That the findings and slide presentation be noted.
2. That the ambition of the service in submitting bids be commended.
3. That the feedback from the government regarding the Dinnington and Wath bids for Levelling Up Funds be circulated when available.
4. That the governance advisor liaise with the Regeneration Strategy Manager to coordinate upcoming scrutiny work on markets with a view to feeding into future bids involving markets.
5. That efforts to ensure Rotherham receives its fair portion of gainshare or “single pot” funds from the Mayoral Combined Authority be noted.

List of Appendices Included

A - Slide deck – Transforming Rotherham

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

Findings of IPSC Working Group on External Funding – 12 November 2021

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has submitted various bids for funding from a variety of sources to fund regeneration and transformation projects around the Borough. Several bids have been successful, while others have been denied. A presentation was requested to illustrate the status of bids and funding packages and the relevant projects that will be delivered.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Clarification was requested around Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) funding and assurances were requested that Rotherham receive its fair share of the money in these Sheffield City Region pots.
- 2.2 Clarification around plans for a new mainline station was also requested. Discussions were currently underway around a new station that would directly connect to places like Birmingham, making this a completely different offer than that which was currently available. Current conversations around transport are in motion to enable this station, and the Government has given assent.
- 2.3 Regarding the Levelling Up Fund, it was wondered if there were additional projects going on in the background which were also considered for bids. The service was continuing to do master-planning work in Dinnington and Wath so that when future funding is secured, these plans will be ready. The Maltby project had been deemed lower value, which meant it was not chosen in the end to receive this funding. Some projects that were not quite ready in time for this funding envelope. Gainshare bids and lining up local priorities will be crucial for those projects that have not been able to pull down funds from national government. The term in use for these plans is “blueprint,” and it was noted that the local blueprint planning will be prepared. “Gainshare” is the term for the single pot of funds designated for the Sheffield City Region.
- 2.4 Although it was not possible to speculate around the Dinnington and Wath projects, as far as deliverability, Members requested more information around bid suitability. In other words, were these projects ever likely to be successful Government bids, or were they likely to have to rely on Gainshare and local funds from the outset? Officers provided more information around the history of the projects, having been started from an early stage and prepared for submission via officers’ sustained and ambitious effort. The desire to submit three bids from standing start by June 2021 was acknowledged a risk. The ambition and drive had been there, however, and the view was that it was worth trying. The initial round had used gainshare funds, but the government was going to allocate £125,000 for the second round, which had not been available in the first round.
- 2.5 Officers provided details of an upcoming feedback session that had been agreed, which affords until the springtime to respond to the feedback and prepare the projects further. With the feedback, it was hoped that the really strong bid will result in round two. The feedback which will be delivered to the

service in the week commencing 13 December, was not available in time to be appended to this report but will be provided to Members when it becomes available.

- 2.6 Clarification around active travel locations was requested to be included in the full Active Travel update report coming to IPSC in spring 2022.
- 2.7 Members observed that physical infrastructure alone will not bring about “levelling up”; rather, real advancement and growth requires an array of factors linking together to achieve this, including for example, education and connectivity.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The discussion included some possible ways to strengthen bids in the next round including sharing with the service the outcome of upcoming spotlight review on markets.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The working group is effectively a consultation with Members, as elected representatives of the residents of Rotherham, around the ongoing efforts to secure external funding.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The timetable for implementing any recommendations from this report is a decision reserved to the directorate that houses the relevant services.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial or procurement implications beyond those described in the main sections of the report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Members have regard for equalities and human rights concerns in forming the recommendations summarised in this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications for emissions and climate change arising from this report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no implications for partners arising from this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Members have regard to the risks and mitigation factors associated with the services under scrutiny and have made recommendations accordingly.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Acting Head of Democratic Services

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TRANSFORMING ROTHERHAM

**IPSC External Funding Workshop
November 2021**

Future High Street Fund

The Council received confirmation in December 2020 that the Future High Street Fund bid had been successful, with an offer made of over £12m. This will be matched by the Council's contribution of over £16m. The funding bid was confirmed in May 2021 which will enable the Council to deliver on several key projects, including:

- Safe and Smart Streets - High quality public realm works (£419K)
- Riverside Gardens (pictured), a playful green space connecting Forge Island with the heart of the town providing recreational space for residents and visitors (£2.552m)
- The Markets Complex redevelopment, delivering an innovative space for enterprise, learning and culture, with a pioneering new flexible shared space for markets, a library and community hub, which is expected to start spring 2022 (£8.909m)
- The expansion and development of children's literacy charity, Grimm and Co., on Ship Hill (£780K)



Getting Building Fund

In August 2020, the Government announced £900m of funding across the country for the delivery of shovel-ready infrastructure projects, agreed with mayors and Local Enterprise Partnerships to boost economic growth, and fuel local recovery and jobs.

From a regional allocation of £33.6m Rotherham secured £6.686m towards the delivery of

- A new business centre (Century II) at Manvers (£2m)
- Capital works in the town centre masterplan new public realm works, acquisitions and demolitions at Riverside Precinct. (£2.18m)
- Transport improvements at The Whins (Greasbrough) (£2.5m)



Towns Fund

The Rotherham Towns Fund covers three areas of the borough (Eastwood, the town centre and Templeborough). This investment will link with other funding and developments (e.g. Forge Island, the markets and town centre housing) in delivering a set of six projects that will drive forward the long-term regeneration of Rotherham town centre and the surrounding area:

- **Eastwood (£2.85m)** – provision of larger houses and better connections to the Tram-Train and rail network
- **Riverside Residential Quarter (£3.39m)** – building on the existing developments on Sheffield Road and at Westgate Chambers
- **Guest and Chrimes Heritage (£4.5m)** – bringing the building back into use
- **Leisure and Cultural Quarter (£4.28m)** – linking the town centre and Forge Island, and providing further residential units
- **Templeborough Business Zone (£6.56m)** – linking into opportunities of new development and the proposed Tram-Train Station
- **Mainline Station (£10m)** – providing Rotherham with direct services to destinations such as Leeds and Manchester

Confirmation of an award of £31.6m was received from government in June 2021. The next stage will require full business cases for each project to be prepared over the coming months which will include wide ranging community involvement. A communications strategy to support the project is also currently in development.

The programme is funded by DLUHC and must be completed by March 2026.

Levelling Up Fund

Rotherham Council submitted three bids totalling almost £60 million. An announcement was made on the 27th October confirming two bids were successful as follows:

- Leisure Economy and Skills – £19.9m Major Attractions & Skills
 - Magna = £1.8m
 - Wentworth Woodhouse = £4.6m
 - Rother Valley Country Park = £5.5m
 - Thrybergh Country Park = £2.5m
 - Maltby Grammar School = £4.5m
 - Gullivers Skills Village = £1m
- Rotherham Town Centre - £19.5m Leisure & Cultural and Riverside Quarters
 - Canal Barrier = £2.4m
 - Strategic Acquisitions = £4.1m
 - Riverside Walk North = £1.8m
 - Riverside Walk South = £852k
 - Riverside Gardens = £3.4m
 - Water Lane Public Realm = £1.6m
 - TCF Upgrades = £3.4m

A further bid focussed on Dinnington and Wath and totalling £20m was unsuccessful. Feedback is awaited.

The programme is funded by DLUHC

Local Growth Fund

Nationally devolved funding to each MCA/LEP area

- Flood Defence works at Forge Island (£2.8m)

Additional MCA 2020-21 budgeted funding allocations from the local growth fund (LGF)

- Emergency Gainshare (revenue) (£1.085m)
- Strategic Acquisition (£3m)
- Century II Business Centre (match to GBF) (£1M)
- Towns Fund Accelerator (£350K)



Active Travel

The Council has secured money from the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund by Sheffield City Region, to deliver a number of schemes across the borough, including:

- **Frederick Street walking and cycling route** - Improved layout and landscaping will allow it to be used by cyclists and pedestrians, making journeys in and around the town centre by bike quicker and easier
- **Forge Island footbridge** - The existing footbridge across the River Don will be replaced with a new pedestrian bridge. This will provide a high-quality walking route between the town centre, train station and the Forge Island leisure development
- **Rotherham to Tinsley walking and cycling route** - Proposed improvements on Westgate and the A6178 Sheffield Road will make walking and cycling between Tinsley and the town centre – and its public transport links – easier and more pleasant.
- **Magna Tram-Train Stop** - Proposed new stop to connect Templeborough to Rotherham town centre and increase catchment from Sheffield.



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Public Report
Improving Places Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 14 December 2021

Report Title

Work Programme Update

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)

Katherine Harclerode, Governance Advisor
01709 254532 or katherine.harclerode@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

To provide an update on the Work Programme of the Improving Places Select Commission.

Recommendations

1. That the report and proposed schedule of work be noted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Governance Advisor in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair to make changes to the schedule of work as appropriate between meetings, reporting any changes back to the next meeting for endorsement.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Work Programme – Improving Places Select Commission

Background Papers

Agendas of Improving Places Select Commission during the 2020/21 Municipal Year
Minutes of Improving Places Select Commission during 2020/21 Municipal Year

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

IPSC – Work Programme Update**1. Background**

- 1.1 The remit of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) is to undertake scrutiny activity in respect of all matters pertaining to the borough of Rotherham as a place. In broad terms, this remit relates to business and economic development, employment, emergency planning, environment, housing, climate change, leisure, culture and tourism, transport and highways, as well as regulatory services such as trading standards and environmental health. The breadth of functions and services that fall within the Commission's remit is significant.
- 1.2 The way in which the Commission discharges its scrutiny activity is a matter for itself, having regard to the provisions of the Constitution and any direction from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The IPSC has chosen to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work.
- 1.3 The IPSC has eight scheduled meetings over the course of 2021/22, representing a maximum of 20 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 2.5 hours per meeting. Members therefore must be selective in their choice of items for the work programme. The following key principles of effective scrutiny are considered in determining the work programme:
 - Selection – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.
 - Value-added – Items had to have the potential to 'add value' to the work of the council and its partners.
 - Ambition – the Programme does not shy away from scrutinising issues that are of greatest concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.
 - Flexibility – The Work Programme maintains a degree of flexibility as required to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration during the year and to accommodate any further work that falls within the remit of this Commission.
 - Timing – The Programme has been designed to ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, its findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. The Work Programme also helps safeguard against duplication of work undertaken elsewhere.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Members are required to review their work programme at each meeting during the 2021/22 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of the borough.
- 2.2 A revised draft of a work programme for Improving Places Select Commission is appended to this report.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Members are recommended to discuss potential areas of scrutiny work to be added to the work programme.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The work programme is subject to consultation with the Chair and Members of the IPSC. Regular discussions take place with Cabinet Members and officers in respect of the content and timeliness of items set out on the work programme.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The decision to develop a work programme is a matter reserved to the Commission and will be effective immediately after consideration of this report.
- 5.2 The Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Head of Democratic Services) is accountable for the implementation of any decision in respect of the Commission's work programme. The Governance Advisor supporting the Commission is responsible on a day-to-day basis for the Commission's work programme. Members are recommended to delegate authority to the Governance Advisor to make amendments to the programme between meetings.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
- 7.2 The authority of the Select Commission to determine its work programme is detailed within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Responsibility for Functions parts of the Constitution. The proposal to review the work programme is consistent with those provisions.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people or vulnerable adults arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Whilst there are no specific equalities implications arising from this report, equalities and diversity are key considerations when developing and reviewing scrutiny work programmes. One of the key principles of scrutiny is to provide a voice for communities, and the work programme for this Commission has been prepared following feedback from Members representing those communities.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no implications for CO2 emissions or climate change arising from this report. Members will have regard to the Climate Emergency when selecting potential items for scrutiny.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The membership of the Commission includes co-opted members from RotherFed who contribute to the development and review of the work programme. Where other matters are being considered for inclusion on the work programme, relevant partners or external organisations are consulted on the proposed activity and its timeliness.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Acting Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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Improving Places Select Commission - Work Programme 2021/22 Municipal Year

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
29 June 2021	Initial Work Programme 2021/22
	Aids and Adaptations Tenant Scrutiny Review
20 July 2021	Rough Sleeper Strategy Update
	Revised Work Programme 2021/22
7 September 2021	Cold Spaces
	Flood Alleviation Update
	Bereavement Services Annual Report
2 November 2021 (Reports 22 October)	Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report
	Progress on Library Strategy and Action Plan
November/December 2021 Spotlight Review	External Funding for Regeneration and Development
14 December 2021 (Reports 3 December)	Planning White Paper
	Rotherham Town Centre Update
	Allotments Self-Management Update
	Outcomes from External Funding Spotlight Review
January/February 2022 Spotlight Review	Cultural Strategy (with Improving Lives Select Commission)
1 February 2022 (Reports 21 January)	Environment Bill – Waste Management
	Housing Strategy
	Fly Tipping Update
March 2022 Spotlight Review	Market Service – Recovery and Future Engagement
22 March 2022 (Reports 11 March)	Planning White Paper
	Active Travel Update
	Clean Air Zone Update
	Highways Service Update

	Outcomes from Cultural Strategy Spotlight Review
19 April 2022 (Reports 8 April)	Re-deployable CCTV Update
	Tree Management Strategy Update
	Antisocial Behaviour Policy Update
	Outcomes from Market Service Spotlight Review
April/May 2022 Spotlight Review	Housing Repairs Service Review

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HOUSE KEEPING TIPS

- Meeting rooms and the Council Chamber will be sanitised before and after every meeting.
- Follow the one-way systems in place.
- Only one person (and their carer) should use a lift at a time.
- You're advised to take LFD tests at home, regularly if you don't have symptoms.
Visit the Council's website for details of where and how to get free LFD tests.
- If you have any **symptoms of COVID-19**, you must self-isolate at home and book a PCR test. **Visit the Council's website for details of how to book a PCR test.**

Further information about COVID-19 can be found at
www.rotherham.gov.uk/coronavirus

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