

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

- Date and Time :-** Thursday 19 January 2023 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 meeting held on 16 November 2022 and 1 December 2022 (Pages 5 - 21)

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 16 November 2022 and 1 December 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 23 January

2023. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

6. Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres (Pages 23 - 42)

To consider a report recommending an in-sourced delivery of customer facing sites and facilities, with these being supported by contracted haulage and disposal when the current Household Waste Recycling Centre contract expires in October 2023.

Cabinet Portfolio: Transport and Environment
Strategic Directorate: Regeneration and Environment

7. Rothercard Review (Pages 43 - 102)

To consider a report outlining the findings of the review of the Rothercard scheme and changes identified to deliver an improved Rothercard scheme.

Cabinet Portfolio: Social Inclusion
Strategic Directorate: Finance and Customer Services

For Discussion/Decision:-

8. Medium Term Financial Strategy Update

To considered a presentation from the Strategic Director of Customer Services and Finance.

For Information/Monitoring:-

9. Work Programme (Pages 103 - 104)

To consider the Board's Work Programme.

10. Work in Progress - Select Commissions

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

11. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 January 2023 - 31 March 2023 (Pages 105 - 114)

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023.

12. Call-in Issues

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

13. Urgent Business

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

14. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2023 at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall.

Sharon Kemp.

**SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.**

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 16 November 2022

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

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

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

100. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 12 October 2022 be approved as a true record.

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

102. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

103. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items on the agenda.

104 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOL

The Leader introduced the report and highlighted that the new Corporate Safeguarding Protocol was a framework for the Council to ensure that safeguarding was embedded across all services and staff and Councillors were aware of their responsibilities.

The report outlined the duty of the Council to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults. A range of development interventions, procedures and good practice were in place to ensure that every service and employee can demonstrate that they understood their responsibilities in respect of these safeguarding duties.

The Chief Executive cited the outcomes of the recent Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) which judged Children and Young People's Services as "good". She noted that the support of the whole organisation was needed to achieve this standard.

The Chair invited questions from the Board. It was noted that the report

listed fundamental rights that should be afforded to children and young people and reflected in the way that services work with them. It was outlined that the expectations cited arose from a piece of work with children and young people, however, the principles also extended to adults.

Further details were sought to establish what changes had been made to the refreshed protocol. It was outlined that there was a commitment to ensure that individual responsibilities and accountability for safeguarding were clarified and more focussed. The Chief Executive referred to the examples cited in her introduction which also included closer monitoring of e-learning activity.

An example was given of a safeguarding issue involving a local adult resident and the difficulties in seeking support. The Chief Executive asked that further discussions take place outside the meeting to establish the circumstances.

Clarification was requested to establish the frequency of reviews of criminal record disclosures (“DBS check”). It was explained that there was a three-year rolling programme of review for roles requiring enhanced checks, with basic checks taking place at the point of employment.

It was acknowledged that the report showed a journey of improvement across the Council. Assurance was sought about the process of transition from children to adult services. The Assistant Director for Children’s Safeguarding outlined that the process was well developed between services for those children receiving support who will have assessed needs as adults.

In addition to the Ofsted judgement of “good”, further details were requested on what additional measures were in place to benchmark performance. It was highlighted that performance was monitored on a continuous basis. This process included close monitoring of a suite of performance measures; participation in regional benchmarking groups and review and practice days. Ofsted also conducted an annual review and the authority was required to undertake a self-assessment.

Assurance was sought if staff were clear on what routes were available to raise concerns or seek advice if issues required escalation. It was explained that staff were actively encouraged to speak to colleagues in the MASH (children’s safeguarding hub) or First Contact (referrals to adult services) to establish what route was most appropriate. It was outlined that the Employee Survey questioned staff of their level of confidence to raise concerns and if improvements had been made year-on-year. This data was used alongside practice and learning sessions to feed into improvements.

The Chair welcomed the commitment to training and outlined that Elected Members were actively looking at ways to strengthening their own

commitment to learning and development in respect of safeguarding issues.

Resolved:

1. That the updated Corporate Safeguarding Protocol be approved by Cabinet.
2. That the outcome of 'Good' from the recent Ofsted Inspection of Children and Young People's Services be noted.

105. SEPTEMBER 2022/23 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The report set out the financial position at the end of September 2022 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year, based on actual costs and income for the first six months of 2022/23. Financial performance was a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework and essential to achievement of the objectives within the Council's policy agenda. This was the third financial monitoring report of a series of monitoring reports for the current financial year.

As of September 2022, the Council estimated an overspend of £18.2m for the financial year 2022/23. Whilst the core directorates services had a forecast year-end overspend of £8.1m on the General Fund, there was £10.1m of estimated unbudgeted cost resulting from the wider financial impact of the war in Ukraine, inflation, energy price increases and the impact of the 2022/23 pay award, costs that the Council could not have projected within its Medium Term Financial Planning. These additional financial challenges have been factored into the current forecast following a review of the impact of these pressures on the current year and Medium-Term Financial Planning. It was noted that at the time of publication, the local government settlement had not been announced.

The Leader introduced the report, highlighting that although the revenue position had worsened since it was last reported, action was being taken within directorates to address the overspend in the revenue budget. Assurance was also given that careful consideration was given to capital expenditure and progress on capital projects.

The Chair thanked the Leader for his introduction and opened the report for questions.

Further clarification was sought to establish what was being considered to achieve savings and the potential impact of these on staff and services. The Leader confirmed that all staff were invited to identify savings and efficiencies. There was a programme of measures outlined in the report to mitigate in-year pressures. In addition, he noted that in the short term, recruitment to some vacancies had been temporarily delayed. Other measures considered included deferring professional accreditation to the following year. However, given the significant budget challenges, the

Council may have to consider if it could no longer afford to support some activities.

Details were sought on the use of the Homelessness Rough Sleepers Initiative Grant. It was highlighted that the authority had a good track record of accommodating rough sleepers however, the focus of this work was to ensure that people were supported before they become street homeless. The Chief Executive noted that there was also a challenge supporting people to find secure accommodation, however, staff were in place to do this.

In the respect of the overspend and budget pressures, it was asked how Rotherham compared with similar authorities, noting that that it should be recognised that this was a national issue. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services confirmed that a number of councils were reporting significant overspends and a corresponding impact on services. She highlighted prudent assumptions had been made in setting the Council's budget however, a large proportion of the pressures were due to external factors outside the control of the authority. It was anticipated that there would be an improvement in the October forecast as controllable overspend was managed. December's monitoring report would inform budget setting proposals.

A view was expressed that the funding gap was not caused by the Council being imprudent or irresponsible with its finances. The steps taken to build adequate reserves would allow the Council to mitigate some of the impact. Clarification was sought to establish if action was being taken by the Local Government Association to raise concerns with the Government. The Leader confirmed that this is the case. The Leader noted that a substantial proportion of the £8m forecasted pressures could be attributed to placement costs for looked after children. Steps to reduce these pressures had been considered by the committee previously. It was noted that other authorities were facing similar pressures with social care costs.

Details were sought about the impact of the war in Ukraine on the budget. It was outlined that the pressures were linked largely to energy costs and inflation, rather than the costs associated with the refugee support programmes.

Clarification was sought if the Council's asset based was being reviewed to look at income generation, particularly in light of greater number of staff adopting hybrid working patterns. Details were also sought if any capital projects could be accelerated to reduce revenue spend, for example decarbonisation projects. It was stated that all options were being considered including longer term proposals which would require decision. It was highlighted that the focus was on what savings could be achieved this financial year to reduce the overspend without having an impact on service delivery.

It was reiterated that the over a number of years, the Council had made sure that it had adequate reserves to cover pressures. However, the pay award, rising inflation and energy costs could not have been foreseen. It was noted that the Council revenue budget ran to thousands of items, therefore line-by-line scrutiny by Members would be time-consuming and unhelpful. Officers summarised variations within the budget by Directorate clearly signposting Members to pressure and trends. It was difficult to forecast the level of Council Tax as Government announcements were awaited. However, there was an assumption of a 3% increase built into the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Resolved:

1. The current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £18.2m be noted by Cabinet.
2. That actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it is likely that the Council will need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2022/23 financial position be noted by Cabinet.
3. The updated Capital Programme be noted by Cabinet.
4. The proposed use of the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund be approved by Cabinet.
5. The proposed use of the Homelessness Rough Sleepers Initiative Grant be approved by Cabinet.

106. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Leader introduced the report which set out a review and update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26. It included technical updates and detailed the volatility in the UK and international markets caused by the war in Ukraine, high inflation and rising energy costs.

The MTFS sat alongside the Financial Monitoring reported considered by the Board. It was envisaged a significant financial overspend that would require the use of the Council's reserves to achieve a balanced financial outturn position for 2022/23 and was also likely for 2023/24. Government funding announcements were expected shortly. The MTFS made assumptions that the Government grant forecasts would be remain the same (as based on its three-year spending review); the level of anticipated resources from council tax and business rates and that planned council tax annual increases remained at 3%.

It was noted that progress was being made to achieve savings across services for example children services and home-to-school transport. It was reiterated that without the inflationary pressures, the Council would have been on course to achieve a balanced budget. The provisional settlement from Government was expected in December. The £10m gap would have to be managed through reserves in the short term.

It was observed that without the final settlement, it was difficult to anticipate what mitigations were required. It was clarified that the call on reserves would reflect the level of funding pressures. Whilst this currently stood at £18m, it was anticipated that this would reduce because of the actions taken within directorates. It was also outlined that planning assumptions were made on collection rates and council tax base which would include growth.

Resolved:

1. That the MTFS update be noted by Cabinet.
2. The requirement to use reserves in order to balance the Council's outturn position for 2022/23 be noted by Cabinet.

107. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - EARLY HELP STRATEGY

The Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) introduced the report. Members of the Commission met on 21 September 2022 to scrutinise the draft Early Help Strategy in advance of its submission to Cabinet. The report detailed the recommendations arising from this review and asked that they be submitted to Cabinet. The Chair of ILSC thanked officers and Members for their contributions. She observed that the approach taken in the undertaking this scrutiny activity was received positively.

In response to questions, it was outlined that the strategy included best practice from other local authorities. A commitment was given to providing further information about take-up of free school meals which would be circulated to the Board.

Resolved:

That the recommendations outlined be agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and decision.

108. SOCIAL VALUE - MID YEAR REPORT

At the meeting on 23 March 2022, OSMB received the Social Value Annual Report. This set out achievements over the previous year and recommended priorities for the year ahead. In considering the report and making recommendations to Cabinet, OSMB resolved to receive a mid-year report on progress. This report provided details of progress at mid-year.

The Leader introduced the report. He highlighted that in adopting this policy, the expectation was that the value of contracts awarded in line with Social Value principles would increase in Rotherham and the wider sub-

region. The Chief Executive outlined that the definition of social value and social responsibilities had been clarified on the website as a result of feedback from this Board.

The Chief Executive put on record her thanks to officers for their support in this initiative. It was noted that whilst this was a technical report, officers were keen to capture the 'stories' of the positive impact social value policies can have. For example, developing employment opportunities for young people. It was hoped that by doing illustrating the impact through these stories, it would influence other organisations to participate.

The impact of the policy was measured through the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) Framework. The Council had selected those measures which will have a positive impact on the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Rotherham community.

The Chief Executive gave a brief overview of progress since the previous report was submitted. This included analysis of local spend, supporting voluntary sector and community groups and the launch of a toolkit to ensure that staff have a good understanding of the social value principles and were able to measure impact. A network has been developed to share learning, intelligence and gaps. Through this work, collaboration with the business sector had taken place.

It was noted that the principles underpinning this project were longer term and the outcomes may take time to be realised. Work was underway to identify opportunities to demonstrate the impact of social value across the thousands of contracts the Council held to get more impact from the money it spent locally.

Prior to opening this item to questions, the Chair put on a record her thanks to the Head of Procurement for her contribution to the recent spotlight review of arrangements to tackle modern slavery.

She invited questions from the Board. In response to a question about engagement of local providers, it was outlined that this was done through various means including market engagement, working through the Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RIDO) and for lower value activities, internet searches. This took place with the Borough and across the South Yorkshire footprint, using local intelligence to raise awareness of contracts to local businesses. It was explained that for contracts under £10,000 at least one quote should be from a Rotherham based supplier.

Clarification was sought on how the social value policy addressed deprivation in wards. It was noted that the Boston Castle ward had seen greater investment because of town centre improvements, however, it was questioned if local residents directly benefited in terms of alleviation of deprivation (for example were engaged as contractors or employed directly as a result of social value initiatives).

The Chief Executive outlined that the Council wanted to use its spending to benefit Rotherham. It was acknowledged that at the moment it was difficult to illustrate these wider benefits in terms of precise number of jobs, skills development or the impact of projects in specific areas. However, through the work being undertaken with businesses, more examples will come through of tangible benefits to show the real impact for the Borough. It was noted that the Council was further ahead in developing this policy compared with many other authorities.

Further details were sought of the number of contractors from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities and how a “market-place” can be facilitated with contractors who do not usually engaged with the Council. It was outlined that there were market engagement events and contractors were encouraged to contact the procurement team for support.

A request was made for regular progress reports to be submitted about the impact of local projects and how these could benefit the wider economy. An example was given of project that had engaged local sub-contractors and was using locally sourced materials.

Details were sought of the work underway to engage with the local Chamber of Commerce and businesses, parish councils and the use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn. It was confirmed that this was ongoing work, citing examples of recent engagement events and activities, and was addressed in the action plan underpinning the policy.

It was noted that the level of investment had declined in one of the most deprived wards, further details were asked about how this could be improved. It was explained that this was due to a contract ending rather than lower investment. It was asked if details of events could be shared with ward councillors to disseminate to local networks to encourage suppliers to bid.

Resolved:

1. That the Social Value mid-year report be received.
2. That briefings on progress of social value linked projects be submitted to ward members on a regular basis.
3. That consideration be given to raising awareness of the Council’s social value commitments by:
 - i. facilitating local networks and information sharing events with small local businesses across the borough including those from under-represented groups;
 - ii. liaising with Parish Councils to publicise opportunities to local contractors;
 - iii. using social media platforms such as LinkedIn to widen local

business intelligence.

109. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme be approved.

110. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

An update was received from each of the Chairs of Select Commissions outlining current areas of work.

Improving Places Select Commission: a spotlight review on selective licensing was underway. The Nature Crisis review would be considered in the New Year.

Improving Lives Select Commission: an outline of the LGA sessions on “Effective Scrutiny of Children’s Services” was provided, along with feedback on the Commission’s work. The Chair thanked all who attended.

Health Select Commission: the Commission had considered a report on access to dental care. A spotlight review on oral health was to be undertaken.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

111. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 NOVEMBER 2022 - 31 JANUARY 2023

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be noted.

112. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

113. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

114. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 1 December 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Thursday 1 December 2022

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

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baum-Dixon and Wyatt.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
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115. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Collingham declared a personal interest as co-signatory of the original petition to improve road safety on Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane. He remained present for the Board's consideration of the issue and its resolution.

116. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

117. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items on the agenda.

118. PROGRESS UPDATE FOLLOWING PETITION - KINGSFORTH LANE AND CUMWELL LANE

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment introduced the report and outlined that it provided an update on the recommendations made by the Board when it first considered the petition on 11 May 2022. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport welcomed the progress made and noted that the Council had responded to the issues raised with urgency, with road safety on this stretch being subject to ongoing monitoring. He repeated his condolences to the families of the bereaved.

The Chair reiterated that Members of the Board should not refer to details of the inquests currently before the Coroner.

The report detailed road safety improvements which had been undertaken on Cumwell Lane and Kingsforth Lane over previous years. These measures included vehicle activated signs; improved signage; carriageway resurfacing; replacement of road studs and improvement to visibility.

At its meeting in May 2022, the Board endorsed the measures outlined to

improve road safety. Since June 2022, the Council had introduced additional intervention measures which included a 50mph speed limit; replacement signage; drainage improvements; new road marking and reflective verge markers; and clearance of vegetation and detritus. It was noted that the use of an average speed camera was not being proposed at this time. The speed limit had been reduced and this would be monitored.

Clarification was sought if the actions detailed in the report would improve road safety. In response, it was outlined that it was that in officer's professional opinion, the measures would be of benefit, although there was a caveat that factors such as driver's behaviour were difficult to mitigate. Officers committed to engage with petitioners to seek their views on the improvements.

The progress made was welcomed. It was noted that at the time of the speed surveys, the speed was reduced to 40mph because of extensive road works. Clarification was sought that additional surveys would be undertaken at points during the year to capture an accurate representation of road use and speeds. It was confirmed that a speed survey would be conducted following completion of the road works.

Clarification was sought if the work would be ongoing on road maintenance and vegetation clearance. It was confirmed that highways inspectors monitor the route daily and defects would be addressed as soon as possible. Feedback from the public was also welcomed. Signage was monitored frequently and landowners were contacted to ensure that visibility was maintained.

It was noted that parts of the road were often affected by mud. It was outlined that problems should be identified in daily inspections. There was a clear line of communication with the landfill site. Ward members were invited to report concerns should they arise.

In response to the question if the speed reduction to 50mph was sufficient, it was outlined that the road would be monitored over the next year. It was noted that the Council was required to follow Government guidance on speed limits. On the basis of available data, there had been a reduction in overall average speeds as a result of the measures taken.

In response to a query about how the Council could be more responsive regarding road safety issues before it progresses to a petition, it was outlined that there were regular reviews of road safety incidents, the outcomes of which are considered alongside national guidance. It was also noted that there was a neighbourhood programme to provide local feedback on road priorities.

It was stated that the success of these interventions were dependent of changing the culture of how people drive. An enquiry was made to establish if the Council participated in road safety education programmes.

It was outlined that the authority was a full, participatory member of the South Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership and that there was a comprehensive education programme targeted across all ages and demographics.

A commitment was made to analyse the speed data near to the landfill site to establish if it met the criteria for an average speed camera. It was thought that it was unlikely that the criteria would be met. Further clarification was sought if the Council was capturing data from speed activation cameras. It was noted that there was technology that could read number plates and issue warnings if infractions took place, however, it was thought that there would be a cost attached to this activity.

A request was made to have a ward member update, including details of enforcement activity if available.

Resolved:

1. That the current approach associated with the investigation and analysis of reported Personal Injury Road Traffic Collisions, together with the prioritisation of intervention measures aimed at reducing the number and severity of collisions taking place on the highway network be noted.
2. That further update of progress be submitted to Improving Places Select Committee in 12 months.
3. That a 'lessons learnt' report be circulated to members of IPSC and OSMB following the conclusion of the Coroner's hearing and/or related legal proceedings.
4. That the findings of interim speed surveys be shared with IPSC members in 6 months.

119. ANNUAL COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT 2021-22

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance, the Head of Policy, Performance and Quality, the Corporate Complaints Manager and officers from each directorate to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member introduced the report which covered the formal complaints and compliments received during the financial year of 2021/22. It was noted that the overall number of complaints had increased, although this was not yet at previous levels prior to the Covid 19 pandemic. It was outlined that complaints were important to the Council to ensure improvements can be made to the customer experience. Complaints helped the Council understand where things have not gone right, check that the right process were in place, apologise when mistakes have been made and learn from this to ensure that issues were rectified. Complaints were also an important measure of performance and that customers were treated fairly.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence gave a presentation to introduce the report, highlighting performance headlines over the past five years.

Trends in each directorate were also outlined. It was outlined that these trends and details of complaints were submitted to Directorate Leadership Teams (DLT) for monthly review and action.

Fewer complaints had been upheld, with the majority resolved at Stage1 which was in line with previous years' performance. Quality of service, lack of services or delays in services accounted for 73% of all complaints. There was a smaller number of complaints received at Stage 3, which demonstrated that the procedure was working effectively. It was also noted that there had been an increase in the number of compliments received, with Adult Care seeing the biggest increase.

An overview was given of learning to deliver better outcomes. Each complaint, regardless of whether it has been upheld, was reviewed by the relevant manager and DLT to identify areas of learning.

In respect of the current direction of travel, numbers of complaints were increasing. It was noted that there had been a slight decline in complaint responses, although this was still in line with a five-year average and Council plan target across directorate reflecting a return to pre-pandemic trends.

The Head of Policy, Performance, and Intelligence outlined the key actions for the year ahead. This included:

- improvements to services to ensure that the new regulatory requirements for Housing Services were met;
- learning and making improvements were captured;
- the right resources and links were in place to support the management of complaints and learning others;
- remedy requests by the Ombudsman were completed on time; and
- staff engagement with the compliments process was increased.

The Chair noted that the last time the Board had considered the Annual Compliments and Complaints Report (2019-20), she had raised concerns following comments from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) about Council delays in responding to its enquiries promptly. It was noted in the current report, the Ombudsman expressed disappointment in the Council's late response and that the same problem had been encountered. She was concerned that an issue raised previously did not appear to have been addressed and asked that the Cabinet Member investigated the matter. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this would take place. The Corporate Complaints Manager outlined the steps that had been put in place to ensure deadlines were met and understand the reasons why if a late response was made.

In the consideration of last year's report, it was raised that it was difficult to record compliments as it was on the same form as complaints. It was observed that this was still the case.

In respect, of the Ombudsman's comments, clarification was sought if managers were not responding to the LGSCO within timescales, how could Members have confidence that they were responding to resident's concerns promptly. Assurance was given that the delays were due to technical matters, however further investigation would be undertaken. It was noted that the LGSCO had suspended complaints during the pandemic and was clearing its backlog, leading to higher numbers coming through. The numbers of formal referrals to the LGSCO were a small minority of complaints.

It was outlined that the formal complaints process was subject to rigorous performance management, with weekly reporting to senior officers. It was stated that every effort was made to keep within timescales and maintain targets however, some issues were more complex which led to delays.

Clarification was sought about how surgery reports and complaints were classified. In response, it was outlined that ideally, resident's dissatisfaction should be resolved at the earliest possible stage through contact with the service. Assurance was sought that surgery reports could be treated as complaints if residents asked for this. It was confirmed that this was already the case, however, changes could be made to the casework form to signpost this option more clearly.

A view was expressed that future reports should include information from directorates about what issues received the most complaints, emerging trends, what action had been taken to address the complaints and its impact on the number of complaints going forward. It was also suggested that the report should reflect new thinking about what measures could be put in place to reduce the numbers of complaints and increase the number of compliments.

It was noted that complaints were driven by resident's concerns and fluctuated according to events. It was outlined that there was a target in the Council Plan relating to response times and new performance indicators would be introduced in Housing Services. It was noted that directorate trends were referred to in the body of the report.

In respect of Regeneration and Environment, the Strategic Director detailed that the highest number of complaints related to missed bins, trees and planning enforcement. Additional investments had been made to develop a 'bin app' to address queries regarding missed services and to help with complaints and casework relating to trees and shrubs.

The Director of Adult Care, Public Health and Housing indicated that his DLT examined trends regularly and that issues were flagged with operational managers. He echoed that it was disappointing to receive the

Ombudsman's response but processes had been put in place to address the concerns.

The Assistant Director for Housing confirmed that the service had a focus on complaints and staff sessions had been held to raise awareness. It was outlined that whilst response rates were improving, there was still a need to understand why delays occurred. It was noted that the number of compliments had gone up and staff were encouraged to have conversations with customers to encourage feedback.

The Assistant Director for Commissioning, Performance and Quality also indicated that complaints were subject to rigorous oversight at CYPS's DLT meetings. Responding to queries and complaints at an earlier point was a priority and work was underway to establish why responses were delayed.

The Strategic Director for Customer Services and Finance also confirmed that regular reports were submitted to her DLT to outline trends, for example complaints about advice given. Action was being taken to ensure that response times were met and senior officers were sighted on the overview to ensure that issues were addressed swiftly.

The feedback from directorates was welcomed as it gave an insight into key issues and directorate responses and responsibilities. It was felt that the comments on the format and content of future reports would be helpful. In respect of compliments, a view was expressed that the often the good work undertaken by staff went unnoticed, particularly in light of the challenges of responding to the pandemic. A view was expressed that the Council's achievements and response should be celebrated internally and this in turn, would influence interactions and communications with communities.

It was suggested that the first point of response was crucial in dealing with complaints. Assurance was sought that directorates understood how to engage with residents and strategies on how to de-escalate were disseminated to staff. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that a culture of openness was required to promote positivity, build confidence and encourage early resolution.

Citing the recent tragic events in Rochdale, it was noted national news may trigger a rise in complaints. A query was raised to establish if Housing Services had seen a rise in complaints about damp and mould issues. It was noted that Housing Services already received complaints about these issues, however, they anticipated that there may be more enquiries. There was ongoing communication with residents about damp and mould prevention. Data was also examined to identify trends across property types so targeted work can be undertaken to ameliorate the problem.

It was felt that the process of engagement and consultation should be

improved, as dissatisfaction with the consultation process often manifested itself as complaints later down the line. The Cabinet Member stated that the consultation framework was being refreshed and would be referred to this body for consideration in due course.

Resolved:

1. That the Annual Compliments and Complaints Report for 2021/22 be noted.
2. That comments on areas that require further improvement regarding complaints handling and reporting be provided.
3. That in the 2022-23 Compliments and Complaints Annual Report:
 - A focus be included on the themes identified in complaints, actions taken to remedy and an analysis if the actions have had an impact on the number of complaints received (relating to theme);
 - Key performance indicators relating to the service area and how these relate to complaints received in those areas be referenced; and
 - New thinking from other Local Authorities be outlined on how the number of compliments can be increased and number of complaints reduced.
4. That a report be submitted to this Board on the concerns referenced in the Ombudsman Letter and outlines what improvements have been made to related processes to address the issues raised.

120. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

121. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

122. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 14 December 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall.

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Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 23 January 2023

Report Title

Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Barry Connolly, Head of Environmental Services

Barry.connolly@rotherham.gov.uk

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene

sam.barstow@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The current Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) contract has been in place since October 2018 and is delivered in partnership with Barnsley and Doncaster Councils. In October 2023 the current contract expires, and officers have been working to explore the potential to continue to work in partnership to deliver this service. The negotiations have not been successful due to policy differences between the Councils and as a result, a range of options have been developed to continue the delivery of this statutory service after the current contract expires.

Options considered include the contracting out of the services, alongside a range of internal delivery models. There are significant complexities attached to developing an in-house service in what is a highly regulated industry. However, there are also a range of potential benefits in terms of new services and more flexibility in delivering existing services, to meet the needs of residents and the Council.

After collaborative consideration of the options across relevant Council departments, this report recommends an in-sourced delivery of customer facing sites and facilities, with these being supported by contracted haulage and disposal. In recognition of the complexities, this report further recommends the procurement of a delivery partner to

provide the HWRC service for up to three years, whilst also supporting the Council to develop and implement its in-house delivery model. In addition, haulage and disposal aspects of the contract will continue to be provided by the market beyond the in-sourcing of the front-end of this service.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve Option 3, which will provide for an in-sourced delivery of customer facing sites and facilities, with these being supported by contracted haulage and disposal, following an initial fully contracted service, and authorises the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment (subject to confirmation by the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services) to agree the final delivery arrangements and subject to Council approval through the budget process.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Previous Cabinet Report July 2022 -
<https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s136866/Item%2014%20-%20HWRC%20Cabinet%20Report%20Final%20v1.11.pdf>

Environment Act 2021 - [Environment Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/12/section/1)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
None

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres

1. Background

- 1.1 The Current Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Contract is due to terminate on 28 October 2023. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide HWRCs to residents within the Borough. Rotherham has 4 sites:
- Greasbrough - Car Hill, S61 4QL
 - Bramley - Lidget Lane, S65 4LY
 - Rawmarsh - Warren Vale, S62 7SS
 - North Anston - Magilla, Common Road, S25 4AH
- 1.2 The current contract is delivered in partnership with Barnsley Council and Doncaster Council. Following a Cabinet decision in July 2022, the Cabinet Member and relevant officers have been engaged with Barnsley and Doncaster Councils in order to develop the parameters for the future contract. There remained some key outstanding issues such as the weighting given to social value in the evaluation of tender submissions, with Rotherham Council seeking a higher weighting reflecting existing policy. In addition, the length of time for delivery of the contract and agreement to pay the Real Living Wage were also matters of ongoing negotiation with Rotherham seeking to ensure workers would be paid the Real Living Wage, again in line with the existing policy position. Ultimately, a shared policy position could not be reached and as a result the Council, through this report, is seeking to develop and implement options for delivery of a bespoke local HWRC service.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 In considering options for future delivery, officers have reconsidered the options presented within the Cabinet report dated 11th July 2022. The primary options remain the same, the Council could choose to deliver this service through a third party via a contract. Alternatively, the Council could seek to bring all, or parts, of the services in house.
- 2.2 As set out within the previous report, referred to above, the Council is committed to a number of key principles which will drive the future service offer. In particular these are areas such as increasing innovation in the re-use of materials, ensuring social value through any contracted provision and ensuring that all workers receive the Real Living Wage. In relation to ambitions such as increasing re-use, the Council is seeking to make the best use of resources available through initiatives such as re-use shops, which could include the potential for building skills and employability locally, supporting wider ambitions around training and employment. Additional flexibility in terms of general site management and the potential to create a commercial waste offer may also be beneficial in delivering future services, as well as the ability to effectively adapt service as the Environment Act 2021 and associated national strategies begin to be implemented.

- 2.3 In order to ensure thorough exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of the varying approaches and the costs associated, the Council has undertaken, with independent partners, an analysis of the options with a focus on the principles set out in the previous Cabinet report. The analysis focussed on a range of areas including (but not limited to) the ability to adapt to new legislation or changing demands, management of risk and staffing implications.
- 2.4 All of the options for future delivery will require capital investment in new equipment as well as signage and infrastructure works. Providing the capital directly will not only reduce costs, due to favourable interest rates available to the Council, but may also limit contractor uplift and provide the potential for recovering some value at the end of the operational life. It also allows for greater flexibility in future delivery, meaning the service could be brought in-house.
- 2.5 In relation to strengths, both in-house models of delivery scored higher (high is good). This is primarily due to the level of the control this would allow the Council to have which may be critical in responding to secondary legislation under the Environment Act 2021, allowing flexibility in use such as commercial operations and providing the greatest capacity to deliver enhanced social value or increasing reuse.
- 2.6 When considering the weaknesses, the in-house models of delivery scored lower (low is good). This is largely driven by issues such as a lack of competitive pricing through contracted provision, lack of flexibility to adapt to some of the key challenges on the horizon, or to align to Council priorities.
- 2.7 Conversely there are risks in bringing the service in-house, largely around experience and technical competencies, efficiencies of scale and in-sourcing risks, alongside general delivery. It should be noted that activities on HWRC sites can present safety risks due to the use of machinery, the processing of waste and the numbers of public visitors. In addition, the Council will need to develop expertise and experience it does not currently hold.
- 2.8 The table below provides an overview of the scores associated with the varying models. As can be noted, both in-house options (whether including or excluding haulage) scored highest. Option 1 is repeated as two different lengths of outsourced options were considered during the analysis with the three-year contract being discounted as the worst option.

	Strengths – Weaknesses	Opportunities-Threats	Total	Ranking
Outsourced 5 + 3 year (Option 1)	9	-3	6	3
Outsourced 3 year (Option 1)	-2	-3	-5	4
In-house excluding haulage and disposal	16	3	19	1

(Option 3)				
In-house including Haulage and disposal (Option 2)	16	3	19	1

- 2.9 With regards to the option of developing a contracted service provision, officers at all levels have remained fully engaged in the process supporting the planned procurement of the partnership contract. This includes market engagement, public consultation and the development of the detailed specification. This means the Council is able to relatively quickly adapt learning and documentation to support local delivery however, the scale of the task should not be underestimated.
- 2.10 In considering in-sourcing all or parts of the service, a number of challenges have been identified. A few examples of the areas of consideration are listed below, and each of these represents a significant programme of work, which will take time to deliver:
- Relevant Permitting
 - Training and Certification of Competent Staff
 - Infrastructure challenges on the sites
 - Staffing issues including Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) transfer arrangements
 - A range of procurements from physical assets to site services and IT systems
 - Health and Safety development of systems and safe working practices
- 2.11 Delivery against these varying demands would require the input of a range of Council services as well as external technical experts and is likely to be unachievable within the timescales prior to the existing contract expiring, without significant additional investment or diversion of a significant proportion of services such as the Waste Management Team, the Procurement Team, Health and Safety Team, IT and others. As a result, options for internal delivery are underpinned by the need for a short-term arrangement, via a contractor, for delivery of the services, as well as support for the Council to develop and implement an internal delivery model. This is set out in options 2 and 3.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1 – Contracted Provision

This option would seek to procure the full delivery of the HWRC service for the long term under an 8-year contract, which would allow the service to run until 2031.

- 3.2 The Council would lease the 4 HWRCs to the successful provider. The terms on which the provider is allowed to occupy the sites, including the provider's obligation as to use of the site, would be clearly documented. The contract would contain certain performance indicators and have obligations that the contractor is obliged to deliver. It would contain measures that would set out

when the contract could be terminated. A contracted service also allows for risk to be managed on the Council's behalf.

3.3 Option 2 – Full In-House Delivery (following an initial fully contracted service)

This option would seek to create a fully in-sourced service. This would mean the Council managing the sites and all associated activities. The operation of HWRCs can be separated into operation of the sites themselves, and then what happens to the waste after it is deposited. In terms of operating the sites, this requires permitting, as waste collection and disposal is a regulated activity. It would also involve employment and management of staff on the site, assets on the site and any risk and safe working practices associated with the site. With regards to disposal, this consists of two main aspects which are the haulage of material from the site and the subsequent processing of that waste (which may be disposal or recycling).

3.4 In order to deliver the haulage and disposal elements of the service, the Council would need to procure providers for the disposal of a large number of separate types of waste. Due to the relatively small tonnages of waste that the Council will collect, as compared to larger national businesses or larger Councils, it is likely to be significantly more expensive. In addition to the costs, the haulage and disposal of waste has little impact on the service delivery for residents, who are largely impacted by the way that the sites operate as opposed to the disposal of items, acknowledging residents will want to be assured as to the responsible processing and disposal of waste. Direct delivery would however benefit from full control over aspects such as emptying or moving of skips, which may support more effective operations on the site.

3.5 This option also acknowledges some of the challenges outlined in section 2.11 and 3.9. In order to address these challenges, the proposal is to procure a delivery partner for a period of up to three years. This delivery partner would be required both to deliver the HWRC service, for the duration of the contract, and support the Council to purchase the relevant assets and develop the relevant infrastructure and systems to deliver services in-house by the end of the contractual term.

3.6 Whilst this option would provide the technical support required to establish safe systems and working practices, there would still be a range of operational activities and procurements required in order to ensure the Council is ready to take over the service following the end of the contractual period. A large amount of this work relates to the front-end delivery of the services. If in addition the Council chose to in-source haulage and disposal as is proposed with this option, there would be around 30 types of materials which would require separate disposal procurements and in addition, safe working practices and procedures alongside the procurement or hire of Heavy Goods Vehicles and employing a number of drivers, which is an area the Council currently has difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

3.7 Option 3 (recommended option) – In-sourced delivery of customer facing sites and facilities, with these being supported by contracted haulage and disposal (following an initial fully contracted service)

This option would seek to in-source all the front-facing aspects of the delivery of HWRC sites. This would allow the Council direct control over the service delivery to residents, allowing for greater flexibility within the service, full control of policies and procedures and the ability to create innovation in the management of waste at HWRCs.

3.8 Again, this option acknowledges the challenges outlined in option 2 and section 2.11 and would therefore seek a short-term delivery partner to both deliver the HWRC service (up to a 3-year contractual period), whilst also purchasing the relevant capital assets, on behalf of the Council, and supporting the Council to develop systems and practices for the delivery of an in-house front-end service i.e., the operation of the HWRC sites.

3.9 Within this option, the contractor would provide haulage and disposals both for the initial contractual period (up to three years) and a further two years, providing a total contract length of up to five years (with an optional +2 extension, giving a total potential contract length of seven years). The suggested term is based on the initial contract period being focussed on the in-sourcing of the 'front end' service, therefore allowing a further two years to consider next steps in relation to haulage and disposal. The market for recycling commodities is relatively unstable however recycled materials do carry value, this combined with significant impending changes as a result of the Environment Act 2021 make it necessary to review the haulage and disposal within the five-year period to ensure the Council can achieve best value for money over the medium to long term. Offering a longer-term relationship with a supplier through the five-year total contract length is intended to increase the appeal to the market whilst also allowing the operational space for the range of changes required. Haulage and disposal elements of the contract would be based on a risk and profit share which is likely to deliver best value for money in the short term. This is the recommended option.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 A consultation was undertaken across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham to gauge resident satisfaction with the current HWRC provision, materials they would like to see introduced and any areas they believe could be improved. The consultation results showed that although residents are largely happy with the current HWRC service, they would most like to see improvements to the materials accepted at site and in particular accepting paint and increasing the reuse and repair. The other two areas residents would like to see improved are the size of the sites and the opening hours. A directly delivered service allows for the greatest capacity to respond to any changes required.

4.2 A market engagement exercise was also conducted as part of the work with Barnsley and Doncaster Councils. The market responded that they would

prefer at least an 8-year term, but most of the reasoning was to allow the appropriate time for the assets to depreciate. Contractors feel that material volatility is always a key risk across HWRC contracts, compounded by the upcoming changes in legislation. These changes will lead to the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme, Extended Producer Responsibility, and changes in kerbside collections, which are a direct result of the Environment Act 2021. As such they would expect any risk to be shared by the Council. Contractors highlighted the long lead in times for any new vehicles, plant machinery and equipment and advised these should be considered when putting the contract together. Additionally, contractors agree in working towards reducing carbon emissions and are firmly behind pushing reuse/repair and social value. They were asked about accepting and recycling paint, carpets and mattresses, which they were positive about.

- 4.3 In considering in further detail the Councils own options, an additional market engagement exercise has been undertaken in order to test the varying options with the market of providers. A total of 8 providers of waste services responded to the Council's market engagement exercise. All providers had an interest in working directly with the Council. Five of the providers would be interested in working with the Council to support developing an in-house delivery service, two further providers were more cautious, and all made comments on how this could best be achieved. Again, when considering interest in providing haulage and disposal for the Council five of the respondents were interested in providing this service and the same again in terms of interest in working with the Council under an in-sourced service delivery model. The market engagement does demonstrate an effective level of market interest which would support a competitive tender should the Council choose this option.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 As noted within the body of the report the contract will end in October 2023 by which point a new provision must be in place. Under the recommended option, it is proposed that procurement activity would commence in January 2023, which would allow the appropriate time for selection and mobilisation.
- 5.2 Concurrently with the initial contract period of up to three years, the Council would mobilise itself to deliver the front-end of the service in-house. This would become effective in October 2026. Subsequently, haulage and disposal options for future delivery would need to be in place by October 2028.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Council's net budget 2022-23 for the HWRC Service is £1.023m. The budget covers the payment to maintain the joint service with Barnsley and Doncaster. It was acknowledged in the previous Cabinet report in July 2022 that even remaining within the partnership, costs were likely to increase. In addition, the Councils further ambitions in areas such as increased re-use and commitment to the Real Living Wage will also increase costs, however, may positively impact on the management of recycling materials in the future

which may generate further income, whilst also allowing the Council broad flexibility in service delivery. The cost of each option is broken down in the following sections however the table below provides a high-level cost comparison.

Option	Total Cost £,000	+/- Vs Current Provision £,000
1 Fully Outsourced	1,180	157
2 Full In-House with initial 3-year contract	1,201	178 +56k after 3 years
3 In-house front facing delivery following a Contracted Provision (up to 3 years)	1,201	178 +44k after 3 years

- 6.2 The following cost assumptions are based on current prices for direct comparison, inflation will impact each model to a varying degree, however it is complex to project that forward within significant accuracy.

Option 1. Contracted Provision for 8 years.

It is estimated that this would cost approximately £730,000 for the management fee, £350,000 for haulage and £100,000 for loyalty bonuses. This represents a total cost of £1,180,000 an increase of £157k on the current contract and offers the cheapest option.

- 6.3 Option 2 Full in-house delivery following Contracted Provision.

The initial cost of £1.201m represents an increase of £178k on current contracts. The increases are management and haulage costs. This option also requires RMBC to purchase the capital equipment. The management fee is estimated at £750k due to the shorter term proposed than in option 1.

Following the 3 years contract the in-house option could then be operated on a cheaper basis owing to income from recyclables, no loyalty payments but increased overheads however, a further £123,600 would be needed after the 3-year period (offset by the increase of at least £67k income) This would increase to £1.257m after this period.

- 6.4 Option 3 In-sourced delivery of customer facing sites and facilities, with these being supported by contracted haulage and disposal.

Initial costs are as per Option 3; £1.201m per annum. After the contract period an in-sourced delivery system could see the HWRC's then run as above at a cheaper cost following the contract with the difference being haulage, however additional operatives would be needed meaning a further £123,600 would be required, offset in the same way as above (Option 2).

The cost of the service is £1.201m for 3 years increasing to £1.245m after this period.

6.5 The Capital costs associated with bringing the services in-house are estimated to be in the region of £2.4m. Capital purchases would be made through the contract associated with the recommended option, ensuring the contractor seeks best value for money.

6.6 As detailed throughout the report, all the varying options have associated procurement implications associated with them. The estimated contract value of the recommended option is in excess of the threshold contained within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) (“the Regulations”) and as such the procurement activity must be undertaken in compliance with the Regulations and the Council’s own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The Council is lawfully able to adopt any of the options put forward in the report. As stated above any procurements will need to be conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the FPPR. The necessary contractual arrangements will need to be concluded with third party providers to include all matters referred to within the report and all further matters to ensure successful operation of the HWRC sites and associated services.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment Regulations) 2006 (commonly known as TUPE) will apply to the insourcing/in house delivery of services. Employees would therefore transfer to the employment of the Council under TUPE, on their existing terms and conditions of employment.

8.2 Under TUPE, all liabilities of the ‘transferor’ (BDR Partnership) relating to employees transfer over to the ‘transferee’ (the Council). The Council would therefore inherit liability for any statutory rights, claims and liabilities of transferring employees. Any risks identified should be managed as part of the due diligence process.

8.3 Consultation and engagement would be undertaken with Trade Unions on any transfer of employees, including any proposed changes to working practices (TUPE measures), in line with normal human resources policies and procedures.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The Equality Impact Screening is attached as appendix one.

- 10.2 The service is already contracted out at present and procuring a new contract would be a continuation of the current provision. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council are legally obligated to provide the service and residents would only be affected if the service was not provided. Policies are in place to ensure that there is equitable service to all residents in the borough. In considering bringing the service in-house, a full review of site accessibility will be considered as part of the infrastructure works required.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The Carbon Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 2. As this is a procurement of an existing service there are no increases in terms of carbon emissions however, the contract and procurement will seek to reduce emissions by the service provider over the lifetime of the contract.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are no specific implications identified for partners.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There is the possible risk that no contractors bid for the HWRC contract due to an uncertain market and impending changes within the waste industry. This would leave the Council no option but to run the services themselves due to the statutory obligation to provide HWRCs to residents within the Borough. In order to mitigate this risk the Council has engaged in two market engagement exercises and has confirmed market interest. Any contract engaged will have appropriate levels of risk transfer. The procurement documentation will be robust with clear requirements and industry standard expectations.
- 13.2 There are a range of risks associated with the in-sourcing of the service, these will be managed through a stand-alone risk register for the project, should Cabinet choose to progress with an in-house delivery model. There are also risks as a result of secondary legislation under the Environment Act 2021 and an in-house model will allow the Council to adapt to these changes more effectively.

14. Accountable Officers

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene
Barry Connolly, Head of Environmental Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	09/01/23
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	03/01/23
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	21/12/22

Report Author: Barry Connolly, Head of Environmental Services
Barry.connolly@rotherham.gov.uk

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

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: Household Waste Recycling Centre contract procurement	
Directorate: Regeneration and Environment	Service area: Community Safety and Street Scene
Lead person: Sam Barstow	Contact: sam.barstow@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provide places for householders to deposit their waste materials as a statutory service at Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) throughout the borough. The current contract ends in October 2023 and the procurement process for the new contract has commenced. This screening document is to ensure that the procurement of the service will result in service provision that is equitable to all.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity
All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees,

or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

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

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

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

The service is already contracted out at present and procuring a new contract would be a continuation of the current provision. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council are legally obligated to provide the service and residents would only be affected if the service was not provided. Policies are in place to ensure that there is equitable service to all residents in the borough.

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?**
- **Key findings**
- **Actions**

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:

Lead person for your Equality Analysis
(Include name and job title):

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Andrew Horner	Waste Officer	06/06/2002

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	31/11/22
Report title and date	Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres 23 rd January 2022
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	

Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	1/12/22
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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?		Dependant on who wins the contract they may need/want to have an office within the borough to manage the HWRC more effectively		This is variable dependant on location and type of building required.	Officers will also request regular carbon assessments from the new contractor. RMBC to perform any further emission assessments if required
Emissions from transport?	reduces emissions	Reduction on contractors' emissions with new vehicles to transport waste	Reduction on contractors' emissions with new vehicles to transport waste when moving around Rotherham	New contract insists on brand new vehicles over the contract term that will be more carbon efficient	RMBC to monitor number of movements made each month and distance travelled. Monitoring will also ensure the maximum payload is used to reduce overall emissions.
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	reduces emissions	Reduction on contractors' emissions with new plant machinery at each site. Contract has a requirement for the contractor to minimise the amount of waste sent to disposal and maximise the amount of material reused and recycled. Residual	None	New contract insists on new plant machinery to be used at sites that are more efficient than current plant hire. New contract incentivises reuse and recycling	RMBC to monitor tonnage of waste collected and moved each month. RMBC to report on reuse and recycling of the contract.

		waste is sent to a Mechanical Biological Treatment facility with Dry Anaerobic Digestion. Electricity generated by the AD plant is used in the operation of the facility.			
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	no impact on emissions				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	no impact on emissions				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	no impact on emissions				
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:
 RMBC officers will monitor tonnages and vehicle movements each month as part of the billing process. Officers will also request regular carbon assessments from the new contractor. Contract will have a requirement for continuous improvement in carbon reduction.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Andrew Horner, Waste Manager, Waste Management, Regeneration and Environment
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]	

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 23 January 2023

Report Title

Rothercard Review

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)

Luke Sayers, Assistant Director of Customer, Information and Digital Services
01709 823249 or Luke.Sayers@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for Rotherham people living on a low-income by offering a discount on a range of Council services, as well as discounts on goods and leisure activities from a small number of other organisations.

The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time which is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.

A review of the Rothercard scheme by a cross party Rothercard Working group has been completed. The findings from the review are set out in Appendix 1 and summarised within this report.

The purpose of this report is to set out the changes identified from the outcome of the review, which, once implemented, will deliver an improved Rothercard scheme.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet approves the recommended changes set out in this report to deliver a new Rothercard scheme as detailed at **Section 3 (*Options considered and recommended proposal*)**.
2. That Cabinet note the changes to the eligibility criteria and the improvements that will be delivered to make it easier for customers to apply for/benefit from the scheme by:
 - Automatically providing residents who qualify for Council Tax Support (with consent) with a Rothercard
 - Raising awareness of the scheme with those who have already qualified for Council Tax Support so they can be provided with a Rothercard should they wish to have one.
3. That Cabinet approve the proposal to offer the following new discounts to Rothercard holders:
 - 10% reduction off the cost of a hot drink effective from 1 April 2023, at the following locations:
 - Clifton Park Museum Café,
 - Thrybergh Country Park Café
 - Rother Valley Country Park Café
 - 5% reduction on the cost of the 2024/25 garden waste collection service (1st bin only). This reduction will be applied from December 2023 when residents are invited to renew/subscribe for the collection service that will commence from 26th February 2024.
4. That Cabinet approve the intention to engage with businesses to explore the potential for developing a universal discount scheme that supports local businesses and retailers to benefit all Rotherham residents.
5. That Cabinet approve the intention to introduce an electronic alternative to a paper based Rothercard.
6. That Cabinet notes the intention to undertake an annual review to assess how the scheme is benefiting residents and helping deliver improved outcomes.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Rothercard Scheme – Review Findings & Recommendations
- Appendix 2a Scheme Eligibility Criteria
- Appendix 2b Rothercard Application Data Demographics
- Appendix 2c Rothercard Discounts 22 to 23
- Appendix 3a Equality Screening – Part A
- Appendix 3b Equality Screening – Part B
- Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Rothercard Working Group – 15th November 2022

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rothercard Review

1. Background

- 1.1 The Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for Rotherham people living on a low-income by offering a discount on a range of Council services, as well as discounts on goods and leisure activities from a small number of other organisations.
- 1.2 There is no charge for a Rothercard. To qualify for a free Rothercard, applicants must be able to provide evidence of meeting one of the criteria set out in the current scheme (Appendix 2a).
- 1.3 The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time which is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.
- 1.4 The range of discounted services on offer has also remained largely unchanged for several years.
- 1.5 The Council Plan (Page 17, People are safe, healthy, and live well) refers to a 'new' Rothercard '*that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.*'
- 1.6 Outcome 2.15 of the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 (*Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind*) sets out an action to complete a review of the Rothercard scheme.
- 1.7 A review of the Rothercard scheme by a cross party Rothercard Working group has been completed as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 The purpose of this report is to set out the changes identified from the outcome of the review to improve the future scheme and provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Rothercard Audience

The current eligibility criteria have not been reviewed for some time which means that some of the residents who should most benefit from the scheme may be missing out.

- It is estimated that there are around 144k residents across the borough who are eligible for a Rothercard under the current scheme; out of which it is estimated only 10k (7%) are card holders
- In terms of applications received since September 2020:
 - 51% of applicants (1.5k) indicated that they were applying as an 'adult on low income; which is less than 3% of the estimated number of 'adults on low income' across the borough (63k); although it should be noted that under current scheme rules,

there is an extensive list of eligible benefits with many applicants in receipt of more than one type of award which makes it difficult to confirm numbers with any real accuracy.

- Only 1% of applications (30) were from young people aged 16-19, which accounts for only 0.3% (11k) of the 2020 mid-year population estimates (Office for National Statistics).
- Only 1% of applications (30) were received from Looked After Children out of a potential 557.
- 12 applications were received from refugees/asylum seekers in receipt of asylum seeker support payments, which is 3% of those eligible according to data found in Home Office's Immigration statistical release (384).
- If adopted, the recommended changes outlined in this report would reduce the estimated number of residents entitled to a Rothercard to 54k. However, by automating and streamlining the service it is envisaged that all those who are eligible will be in possession of a card which would represent a significant increase on current take-up rates.

2.2 **Current Benefits and Take-Up Rates**

2.2.1 **Council Services**

The majority of discounts relate to leisure and event activities such as water sports at Rother Valley Country Park.

A Rothercard holder can however also receive a discount when requesting a Bulky Waste collection, a pest control service for the removal of rats and a range of specific additional/replacement bin services.

Further examples can be found in Appendix 2c.

Details of services that offer a Rothercard discount are included within the Budget Report.

2.2.2 **Places Leisure (PL)**

The Council's contract with Places Leisure has been operating for 12 years and is valid until 2041.

Under the terms of the contract, Rothercard holders are eligible for a discount across several different leisure activities available across four sites.

2.2.3 **Local Businesses**

The current scheme is not designed to allow local businesses to offer discounts to Rothercard holders.

2.2.4 **Take-Up Rates**

It is not possible to gain any overall sense of take-up rates, scheme usage or impact of discounted benefits as this information is not currently consistently collected.

2.3 Administration of the current scheme

2.3.1 Application process

- A digital application process was implemented in September 2020, allowing customers to apply online and upload a photograph together with evidence of their Rothercard eligibility.
- In some cases, the information and documentation customers need to provide when applying for a Rothercard, may be the same as information already held by the Council in relation to other services.
- Making use of existing Council records to verify that someone is on 'low income' would remove the need for the applicant to produce the same documentation again. Furthermore, there would be an even greater improved customer experience if, with consent, eligible residents were to be automatically provided with a Rothercard rather than having to make a separate application.
- There is no current notification process advising customers when their Rothercard is about to expire.
- Several leisure activities offer a Junior Rothercard rate for children under the age of 16 who are dependants of a Rothercard holder living in the same household. The application process for a Junior Rothercard is in need of redesign as it currently requires separate applications for each family member which is administratively clumsy and a poor experience for customers.

2.3.2 Physical Rothercard

Successful applicants are sent a physical plastic Rothercard through the post.

A digital card as an alternative to a plastic card is not currently available.

2.3.3 Financial

- **Customer Services**
Customer Services administer the Rothercard application process. Costs are met from existing Customer Services budget.
- **Services**
In terms of concessionary rates offered by services, all services have income budgets that are uplifted by inflation each year. Any income is reviewed each year as part of budget-setting and adjusted accordingly to reflect planned take-up and rates the following year.

There are no corporate budget allowances for income streams where Rothercard discounts make up a significant proportion. Services are

expected to manage any pressures or gains arising from discounts for their services as part of their monthly monitoring.

- **Places Leisure**

Any reduction in income because of offering a Rothercard discount is considered before determining the value of the profit gain share that is returned to the Council.

2.3.4 **Scheme Promotion**

The scheme has not been actively promoted for many years, which means there is likely to be limited awareness of the available benefits of the scheme.

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 The following recommendations were developed by Members through the review of the current scheme undertaken by the Rothercard Working group.

3.2 **Use existing Council records (Council Tax Support) as the means to verify the 'Adult on Low Income' eligibility criteria**

Rationale

- A key outcome of the Rothercard review is the need to focus the scheme on residents who will benefit the most.
- Making use of existing Council records to verify that someone is on 'low income' improves customer experience by removing the need for an applicant to have to produce documentation they have previously provided. This also makes the scheme easier to manage and administer.
- In addition, automatically awarding residents who meet the 'adult on low income' eligibility criteria with a Rothercard (by consent), improves customer experience and reduces the administrative burden currently resulting from the need for a separate application.

Impact and Action

- The details of residents in receipt of Council Tax Support are already recorded and could therefore be used as the means from which to verify that someone is on 'low income.'
- A digital process will be created to automatically provide consenting residents who meet the 'adult on low income' criteria, with a Rothercard.
- The revised digital process will also incorporate an improved method of assessment/award for dependent children of a Rothercard holder who are under the age of 16 and living in the same household as a Rothercard holder.
- Cards issued to an 'adult on low income' will be valid for 12 months unless they have reached 'state pension age' (see 3.2.2). This means that when a renewal request is received, Council records can be rechecked to ensure the applicants remains eligible under this criterion.

3.2.1 Replace the '60 and over' eligibility criteria with 'state pension age AND on low income'

Rationale:

- According to DWP Labour Force Survey the average age of labour market exit is now 65.2 years old for men and 64.3 years old for women.
- Linking the eligibility to the state pension age, reflects the national increase in the age of people remaining in work and future proofs the scheme by avoiding setting a specific age which might then need to change in later years.
- The focus of the Rothercard scheme is to benefit residents who most need it, which is not necessarily everyone who has reached pensionable age. For this reason, applicants will need to meet **both** the 'low income' and state pension age' criterion to be awarded a Rothercard in future.

Impact and action

- 3.2.2
- The date someone has reached their state pension age varies according to their date of birth; information which can be verified on gov.uk.
 - If a someone meets the 'state pension age' criteria, they will also need to meet the 'low income' criteria as well (as described above in 3.2.1). Adults who reach pensionable age but who don't meet the 'low income' criteria will not be awarded a Rothercard.
 - Successful applicants (with consent) will be automatically provided with a Rothercard.
 - Anyone who satisfies both the 'state pension age' and 'low income' criteria will be issued with a card that does not have an expiry date. The reason for this is that an applicant's age will not change and the likelihood of their income status changing in later life is extremely low. This will improve customer experience and reduce renewal related administrative burden/costs.
 - Adults who continue working up to their state pension age may still be eligible for a Rothercard if they are on 'low income;' in which case they would be awarded a Rothercard with a 12-month expiry date.
 - Existing card holders –anyone aged 60 or over awarded with a Rothercard under the current scheme, will be allowed to continue using their card until it expires; even if they would not be eligible once the new criteria has been introduced. Once the resident's card expires (5 years from the original issue date) they will need to reapply under the eligibility criteria of the new scheme.
 - Some of the residents who reapply will no longer be eligible for a Rothercard which may create dissatisfaction.
 - It is estimated that the number of residents who will meet both the pensionable age and 'low income' criterion is currently around 15k.

3.2.3 Replace the 'Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education' criteria with a new Young Person age category of '16 to 21 years of age'

Rationale

- This would extend the eligibility to include young people who for example are not in education but are undertaking apprenticeships or other jobs

with training/qualifications built into employment. These groups are not currently eligible for a card.

- Young people who are newly embarking on their future career paths can often be in low wage jobs.

Impact and action

- The size of the 'young person' audience will increase which may mean greater take up of discounted activities across both Council and Places Leisure services. Any impact to budget would require monitoring and review ahead of setting out the next period of Council Fees and Charges.
- The Rothercard scheme would help enable more young people to do the things that are important to them – 'have fun.' (Council Plan, page 19)
- Customer experience will improve, and the administrative burden will reduce – currently, a resident applying under the criteria '*Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education*' needs to provide a letter from their school or college and proof of their parent receiving child benefit. This will not be required under the new proposed criteria; proof of age/residency will be all that will be required which will require a change to the current digital process.
- The validity period for a Rothercard issued to a young person applying under the 'up to 21 years of age' criteria will be valid up to 23:59 the day before they turn 21.
- Work will be undertaken to explore the feasibility of enabling a more proactive award process so that when young people reach the age of 16, they are automatically given a Rothercard if they want one.

3.2.4

Automatically provide Section 95 Local Authority residents with a Rothercard

Rationale

- These customer groups have arrived in the borough because of a humanitarian crisis.
- The benefits of the Rothercard scheme compliments other support packages already in place and provides quicker access to the type of activities that have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Impact and Action

- This would be one less 'thing to do.'
- Numbers may increase dependent on events happening worldwide and/or other emerging crises.
- Cards issued under these circumstances would be issued with a fixed one-year period of validity, which means that applying for a card after expiry will only be approved if the applicant meets a different eligibility criteria.
- The process for the automatic allocation of a Rothercard for Section 95 Local Authority residents will need to be designed to compliment existing Council arrangements.

3.2.5

'Looked after children/young people' – no changes pending other discussions already underway to consider how best to support this group of residents.

3.2.6

Create a more simplified and streamlined range of discounts and extend the number of services that offer a discount

Rationale

- Discounts offered are set by the service and vary from anywhere between 10% to 50%.
- Creating a more streamlined and simplified range of discounts in the future will minimise confusion and make the scheme easier to manage.
- Extending the range of discounted services available to Rothercard holders opens new opportunities to those who need help the most.

3.2.7

Impact and Action

- Work will be undertaken to begin streamlining and simplifying service discounts.
- During 2023/24, it is proposed that the following new discounts are made available to Rothercard holders:
 - 10% reduction off the cost of a hot drink effective from 1 April 2023, at the following locations:
 - Clifton Park Museum Café,
 - Thrybergh Country Park Café
 - Rother Valley Country Park Café
 - 5% reduction on the cost of the 2024/25 garden waste collection service (1st bin only). This reduction will be applied from December 2023 when residents are invited to renew/subscribe for the collection service that will commence from 26th February 2024.
- Work is ongoing with services to identify additional new discounts that could be offered in the future.
- The discount the customer receives for some services in the future could be greater or smaller than it is now.
- There will be budget implications to consider because of extending the range of discounted services and/or increasing/decreasing the discount percentage. This will need to be worked through in more detail with finance and service colleagues.
- Discussion with Places Leisure will be required to explore the potential for changing/extending the range of discounts currently available through Places Leisure.
- Work will be undertaken during 2023/24 to explore the potential for developing a universal discount scheme that supports local businesses and retailers.

3.2.8

Scheme Administration

Card Expiry

- There is no current process of advance notification ahead of a Rothercard expiring.
 - Administrative processes will be established to generate a notification in advance of someone's card expiring to allow them time to re-apply if this is something they want to do/are eligible to do.
 - Under the new scheme, residents that are awarded a Rothercard because they have met the 'state pension age' eligibility criteria, will not need to renew their card as the card will be valid for their lifetime. A process will be designed to periodically contact these card holders to check that their details remain valid, and the customer has continued residency in the borough.

Digital Card

- In today's world people increasingly prefer to save documents, tickets, and membership cards in a virtual wallet rather than having to carry a physical record with them just in case it's needed.

There is no current facility to provide users with a digital pass:

- It is planned that a solution will be available to offer to customers by Autumn 2023.

Recording use of a Rothercard

- In most cases, Council services that offer a Rothercard discount have no current means of capturing when a discount is applied, and for which type of activity.
- As part of the Customer & Digital programme, several service redesign projects are already underway to identify potential solutions that could, in the future, more consistently capture Rothercard related activity and provide the business intelligence needed to measure the success of the scheme.

3.2.9 It is recommended that the changes described above are implemented to deliver a new and improved Rothercard scheme that 'will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them' and:

- make the scheme easier to manage and administer.
- improve customer experience in terms of both applying for and benefiting from the Rothercard scheme.
- target the right people to increase awareness of the scheme.
- ensure the scheme is reviewed on a regular basis so that the offer remains right for the residents of Rotherham.
- gather business intelligence to better understand take-up rates and outcomes.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The recommendations proposed in this report have been determined by the work undertaken by the Rothercard Working group consisting of cross party elected members and Council officers.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The new Rothercard scheme will be in place effective from 1st April 2023

5.1.2 Undertake further work during 2023 to:

- Implement a digital card as an alternative to a physical plastic card.
- Work with local businesses to explore the potential to offer discounts to Rothercard holders.

5.1.3 The Rothercard working group will undertake an annual review of the scheme effective from summer 2023.

5.2 Next steps and future actions

It is recommended that

1. Cabinet approves the recommended changes set out in this report to deliver a new Rothercard scheme.
2. That Cabinet note the changes to the eligibility criteria and the improvements that will be delivered to make it easier for customers to apply for/benefit from the scheme by:
 - Automatically providing residents who qualify for Council Tax Support (with consent) with a Rothercard
 - Raising awareness of the scheme with those who have already qualified for Council Tax Support so they can be provided with a Rothercard should they wish to
3. That Cabinet approve the proposal to offer the following new discounts to Rothercard holders:
 - 10% reduction off the cost of a hot drink effective from 1 April 2023, at the following locations:
 - Clifton Park Museum Café,
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 - Rother Valley Country Park Café
 - 5% reduction on the cost of the 2024/25 garden waste collection service (1st bin only). This reduction will be applied from December 2023 when residents are invited to

renew/subscribe for the collection service that will commence from 26th February 2024.

4. That Cabinet approve the intention to engage with businesses to explore the potential for developing a universal discount scheme that supports local businesses and retailers to benefit all Rotherham residents.
5. That Cabinet approve the intention to introduce an electronic alternative to a paper based Rothercard.
6. That Cabinet notes the intention to undertake an annual review to assess how the scheme is benefiting residents and helping deliver improved outcomes.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.
- 6.2 The Rothercard discounts are accounted for in the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. It is not known how the number of eligible people will change under the revised scheme, or how many will take up the card and claim discounts for each service. As such the financial impact of the change in the scheme cannot be estimated at this stage. It is expected that any financial impact is likely to be minimal and will not significantly affect individual service budgets.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There is a positive impact for young people as the proposals of the scheme is to extend the eligibility criteria so that more young people will be eligible for a card.
- 9.2 Vulnerable adults will not be impacted by the scheme as there are no changes to the criteria that covers this group of residents.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The revised Rothercard Scheme makes significant advances in relation to equalities. Refining and adding to the groups of people that qualify will extend and clarify the advantages of the scheme. The scheme makes linkages to other council policies including digital inclusion that will also address equalities and access. This will also enable the collection of equalities data that can be used to identify where there may be lack of take-up in some protected characteristics, enabling proactive action to be taken. The public consultation will enable developments, including advancing equalities, to be made as the scheme is further developed.
- 10.2 Equalities screening and assessments (forms A and B) are appended to the report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The current Rothercard is only available as a physical card printed onto plastic. A digital card will be developed as an alternative so that residents can add the Rothercard to a virtual wallet.
- 11.2 It is anticipated that this option will be popular, reducing the demand for the printing of physical cards and use of plastic; also lowering the volume of outgoing mail which reduces any carbon emissions associated with the delivery of post.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Under the terms of the contract, Rothercard holders are eligible for a discount across several different leisure activities available across four sites. Any impact to demand as a result of the proposed changes will be monitored as part of existing review arrangements.
- 12.2 Discussion with Places Leisure will be required to explore the potential for changing/extending the range of discounts currently available through Places Leisure.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 No risks have been identified at this time but the impact of the proposed changes will be closely monitored with an annual review undertaken to ensure any future risks are identified and acted on.

14. Accountable Officers

Luke Sayers, Assistant Director Customer Information & Digital Services,
Finance & Customer Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	09/01/23
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	05/01/23
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	05/01/23

Report Author:

Luke Sayers, Assistant Director of Customer, Information, and Digital Services
01709 823249 or Luke.Sayers@rotherham.gov.uk

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

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<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Rothercard Working Group
	DATE:	15 th November 2022
	LEAD OFFICER:	Luke Sayers Assistant Director of Customer, Information and Digital Services
	TITLE:	The Rothercard Scheme
1. Background		
1.1	The Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for Rotherham people living on a low-income by offering a discount on a range of Council services, as well as discounts on goods and leisure activities from a small number of other organisations.	
1.2	It is understood that the last formal report relating to the Rothercard scheme for consideration by elected members was sometime in 2008. Since then, there has been no strategic management or development of Rothercard and there is no formally agreed departmental owner; although in 2019 Customer Services (F&CS) took on the responsibility for administering card applications, implementing an improved digital application process in 2020.	
1.3	There is no charge for a Rothercard. To qualify for a free Rothercard, applicants must live in a property which is registered for Council Tax in Rotherham and be able to provide appropriate evidence that they meet one of the criteria listed in Appendix 3a .	
1.4	Since the new digital application process was implemented, 2,245 cards have been issued during the period 1 st September 2020 to 31 st March 2022. It is estimated that there were around 8k existing Rothercard holders prior to the new digital application process being introduced; although this figure cannot be confirmed as the database originally used to collate this information is no longer supported or accessible.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who was issued with a 'one year' Rothercard before 1st September 2020 will have since needed to reapply, which means the details of these residents are now digitally recorded and included in the figures above. • All those aged over 60 who were issued with a card prior to 1st September 2020 have a card with a 5 year expiry date. Over time, the number of these 'unknown' card holders will decrease as cards lapse and residents reapply. This means that unless the scheme changes, all applicant data will be held as a digitised record by 1st September 2025. 	
1.5	The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time. This is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.	

- 1.6** The Council Plan (Page 17, People are safe, healthy, and live well) refers to a 'new' Rothercard *'that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.'*
- 1.7** Outcome 2.15 of the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 (*Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind*) sets out an action to complete a review of the Rothercard scheme by June 2022.
- 1.8** The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the findings of the Rothercard review and set out proposals for a new Rothercard scheme and required actions.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Scheme Ownership

There is currently no formally agreed departmental owner. This means that lines of reporting and accountability are unclear.

Customer Services (CIDS) currently administer the Rothercard application process, which includes the ongoing support and maintenance of the digital process, assisted access for applications/renewals, dealing with general enquiries and the production of the physical card.

As a general overview of current responsibilities:

Table 1

Directorate	Service Area	Responsibilities
F&CS	Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing multi-channel access for customers wanting to apply/re-apply for a Rothercard • Assessing and approving applications based on the Council's agreed eligibility criteria • Providing approved applicants with a Rothercard • Ensuring information across all channels (online, contact centre, face to face) remains updated with any changes requested by directorates (eg. pricing change, new benefits etc) • Identifying any opportunities as part of the Customer & Digital programme to implement new technological solutions that improve customer experience and improve efficiency
All Directorates	All services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying services that will offer Rothercard holders a discount/benefit • Working with finance colleagues to ensure discounts offered are affordable • Keeping Customer Services aware of any changes to Rothercard discounts/benefits so that customer information remains up to date and relevant
F&CS	Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring any benefits/discounts have been accounted for in service budgets and reflected in the council's Fees and Charges document

No agreed owner	No agreed owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the scheme • Membership numbers • Measuring the impact of the scheme
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2.2

The Rothercard Audience

A review of all available data has been undertaken to:

- Identify which customer groups are currently applying for a Rothercard (based on applicant data over the period 1st September 2020 to 31st March 2022)
- Gain a sense of the size of the audience that would most benefit from the future scheme and how others would be impacted by any proposed changes.
- Better understand how card holders are benefiting from the current scheme
- Identify how the future scheme should be designed so that it will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.

2.3

Demographics and current card holders

- It is estimated that there are around 144k residents across the borough who are eligible for a Rothercard under the current scheme; out of which only 10k (7%) are currently card holders (*estimated figure, which includes those card holders who applied prior to 1.9.20*)
- 2021 mid-year population statistics suggest there are circa 68,760 residents aged over 60; of which it is estimated around 8k (12%) of residents in this age group are current card holders. This includes those with a valid card issued before 1.9.20.
- 51% (1,528) of applicants indicated that they were applying as an 'adult on low income'. This is less than 3% of the estimated number of 'adults on low income' across the borough (62,732); although it should be noted that under current scheme rules, there is an extensive list of eligible benefits with many applicants in receipt of more than one type of award which makes it difficult to confirm numbers with any real accuracy.
- The final group of eligible applicants make up less than 3% (72) of applications received. There is a potential estimated 12.2k of young people, looked after children or refugee/asylum seekers eligible across the borough which means that less than 1% are currently benefiting from the scheme.

Please see Appendix 3b for more detailed information

2.5

Current Benefits and Take-Up Rates

The majority of the discounts currently offered to Rothercard holders are leisure based which is typical of most local authority schemes.

- **Council Services:**

All the Council services that currently offer a Rothercard discount are delivered by the Regeneration & Environment directorate. The majority of discounts relate to leisure and event activities.

A Rothercard holder can however also receive a discount when using:

- Bulky Waste service
- Requesting an additional/replacement bin if the bin is black, green or black with a pink lid. There is no discount for brown bins.
- Pest control service where the report relates to rats - the discount does not apply to the treatment of other pests

R&E regularly review the type of services that are suitable for offering a Rothercard discount. Where there are any changes (new discounts or

amendments to an existing one), details are included in the Council's Fees and Charges report.

With the exception of the Bulky Waste service, there is no available data to provide any indication of current take-up rates. Use of a Rothercard to obtain a discount for a Bulky Waste collection is routinely collected as part of the recently redesigned digital process.

During the period 1st January to 31st March 2022, there were 1,913 bulky waste collections booked and paid for. Of these, 436 (23%) received a discount as a Rothercard holder.

- **Places for People (PfP)**

The Council's contract with PfP has been operating for 12 years and is valid until 2041. It was set up as a profit gain share arrangement whereby any profit is shared 50/50 between the Council and PfP with 10% of the Council's share of the profit being committed to sports development.

Under the terms of the contract, Rothercard holders are eligible for a discount across a number of different leisure activities; but there is no available data to indicate how many residents have actually used their cards for this purpose.

- **Looked After Children**

Discussions are separately taking place with CYPS and PfP to explore the provision of a 'Looked after Children' (LAC) VIP card.

2.6 **Appendix 3c** provides an overview of all discounts currently available (2022/23) to Rothercard holders.

2.7 **Junior Rothercard rate**

As referenced in **Appendix 3a**, a number of leisure activities offer a Junior Rothercard rate for children under the age of 16 who are dependants of a Rothercard holder and who are living in the same household as a Rothercard holder.

The application process is in need of redesign as it currently requires separate applications for each family member which is administratively clumsy and a poor experience for customers.

2.8 **Carers and Paid Personal Assistants**

Rothercard holders who have a carer or paid personal assistant, can also apply for the carers discount which gives the carer discounted entry to leisure facilities, and discount rates at Rotherham Theatres when accompanying the Rothercard holder. (NB. The carer is not issued with their own card).

This application process was redesigned and implemented in July 2022.

2.9 **Systems and Software**

- **Application process (managed by Customer Services)**

The current Rothercard application process (implemented Sept 2020) provides customers with a single application form (regardless of access channel). Once submitted, the same system automatically triggers a back-office assessment process which ensures the appropriate eligibility checks (eg. evidence of benefit) are undertaken and recorded so that an award decision can be made.

There is no current notification process advising customers when their Rothercard is about to expire.

- **The 'Rothercard'**

The physical Rothercard is produced by the Customer Services Print & Post team who overlay the Rothercard design template onto a blank plastic card. They use the same type of blank plastic card that is used for Council ID badges but minus the chip that is used for controlling building access.

If approval has been given for the Rothercard holder to receive a discount for their carer/personal assistant (when accompanying them to activities or the theatre), the card is issued with the wording 'plus carer' after their name

- **Recording use of a Rothercard**

In the majority of cases, Council services that offer a Rothercard discount have no current means of capturing when a discount is applied, and for which type of activity.

As part of the Customer & Digital programme, a number of service redesign projects are already underway, and a key requirement that has emerged from this work is the need for a corporate booking solution. Colleagues in Green Spaces and Sport Development have been involved in these discussions. Over the next few months a 'requirements specification' will be created and this will include the need for future software to have the ability to deduct a discount under specific validated circumstances before calculating the cost to the customer.

As referenced previously, any discounts related to the Bulky Waste collection service are routinely recorded as part of the request process. The same digital process is followed regardless of the contact channel the customer uses to make their request; with the web form requiring the customer to enter their Rothercard account number. There is however no current way to verify that the reference number given is valid and in date. The only check at present is to ensure that the details entered are in the expected format.

Further development work would be needed by the Customer Services digital team to create a more robust and effective solution. Rather than treat this in isolation, it is considered best to wait until the procurement of the corporate booking system has progressed as the objective is to identify a solution that can include this functionality and be used for multiple purposes.

- **Digital card**

There is no current facility to provide users with a digital pass. For example, the ability to add a virtual 'Rothercard' to an Apple or Google Pay Wallet which can then be viewed/presented as and when required until it expires.

In today's world people increasingly prefer to save documents, tickets and membership cards in a virtual wallet rather than having to carry a physical record with them just in case it's needed.

The Customer Services Digital team are currently exploring ways in which the new Rothercard could be produced as 'virtual' by default; whilst still providing a physical card for anyone unable to access/make use of digital technology. It is planned that the solution will be available to offer to customers by the Autumn 2023.

Work will continue to identify other more longer-term improvements such as the ability for providers of discounted services to be able to scan a Rothercard/code in a similar way to how retailers for example, handle reward cards.

2.10 Financial

There is no specific budget for Rothercard.

- **Services**

In terms of concessionary rates offered by services, all services have income budgets that are uplifted by inflation each year. Any income is reviewed each year as part of budget-setting and adjusted accordingly to reflect planned take-up and rates the following year.

There are no corporate budget allowances for income streams where Rothercard discounts make up a significant proportion. Services are expected to manage any pressures or gains arising from discounts for their services as part of their monthly monitoring.

Services that offer a Rothercard discount are listed in the Councils Fees and Charges schedule.

- **Customer Services**

Customer Services administer the Rothercard application process. Costs for staff time are accounted for in the staffing budget.

There is no budget for the cards themselves, but current costs are minimal. The cost of producing 2,245 cards (at 6.5p per card) was £146.

- **Places for People**

Any reduction in income as a result of offering a Rothercard discount is taken into account before determining the value of the profit gain share that is returned to the Council

3. Key Actions and Timelines

3.1 The Future Offer

A number of changes are proposed to deliver a new Rothercard scheme that '*will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them,*' and:

- make changes to the eligibility criteria so that the focus of the scheme is directed towards residents who will most benefit
- make the scheme easier to manage and administer
- improve customer experience in terms of both applying for and benefiting from the Rothercard scheme
- target the right people to increase awareness of the scheme

i) **Use existing Council records as the means to verify the 'Adult on Low Income' eligibility criteria**

Rationale

- A key outcome of the Rothercard review is the need to focus the scheme on residents who will benefit the most.
- Making use of existing Council records to verify that someone is on 'low income' improves customer experience by removing the need for an applicant

to have to produce documentation they have previously provided. This also makes the scheme easier to manage and administer.

Impact and Action

- The details of residents in receipt of Council Tax Support are already recorded and could therefore be used as the means from which to verify that someone is on 'low income.'
- The administrative process for assessing applications will need to be updated to include a verification step to be undertaken by Customer Services. This may initially require a degree of manual review with a digital solution created later.
- The revised digital process will incorporate an improved method of assessment/award for dependent children of a Rothercard holder who are under the age of 16 and living in the same household as a Rothercard holder.
- Cards issued to an 'adult on low income' will be valid for 12 months unless they have reached 'state pension age' (see 3.1 ii). This means that when a renewal request is received, Council records can be rechecked to ensure the applicants remains eligible under this criterion.

ii) Replace the '60 and over' eligibility criteria with 'state pension age AND on low income'

Rationale:

- According to DWP [Labour Force Survey](#) the average age of labour market exit is now 65.2 years old for men and 64.3 years old for women.
- Linking the eligibility to the state pension age, reflects the national increase in the age of people remaining in work and future proofs the scheme by avoiding setting a specific age which might then need to change in later years.
- The focus of the Rothercard scheme is to benefit residents who most need it, which is not necessarily everyone who has reached pensionable age. For this reason, applicants will need to meet **both** the 'low income' and state pension age' criterion to be awarded a Rothercard in future.

Impact and action

- The date someone has reached their state pension age varies according to their date of birth; information which can be verified on gov.uk.
- If a someone meets the 'state pension age' criteria, they will also need to meet the 'low income' criteria as well (as described above in 3.1 i). Adults who reach pensionable age but who don't meet the 'low income' criteria will not be awarded a Rothercard.
- Anyone who satisfies both the 'state pension age' and 'low income' criteria will be issued with a card that does not have an expiry date. The reason for this is that an applicant's age will not change and the likelihood of their income status changing in later life is extremely low. This will improve customer experience and reduce renewal related administrative burden/costs.
- Adults who continue working up to their state pension age may still be eligible for a Rothercard if they are on 'low income;' in which case they would be awarded a Rothercard with a 12 month expiry date.
- Existing card holders –anyone aged 60 or over awarded with a Rothercard under the current scheme, will be allowed to continue using their card until it expires; even if they would not be eligible once the new criteria has been introduced. Once the resident's card expires (5 years from the original issue date) they will need to reapply under the eligibility criteria of the new scheme.

- Some of the residents who reapply will no longer be eligible for a Rothercard which may create dissatisfaction.
- The number of residents who will meet both the pensionable age and 'low income' criterion is unknown.

iii) Replace the 'Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education' criteria with a new Young Person age category of '16 to 21 years of age'

Rationale

- This would extend the eligibility to include young people who for example are not in education but are undertaking apprenticeships or other jobs with training/qualifications built into employment. These groups are not currently eligible for a card.
- Young people who are newly embarking on their future career paths can often be in low wage jobs.
- As a local comparison, South Yorkshire Transport provide reduced cost travel costs for young people up to the age of 21

Impact and action

- The size of the 'young person' audience will increase which may mean greater take up of discounted activities across both Council and Places for People services. Any impact to budget would require monitoring and review ahead of setting out the next period of Council Fees and Charges.
- The Rothercard scheme would help enable more young people to do the things that are important to them – 'have fun.' (Council Plan, page 19)
- Customer experience will improve and the administrative burden will reduce – currently, a resident applying under the criteria 'Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education' needs to provide a letter from their school or college and proof of their parent receiving child benefit. This will not be required under the new proposed criteria; proof of age/residency will be all that will be required which will require a change to the current digital process.
- The validity period for a Rothercard issued to a young person applying under the 'up to 21 years of age' criteria will be valid up to 23:59 the day before they turn 21.

iv) Automatically provide Section 95 Local Authority supported refugees/asylum seekers with a Rothercard:

Rationale

- These customer groups have arrived in the borough as a result of a humanitarian crisis.
- The benefits of the Rothercard scheme compliments other support packages already in place and provides quicker access to the type of activities that have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Impact and Action

- This would be one less 'thing to do' for newly arriving refugees or asylum seekers.
- Numbers may increase dependent on events happening worldwide and/or other emerging crises.
- Cards issued under these circumstances would be issued with a fixed one year period of validity; which means that applying for a card after expiry will only be approved if the applicant meets a different eligibility criteria.

- The process for the automatic allocation of a Rothercard for refugees/asylum seekers will need to be designed to compliment existing Council arrangements.

v) Remove 'Looked after children/young people' as a Rothercard criteria

Rationale

- Discussions are currently and separately underway to create a 'Looked after Children' (LAC) VIP card. It is therefore anticipated that retaining this criterion will not be required and may otherwise cause confusion.
- Assuming this initiative is implemented as currently expected, and that the timing does not conflict, there would be no reason to include this eligibility criteria

Impact and Action

- Subject to the successful implementation of the VIP card, it is anticipated that looked after children will benefit from a more rounded and bespoke offer.
- It is understood that the administration of the VIP card will be undertaken by CYPS to compliment existing LAC related processes.
- A young person aged 16-21 will still be able to apply for a Rothercard if they can provide proof of age and residency.
- Should the expected introduction of a VIP card not go ahead, a separate review will be undertaken to consider how the Rothercard scheme could be best used to the benefit of looked after children/young people.

vi) Creating a more consistent level of discount and extending the range of services that offer a discount

Rationale

- Discounts offered are set by the service and vary from anywhere between 10% to 50%.
- Setting a single standard percentage discount would remove customer and organisational confusion, improve consistency and minimise the administrative burden.
- Extending the range of discounted services available to Rothercard holders opens up new opportunities to those who need help the most.

Impact and Action

- Setting a single standard discount means that the customer may receive a greater/lesser discount than they do now, dependant on the activity or service they are wanting to access using their Rothercard.
- A single standard percentage discount will simplify the administration and ongoing management of the scheme offer.
- There will be budget implications to consider as a result of extending the range of discounted services and/or increasing/decreasing the discount percentage. This will need to be worked through in more detail with finance and service colleagues.
- There needs to be an exemption process put in place that would allow services to request approval to offer a different discount.
- The ability to extend the range of discounted services and implement a single standard discount for Place for People activities may not be possible due to contractual limitations. Further work will be required to explore the potential.
- Local businesses are likely to be interested in offering Rothercard holders a discount to goods/services as a means to boost their trade and increase the

number of people 'shopping local.' This is a piece of work that will be developed during 2023/24.

vii) **Re-establish ownership of scheme responsibilities**

Rationale

- Over time the responsibilities for the Rothercard scheme have become unclear with some activities such as promotion of the scheme and measurement of take-up rates/outcomes not being undertaken at all.

Impact and Action

- Table 1, section 2.1 provides an overview of current responsibilities. It is recommended that those responsibilities already established and working well remain in place.
- Subject to discussions with the appropriate departmental colleagues, it is proposed that those responsibilities without current owners are allocated as follows:
 - Promotion of scheme discounts and benefits to the appropriate target audiences– **Comms & Marketing**, working closely with service colleagues
 - Measuring outcomes, including take up rates and the impact the benefits of the scheme have on Rothercard holders – **Policy, Performance and Intelligence**
- Raising the awareness of the scheme is likely to increase take-up rates which could have budget implications and therefore any promotional activities would need to be carefully considered and planned with finance and service colleagues

viii) **Card Expiry Dates and Changes to Card Holder details**

Rationale

- There is no current process of advance notification ahead of a Rothercard expiring.
- There is no established process for dealing with changes to the card holder details; for example, if someone changes their name, or the person becomes deceased.

Impact and Action

- Administrative processes need to be established to generate a notification in advance of someone's card expiring to allow them time to re-apply if this is something they want to do/are eligible to do.
- The advance notification needs to advise the customer of the eligibility criteria they will need to meet in order to receive a new card; for example, a customer who applied previously under the '*Young Person under the age of 21*' criteria may still be eligible if they are an 'adult in receipt of Council Tax support.' A person who previously applied under the 'age over 60' eligibility criteria may continue to be eligible if, based on their date of birth, they have reached the 'state pension age'.
- Under the new scheme, residents that are awarded a Rothercard because they have met the 'state pension age' eligibility criteria, will not need to renew their card as the card will be valid for their lifetime. A process will be designed to periodically contact these card holders to check that their details remain valid and the customer has continued residency in the borough.

3.2

Summary of Actions

Action	Owner	Timescales
1 st Draft report outlining the findings of the Rothercard review and associated proposals shared with the working group	L. Sayers	May 22 Complete
Final draft report incorporating comments and feedback	L Sayers	September 22
Conclude review and present final version of report shared with key stakeholders	Rothercard working group	November22
Seek formal approval of recommendations	Cabinet	TBC
Create a new set of eligibility rules and required evidence	H Barker	By Dec 22
Create a new digital application process based on the new eligibility rules	H Barker	By Feb 23
Establish a new process for the automatic allocation of a Rothercard for refugees and asylum seekers	H Barker	By Feb 23
Work with services & finance to confirm discounted services and standardise discounts	H Barker	Once approved
Agree owners of currently unallocated responsibilities	L Sayers	Once approved
New Rothercard in place		Apr 23
Promotion of new scheme – in advance of new scheme being introduced, continuing afterwards	Comms	To start Feb/Mar 23
Implement a digital card	H Barker	Autumn 2023
Monitoring of take up rates and measurement of outcomes	TBC	Ongoing
Explore any opportunity to further extend the range of discounted services on offer	Service departments	Ongoing
Undertake an annual review of the scheme	L Sayers	Annual
	L Sayers	Autumn 2023

	Work with local businesses to extend the range of available discounts to Rothercard holders			
4. Recommendations				
4.1	It is recommended that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The changes and actions set out in this report are approved in order to deliver a new Rothercard scheme that ‘will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them,’ and:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ make changes to the eligibility criteria so that the focus of the scheme is directed towards residents who will most benefit○ make the scheme easier to manage and administer○ improve customer experience in terms of both applying for and benefiting from the Rothercard scheme○ target the right people to increase awareness of the scheme• The Council continues to explore any opportunity to further extend the range of discounted services on offer to those who need to benefit the most.• An annual review takes place each year to assess customer engagement, experience and take-up rates and monitor administrative processes and application of discounts.			

Appendix 2a

Rothercard – Current Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Evidence Required	Card validity period
Aged Over 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proof of age • proof of address 	5 years
Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proof of age • proof of address • letter from your school or college if you are aged 16-19 in full time education (your parents must still receive child benefit for you) OR proof of child benefit for the dependent applying for the card 	1 year
Refugee/asylum seeker dependent on asylum seeker support payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proof of age • proof of address • HC2/3 certificate 	1 year
Looked after child/young person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an official letter supplied by the foster carer or residential worker naming the young person in their care 	1 year
<p>Adult on a low income (and any dependants living in the same household) who is in receipt of one of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit • Attendance Allowance • Council Tax Reduction • Disability Living Allowance • Personal Independence Payment • Working Tax Credit • Housing Benefit • Incapacity Benefit • Income Support • Severe Disablement Allowance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of age • Proof of address • And, dependent on circumstances one of the below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recent benefit award letter or if on Universal Credit proof of online Universal Credit account ○ Council Tax bill showing Council Tax Reduction ○ recent bank statement* ○ HC2/3 certificate 	1 year

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobseekers Allowance • Employment and Support Allowance • HC 2/3 Certificate - (help with cost of prescriptions, dentist/optician charges) 		
<p>Carers or paid personal assistants supporting Rothercard holders with their attendance at leisure events and theatre</p>	<p>The person applying for a Rothercard must first qualify under one of the above criteria and be able to provide evidence of one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Allowance • Disability Living Allowance • Disabled Person's Tax Credit • Incapacity Benefit • Severe Disablement Allowance <p>If the applicant has qualified for a Rothercard but is not in receipt of one of the above, they must be able to provide evidence of one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invalid Care Allowance • Blue Badge • War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement • Registered Disabled • Industrial Injuries (Constant Attendance Allowance or Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance) • Assistance of interpreter as form of care for deaf people • Vaccine damage payment • Registered blind or partially sighted • Note of disability from GP or hospital doctor • Motability • A disability premium included in an award for Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction 	<p>The card is issued to the Rothercard holder not the carer - the validity period depends on the eligibility criteria that the card holder applied under. (1 or 5 years)</p>

* As many customers now bank on-line, they may not have a paper statement to provide as evidence. A screen shot/photo is acceptable providing this provides evidence of the account holder.

Customer Services provides advice/support for any customer who is unsure how to provide the required documentation and/or needs assistance to do so.

1. Rothercard Applications (1st September 2020 to 31st March 2022)

Since the new digital application process was implemented, there has been 2,979 Rothercard application forms received (1st September 2020 to 31st March 2022). Of these:

- 2,245 were successful applications
- 283 were declined as the applicants was unable to provide the required evidence of eligibility
- The remaining 451 applications include people who made an initial application but have since either decided not to pursue the application or still need to provide corroborating information/evidence.

Data from the 2,979 applications provides the following breakdown of eligibility criteria as indicated by residents:

Reason for applying:	Number	%
Aged over 60	1,379	46.30%
Adult on low income	1,528	51.30%
Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education	30	1.00%
Looked after children/young people	30	1.00%
Refugees/asylum seekers dependent on asylum seeker support payments	12	0.40%
Total	2,979	100.0%

Applicants who described themselves as ‘adults on low income’ indicated that they are in receipt of the following benefits:

Benefit	Number of Applicants	% of total applications
Universal Credit	665	43.5%
Personal Independence Payment	239	15.6%
Working Tax Credit	149	9.7%
Council Tax Reduction	136	8.9%
Employment and Support Allowance	114	7.5%
Disability Living Allowance	85	5.6%
Housing Benefit	59	3.9%
Income Support	43	2.8%
Jobseekers Allowance	15	1.0%
Attendance Allowance	10	0.7%
HC 2/3 Certificate	10	0.7%
Incapacity Benefit	3	0.2%
Totals	1528	100%

2. Borough demographics

It is estimated that there are 143,671 residents across the borough eligible for a Rothercard under the current scheme. This is made up of the following demographic groups:

i) Aged over 60

Mid-year (2021) population estimates:

Age	Total
Aged 65+	52,388
Aged 60-64	16,372
Total	68,760

ii) Adults on a low income - defined as anyone in receipt of one of the following benefits:

The data collated below (Jan 22) is from a variety of sources. Exact numbers are continuously changing.

Many adults on low income are in receipt of more than one benefit type. This means that the total number of benefit awards identified in the table below (116k) is not the same as the number of people currently eligible for a Rothercard.

It is considered that 63k wpi;d be a more realistic estimate of 'Adults on Low' income in Rotherham

Benefit	Number of estimated benefit awards across the borough	Comments
Universal Credit	26,395	
Employment & Support Allowance	9,794	
Income Support	1,470	
Job Seekers	952	
Attendance Allowance	7,282	These residents are already included in the over 60 age category
Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment	24,174	Only 2,969 exclusively claim DLA/PIPS. Some people in receipt of these benefits are included in the over 60 group
Incapacity Benefit & severe disablement allowance	197	
Working Tax Credit	11,200	
Housing Benefit	12,832	Most people in receipt of Housing Benefit will be receiving Council Tax support, or on one of the other primary benefits such as IS, JSA other benefits already listed

Council Tax Support	23,437	Some people in receipt of CTax support will also be included int the totals for ESA,JSA,IS & UC
HC 2/3 Certificate - (help with cost of prescriptions, dentist/optician charges)	unknown	

iii) Young people aged 16 to 19 years in full time education

Data provided by the Office For National Statistics (ONS) according to 2020 (most recent) mid-year population estimates:

Age 16	2,997
Age 17	3,022
Age 18	2,833
Age 19	2,387
Age 16-19	11,239

iv) Looked after children/young people

Data provided by CYPS:

Age group	Number
1 to 4 years	93
10 to 15 years	255
16 years and over	96
5 to 9 years	113
Total children	557

v) Refugees/asylum seekers dependent on asylum seeker support payments

Data found in Home Office's Immigration statistical release:

Section 95 support by Local Authority	UK Region	Local Authority	LAD Code	Support sub-type	People
Date (as at...)					
31 Mar 2021	Yorkshire and The Humber	Rotherham	E08000018	Dispersed Accommodation	371
31 Mar 2021	Yorkshire and The Humber	Rotherham	E08000018	Subsistence Only	12

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Current Rothercard Discounts**i) Discounts for services provided by the Council**

Service	Description of Fee or Charge	Unit of charge	Rothercard Price 2022/23	Full price otherwise
Waste	CAT A Waste Household Garden and Recreational Maximum 9 Items with Rothercard 50% Discount	1-3 items Each additional item	£15.50 £5.00	£31 £10
Waste	180L Black Bin with Pink Lid – New property, additional bin, 2 nd stolen bin	1 bin	£11.50	£23
Waste	240L Green Bin (Paper/card) - New property, additional bin, 2 nd stolen bin	1 bin	£13	£26
Waste	240L Black Bin (Plastics/Cans/Glass) - New property, additional bin, 2 nd stolen bin	1 bin	£13	£26
Waste	140L Additional Black bin (domestic waste)	1 bin	£11	£22
Waste	Delivery charge for the above bins	1 bin	£4.50	£9
Pest Control	Treatment of rats	1 course of treatment	£36	£72
Urban Parks (Clifton Park only)	Season Ticket (April-September) Junior Rothercard Price	Per Person	£45.00	£53.00 Concessionary £82.00 adult
Urban Parks (Clifton Park only)	Day ticket / Match ticket Junior Rothercard Price	Per Person day ticket	£3.50	£4.00 concessionary £6.00 adult
Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium	Athletics - Junior Rothercard Price	Per Person	£2.90	£3.60 concessionary £4.40 adult
Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium	Season Ticket - Monthly (Junior Rothercard Price)	Per Person	£12.40	£19.40 concessionary £25.00 adult
Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium	Season Ticket - Family Monthly - Concessionary/Rothercard	Per Person	£30.80	£41.40
Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium	Multi-sports - Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per Person	£3.60 £2.80	£4.40
Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium	In2Athletics - Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per Person	£3.40	£3.90

Appendix 2c – Rothercard Discounts 22 to 23

Service	Description of Fee or Charge	Unit of charge	Rothercard Price 2022/23	Full price otherwise
Thrybergh CP	4 hours (2 fish) Concessionary/Rothercard	Half Day	£4.20	£6.20
Thrybergh CP	Full day (2 fish) Concessionary/Rothercard	Half Day ticket	£5.20	£6.70
Ulley CP	Season Ticket Concessionary/Rothercard	Ticket	£36.70	£56.40
Ulley CP	Day Ticket Concessionary/Rothercard		£3.20	£4.70
Rother Valley CP	Double Handed Dinghies Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per 90 mins	£13.00 £11.00	£18.50
Rother Valley CP	Single Handed Dinghies Concessionary/ Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per 90 mins	£10.50 £8.00	£14.50
Rother Valley CP	Windsurfer Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per 90 mins	£9.50 £7.00	£13.50
Rother Valley CP	Canadian Canoe Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per hour	£11.50 £9.00	£14.00
Rother Valley CP	Kayak Canoe Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per hour	£9.50 £7.30	£12.00
Rother Valley CP	Open Canoe Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per hour	£9.50 £7.50	£12.00
Rother Valley CP	Topo Due Canoe Concessionary/Rothercard Junior Rothercard	Per hour	£11.00 £8.00	£13.00
Rother Valley CP	Wet Suit (session) Concessionary/Rothercard	Per person	£5.00	£7.00
Rother Valley CP	Wet Suit (per day) Concessionary/Rothercard	Per person	£8.00	£15.00
Rother Valley CP	Buoyancy Aid (per day) Concessionary/Rothercard	Per person	£7.00	£11.00
Rother Valley CP	Private Launch - (Per Day) Concessionary/Rothercard	Per unit per day	£8.00	£11.00
Rother Valley CP	Private Launch (within 3 hours of closure) Concessionary/Rothercard	Per unit	£5.50	£7.50
Rother Valley CP	6 Month Private Launch Saver - Incl. Car Parking Fee Concessionary/Rothercard	Per unit	£156.00	£202.00

Appendix 2c – Rothercard Discounts 22 to 23

Service	Description of Fee or Charge	Unit of charge	Rothercard Price 2022/23	Full price otherwise
Rother Valley CP	Model Boating (per craft per day) * Concessionary/Rothercard	Per craft per day	£4.00	£5.50

ii) Places Leisure

	Rothercard price	Full price
SWIMMING		
Adult Swim	£3.80	£4.85
Junior	£3.00	£3.60
GYM		
Casual Use	£4.75	£6.75
Soft Play (up to 2 children, under 5 yrs)	£3.60	£4.65
SWIM ACADEMY (cash)		
Lesson 30mins	£5.10	£6.60
Lesson 45mins	£5.65	£7.65
Adult & Child	£5.10	£6.60
SWIM ACADEMY (DD)		
Junior 30min	£21.50	£27.50
Junior 45min	£23.50	£32.00
Adult & Child	£21.50	£27.50
HALL ACTIVITES		
Badminton	£9.00	£10.55
Squash	£6.50	£7.55
Squash jnr	£5.00	£6.50
Table Tennis	£9.00/£5.90 (jnr)	£10.55

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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: Rothercard Scheme – proposed changes	
Directorate: Finance & Customer Services	Service area: Customer, Information & Digital Services
Lead person: Helen Barker, Head of Customer Services	Contact number:
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p>The Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for Rotherham people living on a low-income by offering a discount on a range of Council services, as well as discounts on goods and leisure activities from a small number of other organisations.</p> <p>Since then, there has been no strategic management or development of Rothercard and there is no formally agreed departmental owner; although in 2019 Customer Services (F&CS) took on the responsibility for administering card applications, implementing an improved digital application process in 2020.</p>

Appendix 3A

The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time. This is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.

The Council Plan (Page 17, People are safe, healthy, and live well) refers to a 'new' Rothercard 'that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.'

Outcome 2.15 of the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 (Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind) sets out an action to complete a review of the Rothercard scheme by June 2022.

A review of the current scheme has recently been undertaken and a number of recommended changes to the scheme will be proposed to Cabinet for approval.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

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

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?	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 explain the reason

Appendix 3A

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?**

Yes.

The Rothercard scheme is designed to offer discounts to residents who most need it; which includes people all groups with protected characteristics.

- **Key findings**

There are two aspects to consider with regard to the Rothercard scheme:

1. The ease with which all residents are able to access information about the scheme so they know what the scheme is about, who can apply for a card and what they need to do to apply. A number of improvements have been identified to make the scheme easier to administer which it is anticipated will increase customer experience. Any agreed changes will be created to meet the Digital Design principles and be aligned with the Council's Customer Access Strategy which sets out how the Council will:
 - Make it easier and more attractive for people to access services online
 - Increase digital inclusion – a specific programme of works to increase digital inclusion is underway
 - Encourage and support more people to regularly 'self-serve' rather than choosing to phone or visit a council office
 - Make sure everyone continues to have equal access to the information and help they need regardless of their individual circumstances
 - Deliver excellent customer service and enhance customer experience
 - Involve customers in designing and building services around their needs – the Customer Services digital team have recruited a number of real customer volunteers to help test/comment on new proposed processes or designs
 - Make better use of customer feedback to continually develop and improve .

2. Scheme eligibility

The new Rothercard scheme will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them. The impact this has on the following groups has therefore been considered:

AGE

Older Adults

- According to DWP Labour Force Survey the average age of labour market exit is now 65.2 years old for men and 64.3 years old for women.
- Linking the eligibility to the state pension age, reflects the national increase in the age of people remaining in work and future proofs the scheme by avoiding setting a specific age which might then need to change in later years.
- The focus of the Rothercard scheme is to benefit residents who most need it, which is not necessarily everyone who has reached pensionable age

Young People

- Take-up under the current scheme is low as the criteria is directed at looked After children and young people aged 16 to 19 years who are in full time education
- Many young people may not be in education but are instead undertaking apprenticeships or other jobs with training/qualifications built into employment.
- These groups are not currently eligible for a card – the new scheme proposes that this be made more attractive and more inclusive for young people up to the age of 21.

Junior Rothercard rate

- A number of leisure activities offer a Junior Rothercard rate for children under the age of 16 who are dependants of a Rothercard holder and who are living in the same household as a Rothercard holder.
- Although changes are proposed to the overarching Rothercard eligibility criteria, children under the age of 16 who are dependants of a Rothercard holder and who are living in the same household as a Rothercard holder will continue to be eligible for a Junior Rothercard.

DISABILITY

- No anticipated impact –changes to the eligibility criteria are being proposed to ensure that discounted services are offered to those who need them the most.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

- No anticipated impact:

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

- No anticipated impact

RACE/LANGUAGE BARRIER

- Section 95 Local Authority supported refugees/asylum seekers are eligible for a Rothercard and future administrative changes to the scheme have been recommended to make this application process easier for this group of customers.
- Anyone wanting to apply for a Rothercard can receive assistance through interpreting

services that are available through DA Languages.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

No anticipated impact

SEX

No anticipated impact

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

No anticipated impact

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

No anticipated impact.

OTHER

None currently

- **Actions**

1. Equality considerations forms part of our development and implementation of new digital technologies, particularly where these are public facing.
2. Wherever possible residents are involved in the design and testing of solutions designed to meet their needs.
3. Regular updates on new customer access/service initiatives and/or improvements are provided to Community Reference group members.
4. Working with partners, a focussed piece of work to better understand digital exclusion in the Rotherham place is already underway to deliver a longer term programme of work to increase digital inclusion.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

Within 12 months of the proposed changes being implemented – and on a 12 month basis from then onwards as part of the annual review of the scheme.

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:

TBC

Lead person for your Equality Analysis
(Include name and job title):

Phil Rushton, Customer Services Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Helen Barker	Head of Customer Services	29 th November 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	21 st November 2022
Report title and date	Rothercard Scheme – proposed changes
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	TBC
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	29.11.22

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: Rothercard Scheme	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): Analysis conducted as part of working group review meetings (Dec21 to Nov 22)	
Directorate: F&CS	Service area: CIDS, Customer Services
Lead Manager: Helen Barker	Contact number:
Is this a:	
<input 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)
Helen Barker	RMBC	Head of Customer Services
Phil Rushton	RMBC	Customer Service Manager
Steve Eling	RMBC	Policy and Equalities Manager

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)

The Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for Rotherham people living on a low-income by offering a discount on a range of Council services, as well as discounts on goods and leisure activities from a small number of other organisations.

Since then, there has been no strategic management or development of Rothercard and there is no formally agreed departmental owner; although in 2019 Customer Services (F&CS) took on the responsibility for administering card applications, implementing an improved digital application process in 2020.

The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time. This is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.

A review of the current scheme has recently been undertaken and a number of recommended changes to the scheme are proposed.

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

1. Rothercard Working group

A working group consisting of cross party elected members and Council officers have reviewed the way the current scheme works and identified opportunities to improve the scheme to meet the following objectives:

- The Council Plan (Page 17, People are safe, healthy, and live well) refers to a 'new' Rothercard 'that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.'
- Outcome 2.15 of the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 (Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind) sets out an action to complete a review of the Rothercard scheme.

2. Demographics:

The following information was provided by various officers including the Policy & performance team, Revenue & Benefits and Customer Services.

- **Applications by customer group**

Appendix 3B

Between 1st September 2020 to 31st March 2022). Of these:

- 2,245 were successful applications
- 283 were declined as the applicants was unable to provide the required evidence of eligibility
- The remaining 451 applications include people who made an initial application but have since either decided not to pursue the application or still need to provide corroborating information/evidence.

Data from the 2,979 applications provides the following breakdown of eligibility criteria as indicated by residents:

Reason for applying:	Number	%
Aged over 60	1,379	46.30%
Adult on low income	1,528	51.30%
Young person aged 16 to 19 years in full time education	30	1.00%
Looked after children/young people	30	1.00%
Refugees/asylum seekers dependent on asylum seeker support payments	12	0.40%
Total	2,979	100.0%

Applicants who described themselves as 'adults on low income' indicated that they are in receipt of the following benefits:

Benefit	Number of Applicants	% of total applications
Universal Credit	665	43.5%
Personal Independence Payment	239	15.6%
Working Tax Credit	149	9.7%
Council Tax Reduction	136	8.9%
Employment and Support Allowance	114	7.5%
Disability Living Allowance	85	5.6%
Housing Benefit	59	3.9%
Income Support	43	2.8%
Jobseekers Allowance	15	1.0%
Attendance Allowance	10	0.7%
HC 2/3 Certificate	10	0.7%
Incapacity Benefit	3	0.2%

Totals	1528	100%
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- **Borough Demographics (info dated Jan 22)**

Only a small proportion of residents (estimated to be around 10K) are currently Rothercard holders; out of approx. 144k residents across the borough who it is believed could be eligible for a Rothercard under the current scheme. This is made up of the following demographic groups:

- i) **Aged over 60**

Mid-year (2021) population estimates:

Age	Total
Aged 65+	52,388
Aged 60-64	16,372
Total	68,760

- ii) **Adults on a low income - defined as anyone in receipt of one of the following benefits:**

The data collated below (Jan 22) is from a variety of sources. Exact numbers are continuously changing.

Many adults on low income are in receipt of more than one benefit type. This means that the total number of benefit awards identified in the table below (116k) is not the same as the number of people currently eligible for a Rothercard.

Conversations with colleagues suggest that 63k was a more realistic estimate of 'Adults on Low' income in Rotherham

Benefit	Number of estimated benefit awards across the borough	Comments
Universal Credit	26,395	
Employment & Support Allowance	9,794	
Income Support	1,470	
Job Seekers	952	

Appendix 3B

Attendance Allowance	7,282	These residents are already included in the over 60 age category
Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment	24,174	Only 2,969 exclusively claim DLA/PIPS. Some people in receipt of these benefits are included in the over 60 group
Incapacity Benefit & severe disablement allowance	197	
Working Tax Credit	11,200	
Housing Benefit	12,832	Most people in receipt of Housing Benefit will be receiving Council Tax support, or on one of the other primary benefits such as IS, JSA other benefits already listed
Council Tax Support	23,437	Some people in receipt of CTax support will also be included int the totals for ESA,JSA,IS & UC
HC 2/3 Certificate - (help with cost of prescriptions, dentist/optician charges)	unknown	

iii) Young people aged 16 to 19 years in full time education

Data provided by the Office For National Statistics (ONS) according to 2020 (most recent) mid-year population estimates:

Age 16	2,997
Age 17	3,022
Age 18	2,833
Age 19	2,387
Age 16-19	11,239

iv) Looked after children/young people

Data provided by CYPS:

Age group	Number
1 to 4 years	93
10 to 15 years	255
16 years and over	96
5 to 9 years	113

Total children	557
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v) **Refugees/asylum seekers dependent on asylum seeker support payments**

Data found in Home Office's Immigration statistical release:

Section 95 support by Local Authority					
Date (as at...)	UK Region	Local Authority	LAD Code	Support sub-type	People
31 Mar 2021	Yorkshire and The Humber	Rotherham	E08000018	Dispersed Accommodation	371
31 Mar 2021	Yorkshire and The Humber	Rotherham	E08000018	Subsistence Only	12

3. Accessibility - information about the scheme and applying for a Rothercard

- **Online**

In terms of information relating to the Rothercard scheme that is published online. The Customer Services web team take several steps to make sure the website is user-friendly and accessible to all. We have a review process as part of our everyday workflow whereby:

- Website content is firstly written in draft by the service to make sure it's factually correct.
- Draft content is shared with the Comms team to check it meets writing standards, such as spelling, grammar and readability.
- Content is then supplied to the website team to make sure it is formatted correctly (HTML) and meets accessibility regulations.

To meet accessibility regulations, the Council uses tools such as WAVE Web Aim which evaluates web content for accessibility issues. And we use Silktide Accessibility simulator which simulates a range of disabilities, such as colour blindness, Myopia and Dyslexia. We also use 'read-aloud' services to make sure our content is understandable when spoken. Our website is also independently audited for accessibility by Silktide. The audit by Silktide highlights accessibility issues and recommends fixes. The website team look at the issues and fix the one's which can be fixed by the team. Some of the issues are technical and are raised with our website supplier. Our website is currently scoring 97 out of 100 on the Silktide index and has been in the top 30 of UK councils for over the past 24 months. An independent company ([Silktide](#)) assess over 400 local authority websites on a monthly basis against website accessibility standards. RMBC has been in the top 30 each month for the last 24 months.

The Council's [Accessibility statement](#) provides a wide range of information for customers about how to get the most out of their online experience.

- **Telephone**

The Customer Services contact centre support anyone unable to self-serve online by providing going through the application process with the customer over the telephone.

- **In person**

Where either of the above contact channels are not appropriate for the customer, a pre-arranged telephone appointment can be arranged and conducted face to face at any of the Council's six Customer Service centre locations.

- **Translation services**

DA Languages are the Councils' appointed Translation and Interpretation provider and arrangements are in place to support any customer with language difficulties.

The Council's accessibility pages provide information about how to change language settings for customers transacting online.

- **Disabilities**

The Council's [Customer Access strategy](#) sets out the Council's commitment to ensure all customers, regardless of circumstances can access the help and support they need and provides a range of channels and contact methods for people to choose from.

- **Physical Rothercard**

In today's world people increasingly prefer to save documents, tickets and membership cards in a virtual wallet rather than having to carry a physical record with them just in case it's needed.

There is no current facility to provide users with a digital pass but it is anticipated that a solution will be available to offer to customers by the Autumn 2023.

4. Service Take Up:

The collection of data to evidence Rothercard usage is not consistent and does therefore currently provide any reliable information about how the scheme might be positively impacting on people's lives.

A new digital corporate equalities template has recently been designed to 'add on' to any digital form (when appropriate) and should in the future extend the amount of equalities data captured when customers are requesting services that involve a Rothercard discount.

5. Residents who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a Rothercard

The recommended changes to the Rothercard scheme are intended to deliver a new and improved scheme that 'will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them; with a regular review to ensure the offer remains right for the residents of Rotherham.

A piece of work to be developed during 2023/24 will explore options for a different Rothercard offer for those who do not meet the eligibility criteria. Local businesses for example may be interested in offering Rotherham residents a discount to goods/services as a way of boosting their trade and increasing the number of people 'shopping local.'

6. Other related programmes and projects :

- The Rotherham Place Digital Inclusion programme; working with charities and partners to address digital divides within the community with a particular focus on the ability of residents in protected groups to access services.
- Digital Strategy - four interlinking themes that collectively aim to reduce the digital-divide and help residents that might otherwise struggle, overcome barriers and enjoy the benefits of digital technologies.
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy - creating the capacity, interest and enthusiasm for individuals and communities to do things for themselves
- Customer & Digital programme – implementation of customer improvements that are designed as digital first, based on a series of design principles to ensure they are built consistently and to agreed standards. Wherever possible, and particularly for high demand/sensitive/complex processes, we involve members of our customer user testing group. We have around 50 residents who have expressed interest in helping, together with established groups such as the Digital Inclusion Stakeholder group with representation from the 3rd sector such as Age UK
- Access to free wi-fi in Council buildings for people without their own broadband/data access
- Rotherham Place Digital Roadmap – a 5 year roadmap to empower patients and citizens to better self-manage their own health and care through digital services and support the transformation of our health and care services so that they can increasingly be delivered out in the community.
- Promoting, encouraging and supporting those who are able, to be more motivated to engage digitally, and feel more inclined to choose 'online' as their channel of choice.

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

As referenced previously, there is very little data consistency at present; something which will be resolved as part of the redesign of the scheme.

Equality information is not currently captured. The use of a single digital process (as per Customer & Digital design principles) coupled with the use of the new standard equalities questionnaire should extend the amount of usable data captured.

For example, by capturing scheme usage based on gender, ethnicity and disability, the Council can identify any groups where take-up is disproportionately lower than it should be; allowing for a more targeted awareness raising campaign.

Some form of public consultation would also further increase the Council's understanding of how the scheme is benefiting its residents, as well as providing an opportunity to find out if there are any links between the take up of specific discounted services and protected groups. For example, Rothercard holders from protected group x are not making use of the discount for these kinds of sporting activities.

All of this information can then be assessed as part of the annual review and used as the evidence to propose any potential changes to the offer.

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

- Customer feedback channels including but not limited to:
 - [Website Feedback form](#). This is designed for customers to share their thoughts about their website experience
 - [Customer Access Strategy](#) - this web form encourages customers to tell us what we can do to make it easier for customers to access the services they need and to share ideas about new features we might not already offer.
 - Rothercard scheme feedback questionnaire – to be developed during 2023/24
 - Comments, compliments, complaints – formal or informal
 - Digital Inclusion working group
 - Community Reference group
- Review of Rothercard application data over the first few months following implementation of the improved scheme and related processes
- Financial impact – There are no corporate budget allowances for income streams where Rothercard discounts make up a significant proportion. Services are expected to manage any pressures or gains arising from discounts for their services as part of their monthly monitoring.
- Annual review of the scheme

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

See Section entitled '*What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)*'

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

The following Council officers have provided information that has helped the Rothercard Working group establish how the scheme works/is used now, and how it could be improved in the future:

Name	Directorate	Date
Michael Holmes	Assistant Chief Executive	Jan, Sept 2022
Rob Cutts	Finance & Customer Services	Apr, Sept 2022
Andrew Sheldon	Finance & Customer Services	Apr, Sept 2022
Nikki Kelly	Finance & Customer Services	Nov 2021
Sam Barstow	Regeneration & Environment	Jul, Aug 2022
Leanne Buchan	Regeneration & Environment	Nov 2022
Barry Connolly	Regeneration & Environment	Jul, Aug, Sep 2022
Chris Siddall	Regeneration & Environment	Apr 2022, Dec 2022
Donna Furniss-Morton	Regeneration & Environment	Jul 2022

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	Phil Rushton	Finance & Customer Services	Ongoing
	Charlotte Cheetham	Finance & Customer Services	Ongoing
	Ashley Haystead	Finance & Customer Services	Apr 2022
	Jo Longworth	Regeneration & Environment	May 2022

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 Rothercard scheme was launched as an anti-poverty initiative in 1993 to prioritise support for anyone living in a property which is registered for Council Tax in Rotherham and able to provide evidence of meeting one of the [criteria](#) set out in the current scheme.

The current scheme has not been developed or promoted for some time which is likely to mean that some of the people who could most benefit from the scheme, are missing out.

The Council Plan (Page 17, People are safe, healthy, and live well) refers to a 'new' Rothercard '*that will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them.*'

Outcome 2.15 of the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 (*Inequalities are addressed and nobody is left behind*) sets out an action to complete a review of the Rothercard scheme. (completed Nov 22)

The review took into account all available information to determine how a new and improved Rothercard scheme that 'will provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them,' could be delivered. The proposed improvements will mean that for all residents, regardless of protected group:

- Customer experience will be enhanced in terms of both applying for and benefiting from the Rothercard scheme
- the right people will be targeted to increase awareness of the scheme
- the scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis so that the offer remains right for the residents of Rotherham
- business intelligence will be more consistently gathered and analysed more regularly so the Council can better understand take-up rates and outcomes

As the assessment of current equalities information confirmed, appropriate support is in place for all groups to ensure they can access the help and support they need when enquiring about /applying for a Rothercard.

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

Research suggests that some customers and communities are more likely to find it difficult to access services in the same way that others might take for granted. For example, national data finds that digital exclusion is more evident amongst the elderly, disabled, and individuals from BAME and socially deprived communities.

Through work already taking place as part of the Customer & Digital programme and Digital Inclusion programme, any opportunity to improve service access/delivery can be identified and appropriate plans put in place to reduce digital inequalities.

The focus of the Rothercard scheme is to benefit residents who most need it, which is not necessarily everyone who has reached pensionable age. For this reason, applicants will need to meet both the 'low income' and state pension age' criterion to be awarded a Rothercard in future.

Anyone 'aged 60 & over' who already has a Rothercard can however continue using their card until it expires; even if they would not be eligible once the new criteria has been introduced. Once the resident's card expires (5 years from the original issue date) they will need to reapply under the eligibility criteria of the new scheme.

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

The new scheme means more young people can apply for a Rothercard. The criteria currently requires a young person to be 16-19 and in full time education. The new scheme removes the need for a young person to be in education and expands the age range to 16-21.

Anyone of any age who meets the 'adult on low income' criteria will be able to apply for a Rothercard; and, for anyone on low income who has also reached the state pension age, they will be awarded a Rothercard that does not have an expiry date.

Section 95 Local Authority supported refugees/asylum seekers will be automatically granted a Rothercard with a 12 month expiry date. These customer groups have arrived in the borough as a result of a humanitarian crisis and the benefits of the Rothercard scheme compliments other support packages already in place and provides quicker access to the type of activities that have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

This is a positive step. It is one less 'thing to do' for newly arriving refugees or asylum seekers.

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)

Strong and collaborative community engagement is essential in delivering effective, efficient and inclusive customer centric services.

The new Rothercard scheme is designed to provide discounts on Council services for those who most need them so it is anticipated that the impact of this change will be a positive one.

The future scheme will benefit from improved data gathering, more regular assessment and the annual review; making it easier to identify any changes needed to the 'offer' also taking into account other work already taking place as part of the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy, Customer & Digital programme and Digital Inclusion.

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: Rothercard Scheme
Directorate and service area: Customer Services, Finance & Customer Service
Lead Manager: Helen Barker
Summary of findings:

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Design and build improved application and assessment process	ALL	04/23
Create Comms Plan - Promotion of new scheme in advance of new scheme being introduced, and continuing afterwards	ALL	03/23
Implement a digital card	ALL	10/23
Work with local businesses to explore the potential for offering discounts to Rothercard holders	ALL	10/23

Appendix 3B

Questionnaire to seek customer feedback about the new Rothercard scheme	ALL	10/23
Undertake an annual review of the scheme	ALL	11/23

*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
Steve Eling	Policy and Equalities Manager	13/12/2022

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	13/12/2022
Report title and date	Rothercard Scheme
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	13/12/2022

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?	None				
Emissions from transport?	None				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	None				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	None				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	None				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	Yes	A digital Rothercard will be created . Customers will be encouraged to choose this option rather than a plastic card that has to be posted out Reduction to paper and associated tasks eg. print, mail/delivery			Customer take-up of digital cards will be monitored with further promotion when appropriate.
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:

The Rothercard scheme is designed to provide discounts on Council services for Rotherham residents who most need them. The current card is only available as a physical card printed onto plastic. Customers increasingly expect a digital card (which can be added to a virtual wallet) so it is anticipated that this option will be popular and therefore reduce the demand for physical cards which ultimately reduces print and use of plastic; in addition to lowering volume of outgoing mail which reduces carbon emissions associated with post delivery.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Helen Barker
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]	

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme 2022-23

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
11 May 2022	Petition – Improve Road safety on Cumwell Lane Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund: Update and Implementation Household Support Fund
27 May 2022 – Special Meeting	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.
15 June 2022	Finance Update Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022/2025), Action Plan 2022/2023) and Annual Report (2021/2022) Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report. Operation Linden
6 July 2022	Annual Housing Development Report 2022-23 Children's Commissioners Takeover Challenge - Climate Change
14 September 2022	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report July 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2022-25 Household Support Fund
12 October 2022	Foster Carer Fees and Development of In-House Retention Offer Proposals for Day Opportunities for People with High Support Needs Forge Island Implementation Scrutiny Review – Cultural Strategy Scrutiny Review – Markets Engagement and Recovery
1 November 2022	Modern Slavery – Spotlight Review
16 November 2022	Pre-decision Scrutiny Items Social Value Mid-Year Review
1 December NEW	Cumwell Lane Petition - update Complaints Annual Report
14 December 2022	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report Establishment of a Financial Abuse and Exploitation Service for Rotherham Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report. Scrutiny Review Recommendations - COVID-19 Care Home Safety

19 January 2023	Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres Rothercard
8 February 2023 (TBC)	Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 Financial Inclusion Strategy Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges HRA Business Plan
22 February 2023	TBC
15 March 2023	Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report
March (TBC)	Children's Commissioner's Take Over Challenge
19 April 2023	TBC
10 May 2023	TBC

Items for Scheduling

Finance/Budget Setting	Resolved at the 14 July meeting: 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.
CYPS Performance monitoring	Workshop session on CYPS Performance monitoring
CYPS Invest to Save	To scrutinise the impact of "Invest to Save" initiatives across CYPS
Cost of Living	Work Commencing December 2022
Adult Care Services Commissioning	To look in further detail the commissioning process for adult care services. Requested at the 9 February meeting.
Census	2012 and April 2013 reported to OSMB previously.
Notice of Motion - Byelaws	Referred from the Council Meeting 30 November 2022. Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider within its work programme the listed potential actions, making any recommendations they deem necessary, and require the proposer of this motion to be part of this Scrutiny activity:

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
1 January 2023 – 31 March 2023

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 23 JANUARY 2023								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Provision of Mental Health Recovery Focussed Supported Living Services	November 2022	To approve procurement of mental health recovery focussed supported living services.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges	October 2022	To consider and recommend to Council approval of the 2023-24 social and affordable rent charges, district heating charges and service charges.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Reports and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
HRA Business Plan	October 2022	To consider and recommend to Council the approval of the 2023-24 HRA Business Plan.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Housing Development Update	October 2022	To note progress on the Council Housing Development programme.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and 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
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
November 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report	November 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 and appendices	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								
Use of Compulsory Purchase powers, 3-7 Corporation Street	December 2022	To confirm use of Compulsory purchase powers for 3-7 Corporation Street (burnt out buildings.)	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers, stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Collections Management Policy	December 2022	To approve the Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Collections Management Policy.	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, officers, stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Future Provision for Household Waste Recycling Centres	November 2022	To consider the future operating model for Household Waste Recycling Centres.	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Reports and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 23 JANUARY 2023								
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Covid-19 Care Home Safety	December 2022	To receive the report and consider the recommendations.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Relevant officers, Members and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
Risk Management Policy	December 2022	To approve the Council's Risk Management Policy.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Officers, Members 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								
Performance Management of Dignity Contract	November 2022	To provide an update on the performance management of the Dignity Contract for this year and to consider the future use of funds received as a result.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Rothercard Review	December 2022	To approve the new proposed approach for the Rothercard Scheme.	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 13 FEBRUARY 2023								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Proposals for accommodation with support for people with Autism and or a Learning Disability	December 2022	To agree the principles for developing a new strategy for accommodation and support.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Relevant Members, Officers, Stakeholders and customers.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Mental Health Service Review	December 2022	To report on the outcomes and proposals from the Mental Health Service Review.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Relevant Members, Officers, Stakeholders and customers.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Fully 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
Financial Inclusion Strategy	December 2022	To approve the new Financial Inclusion Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	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
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Proposal to close the Rowan Centre Pupil Referral Unit following transfer of pupils to Elements Academy	December 2022	To report on the outcome of pre statutory consultation and seek approval to commence a period of statutory consultation by the publishing of a public notice on proposals.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant stakeholders as outlined in DfE guidance.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Suzanne Joyner Tel: 01709 247617 suzanne.joyner@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
December Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23	December 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 and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24	December 2022	To recommend to Council the Budget and Council Tax for 2023-24.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Place Based Investment Strategy	October 2022	To approve the Place Based Investment Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Rotherham Construction Procurement Framework	December 2022	To re-procure and replace the existing Rotherham Construction Procurement Framework.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@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
Olive Lane Funding and Development Agreement	December 2022	To approve the Council entering into a Section 2 Funding Agreement, Development Agreement and the subsequent property lease agreements in order to facilitate the development of a medical provision.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	Rother Vale	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 13 FEBRUARY 2023								
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Early Help Strategy 2023-2028	August 2022	To endorse the Early Help Strategy 2023-2028 and approve the monitoring and oversight of progress against the Strategy Delivery Plan.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Suzanne Joyner Tel: 01709 247617 suzanne.joyner@rotherham.gov.uk
National Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Update	October 2022	To note the update.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Suzanne Joyner Tel: 01709 247617 suzanne.joyner@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	December 2022	That Cabinet approve the applications for Discretionary Business Rate Relief.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Review - Cultural Strategy	December 2022	To approve the response to the Scrutiny Review of the Cultural Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@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
Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Review - Markets: Engagement and Recovery	December 2022	To approve the response to the Scrutiny Review Markets: Engagement and Recovery.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Towns and Villages Fund Delivery Update	December 2022	To receive an update on the delivery of the Towns and Villages Category 1 schemes.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	Brinsworth; Dalton & Thrybergh; Greasbrough; Hellaby & Maltby West; Hooper; Swinton Rockingham	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 MARCH 2023 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023 - 2026	December 2022	To approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026.	Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Child Exploitation Strategy 2023-2027	November 2022	To endorse the Child Exploitation Strategy 2023-2027.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Councillor Victoria Cusworth Tel: 07824895314 victoria.cusworth@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Renewable Energy Generation Project	December 2022	To approve the Renewable Energy Project.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers, stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@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
Climate Change Action Plan and Annual Report	December 2022	To approve the Climate Change Action Plan and Single Use Plastics Plan.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers, stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 MARCH 2023 OR LATER								
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Quarterly Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Report	December 2022	To note performance against the Council Plan and achievements of the Year Ahead Delivery Plan.	Leader of the Council	Relevant officers, Members and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	July 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
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Modern Slavery Annual Transparency Statement	December 2022	To approve the annual modern slavery transparency statement for publication.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant colleagues, Cabinet Member, Partners.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk

**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.