

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time :- Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 10.00 a.m.
Venue:- Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
Membership:- Councillors Clark (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Baker-Rogers, Browne, Cooksey, Miro, 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 7 February 2024 (Pages 5 - 18)

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 7 February 2024 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.

6. Question and answer session, Mayor Coppard, South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority.

On invitation of the Chair, Councillor Maggi Clark, Mayor Coppard to present a brief overview of his priorities as Mayor of South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and take part in a question-and-answer session with Board Members.

Please note: 30 minutes will be allocated to this item.

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 18 March 2024. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

7. Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 (Pages 19 - 78)

To receive a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Service outlining the proposed Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029. The strategy has been developed in response to revised government guidance, including the Department for Education (DfE) new edition 'Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023'. It describes three phases of support for children and families and concludes with how children, families and other key stakeholders will work together to deliver the vision over the next five years.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

1. Endorse the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029.
2. Approves the Local Authority involvement in the development and implementation of the Strategy Delivery Plan with the oversight and delivery of progress by the Early Help Partnership Group (EHPG) and the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC).

For Discussion/Decision:-

8. Climate Emergency Annual Report 2023 - 2024 (Pages 79 - 142)

To receive a report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment outlining progress towards the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan reported for the 2023/2024 period. Also included is a summary of climate

change data, for greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations April 2020 – March 2023 and across the Borough of Rotherham, 2005 – 2021. Local area emissions data are published two years in arrears by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

This report was approved at the Cabinet meeting held on 18 February 2024.

Recommendations

That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Notes Cabinet's approval of the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report.
2. Consider the report and action plan and determine if there are any additional recommendations arising from the matters herein.

9. Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Nature Recovery (Pages 143 - 160)

To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services outlining the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Nature Recovery undertaken by Members from Improving Places Select Commission.

For Information/Monitoring:-

10. Work Programme (Pages 161 - 162)

To consider the Board's Work Programme.

11. Work in Progress - Select Commissions

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

12. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024 (Pages 163 - 168)

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024.

Please note that there are no Cabinet meetings scheduled for April 2024 or May 2024.

13. Call-in Issues

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

14. Urgent Business

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

15. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall.

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

SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 7 February 2024

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Ball, Browne, Cooksey, Elliott, Pitchley, Tinsley and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- There were no apologies for absence.

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

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

99. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2024

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 16 January 2024 be approved as a true record.

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

101. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the public or press.

102. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items.

103. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council to introduce the report. Also in attendance was the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood Workings and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance.

Also present were the Chief Executive; the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and Assistant Director of Financial Services; the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health; the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment; and the Acting Assistant Director of Early Help and Business Support (representing the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services).

The report proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2024/25, based on the Council's Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, budget consultation and the consideration of Directorate budget proposals. A review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had also been undertaken.

The proposed Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy reflected the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan. The development of the Budget proposals for 2024/25 and the further update of the MTFS had taken into account prevailing economic factors and demand pressures, notably inflation remaining significantly high during 2023/24 and its impact on market pressures for CYPS placements, food prices for schools catering and increased base costs across Council services, along with significant increased demand for Home to School Transport. Following the Council's technical MTFS updates and the impact of the Provisional Financial Settlement the Council had been able to propose a balanced budget for 2024/25 and faced a projected, potential £6.6m funding gap in 2025/26.

In setting the Budget, the Council maintained a focus on mitigating any adverse impact on residents as far as possible, ensuring the protection of basic services in order to support the community through a continuing cost of living crisis. In addition, the Budget provided some additional investments to help support people and delivering the Council's ambitions for the Borough with specific regard to the environment and being family friendly.

In recognition of escalating cost pressures relating to inflation, transitions and rising demand for the service, the report proposed approximately £7.5m of additional funding to support the delivery of Adult Social Care services.

In setting the proposed 2024/25 budget, Cabinet would recommend to Council a 3.5% increase in Council Tax, made up of an increase of 1.5% in the Council's basic Council Tax plus an increase of 2% for the Adult Social Care precept.

The Leader of the Council outlined that because of previous budgetary decisions, the presented budget proposed a comparatively low increase in Council Tax compared to many other authorities in the country.

It was noted that directorates were working towards a balanced budget position, which would require a small use of reserves over the next two years. However, in 2025/26, there was a projected budget gap of approximately £6.6 million.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services added that there was some uncertainty about future local government funding. However, in setting the budget, risks had been identified and mitigated, details of which were outlined in the report. Treasury Management decisions had generated additional income which had been added to reserves. Assurance was given in her capacity as the Section 151 Officer, that the proposed budget was robust and safe.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board and a discussion on the following issues ensued:

- The challenge of setting a balanced budget in light of financial austerity and economic conditions and the prudent choices the Council had taken financially were noted. Given these financial challenges, the additional investments were welcomed.
- Clarification was sought on the Council Tax support available to low-income households. In response, it was outlined that approximately 14,000 working age households would receive Council Tax top up and of these, approximately for 10,000 this would cover the Council Tax bill entirely. It was noted that for those residents in parish areas, parish precepts would not be covered.
- It was noted that the Government had reduced grant support to councils, with the expectation that business rate and Council Tax receipts would address the funding gap.
- In reference to previous year's savings, clarification was sought if these would be achieved. It was outlined that there had been a delay in disposing of some assets, however the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services was confident that these would be delivered by the end of the current year.
- The extent of budget savings since 2010 and their impact on services were noted. It was noted that the flexibility to make discretionary budget decisions had diminished. The Council would continue to deliver statutory services such as social care provision and refuse collection. However, it would not be possible to meet all expectations because resources were limited.
- It was noted that the report referred to complexities faced by the health and care system. It was outlined that the ageing population, with people living with long-term conditions; delays in treatment; staffing pressures; and the impact of the pandemic were all contributory factors. It was clarified that the budget allocated would address some of the risks. It was noted that Central Government had allocated additional funding, however if these funds were not continued, the service would face considerable pressures.
- It was clarified that there were no savings proposals in this budget round. The savings outlined had been agreed in previous years and were on track to be delivered.
- Further details were sought on amount charged in Council Tax since the start of the Council's term (2021). The Leader of the Council outlined that each year of the term, and in the preceding two years, Council Tax had been increased by less than the Government's referendum threshold. It was outlined that the reduction in Central Government funding had meant that local councils had to raise Council Tax bills to meet this funding gap.
- Concerns were expressed about the use of Council resources, how performance was being managed in specific services and if the proposed investments were justified. In response, using the

example of contact centres, it was highlighted that investments in staffing and capacity had improved performance and customer satisfaction.

- In respect of previous years savings, it was clarified that Finance and Customer Services had secured additional efficiencies by getting better value from IT contracts.

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council to outline proposals concerning Fees and Charges.

It was outlined that the Council had a policy to increase fees and charges to ensure that services which the Council provided were kept broadly in line with increases in the cost. The proposal was fees and charges would be uplifted by 6% (unless an exception was applied). These were detailed in paragraph 2.3.3 of the report.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Board members:

- In respect of the proposed fee increase of 15% for school catering, clarification was sought as to the cost the local authority should this not be passed onto schools. It was outlined that the projected cost was in the region of £750,000. It was also explained that schools had the discretion of purchasing the service from the local authority or from another provider.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of the increase in school meal prices particularly in respect of those household who were slightly above the threshold for free school meals. It was outlined that families who fall outside the means test thresholds may benefit from additional Council Tax support and other measures put in place to support low-income households.
- Details are asked at the outcomes of consultation with schools about the proposed increase in fees. It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing.
- In respect of taxi licensing, clarification was sought on MOT requirements. It was outlined that the review of the Licensing Policy had determined that the current frequency of testing should be maintained. In mitigation, agreement had been reached with the taxi trade that older vehicles could be used if they met the agreed standards. A query was raised whether the use of bus and cycle lanes could be extended to taxi drivers in line with some other local authorities. The Leader of the Council confirmed that he would examine the issue further.

The Chair invited Leader of the Council to introduce proposed Revenue Budget Investments, outlined in detail in Appendix 2 of the report.

The proposals delivered by Children and Young People Services Directorate (linked to the Council Plan theme 'Every Child Able to Fulfil their Potential') were outlined.

In respect of the early help proposals, it was intended that these would improve the Council's universal offer and provide flexibility in services across early help and social care. This would add capacity to increase the reach of the offer to under-fives across the borough; commission universal youth services and increase outreach and engagement resources; and improve the effectiveness of initial contact with families to ensure they received the right help at the right time from a range of agencies. Details were provided of the baby pack scheme; the scheme would be universally available for all babies and new parents to promote a fair and equal start for all children and access to universal and targeted provision in localities. The concept of the pack was to facilitate proactive engagement with young families from birth, making sure that families had the essentials in the first few weeks and months of life.

The Acting Assistant Director for Early Help and Business Support reiterated that the introduction of baby packs was intended to facilitate early engagement with families and provide relevant information (e.g. safe sleeping campaigns). It was established that families which received early intervention and support were less likely to require statutory intervention as they grow older.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board:

- The investment in universal early help services across the borough was welcomed. Further details were requested on how equitable access to services would be delivered, particularly in those localities which did not have access to family hubs. It was outlined that outreach services would be delivered within communities: an example was given of engagement with young people. It was also highlighted the activities and services will be delivered in buildings belonging to partners.
- A question was raised whether the baby packs would be means tested. It was clarified that this was a universal offer, available to all families as means testing often acted as a barrier and made it more difficult for families to access services. The premise behind the proposal was that the service was engaging directly with families from day one and if the service was not needed by a family, the service would not be accessed.
- Clarification was sought whether an analysis had been undertaken on whether the baby packs provided value for money and if families on very high incomes would take up the offer, possibly at detriment to those in greater need. It was established that an income distribution analysis had not taken place, however there were relatively few people on the high wages cited who lived in the borough. It was intended that the process would be as simple as possible so as not to put off applicants through bureaucracy. It was anticipated that this would enable all families to have the opportunity to engage with local universal services.

- Details was sought about how the impact of the investment in baby packs would be monitored and reported. It was clarified that this would take place. Data was collected on the numbers attending Children Centres, alongside ongoing monitoring of numbers of children in need and looked after children. The impact of this initiative would be measured in the long-term.
- It was outlined that conversations have taken place with families through Children Centres to establish what would be helpful and make a difference to them, especially in the first few weeks. The offer was in line with the recent Government policy “Stable Homes, Built on Love”.
- Further comments were made welcoming the proposals; in particular, the ability of new parents to access advice and support in a non-stigmatising way. It was noted that this would be of benefit to new parents regardless of their income-level.

The proposals delivered by the Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Directorate (linked to the Council Plan theme ‘People are Safe, Healthy and Live Well’) were outlined.

Reference was made to the pressures experienced in Homelessness Services. The proposal outlined an investment in homelessness prevention and managing temporary accommodation pressures. To highlight the scale of the problem, it was noted that almost 160 homeless households were temporarily accommodated in Rotherham during December and the service received over 2500 service requests per week. This level of demand was comparable with that experienced by other local authorities.

There were two strands to the proposal: the first being the provision of support alongside probation services in accommodation for individuals exiting custody. This cohort often had a complex range of issues and struggled to maintain tenancy without intensive support, leading to substantial pressures on the service if unaddressed. The second part of the proposal involved the provision of targeted support and for people in temporary accommodation.

The second investment proposal concerns bringing empty homes back into use. The third investment proposal was to support the new CQC regulatory and inspection arrangements for adult social care and coordinate the work across the service.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board:

- Further details were asked about what steps would be taken if an individual presented as homeless, the length of time to access emergency accommodation and how the proposed investment would help the process. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood Working outlined that the

response depended on the particular circumstances of the case and presenting need (e.g medical conditions et cetera).

- In the case of rough sleepers, it was outlined that the Council would try to source emergency accommodation on the same day that the individual presented.
- Concerns were expressed about the use of hotels as temporary accommodation, particularly for women with children, including those who may have suffered domestic abuse.
- Clarification was sought about how empty homes could be brought back into use and if developers could be incentivised to increase the numbers returned to use. It was noted that empty homes were privately owned and therefore not council assets.
- Further details were asked about what support Council tenants received to help them stay in their properties and mitigate the risk of homelessness. It was highlighted that a report would be submitted to the February meeting of Council detailing proposals. This had been considered by the Board at its previous meeting.
- Concerns were expressed at the expense of using hotels as temporary accommodation. It was noted that there had been a spike in homelessness numbers that mirrored the national trend. The Council's intention was to support people to stay in sustainable tenancies and provide more affordable homes.

The proposals delivered by the Regeneration and Environment Directorate (linked to the Council plan themes 'People are Safe, Healthy and Live Well' (1); 'Expanding Economic Opportunity' (1) and a 'Cleaner, Greener Environment' (3) were outlined.

The Restorative Hate Crime Service provided an early intervention and prevention approach to tackling hate crime/incidents. This initiative was previously funded by the Community Safety Partnership. The proposal was to increase the capacity of the provider Remedi by 33% and put service on a more sustainable basis.

The proposal entitled Community Wealth Building was focused on providing support to increase employer ownership across the borough. It supported the delivery of the Council's Social Value Policy and also formed a complimentary part of the Council's wider approach to creating a more inclusive economy. The proposal would enable the delivery of targeted activity within the Borough to promote and increase employee ownership.

In respect of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) proposals, it was outline that the Council had a new statutory duty to administer BNG as a planning requirement within the Environment Act 2021. It had been identified by both planning and green spaces services that demand and work would increase as a result of the new duty. The aim of the proposal was to increase capacity to allow the Council to meet its new BNG

responsibilities.

In respect of the proposals around Principal Towns Cleansing, it was noted that there had been an increase footfall across areas of the borough which are benefiting from regeneration schemes, Towns and Villages Funding and wider capital investment to enhance local communities. The proposals would increase the cleansing and maintenance operations; provide evening and weekend cover; maintain new and/or enhanced public spaces and provide a cleaner greener town centre to visit and work in.

With regards to the Tree Service Improvements, the proposals were intended to ensure that the service was meeting good practice standards as well as legislative requirements. The additional investment was needed to sustain the service at the new level and make improvements to response time and faults rectified through proactive inspections.

The proposal to reduce the price of the Bulky Waste Service to residents was outlined. The proposal was to seek a 50% reduction on the current charge to residents who use the service, with a further reduction for Rothercard holders. It was anticipated that this would drive up demand for the service to encourage more residents to use the trusted and efficient service available and reduce fly tipping.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board:

- Further details were requested on how Community Wealth Building would work in practice and if it applied to sole traders. A further question was asked about how the initiative would be communicated to black and minority ethnic communities and across the wider borough. It was outlined that the initiative was typically aimed at slightly larger organisations. The intention was to generate wealth and encourage local businesses to win contracts with the council.
- In respect of the Bulky Waste proposals, details were sought if this would be extended to churches. The Leader of the Council stated that he would be happy to look at this question.
- Clarification was requested if enforcement activity around fly tipping would be maintained. This was confirmed.
- Further details were requested on how the impact of the Restorative Hate Crime Service and Community Wealth Building would be measured and communicated to Members. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained that data was gathered with regards to hate crime/incident reoffending rates and metrics would be developed on community wealth and employee ownership which would be reflected in performance information. The Chief Executive confirmed that the performance information regarding hate crime initiative is outlined in the Rotherham Safer

Partnerships annual report.

- In terms of the investments related to street cleaning, tree services and bulky waste collections, if the proposals were approved, consideration would be given to how improvements were communicated to residents.
- Details was sought if town cleansing would benefit all wards. It was confirmed that this should be the case however, priority had been given to areas of higher footfall. Members were invited to feedback where improvements could be made to services. The Chief Executive outlined that comparisons had been made with national good practice on street cleansing. Capital investments had also been made to improve the efficiencies of the service including equipment, contact centre and website.
- In respect of the Restorative Hate Crime Service, clarification was sought between what constituted freedom of speech and a hate crime. It was outlined that the police investigated where crimes have taken place and also recorded what was defined as 'hate incidents'. The Home Office had issued guidance on the recording of hate crime/incidents. The investment proposals were based on national good practice and the requirement for community safety partnership to respond to and address hate crime/incidents and reduce tensions in the local area.

The proposals delivered by the Finance and Customer Services Directorate (linked to the Council plan theme 'One Council Approach') were outlined.

Temporary funding was allocated for additional call handling posts within the customer contact centre, resulting in reductions in average call waiting times. The positive feedback had been from customers about these improvements. The proposal was to make this function permanent and continue to reduce call waiting times. Alongside this, there was a proposal to improve the digital customer experience to develop the Council's online offer and ensure that it was responsive, easy to access and connected better with back-office functions.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board:

- Concerns were expressed about the necessity of the investment proposals, particularly those linked to digital design. In response, an example was given around bulky waste collection and how back-office systems had been streamlined to improve services. It was highlighted that the recent LGA peer review recommended that the Council reviewed where the pace of transformation could be accelerated. It was envisaged that the proposals would ensure that services would be delivered to customers more quickly and create savings. In addition, the services would be able to keep pace with technological advances to ensure that services remained

fit for purpose and value for money.

- Details were sought whether sickness levels were monitored for this group of staff and if the cost of Internet was paid for staff working from home. It was confirmed that sickness was monitored across the directorate and there were no concerns about levels in Digital Services. It was also confirmed that the internet was not paid for homeworking, unless there was a contractual obligation (in line with Council policy).

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council to outline Capital Investment Proposals.

The Capital Strategy and proposed Capital Programme to 2027/28 ensured that the investment decisions were clearly aligned with the Council's strategic priorities, vision for Rotherham and the Council Plan. The Council's strategy and programme to 2025/26 had been further refreshed and updated as part of this budget report and reporting to Cabinet and Council carried out during 2023/24. These were outlined in Appendix 3A to 3F of the report.

Details of the following programs were outlined:

- Working with Rotherham Parents Carers Forum, the development of a special educational needs and disabilities hub in the town centre.
- A major upgrade of children's playgrounds costing in the region of £1 million, including the replacement of the water splash play area at Clifton Park.
- Additional investments of the next two years in a programme of public realm improvements through the places fund to improve the quality of place across the borough and inspire greater pride in neighbourhoods.
- Continued investment in the road network, to improve roads, footways and highways drainage. This will be complemented by a £400k investment to improve road safety.
- Further investment in flood defences to make the borough more resilient to a changing climate (£9.8 million), with further consideration given to what measures were required to protect the Catcliffe community from the devastating impact of flooding.
- Support to the natural environment and facilities; including improvements to footpaths in Thrybergh Country Park to mitigating the impact of ash dieback and effectively manage trees.
- Additional investment would be made to equipment to support Principal Towns Cleansing.
- Support would also be given to the digitalisation of the local studies service and archives and software to support street pride services.

The Chair invited questions from members of the Board:

- Clarification was sought if the 'Our Place investments would prioritise areas not eligible for Towns and Villages Fund. It was confirmed that a policy paper would be submitted in due course which would detail eligibility criteria.
- Details were requested about reasonable expectations concerning the maintenance or repair of assets. It was outlined that this was dependent on the nature of the asset. For buildings, the life-cycle was much longer however for vehicles or other equipment this would be relatively short. It was highlighted that the Clifton Park water splash had been in use over 15 years and therefore was probably towards the end of its life-cycle and would require replacement.
- In relation to the Towns and Villages Funds, how would the funds be allocated. It was outlined that the funding was ring fenced.
- Clarification was sought about the quality of materials used in footpath repairs and if this provided value for money. It was highlighted that the materials used were industry recognised standard. There was a programme of inspections on completed works. The service welcomed Member feedback regarding resident comments on the quality of repairs.

The Chair invited questions and comments on the remainder of the report not covered in previous discussions:

- In relation to the Community Leadership Fund (CLF), had consideration been given to adopting a tiered approach which took account of local factors: for example, higher deprivation or greater representation of the voluntary and community sector. It was confirmed that there was no intention to adopt a different approach.
- Details were also sought whether the CLF should be used to purchase equipment to support the delivery of Council priorities or projects. It was confirmed that the CLF was intended to support ward members to address ward priorities and tackle issues that residents raise. The budget allocated to CLF was to address the additional issues raised in wards rather than operational matters.
- The level of participation in the budget consultation was noted, particularly the low-level of partner response. It was highlighted that this could be taken as there being no concerns with the proposals outlined and their impact on services. The Chief Executive committed to raising this at the next partnership meeting. It was asked if consideration could be given to widening access by providing paid-for return envelopes at venues such as libraries.
- Clarification was sought on the added value of the carbon impact assessment in relation to strategic documents such as the budget.

The Chief Executive outlined that the forthcoming Climate Change annual report would detail the work underway to improve carbon literacy. It was noted that there were investments in the budget which would support the work on biodiversity.

- Concerns were expressed on the uncertainty of the Household Support Fund and if this would continue in the future. The withdrawal of schemes to provide food vouchers for children eligible for free school meals during school holidays, local Council Tax support and discretionary housing payments would have an impact on low-income households and families.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and members of the Senior Leadership Team for their attendance.

Resolved:

- 1) That a report on the impact and take-up of the baby pack scheme be submitted to OSMB (or nominated select commission) at a future point when meaningful data has been gathered.
- 2) That consideration is given to the use of bus lanes and gates for the use of licensed taxis.
- 3) That Cabinet be informed that the following recommendations be supported:

That Cabinet recommend to Council:

1. Approval of the Budget and Financial Strategy for 2024/25 as set out in the report and appendices, including a basic Council Tax increase of 1.5% and an Adult Social Care precept of 2%.
2. Approval of the extension to the Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme, that will provide up to £121.96 of additional support to low income households most vulnerable to rising household costs, through reduced Council Tax bills as described in section 2.5.11-14.
3. Approval of the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26, as described within section 2.6.
4. Approval of the Reserves Strategy as set out in Section 2.8 noting that the final determination of Reserves will be approved as part of reporting the financial outturn for 2023/24.
5. To note and accept the comments and advice of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer), provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the Budget provides (Section 2.14).
6. To note the feedback from the public and partners following

the public consultation on the Council's budget for 2024/25 which took place from 8 December 2023 to 14 January 2024, attached as Appendix 4.

7. Approval of the proposed increases in Adult Social Care provider contracts and for Personal Assistants as set out in Section 2.4.
8. Approval of the revenue investment proposals set out in Section 2.7 and Appendix 2.
9. Approval of the Council Fees and Charges for 2024/25 attached as Appendix 7.
10. Application of the Business Rates Reliefs as set out in Section 2.10, in line with Government guidance.
11. Approval of the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme as presented in Section 2.12 and Appendices 3A to 3F.
12. Approval of the Treasury Management matters for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 9 of this report including the Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy.
13. Approval of the Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 5).
14. Approval that any changes resulting from the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 be reflected in the Budget and Council Tax Report to Council on 28 February.
15. Continuation of the principles and measures adopted since April 2020 to make faster payments to suppliers on receipt of goods, works and services following a fully reconciled invoice as described in section 2.11.
16. Approval of the Budget allocations for the Community Leadership Fund as set out in section 2.9.
17. Approval that the Capital Programme Budget continues to be managed in line with the following key principles:
 - (i) Any underspends on the existing approved Capital Programme in respect of 2023/24 be rolled forward into future years, subject to an individual review of each carry forward to be set out within the Financial Outturn 2023/24 report to Cabinet.
 - (ii) In line with Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules 7.7 to 7.11 and 8.12, any successful grant applications in respect of capital projects will be added to the Council's approved Capital Programme on an ongoing basis.
 - (iii) Capitalisation opportunities and capital receipts flexibilities will be maximised, with capital receipts earmarked to minimise revenue costs.

104. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme be approved.

105. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

This item was deferred.

106. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 February 2024 to 30 April 2024 (as published on the Council's website and circulated by email).

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

107. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

108. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

109. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10am on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at Rotherham Town Hall.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 18 March 2024

Report Title

Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 - 2029

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Kelly White, Acting Assistant Director Early Help & Family Engagement

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The proposed Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029 has been developed in response to revised government guidance, including the Department for Education (DfE) new edition 'Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023'. The statutory guidance outlines what organisations and agencies must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people.

This is a partnership document and the Strategy articulates Rotherham Borough's widest vision for Early Help:

All agencies working together to ensure that children, young people, and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support (co-produced and agreed by partners, stakeholders, children, young people, and families).

The Strategy describes three phases of support for children and families and concludes with how children, families and other key stakeholders will work together to deliver the vision over the next five years.

It is proposed the Delivery Plan will be overseen by the Early Help Partnership Group with scrutiny from the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC).

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

1. Endorse the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029.
2. Approves the Local Authority involvement in the development and implementation of the Strategy Delivery Plan with the oversight and delivery of progress by the Early Help Partnership Group (EHPG) and the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC).

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: Early Help Strategy 2024-2029

Appendix 2: Family Help Services and Support

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Appendix 4: Part A - Initial Equality screening Assessment form

Appendix 5: Part B – Equality Analysis Form

Appendix 6: Early Help Strategy Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

[Graded Care Profile 2 \(GCP2\) | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Guide for children and young people: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme%20>

[Place Partnership – Healthy Rotherham \(yourhealthrotherham.co.uk\)](https://yourhealthrotherham.co.uk)

[Health Wellbeing Strategy 2018 New branding.pdf \(rotherham.gov.uk\)](https://rotherham.gov.uk)

[https://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/file/158/child-exploitation-priorities-2023-to-2028 council-plan-2022-25 \(rotherham.gov.uk\)](https://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/file/158/child-exploitation-priorities-2023-to-2028-council-plan-2022-25)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

N/A

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029

1. Background

1.1 The previous Early Help Strategy 2016 – 2019 was central to Rotherham's improvement journey. The Strategy set out the Council's intentions to work together across the partnership to harness collective expertise and resources and organise these to meet the needs of children and families. The Strategy comprised of three phases which were implemented on time and delivered against the agreed activity.

1.2 As a result, Rotherham now has an effective and mature Early Help system. There have been many achievements since the last strategy was produced. Key achievements over this timeframe include:

- Development of the integrated Early Help Service, with a well-equipped and well-trained workforce.
- Front door integration between Early Help and Children's Social Care in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), including introduction of a 'rapid response' function by Early Help enabling swift support to families to prevent escalation into statutory services.
- Strong co-working framework between Early Help and Children's Social Care with robust step-up, step down and co-working arrangements.
- Embedding the Graded Care Profile 2 tool in Early Help practice with 94.5% completed since April 2023 being carried out by Early Help.
- Delivery of an integrated outreach and engagement offer that spans the 0-19 age range (25 with SEND).
- Multi-disciplinary approach to outreach & engagement activity such as Operation Keepsafe and Partnership Water Safety Plan.
- Robust suite of evidence-based, validated programmes available for families both digitally and face to face, with access to self-serve digital interventions which families can access when they need them.
- Development of the Early Help Midwifery Pathway to ensure robust arrangements for early identification of need between Early Help and Midwifery Services.
- Embedding of shared responsibility for early help across partners, with an increase in the numbers of Early Help Assessments by partners from 0 to 26.9% (as of December 2023).
- Development of the Family Hubs and the Best Start in Life programme, adding value to the existing support that is already available for families in Children's Centres and Early Help sites.

- Development and embedding of the School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP) which is highlighted nationally by the Department for Education for its innovative and welfare-based approach to poor school attendance.
 - Established a Universal Youth Work offer (of over 900 sessions per year), increasing capacity within the voluntary and community sector to deliver youth provision for young people across the Borough.
 - Delivered the DfE funded Healthy Holidays' Programme.
- 1.3 Work on a new Strategy was delayed in 2019 to allow time for Self-Evaluation work to take place in relation to the national Supporting Families Programme, so that learning could inform the Strategy. Further development was then paused during the pandemic and recommenced at the start of 2022.
- 1.4 During this period, the Early Help Partnership Group has followed an overarching delivery plan and overseen the delivery of key national programmes including the Supporting Families Programme and the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme.
- 1.5 In 2023, the government published a new vision to transform Children's Social Care: 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy' in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. This preceded the publication of updated multi-agency statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'.
- 1.6 The new Strategy is therefore required to address the changing environment and recent developments set out in the government's plans to reform children's social care and early help, setting a national direction for change.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Learning gained from the delivery of the Supporting Families Programme, and the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, has identified the need to build upon the good co-operation that is currently in place across the partnership and improve how services share information and work together to provide holistic support for families. This includes improved awareness and access to the universal Start for Life offer, further development of the network of support available to families in their communities, building on children centre delivery in line with the family hubs approach, embedding co-production to ensure the voices of those who use and access services influence the continuous improvement of the Early Help Offer.
- 2.2 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy' defines a significant change to children's social care and sets out key ambitions (6 pillars of reform) including the need to provide 'Family Help' to help ensure all children and families can get the right help, at the right time, and in an easy way.

Ambition 1: Family help
Ambition 2: Keeping children safe

Ambition 3: Supporting families to help children

Ambition 4: Make care better for children in care and care leavers

Ambition 5: Children have great social workers

Ambition 6: Improving the whole system for children and families

2.3 Requirements within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 focus on:

- Strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of support and protection for children and their families
- Keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus
- Embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice

2.4 A new chapter on 'shared responsibility' highlights how positive outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency working. The guidance introduces a set of multi-agency expectations for all practitioners involved in safeguarding and child protection. These expectations aim to ensure that practitioners share the same goals, learn with and from each other, have what they need to help families, acknowledge and appreciate difference and challenge each other.

2.5 Rotherham Together Partnership wants Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful. The Strategy articulates Rotherham's vision for children, young people and families:

Best Start - Children get the best start in life.

Safe - Children and young people are safe from harm.

Achieve - Young people feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations.

Have fun - Children and young people have fun things to do and safe places to go.

2.6 The Strategy describes three phases of support for children and families.

2.6.1 **Universal and Community Family Help**

Universal and Community services are available to all children, young people, and families in Rotherham. These services are provided by lots of different agencies such as nurseries, schools, and colleges; GPs, midwives, and health visitors; children centres and family hubs, libraries, youth services, and community organisations. They are the starting point for any family in Rotherham requiring information, advice and support.

Proposals to secure investments of £895,000 into universal services were approved by Council in February 2024 and include:

- A Baby Pack Scheme for all new parents giving birth in Rotherham to give them the best start in life.
- Developing a SEND activity hub in the town centre improving the Council's offer of recreational activities for children and young people with SEND.
- Additional capacity to increase the reach of the offer to under 5s.
- Further enhancing the Voluntary, Community and Faith Services sector's ability to deliver services to more children and young people across the Borough.
- Additional capacity to develop work with partners at the Front Door to improve the effectiveness of initial contact with families.

2.6.2 **Focused Family Help**

This will provide help where families are not managing to effect positive change and they require enhanced, more focused and/or specialist support. This will include children and their families who need additional support to meet their full potential or whose needs are sufficiently complex will receive focused family help. This may be provided by a range of services and practitioners across the partnership, usually supported by an Early Help assessment. Examples include mental health support in schools, targeted prevention work from Youth Justice teams or early help casework in Children and Young People's Services.

2.6.3 **Specialist Family Help**

Specialist services to children and their families are provided where children and young people need a high level of support or may be experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm in circumstances where improvements have not been achieved through universal and community family help, or focused family help. This can include services for disabled children, special school arrangements or specialist physical or mental health provision, for example. It may also include child protection services, working with those experiencing harms outside the home, care arrangements or youth justice services, including custody. Specialist Family Help is provided to families where the concerns are high and have not improved through enhanced or focused support.

2.7 A five-year Delivery Plan has been developed as a roadmap to achieving the three phases of support for children, young people and families.

2.7.1 **Phase 1 (2024/24) Design** will include consultation with key stakeholders across the wider Council, the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC), Health, Police and children and families to ensure co-design and co-production from the start. New guidance will be considered along with a number of reviews. The first phase will be around establishing and setting out the requirements of the project.

- 2.7.2 **Phase 2 (2025/26)** will focus on the **implementation and delivery** stage ensuring continued engagement with stakeholders. There are plans to engage external evaluation two years into the implementation phase as a measure of progress and success. Key outcome measures will also be developed during this phase.
- 2.7.3 **Phases 3 & 4 (2026-2028) Maintain and Operate** will also incorporate monitoring service quality, measuring outcomes and responding to learning to achieve continuous improvement.
- 2.7.4 **Phase 5 (2029) Evaluate** will include a review and refresh of the strategy.
- 2.8 The Early Help Partnership Group provides the strategic oversight and delivery of the Early Help Strategy, along with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Early Help Offer in Rotherham.
- 2.9 Reporting to the Early Help Partnership Group, the Family Hub Operational Group brings together colleagues from a range of services to ensure effective partnership, collaboration and strong communication between agencies co-located in Family Hubs in Children's Centres.
- 2.10 The Early Help Partnership Group feeds into the Local Safeguarding Children's Executive and the Place Board.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to endorse the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029. Endorsement of the Strategy 2024- 2029 will ensure the Council has set out its commitment in line with best practice to ensure that there is an Early Help Strategy in place for all children and young people in the Borough.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to approve the Local Authority involvement in the development and implementation of the Strategy Delivery Plan and the oversight and delivery of progress by the Early Help Partnership Group and scrutiny by the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC).
- 3.3 The alternative option is not to endorse the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029. This would result in non-compliance with the government's legislative requirements and statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. This would present a significant barrier in achieving the necessary national and cultural shift to continue to reform children's social care and early help in Rotherham. This option is not recommended.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 In 2020, the Early Help Partnership Group led a series of consultation events with staff, stakeholders, and partners. (See Appendix 5 Equality Impact Assessment).

4.2 Further consultation took place at the Rotherham Show in September 2022 and in a workshop, facilitated by the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC), in September 2022. The following premises emerged from the ILSC workshop;

- Early help is “everyone’s business”.
- The Early Help Offer needs to be clear and link to basic needs.

4.3 In 2023 a further engagement activity involved internal stakeholders and key partners. There were many positive responses shared as well as many suggestions to improve the current early help offer. All stakeholders recognised the commitment of Early Help members and shared aspects of the service of which they were most proud. This has informed the development of the delivery model and plan.

4.4 Local learning indicates the importance of embedding co-production to ensure the voices of those who use and access services influence the continuous improvement of the Early Help Offer. Working Together 2023 sets out new expectations for ‘shared responsibility’ and introduces a set of multi-agency expectations to ensure that practitioners share the same goals, learn with and from each other, have what they need to help families, acknowledge and appreciate difference and challenge each other. Genuine Partnerships and the Four Cornerstones (also known as the Rotherham Charter) evolved from a unique partnership involving the Rotherham Parent Carers Forum and Rotherham Council. The Rotherham Four Cornerstones (developed from research involving Rotherham children and young people with special educational needs, and their parents and carers) defines how the partnership works together and with children and families, acknowledging that the development of shared goals requires co-production rather than consultation. Consequently, whilst the Early Help vision and principles are defined in this strategy, the delivery plan includes an initial year of engagement, consultation and co-production.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The new Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham will cover the period 2024 to 2029.

5.2 Progress against the delivery plan and review of objectives will be monitored by the Early Help Partnership Group.

5.3 A further update will be brought to Cabinet following the Year 1 consultation and design work with partners, children, young people and families.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report. However, it is important to note that where third party organisations are engaged to deliver against the strategy,

they must be procured via the relevant procurement legislation at the time (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Procurement Act 2023 or The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023) as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

- 6.2 Finances will need to be maintained within existing budgeted cash limits. There are a number of grant funded projects across Early Help with set funding end dates, which provide additional funding sources and are subject to specific resource and delivery requirements.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The wide variety of services, support and resources available to babies, children, young people and their families, as described on offer in this report falls within the requirements of section 17 of the Children Act 1989 whereby every local authority has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. In addition, there is a renewed focus highlighted in the recent "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023" on how organisation and agencies provide early help to strengthen the role of education and childcare settings in keeping children safe; clarifying a broader range of practitioners to be the lead practitioners for families in receiving support under s17 of CA 1989 and improved multi-agency child protection standards has been taken into consideration above. As such, no legal implications arise from the recommendations in this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 HR will provide support to ensure that the workforce is skilled and experienced to deliver the strategy.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 aligns with the key local partnership priorities and plans including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Plan 2022/25, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership plan and associated strategies, Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Plan and Rotherham Health and Social Care Place Plan.
- 9.2 The Strategy describes how partners will work together to ensure that all children and young people receive the right help at the right time so that Rotherham is a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful.
- 9.3 The Adult Social Care Strategy for Rotherham 2024 – 2027 sets out a vision to enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time. To achieve this vision, a number of strategic priorities are identified to support young people preparing for adulthood. These priorities will

complement the Early Help Strategy to enable young people to receive the right help at the right time.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Equality and human rights are considered within the strategy.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Actions proposed in the *Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029* may have a carbon impact in Rotherham. Commitments to develop a SEND hub in Rotherham Town Centre and to increase the Council's Universal Youth offer may affect emissions from non-domestic buildings; whereas strengthening local provision may decrease emissions from transport, if families do not have to travel so far, to access the support they need. These and other impacts, mitigation and monitoring actions are summarised in a carbon impact assessment, Appendix 6.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 These are referred to in the strategy and associated delivery plan.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 These are referred to in the strategy and associated delivery plan.

14. Accountable Officers

14.1 Kelly White, Acting Director Early Help and Family Engagement
kelly.white@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	04/03/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	23/02/24
Assistant Director or Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	23/02/24

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

EARLY HELP STRATEGY: FAMILY HELP IN ROTHERHAM 2024-2029



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FOREWORD

COUNCILLOR VICTORIA CUSWORTH, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, I have a specific remit for leading targeted and coordinated action across the early years and childcare system to improve outcomes for children.

I am delighted to introduce the new Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham which is central to delivering our collective vision of 'all agencies working together to ensure that children, young people, and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support'. We are coming from a position of real strength, with strong partnerships and robust early help and support provided to our children and families and are ready to build on the national Stable Homes, Built on Love' Strategy.

This sets out a vision for children's social care, Early Help and partners to provide the help families need to overcome challenges at the earliest possible stage, to keep children safe, and to make sure children in care have stable loving homes, long-term loving relationships, and opportunities for a good life. The Government's strategy presents a positive vision for a 'family-first' approach, prioritising early Family Help and valuing the support wider family and friends can offer including as kinship carers.

In Rotherham, we want all families to be able to access advice and support, as well as providing them with the tools they need to care for and interact positively with their children, whilst at the same time looking after their own wellbeing. We have made significant strides as a partnership towards these goals over the last five years and look forward to embedding these and being ever more ambitious for children and young people with the plans outlined in this strategy involving Universal and Community Help; Focused Help; and Specialist Help.

I am committed to championing this strategy, and working with partners and children, young people and families. I am excited to see the progress we can make together.



INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH



In 2023, the Government published a new vision to transform children's social care: 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy' in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. This proposes significant changes to children's social care and Early Help, setting out a number of key ambitions including the need to provide 'Family Help' to help ensure all children and families can get the right help, at the right time, and in an easy way.

Further to this, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 focuses on strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of support and protection for children and their families keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice.

The Early Help Systems Guide provides a framework, which helps to focus Early Help systems on common goals and progress towards these. In addition, the National Supporting Families programme is about building resilience by providing effective, whole family support at the earliest opportunity.

In Rotherham we are committed to ensuring that all children, young people, and families are resilient, successful, and safe, building on our key ambitions.

We recognise that all families benefit from and need help from time to time to enable their babies, children, and young people to thrive. We also know that moving forward most families want the resilience to be able to support themselves in the longer term, with their wider network.

For most children, young people and families in Rotherham, they flourish with support from services which are available to all families, for example GPs and Schools (universal services). Some families may need to access additional short-term support to address a specific issue, or may require more intensive, longer-term support, when experiencing more complex issues. This is common to all local authority areas, and within this document we will detail the different levels of support available for families.

We know that the needs of children, young people and families change over time and our partnership approach to Early Help ensures that families can access the right level of support at the time they need it. Central to a healthy Early Help system is agencies working together, to meet the needs of both the child and the family in order to achieve long term, sustainable outcomes.

Rotherham already benefits from co-location arrangements between a range of agencies working with children and their families as part of the development of our Family Hubs in Children's Centres. Family Hubs help improve whole family support from 0 to 19, including Start for Life services, through a physical network of hubs including a digital and virtual offer, as well as outreach and engagement support.

This same partnership approach needs to be applied when considering contextualised safeguarding and harm outside the home. This encourages collaborative working across the partnership to help children and their families understand their environments and associations outside of the family home, and to engage with community partners in order to minimise risk within a certain area.

THE VISION AND KEY PRINCIPLES



We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people are supported when needed to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful.

This is not only important for our children and young people, but for the future of our Borough. Research shows that experiences in childhood have a major influence on outcomes across an individual's life. By supporting children and young people to have the best possible start in life and to develop, flourish and thrive we can prevent future challenges and address inequalities.

We aim to give Children the best start in life – This is identified in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Rotherham Health and Care Place Plan, the Council Plan and the Family Hubs and Best Start in Life programme.

All partners are committed to working together in a coordinated way with organisations, communities, children and their families to eliminate neglect and reduce child exploitation and keep children safe from harm – This is identified in the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Neglect Strategy, child exploitation priorities, Council Plan and Police and Crime Plan.

We are ambitious for our young people, we want them to feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations – This is identified in the Council Plan and SEND Strategy.

It is also important to us that children and young people have fun with things to do and safe places to go – This is identified in the Council Plan and SEND Strategy.

Our Early Help Vision

All agencies working together to ensure that children, young people, and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support – This has been co-produced and agreed by partners, stakeholders, children, young people, and families.

Key principles:

We have agreed the following principles to underpin and inform our work with children, young people, and families.

- Children, young people and families are at the heart of everything we do.
- Prevention and Early Help support is better than late intervention.
- Early Help is a shared responsibility, across the partnership, and is everyone's business.
- We will ensure that children and young people thrive in their families by receiving the right help, at the right time, and in an easy way, recognising the importance of relationship-based intervention.
- We are committed to promoting fairness; respect; equality; dignity; and supporting autonomy.
- We will listen to families, have purposeful conversations and provide support to improve outcomes.
- We will work restoratively with children, young people and families.
- Public, voluntary and community sector organisations are all part of the Early Help system and work together to meet the needs of children and their families.

WHAT IS EARLY HELP?



Whilst Working Together 2023 defines Early Help (above), it also talks about 'Family Help'. This is a new term that is inclusive of all ages and incorporates a number of services across the partnership. Family Help in Rotherham is not a single service, but a collaborative, whole system approach, that works across the partnership. This means children, young people and their families receive support at the earliest opportunity from a range of different services, dependent on their needs.

Family Help is made up of public, voluntary and community sector organisations working together to meet the needs of children and their families so that they receive the right support at the right time. These organisations include public health nursing, midwifery, mental health services, the Police, schools, nurseries, substance misuse providers, educational psychologists, domestic abuse services, childminders, housing providers, and other services working with children, young people, and families.

We know that prevention is better than late intervention to improve outcomes for families. For this reason, we focus on meeting needs early, as problems arise to help prevent them from getting worse.

- ✳ Identify needs early
- ✳ Right Support at the right time to stop things getting worse
- ✳ Best possible start through early education
- ✳ Whole family approach
- ✳ System of support
- ✳ Supporting families
- ✳ Partnership working

“Early Help is support for children of all ages that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area”

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT FAMILIES IN ROTHERHAM



- The population of Rotherham is **265,800** (Census data, 2021).
- Rotherham ranks as the **35th most deprived upper tier local authority in England** out of a total of 151 upper-tier local authorities (Index of multiple deprivation 2019 by LSOA).
- **21.9% of children aged 0 to 15 years live in absolute low-income families.** 25.7 % of children live in relative low-income families, for comparison, the percentage rate for England is 15.1 % and 18.7 % respectively. The number of Children aged under 16, living in relative low-income families, financial year ending 2021 was 13,193 (Index of multiple deprivation 2019 by LSOA).
- There are **125 schools** in Rotherham.
- Of the 41,332 pupils school years Reception to Year 11 a total of 12,034 (**29.1%**) are eligible for free school meals (October 2023).
- **73.6% of children in reception class who are at a healthy weight** (2,275 children in total), in comparison to the national figure of 76.5 % (National Child Measurement Programme).
- **20.4% of pupils in Rotherham (9,325) have identified SEND needs** compared to 17.1 % nationally (Spring School Census, 2023).
- **3,192 Children and young people aged 0 to 25 years have a EHCP**, a 44 % increase in EHCP over the last 3 years. (EHCP data, July 2023).
- **89% of children aged 0 to 5 years old registered with a Children's Centre** and of those living in the 30 % most deprived areas of Rotherham, 92 % were registered (March 2023).
- **73% of children aged 0 to 5 years access Children's Centre activities.** 78 % of children living in the 30 % most deprived communities access Children's Centre activities.
- **505 children in care**, this includes 382 in-family based placements (December 2023).
- **323 care leavers in Rotherham** (November 2023).



3 STAGES OF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

I. UNIVERSAL AND COMMUNITY FAMILY HELP

Universal and community services are available to everyone - all children, young people, and families in Rotherham. They ensure families can access **the right support at the right time**, and prevent concerns escalating, helping families to help themselves, and preventing a reliance on statutory services. In Rotherham, these services are provided by lots of different agencies such as nurseries, schools, and colleges; GPs, midwives, other NHS services and 0 to 19 public health nursing services, including health visitors and school nurses; family hubs in Children's Centres and Early Help sites, libraries, youth services, and community organisations. These services may be the starting point for any family in Rotherham requiring information, advice, and support.

Rotherham has a strong voluntary and community sector who provide support to children, young people, and families. There are a total of 750 registered third-sector organisations in Rotherham, with a workforce of 3,778 employees, 4,218 volunteers, and 1,759 trustees, providing a range of support to improve health and wellbeing, increase community participation, cohesion and belonging, build resilience and independence, and address individual needs.

What we will do:

- Develop the **self-service and digital offer** to allow families to access information they need at a time convenient to them, including online parenting courses, signposting, guidance and advice.
- Continue to deliver **the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme** to ensure that families have access to the information and tools they need to care for and interact positively with their babies and children, and to look after their own wellbeing.
- Provide **Baby Packs** to all new parents living in Rotherham, to help give their children the best start in life.
- Continue to **enhance the Local Offer** for children with disabilities and their families.
- Develop a **SEND hub** centrally based improving our offer of recreational activities for children and young people with SEND, providing a safe disability friendly space to support families accessing the Town Centre and the opportunity for peer support and access to calm/sensory spaces.
- Ensure children and young people with SEND and their families **have their voices heard** and this makes a difference to their experiences and outcomes.
- **Work with families** to help them understand their own wider network of support through family and friends.
- Increase the **Universal Youth Work offer** across the borough ensuring young people have places to go and things to do.



- Deliver the **Children's Centre offer** to children and families 0 to 5 years, increasing engagement with this universal offer.
- Further work with our **Voluntary and Community Sector to deliver services** to more children and young people across the Borough.
- Promote the **early identification of children and young people's needs** to ensure timely intervention to support them.
- Continue to deliver **Operation Keepsafe** – a multi-agency initiative that enables a proactive response to children and young people that are at risk due to being unsupervised and vulnerable due to the time of night that they are out, or the risky situations that they place themselves in.
- Ensure that all children and young people get the best possible start by working with families to **increase the number of children accessing early education**.

- Work in partnership to **expand wraparound care options** (before and after school) for primary school children by increasing the number of places available, to support working families.
- Continue to work with public and private sector partners to deliver **improvements in the choice of housing** available in Rotherham.
- Aim to **improve the health and wellbeing** of Rotherham residents, reduce health inequalities and protect the population from health harms.
- Continue to deliver the '**Rotherham Backs Breastfeeding**' campaign (as part of the Breastfeeding Friendly Borough Declaration).
- Aim to make **maternity and neonatal services more personalised** and equitable.
- Continue to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and as part of this we will aim to **improve timely access to mental health assessments and intervention**.
- Work in partnership with organisations, communities, children and their families to **increase their understanding of vulnerabilities to exploitation**, and keep children safe.
- We will encourage and support professionals and members of our community to **spot the signs of neglect** by increasing engagement, awareness and understanding of neglect.
- Continue to work with our local community to **recruit, retain and grow the best in-house foster carers** so that the needs of children and young people can be met in Rotherham.
- Partners will work together to increase the number of **young people accessing supported internships** and other opportunities for employment.

2. FOCUSED FAMILY HELP

Focused Family Help is available where families have not been able to effect positive change with the support of universal services and they need additional support. This may be an enhanced, more intensive and/or specialist support. It can be delivered in the home, in health settings, through schools, Children's Centres, and the voluntary and community sector. It might include parenting intervention, mental health and emotional wellbeing support, targeted youth services, youth justice services, and housing and employment services. Focused Family Help can support children and families who have several needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable.

What we will do:

- Ensure **community-based, multi-disciplinary focused family help services** are available to provide seamless support for families, spanning Early Help and child in need (Section 17 Children Act 1989) provision. This is inclusive of children with additional needs and disabilities.
- Avoid multiple assessments of children and their families **working seamlessly with partners** to build on existing information and assessments, ensuring that those best placed undertake or are supported to undertake assessment work where appropriate.
- Ensure that when children and their family have an identified need, **access to support is simple, avoiding delay and duplication** for children and families.
- Collaborate with education, health and social care where appropriate to **provide support for children with additional needs**.
- Work collectively with the Police, schools and colleges to continue to **deliver Operation Encompass** raising awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on the next school day for children.
- Work to ensure **all children and young people in Rotherham with SEND enjoy good physical and mental health**.
- We will work closely with schools within the Rotherham and the Department for Education (DfE) as they **develop mainstream SEND resource provisions** supporting children to continue to receive their education locally.
- Ensure **appropriate support for children will longer term health needs**.
- Work with colleagues across the partnership to **determine who is best placed to support the family, ensuring support is specific and based on need** such as housing; domestic abuse support services; education; community safety.
- Work with families to **help them share their circumstances with trusted family and friends**, with a view to extending their support network, improving resilience and providing a safe exit strategy.
- Work with partners to **review the current Early Help Assessment template to ensure it is streamlined and family-friendly**, as well as being a tool that be used by a range of partners.
- Ensure that across the wider family help system that school attendance is viewed as 'everybody's business' and **that barriers to attending school are understood and supported** through Early Help Assessments and the Rotherham School Attendance Matters Pathway.

- Work with health colleagues to **provide better access to mental health and wellbeing support programmes** for young people.
- Work with our schools to **reduce the number of children who are excluded.**
- Deliver targeted work with Rotherham's Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and not known young people, supporting young people in **Years 12 and 13 to access employment, education, and training.**
- Deliver **street-based work with young people** within their communities.
- Continue work with partners, community safety and Police to support **early identification of vulnerability to prevent child exploitation and deliver support through Evolve outreach in schools.**
- **Support successful preparation for adulthood**, including independent living and employment.



3. SPECIALIST FAMILY HELP

Statutory services to children and their families are provided where children and young people need a high level of support or may be experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm. This can include services for disabled children, special school arrangements or specialist physical or mental health provision, for example. It may also include child protection services, working with those experiencing harms outside the home, care arrangements or youth justice services, including custody. Specialist Family Help is provided to families where the concerns are high and in circumstances where improvements have not been achieved through universal and community family help, or focused family help.



What we will do:

- Provide **a timely response to escalating concerns** for children wherever those concerns arise.
- **Utilise existing relationships with families**, across the partnership with those who best know our children.
- **Use family group conferencing or network meetings at the earliest opportunity** to support children to remain within their family network where it is safe to do so.
- Advocate for children and engage with schools to ensure children receive and engage in an **appropriate education offer**.
- Work with health colleagues to best **understand any unmet needs** (including mental health) for children, and ensure plans are in place to meet these needs.
- Ensure our Short Breaks offer is **flexible and meets need**.
- Where level of risks indicates, **work collectively** with Police and Health colleagues to investigate concerns and best support children and their families.
- Work jointly with partners and **utilise partnership information** to best understand children's situations **to inform joint decision making**.
- Engage **specialist teams** within social care to respond to crisis and support children and young people to remain within their networks where it is safe to do so.
- **Work with Health colleagues** to ensure our Children in Care benefit from timely health assessments and dental appointments and that any identified needs are met.
- **Work with families and partners to support planning** at all levels for children.

DELIVERY PLAN

Phase 1 (2024/25) Design



- Consult with children, young people and families on new ways of working
- Identify and consult with stakeholders (wider Local Authority, Police, Health etc)
- Consider the new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Framework 2023 and incorporate any required changes for Rotherham (P2)
- Develop a roadmap - child's journey across the Early Help system
- Review and update Early Help Systems Guide (July 2024)
- Budget and HR integration for relevant agencies

Phase 2 (2025/26) Implement and Deliver



- Clear governance arrangements
- Operational Group(s)
- Implement key outcome measures
- Implement the re- designed system
- HR support
- Budget monitoring
- Continued engagement with children, young people, families, staff and stakeholders

Phases 3 and 4 (2026/28) Maintain and Operate



- Ongoing delivery of services
- Implement Government changes/legislation
- Monitor service quality and adjust
- Measure success/outcomes
- Responding to learning - continuous improvement
- Budget pressures
- External evaluation

Phase 5 (2028/29) Evaluate



- Seek feedback from children, young people and their families
- Assess and identify areas of development
- Review and refresh strategy

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

The Early Help Partnership Group will be accountable for strategic oversight of performance across the Early Help system in Rotherham. They will provide robust governance and accountability arrangements with scheduled analysis and reporting to understand the impact of delivery for children and families and embed a partnership approach.

A multi-agency performance management framework will be developed which will monitor success via a set of outcome measures and key performance indicators from across the partnership. There will be direct links with other strategies and plans and may also be cross-cutting across partner agencies.

There are some examples of outcomes below, however, these could change during the co-production and implementation phases of the strategy delivery plan.

Local authority outcomes

- Reduce the number of children with speech, language and communication needs.
- Reduce contacts which progress to Children's Social Care assessment.
- Increase in the number of Early Help Assessments completed by partners.
- Reduce the number of children and young people where neglect is a primary concern.
- Increase the number of children and families ceasing Early Help support, achieving positive and sustainable outcomes.
- Increase the number of young people accessing Universal Youth Work sessions.

- Maximise the number of children aged 0 to 5 being registered with and accessing a Children's Centre.
- Reduce first time entrants into the Youth Justice Service.
- Continue to reduce young people re-offending in Rotherham.

Education outcomes

- Increased preparedness for children starting school in nursery or Key Stage 1.
- Increase school attendance.
- Reduce the number of permanent exclusions.
- Improve attainment outcomes for our Children in Need (CIN).



Health outcomes

- Increase breastfeeding continuation status at 6 to 8 weeks.
- Improve parent/infant mental health relationship.
- Increase in the number of families attending weaning sessions across Rotherham.
- Reduce the number of 5 year-olds with visual tooth decay (or other similar oral health outcomes.)
- Increased engagement in the Weight Health and Attitude Management service.

Safer Rotherham Partnership outcomes

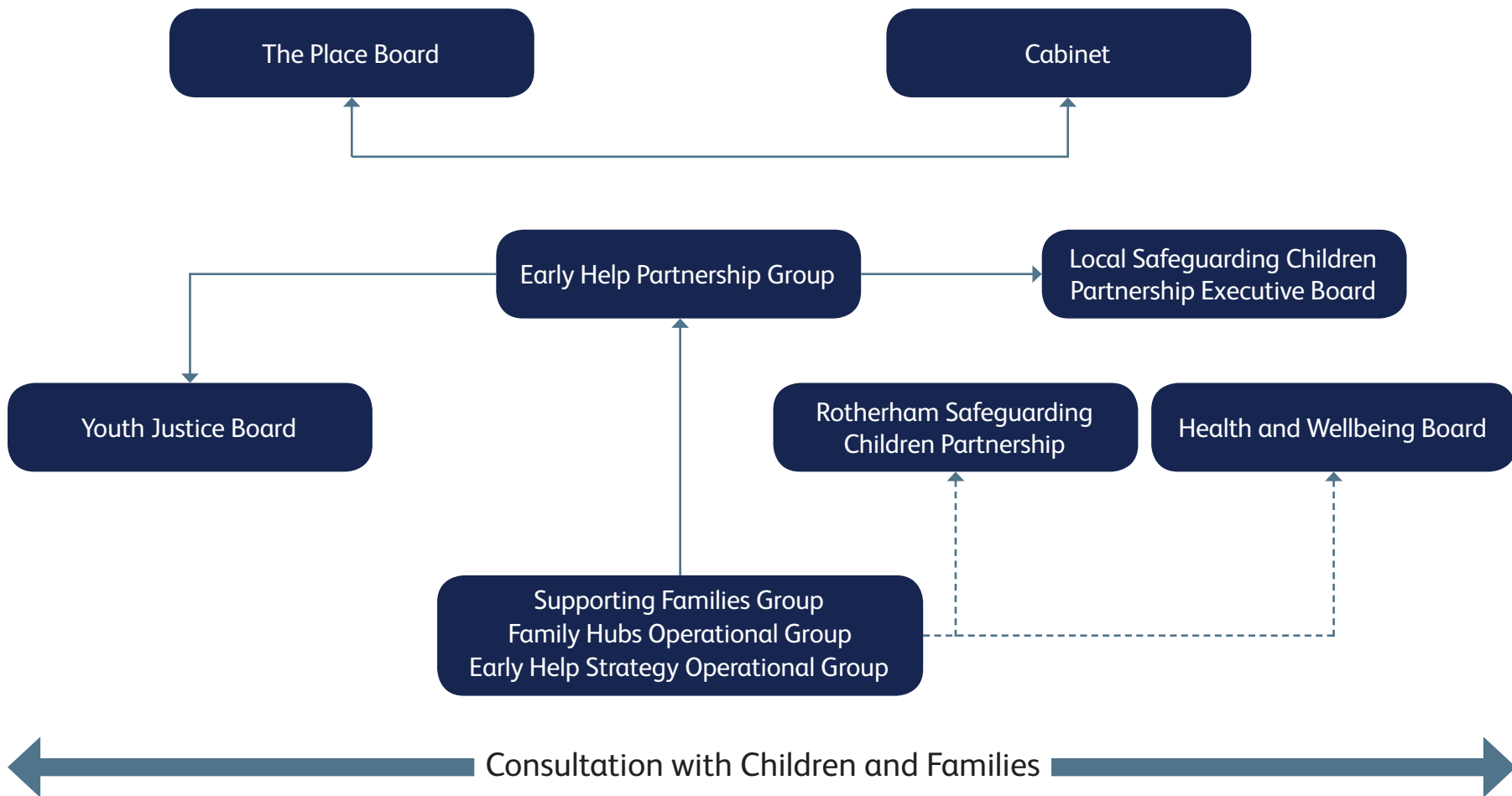
- Reduce the number and seriousness of children and young people missing.
- Reduce the number and severity of domestic abuse incidents.
- Reduce the number of children at risk of and experiencing exploitation.

Year 1 – Overall Outcome of success

By the end of March 2025, all actions identified in the design phase of the delivery plan will be completed and project management controls will be in place to begin implementation and delivery.



GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Consultation with children and families is well established as part of our day-to-day practice to gather and act on feedback from families and engage people with their lived experience (evidence-based tools). We believe that people who have experienced services should have a say on how services are developed and delivered.

OUR VISION OUR CHILDREN - RESILIENT, SUCCESSFUL AND SAFE



Thank you to all of the organisations and individuals
who will be supporting and delivering the Early Help Strategy

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Appendix 2 Family Help Services and Support

Universal and Community Family Help

Children's Centres:

Early Help Outreach and Engagement teams deliver the statutory Children's Centre offer for families with children aged 0-5 years. This includes delivery of universal activities including new birth celebration sessions; baby massage; baby first aid; treasure basket sessions; reach, roll and play sessions; talking tots; toddler yoga; stay and play groups; and baby weigh sessions.

The Family Hubs' programme is delivered through Children's Centres:

Family Hubs and Start for Life is a national programme to improve access to 'whole family' service delivery, including Start for Life services in areas with the highest levels of deprivation and across the wider 0-19 age range. All families need support from time to time to help their babies and children thrive, whether that's from friends, family, volunteers, or practitioners. Our ambition is for every family to receive the support they need when they need it, ensuring that all families have access to the information and tools they need to care for and interact positively with their babies and children, and to look after their own wellbeing. Family Hubs will provide an exciting opportunity to transform join-up between services, taking a whole family approach to better support families to access the help they need.

The Family Hub and the Start for Life Programme brings together services which support families in Rotherham, such as midwifery, health visiting, Children's Centres, Early Help, voluntary and community sector organisations. The programme ensures that children and families can go to get the right information, advice, and support when they need it, with services working together to reduce the need for them to have to keep repeating their story.

The focus of Family Hubs is supporting parents, carers and families with children under two, but it will also include a wider offer from conception to 19 or up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Universal Youth Work:

It is important that we are offering timely support and the opportunity for positive change, working with young people and families to ensure they have the tools they need to develop resilience and independence. Universal youth work provision is important in the pathway to adulthood for young people and the Universal Youth Work offer builds capacity within the voluntary and community sector to ensure that there are sufficient places to go and things to do for young people across the Borough.

Universal Youth Work funding is open to constituted voluntary groups, charities, private sector organisations, schools, faith groups who can demonstrate they can meet the minimum standards of a high-quality offer for young people, creating provision across the Borough for young people. The offer focusses on the needs of adolescence, but ensure whole family working, within a community development approach. would respond to localised issues as well as developing a localised offer of safe places to go and stimulating things to do.

Healthy Holidays:

The Healthy Holiday Programme is funded by the Department for Education to provide support to families who may find school holidays difficult because of increased costs such as food and childcare and reduced income. Children from disadvantaged families are less likely to access organised out-of-school activities and are more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition, physical health, and social isolation. The funding enables eligible children ages from reception to year 11 to access holidays clubs for free.

Managed by the Early Help and Family Engagement Service, the programme is delivered by a range of providers over the Easter, Summer, and Winter School Holidays. Each activity lasts 4 hours per day. Programmes are for 4 days at Easter and Winter, and 16 days over the Summer Holidays. Each activity includes a nutritious meal and a variety of sports and enriching activities for children and young people.

Street-based work with young people:

Early Help Outreach & Engagement teams deliver street-based youth work sessions flexibly across the Borough. These sessions target 'hot spot' areas in response to identified issues such as anti-social behaviour or exploitation, as well as extending youth provision across the varying geographical profile in Rotherham. Street-based youth work engages with young people in their own communities and 'on their own turf', allowing flexibility to utilise creative and innovative approaches to engage with young people, help them to identify their skills, passions and to share their voice on issues which are important to them. Through this provision young people are provided with support and guidance to be able to make safe choices and to engage with other opportunities such as universal youth work provision.

Operation Keepsafe is a multi-agency initiative that enables a proactive response to children and young people that are at risk due to being unsupervised and vulnerable due to the time of night that they are out, or the risky situations that they place themselves in. Intelligence informs us that some localities present high levels of risk at particular times and Operation Keepsafe offers a multi-agency response to protect vulnerable young people from imminent harm or potential harm whilst identifying pertinent underlying issues.

- **Operation Keepsafe** is delivered between the hours of 10pm and 2 am.
- **Operation Keepsafe 2** is a *lighter touch* version of Operation Keepsafe and is delivered earlier in the evening in response to intelligence about youth related issues (usually between 6-9pm though this can be flexible.)

It is important to note that the difference between a Keepsafe 2 and general outreach detached work is the multi-agency context (including police) and the fact that it is a one-off response to intelligence and community concern.

Evidence-based programmes:

Co-ordination of evidence-based programmes delivered across the borough is through the Early Help Evidence Based Hub. Families can access a wide repertoire of evidence-based interventions, delivered in partnership by Early Help workers and partners.

Through the Family Hubs' digital platform families can access online programmes, providing a self-serve function to digital evidence-based programs. Face to face group delivery is available to families where this better suit their needs.

Programme	Delivery Method	Programme Summary
Triple P 0-12	In person & online	Parenting programme for parents of children 0-12. The programme promotes positive parenting strategies, coping and self-care skills.
Triple P Teen	In person & online	Parenting programme for parents of teenagers. The programme promotes positive parenting strategies, dealing with emotional and risky behaviours, coping and self-care skills.
Triple P Steppingstones	In person	This programme is for parents of children 0-12 who have a child with disability. The programme builds parenting skills for promoting children's development, social competence and self-control and is delivered in a group setting.
Triple P Discussion Groups	In person	Short one-off parent discussion groups on commonly encountered problems such as disobedience, fighting and aggression, and managing situations such as shopping with children and bedtime. The Teen Triple P Discussion Group Series includes parent discussion groups on commonly encountered problems such as getting teenagers to cooperate, coping with teenagers' emotions, reducing family conflict, and building teenagers' survival skills. The discussion groups are designed to provide an overview of the positive parenting principles for any interested parent. Parents are actively involved throughout the 2-hour small group format discussions.

Triple P Fear-Less	In person & online	Fear-Less Triple P is for parents (of children aged 6 to 14) who would like to learn how to teach their children to manage anxiety effectively.
Triple P Transitions	Online	Family Transitions Triple P is designed for parents who are experiencing personal distress from separation or divorce, which is impacting on or complicating their parenting.
The Solihull Approach, including Preparation for Parenthood / The First Five Years / The School Years	In person & online	The Solihull Approach introduces a model for understanding the impact of relationships on health and wellbeing and the impact of adverse childhood experiences on health and wellbeing. The Solihull Approach supports mental health and wellbeing in parents, children, schools, older adults, and high stress workplaces through an evidence-based model. The Solihull Approach model combines three theoretical concepts, containment (psychoanalytic theory), reciprocity (child development) and behaviour management (behaviourism). It provides a framework for thinking for a wide range of professionals working with families with babies, children, and young people. Rotherham has pre-birth, preparation for parenthood, 0-5 and school age versions of the programme and it is available face to face and digitally.
Parents as Partners	In person	Parents as Partners (PaP) is an evidence-based intervention for couples and co-parents. Designed to improve relationships between parents and to increase children's well-being and success.
Sleep Tight	In person	This course helps parents understand the impact of poor sleep on behaviour. The programme supports families to implement creative and evidence-based methods of improving sleep patterns in young children.
Family Links	In person	This programme is for the parents of young children up to the age of 10 and looks at topics, including: understanding why children behave as they do, recognising the feelings behind behaviour. Exploring different approaches to discipline and learning the importance of looking after ourselves.
Caring Dads	In person	Developed in a university partnership, Caring Dads is a group intervention program for men who have abused, neglected, or exposed their children to domestic violence.
Timid to Tiger	In person	Timid to Tiger is an entirely parenting-based approach to managing anxiety in children aged nine years or below.
One Plus One: Me, You and Baby Too	Online	Me, You and Baby Too helps new and expectant parents adapt to the changes that parenthood can have on their relationship, while raising awareness of the impact of stress and conflict on their baby. Parents completing this course will develop the skills to manage their conflict more constructively.

One Plus One: Arguing Better	Online	Arguing better helps raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. It gives parents the skills to cope with stress together and manage their conflict more constructively.
One Plus One: Getting it Right for Children	Online	Getting it right for children uses Behaviour Modelling Training techniques to help separating parents see how they are putting their children in the middle of their conflict. It helps parents to develop positive communication skills, so that they can parent co-operatively and work out solutions together.
PEEP (Parents as Early Educators Programme) Home Learning Programme	In person	A parenting programme that helps parents and carers to improve their children's life chances, by making the most of everyday learning opportunities - listening, talking, playing, singing, and sharing books and stories together.
Be Share Aware	In person	Delivered to young people that have been involved in 'sexting' and sharing explicit images, referrals come through the police direct to the Youth Justice Service.
Crime and Consequences	In person	Education intervention for young people who have been issued with an Outcome 22 by police to defer prosecution and provide the opportunity to engage in a preventative intervention.
Barriers to Learning Programme	In person	Keep on Track Programme is a 12-week programme delivered to young people in Year 11 who are at risk of becoming NEET.

Focused Family Help

Partner led Early Help Assessments:

Focused Family Help is available where families have not been able to affect positive change with the support of universal services and they need additional support. Focused Family Help can be delivered through a range of services working with children and families through the Early Help Assessment (EHA). The EHA helps any professional to better understand and document needs when issues or concerns begin to emerge for a child and family that they are working with. The tool is a consistent way of understanding and articulating the things that we are worried about, what is working well and what needs to happen.

Early Help Integrated Working Leads (IWLs) are responsible for embedding the uptake of the Early Help Assessments across partners, and ensuring effective support is provided to children and families through this process. This includes support and oversight of children where an EHA has been requested from a partner agency; support and guidance for partners through the process of completing the EHA and plan and undertaking the role of Lead Professional; providing information and advice to Lead Professionals about services that could support or contribute to the support package for a child and family; reflective discussion to help drive positive change for families; developing strong multi-agency relationships with local partners in order to ensure high quality support to children and families to address need and prevent problems getting worse.

Early Help Family Support:

Family support is provided to children and families by locality services delivering family support to help them to address problems at the earliest opportunity and deliver interventions to address presenting needs. Family support is underpinned by the Early Help Assessment tool (EHA), as evidence shows us that the most effective way to work with vulnerable families is to provide support that is coordinated and focused on problems that affect the whole family.

When an Early Help Family Support Worker is the Lead Professional for a family, they undertake the EHA in partnership with the family and other professionals to understand what life is like for the child and family and what support is needed to address the presenting needs. The Family Support Worker will work with the family and other professionals to co-produce an action plan, which is outcome focused and that seeks to address the needs identified through the EHA. Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings will take place regularly to ensure that the plan is reviewed, and the family are receiving the right support and engaging in order to make positive changes. The plan may incorporate direct support from other agencies, and family support workers will deliver interventions as part of this plan. Through regular review of the plan, the family and agencies are working to address issues and ensure that families can eventually sustain change with support from Universal Services.

Families who have been open to Social Care for a statutory assessment and who need continued support may step down to Early Help as part of Rotherham's step-down arrangements. For these children and families, an updated EHA and plan will be completed to understand the current needs for the family and co-ordinate continued support from agencies.

School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP):

The Early Help Service launched the School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP) in September 2019 to ensure rigorous and consistent processes are in place to support children who have poor attendance. The SAMP was developed in partnership with Head Teachers and the subsequent agreed pathway is managed by the Early Help Service.

The SAMP provides a framework which supports the Service's statutory duty of enforcement action for poor school attendance and ensures a restorative based approach where welfare is considered paramount, and support strategies are exhausted prior to enforcement action in Court. The Early Help Assessment underpins the SAMP and is a shared responsibility across the wider children's workforce, to ensure that issues are addressed early in the development of a problem.

In May 2022 the DfE published 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', which outlines a duty for schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities to work together to maintain high levels of school attendance. This guidance introduces a clear core set of expectations for schools, MATs, and local authorities from Sept 2022 and is refocused away from overreliance solely on punitive approaches to an approach of providing whole family support before enforcement.

The Early Help Core Attendance Team co-ordinate effective operational delivery of the School Attendance Matters Pathway.

Targeted work with young people who are NEET and Not Known:

Early Help Outreach & Engagement Workers are responsible for contacting and supporting young people who are in years 12 and 13 and who are NEET or have a destination which is 'not known'. This is a statutory duty of the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996.

In practice this involves:

- Delivery of the Keep on Track programme with young people identified as being at Risk of NEET (RONI) in Year 11.
- Interventions with young people in years 12 and 13 who are NEET, to support them into a positive EET destination.
- Ensuring that every young person in years 11 and 12 have an offer of a place by the end of September (September Guarantee).
- Contact with young people whose destination is 'Not Known'.

Universal and Targeted Groups for children and families:

Delivered by Early Help Outreach & Engagement teams, universal and targeted groups are offered to children and families across the Borough.

Youth Justice Service:

Aims to prevent offending and re-offending of children aged 10-17. All YJS staff have a responsibility to be alert to safeguarding issues in their work with children and their families and must ensure that all young people are assessed to identify risk of exploitation. Exploitation Risk Assessment Management Tools should be completed where appropriate and appropriate concerns should be raised with line managers and where appropriate referred to Children's Social Care and specialist exploitation teams.

Specialist Family Help

Children's Services are responsible for the co-ordinating of statutory assessments for children in need. Where there are concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, a referral should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). They will assess the information and if deemed appropriate undertake further assessment. The assessment may result in the provision of services designed to address the identified needs of the child through Early Help support, a multi-agency child in need plan or child protection plan.

Where a child is assessed as having suffered, or being at risk of, significant harm as a result of exploitation, Children's Services will follow a Contextual Safeguarding process to ensure that extra familial risks are considered under a multi-agency plan coordinated by the exploitation team, Evolve. Multi agency support is provided to victims and survivors of child exploitation.

For a small number of children, they will become children in care but only when there are no other safe options for the children within their family and extended network. They will be supported whilst children in care and as care leavers.

The Youth Justice Service comprises of a range of professionals who work together to prevent children and young people from entering the youth justice system for the first time, supporting them to move away from offending, and when they do, working to 'child first' principles to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people and victims of crime. They also support children in custody. Rotherham Children's Safeguarding Partnership has the statutory responsibility to oversee partnership arrangement to keep children safe. They comprise senior representation from Children's Social Care, Police and Health. Sitting underneath this are multi-agency partner delivery groups with specific focus on child exploitation; neglect; performance, practice and improvement; and education.

Appendix 3 Glossary of Terms

Sentence or Word Clarification	Clarification
Child Sexual Exploitation	<p>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Child Sexual Exploitation includes forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, or whether the child is aware of what is happening and in some situations the child may believe they are in a loving consensual relationship – this is called grooming. The activities may involve physical contact, and may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Children or young people might be invited to parties or gatherings with others their own age or adults and given drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>They may be assaulted and sexually abused by one person or multiple perpetrators. The sexual assaults and abuse can be violent, humiliating and degrading. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. CSE can happen in person or online and children encouraged to film or stream sexual activities and have sexual conversations. An abuser will gain a child's trust or control them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them.</p> <p>The national plan focuses on the relationship between Child exploitation and the Serious and Organised Crime delivery framework, also known as the '4Ps' – Pursue, Prepare, Protect and Prevent. This document can be found at Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Plan 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p>
Children's Social Work National Framework	<p>A Department for Education National Framework that brings together the purpose of local authority children's social care, the principles by which children, young people and families should be supported, the enablers that should be in place so the system is effective, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive. The National Framework puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported.</p> <p>Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Child Criminal Exploitation	<p>Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is the manipulation, coercion and control of children and young people to commit crimes usually for the benefit of other abusive adult's or peers. This could be within extended families, communities or more sophisticated organised crime groups, linked to the modern-day slavery. transporting and storing of drugs and harbouring or receipt' monies. Such exploitation usually happens outside of the home and is extra-familial. The national guidance can be found at Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

Early Help Partnership Group (EHPG)	Provides the strategic oversight and delivery of the Early Help Strategy and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Early Help Offer in Rotherham. The partnership offers strong support across the multi-agency partnership to embed a strong universal and targeted offer in Rotherham with shared responsibility.
Early Help and Family Support Service	Family support is provided to children and families by locality services delivering family support to help them to address problems at the earliest opportunity and deliver interventions to address presenting needs.
Early Help Systems Guide	The Early Help Systems Guide provides a framework, which helps to focus early help systems on common goals and progress towards these. The National Supporting Families programme is about building resilience by providing effective, whole family support at the earliest opportunity.
Evolve Team	The Evolve Team respond to and safeguard children who are or likely to suffer harm through child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. They aim to provide 'wrap around' support and protection to children and their family, with a team of people from a variety of support agencies. This includes social workers, a child sexual exploitation specialist nurse, a Barnardo's social worker, a children's social care operational manager, business support staff and police officers.
Family Group Conference	A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a meeting to bring family members, friends and anybody else important to the family together, with the aim of making things better and safer for the family concerned. Family Group Conferencing – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Family Hubs	Rotherham already benefits from co-location arrangements between a range of agencies working with children and their families as part of the development of our Family Hubs (children's centres). Family Hubs help improve whole family service support, including Start for Life services, through a physical network of hubs including a digital and virtual offer, as well as outreach and engagement support.
Family Hub Operational Group	Brings together a range of colleagues from a range of services to ensure effective parenting, collaboration and strong communication between agencies co-located in Family Hubs. Family Hubs Locality meetings feed into this group.
KPI	Key performance Indicator
NEET - Not in Employment, Education or Training	A young person who is not in full time employment, education or training.
Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)	Rotherham's Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) provides a multi-agency approach for professionals working with children, young people, and adults. They work collaboratively in order to protect children contextually, that is, to understand their environments and associations outside of the family home, and to engage with community partners in order to minimise risk within a certain area.
School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP)	The School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP) provides a framework which supports the Service's statutory duty of enforcement action for poor school attendance and ensures a restorative based approach where welfare is considered paramount, and support strategies are exhausted prior to enforcement action in Court.

Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP)	The Safer Rotherham Partnership is the borough's Community Safety Partnership, set up under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2022-2025 can be found at <u>safer-rotherham-partnership-plan (saferrotherham.org.uk)</u>
S47 – Section 47	Where information gathered during a referral or an assessment (which may be very brief) results in the social worker suspecting that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion Meeting should be held to decide whether to initiate enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
SEND Hub	A centrally based offer of recreational activities for children and young people with SEND. The Hub would provide a safe disability friendly space to support families accessing the Town Centre by providing a changing space and the opportunity for peer support and access to calm/ sensory spaces.
Stable Homes Built on Love	The Governments 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' Strategy sets out a vision for children's social care to provide the help families need to overcome challenges at the earliest possible stage, to keep children safe, and to make sure children in care have stable loving homes, long-term loving relationships, and opportunities for a good life. The Government's strategy presents a positive vision for a 'family-first', prioritising early family help and valuing the support wider family and friends can offer including as kinship carers. <u>Children's Social Care: Stable Homes, Built on Love consultation response (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u>
Supporting Families Programme	The programme focuses on building the resilience of vulnerable families, and on driving system change so that every area has joined up, efficient local services which are able to identify families in need and provide the right support at the right time.
Best Start in Life Programme	Rotherham has a key focus on supporting families to help children to have the very Best Start in Life. This includes a range of services from different organisations, located in one place and support is available for families with children aged 0 to 5. The Best Start in Life support is delivered from Family Hubs based in Childrens Centres which covers the 0-19 age range (25 with special educational needs and disabilities). We have good evidence that that the first 1001 days of a child's life (pregnancy to age 2) are critical for good development. <u>Best Start in Life Programme – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</u>
The Place Board	A forum where all partners across health and care in Rotherham come together to formulate and agree strategies and provide leadership to deliver the ambitions of the Place Partnership and the Rotherham Place Plan.
Vulnerable Child	Vulnerable children are children can be at greater risk of experiencing harm because of one or more factors in their lives including abuse, living in a home where there is domestic abuse, addiction or mental ill health, and or having additional needs such as learning or physical needs. Vulnerable children can have less resilience or safeguards around them to spot signs of risk.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023	A Government guide providing the legislative requirements that apply to individuals, organisations and agencies in respect of multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. The guidance focuses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of support and protection for children and their families

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus• Embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice |
|--|--|

The Working Together guidance can be found at [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance)

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: Early Help Strategy 2024-2029

Directorate: Children and Young People's Services

Service area: Early Help

Lead person:
Kelly White

Contact number:
01709 822318

Is this a:

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

If other, please specify

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

The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 describes the responsibility of agencies to work together and safeguard children in line with the refreshed statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The strategy describes the local authority's responsibility to promote inter-agency partnership working to improve the welfare of all children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

The previous Rotherham Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 was launched in January 2016 and was primarily focussed on the resources, staffing and services within the local authority. The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 builds on these strong foundations as well as the vision of the previous strategy and sets the priorities for prevention and early identification and intervention in Rotherham.

The Multi-Agency Early Help Partnership Group will oversee the implementation of the delivery plan reporting into the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Place Board.

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

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

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

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

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

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

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

How have you considered equality and diversity?

There are approximately 1,393 Early Help episodes open.

Number of Children in all episodes	Requests for support
2955	1045

The Insight data dashboard breaks down equality and diversity information into locality, gender, age, ethnicity, and primary need.

To inform the Early Help Strategy a consultation and engagement activity with partners was undertaken. The development of the revised Strategy has involved collaborative working across Rotherham's key stakeholders.

The Early Help Partnership Group has met regularly to develop the priorities and themes for the strategy and Head Teacher briefings were held. An on-line consultation survey was also shared with partners and stakeholders.

- 83 organisations responded to the consultation survey.
- 93% of respondents reported that they had engaged with early help with 3% stating never having engaged with early help.
- 51% of respondents had completed an Early Help Assessments (EHA) and 35% had engaged in Team Around the Family meetings (TAF).
- 10% of respondents had engaged around matters of attendance and 4% parenting support.
- 76% of respondents felt there was a shared understanding of early help across the wider system and 67% felt mechanisms were in place to support professionals and partner agencies to quality assure and improve their early help practice, assessment, and plans.

- 65% of respondents felt that the partnership was making effective use of services available from other organisations and groups to support children, young people, and families.

Recruitment to staff roles considers the need for the workforce to reflect the communities in which they work.

Information regarding protected characteristics is captured in the Early Help Assessment and informs the Plan that is coproduced with the family members.

Translation services are utilised as a range of bespoke provision is in place including specific targeted support groups for LGBT young people, BAME young people, Girls and young women, faith-based groups and provision, support for Ukraine and Afghanistan families and young people with autism.

Key findings

Rotherham's Early Help Offer supports some of the most vulnerable children, young people and families in Rotherham.

The draft five-year Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 is a partnership approach to prevention, early identification, and family help and support in Rotherham. It will aim to deliver better outcomes for babies, children, young people, and families across Rotherham by ensuring that support is provided to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of help and support.

The draft Strategy will aim to improve how services share information and work together to provide holistic support for families through a Start for Life offer, a network of support through a family hubs approach, and that the voices of those who use, and access services influence the continuous improvement of the Early Help offer.

Actions

Further Equality Impact Analysis will be completed as required as part of the delivery associated with the Strategy.

A range of approaches will be used to ensure that children, young people and families play a key part in the evaluation of the strategy.

Service users have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery as well as frontline staff, partner agencies.

- Continued engagement with the Early Help Partnership Group
- Continue to ensure that consultation and engagement with the service users is embedded in all Early Help Assessments and plans.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	January 2024
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	January 2024

Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Kelly White, Interim Assistant Director Early Help
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5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Nicola Curley	Director of Children's Services	31/01/2024

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	29 January 2024
Report title and date	Early Help Strategy 2024-2029
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	March 2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	January 2024

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PART B – Equality Analysis Form

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Early Help Strategy 2024 - 2029	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 29 January 2024	
Directorate: CYPS	Service area: Early Help
Lead Manager: Kelly White: Interim Assistant Director, Early Help	Contact number: 01709 822318
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 Sweaton	RMBC/ South Yorks NHS	Assistant Director, Commissioning
Anne Hawke	RMBC	Head of Service, Performance
Laura Gough	RMBC	Head of Service Safeguarding

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance
<p>Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known) <i>This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)</i></p> <p>The Early Help Service is an essential component of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) delivery model for Children's Services.</p> <p>The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 describes the local authority's responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.</p>

Early Help spans a wide age range; 0-19 years and up to 25 years if there is a disability or special educational need. It incorporates pre-birth, early years, adolescence through to early adulthood. Early Help has a critical role to play at the key transition points in a child's journey from dependence to independence. The service brings together a range of statutory and non-statutory functions including Family Support Services, Education Support Services, Youth Justice Services.

The previous Rotherham Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 was launched in January 2016 and was primarily focussed on the resources, staffing and services within the local authority. The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 builds on the strong foundations and vision of the previous strategy and sets the priorities for prevention and early identification and intervention in Rotherham.

The five-year Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 is a partnership strategy that has been developed through partner and stakeholder consultation and coproduction through the multi-agency Early Help Partnership Group (EHPG).

The Early Help Vision, *"All agencies working together to ensure that children, young people, and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support,"* was developed and agreed by partners, stakeholders, children, young people, and families.

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

Quality information is already captured and used to shape priorities and deliver existing services across the Local Authority, health and education sectors.

Equality information is available through the following sources:

- Performance Practice and Learning
- CYPS performance reporting – Scorecards and Dashboards (Insight)
- Audit and QA activity
- Section 11
- DfE reporting
- Department for Health & Social Care
- Ofsted

A work plan will sit alongside the strategy with includes the capturing of data, including diversity and equality, and feedback form different children and groups which will continue to be used to monitor, scrutinise and inform the plan. This work plan is owned and delivered on by the Early Help Partnership Group, a multi-agency group offering cross partnership challenge and co working.

Rotherham is a large minster town in South Yorkshire, England which along with its nearby settlements form the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, with a population of 265,800 (ONS, 2021).

There are 61,600 0-19 year old children living in the Borough (23.1% of the local population – ONS, 2021). 122 Schools provide education to 45676 Pupils on Roll.

26% of children living in Rotherham are in low-income families (England 19% - 2021). Our Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement rate is above national average, 21.8% compared to 20.2% at Primary phase and 20.7% compared to 18.2% at Secondary phase (DfE 2020/21).

Rotherham is a relatively deprived local authority, ranking 44th of 317 local authorities according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation score (a slight relative increase from 52nd in 2017). Deprivation is linked to a wide variety of poor health and educational outcomes for children. As such, Rotherham often fares significantly worse than the national average when considering markers of 'good health' throughout this document. Comparisons have also been made with statistical 'nearest neighbours' to compare how well Rotherham is doing relatively to similar local authorities.

20.1% of our school age population is from BME background (England 36.1%) (DfE 2021/22).

- The population of Rotherham is 265,800 (Census data, 2021)
- There are 125 schools in Rotherham
- The percentage of children and young people who are eligible for free school meals is 11,621 — or 68% (Data as of July 2022)
- Rotherham ranks as the 35th most deprived upper tier local authority in England out of a total of 151 upper-tier local authorities (Index of multiple deprivation 2019 by LSOA)
- The prevalence of children in reception class who were at a healthy weight was 73.6% (2,275 children in total), in comparison to the national figure of 76.5% (National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data from 2021 to 2022)
- At the end of March 2023, 89% of children aged 0-5-years-old were registered with a Children's Centre and of those living in the 30% most deprived areas of Rotherham, 92% were registered. During the same period, the proportion of children aged 0-5-years-old who had accessed Children's centre activities was 73% overall and 78% for those children living in the 30% most deprived communities.
- In Rotherham there are 21.9% of children aged 0-15 years in absolute low-income families and 25.7% of children in relative low-income families, for comparison, the percentage rate for England is 15.1% and 18.7% respectively. The number of Children aged under 16, living in relative low-income families, financial year ending 2021 was 13,193 (Index of multiple deprivation 2019 by LSOA)
- 20.4% of pupils in Rotherham (9,325) have identified SEND needs compared to 17.1% nationally (Spring School Census 2023)
- 3,192 Children and young people aged 0-25 yrs have a EHCP (44% increase in EHCP over last 3 years) (EHCP data July 2023)
- As of 31 December 2023, we had 505 children in care, 382 were in family-based placements.
- There are currently 323 care leavers in Rotherham (As of November 2023)

Of the children open to the service 1537 are male or identify as male, 1388 are female or identify as female and 20 are unborn (5 have not disclosed gender).

Ethnicity	Count
A1 - White British	2387
A5 - Gypsy / Roma	114
A3 - Any other White background	74
E2 - Any other ethnic group	62
C2 - Pakistani	56
B3 - White and Asian	54
B4 - Any other mixed background	41
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	34
D2 - African	32
E4 - Information not yet obtained	31
B2 - White and Black African	27
C4 - Any other Asian background	21
C1 - Indian	6
E1 - Chinese	5
D3 - Any other Black background	3
E3 - Refused	2
A2 - White Irish	1
Rotherham Total	2950

Recruitment to staff roles considers the need for the workforce to reflect the communities in which they work.

Information regarding protected characteristics is captured in the Early Help Assessment and informs the Plan that is coproduced with the family members.

Translation services are utilised as a range of bespoke provision is in place including specific targeted support groups for LGBT young people, BAME young people, Girls and young women, faith-based groups and provision, support for Ukraine and Afghanistan families and young people with autism.

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

Not that we're aware of, we have rich cross organisational data available however we will continue to develop our reporting mechanisms as part of the Early Help delivery plan to ensure Diversity and Equality remains a key consideration.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy

or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

A range of approaches will be used to ensure that children, young people and families play a key part in the evaluation of the strategy and that their individual needs and protected characteristics are considered.

Existing data and established methodology across the children's workforce will continue to be used to monitor impact on those groups with protected characteristics.

Service users have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery as well as frontline staff, partner agencies.

- Continue engagement with the Early Help Partnership Group
- Continue to ensure that consultation and engagement with the service users is embedded in all Early Help Assessments and plans.

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

To inform the Early Help Strategy a consultation and engagement activity was undertaken with partners and delivery groups which report to The Rotherham Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

An on-line consultation survey was also shared with partners and stakeholders. 83 organisations responded to the consultation survey.

In September 2022 the Improving Lives Select Commission held a workshop to identify the key challenges facing children, young people, and families in the borough and to shape and influence the priorities, principles, and themes of the Strategy. The recommendations made have been incorporated into the development of the Strategy and associated governance arrangements.

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

The Early Help Partnership Group have been engaged and will be pivotal in the implementation of the Strategy Deliver Plan.

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)

How do you think the Policy/Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?

The Early Help Service covers a wide range of need and includes working directly with different communities and groups. However, some need is universal and not unique to protected characteristics (e.g., parenting). Delivery of the proposed Strategy will support the service to take account of cultural differences and strengths, and the unique circumstances of some young people and families in Rotherham.

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and Signs of Safety (SoS) model ensure an assessment and case planning format that integrates professional knowledge with local family and cultural knowledge, to identify and implement interventions that will benefit children, young people and families avoiding the need for further costly interventions. Early indications of its use with Early Help families are positive.

The impact of changes across the protected characteristics groups that Early Help works with is detailed below and is most likely to be initially experienced in the form of less frequent interventions or different models of engagement.

As the service moves towards more evidenced based, outcome focussed, and targeted forms of delivery, those individuals from protected groups are likely to experience a more enhanced service.

It is of particular importance that the service is agile enough and has tools that are flexible to respond to future need and changing demographics such as the population becoming more culturally diverse.

As well as responding to need as illustrated in the snapshot, the Strategy also takes account of the fact that those most likely to require help and support are located in areas of multiple deprivation.

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

The strategy proposes continuation of the delivery of a continuum of early help support including a more targeted service for those in need of early help, it is not envisaged that the service will present any barriers to communities and groups.

Accessibility, physical and geographical will continue to be carefully monitored by the Early Help Partnership Group.

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

Early Help services are not delivered in isolation and the Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 emphasises the importance of developing the Early Help System, the Early Help Offer and the Early Help Workforce.

The strategy proposes continuation of the delivery of a continuum of early help support including a more targeted service for those in need of early help, it is not envisaged that the service will present any barriers to communities and groups.

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)*

The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 will ensure that the service continues to work with the specific specified groups identified through the Protected Characteristics and does not differentiate between different groups.

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: Early Help Strategy 2024-2029
Directorate and service area: CYPS, Early Help
Lead Manager: Kelly White: Interim Assistant Director, Early Help
Summary of findings:
<p>The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 will ensure that the service continues to work with the specific specified groups identified through the Protected Characteristics. Anticipated Impact will be low.</p> <p>Early Help services in Rotherham will continue to develop through the delivery of this strategy which will improve the accessibility of the Early Help offer, the way the system works together and workforce.</p>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Complete and submit EH Strategy	A, D, S, RE, RoB, PM, C, O	March 2024
Cabinet Paper Approval	As Above	March 2024
Implementation of the 5 Year Delivery Plan	As Above	April 2024 to March 2029

*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
Nicola Curley	Director Children's Services	TBC
Kelly White	Interim Assistant Director, Early Help	01/02/24
Cllr Cusworth	Cabinet Member	TBC

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	29/01/2024
Report title and date	Early Help Strategy 2024-2029, Cabinet March 2024
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

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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?	Unknown; potential increase in emissions	<i>Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029</i> commits to develop a SEND hub in Rotherham Town Centre and to increase the Council's Universal Youth Work offer across the Borough. This may increase emissions from non-domestic buildings.		Existing facilities will be preferred, where appropriate to the needs of children, young people and their families.	Greenhouse gas emission from non-domestic buildings in the Council's energy procurement portfolio are monitored and reported in NZ30 carbon accounts.
Emissions from transport?	Unknown; potential decrease in emissions		Extending wraparound care options for primary school children may decrease emissions from transport through avoided car journeys. Developing mainstream SEND resource provision, so that children can continue to receive their education locally, may save people from travelling farther to access the same support.		Emissions from home to school transport (HST) provided by the Council are partially monitored, as fuel use in corporate fleet vehicles is reported in NZ30 carbon accounts. The Climate Change Team will seek to increase the Council's capacity to monitor emissions from taxis and private hire vehicles commissioned for HST.

Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?					
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?					
Emissions from construction and/or development?					
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?					

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

Developing a self-service and digital offer for families will have an uncertain carbon impact. There may be some benefit from avoided energy use in buildings, avoided journeys to access services and advice and avoided use of paper and other materials. However, digital resources have their own, significant carbon impact, due to data servers' high energy demand and the potential harm caused by electronic waste.

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

The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 describes the local authority's responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

Working Together, 2023 provides the legislative framework for Early Help and describes how local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families.

The previous Rotherham Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 was launched in January 2016 and was primarily focussed on the resources, staffing and services within the local authority. The Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 builds on the strong foundations and vision of the previous strategy and sets the priorities for prevention and early identification and intervention in Rotherham.

The Multi-agency Early Help Partnership Group will oversee the implementation of the delivery plan reporting to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Kelly White, Interim Assistant Director, Early Help, Children and Young People's Services Arthur King, Principal Climate Change Officer, Asset Management, Finance and Customer Services
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	N/A
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	N/A
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Tracking reference: CIA 235 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer, Asset Management, Finance and Customer Services

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 12 February 2024

Report Title

Climate Emergency Annual Report 2023 - 2024

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

On 30th October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set out its action plan covering the following seven policy themes of Monitoring and Measurement; Energy; Housing; Transport; Waste; Built and Natural Environment; and Influence and Engagement.

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

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

A Climate Emergency Action Plan was established, and this report outlines progress towards the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan reported for the 2023/2024 period. Also included is a summary of climate change data, for greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations April 2020 – March 2023 and across the Borough of Rotherham, 2005 – 2021. Local area emissions data are published two years in arrears by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

This report covers the seven policy themes detailed above and in addition includes a summary of the Council's progress on nature recovery and adaptation action. A forward plan for 2024/25 is presented and expands upon the previously included

Influence and Engagement section to include the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector for the first time.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1	Climate Change Progress Report
Appendix 2	Climate Change Action Plan 2024/2025
Appendix 3	Carbon Emissions Data Summary
Appendix 4	Single Use Plastic Action Plan 23/24
Appendix 5	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 6	Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Rotherham Council \(2020\). Responding to the Climate Emergency. Cabinet 23 March 2020:](#)

[Rotherham Council \(2021\). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 22nd March 2021:](#)

[Rotherham Council \(2022\). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 25th April 2022:](#)

[Rotherham Council \(2022\) Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23. Cabinet 17th October 2022.](#)

[Flood Alleviation Update. Improving Places Select Commission 25th October 2022.](#)

[Rotherham Council \(2023\) Climate Emergency Annual Report 20th March 2023](#)

[Flood Alleviation Update. Improving Places Select Commission on Tuesday 19 September 2023, 1.30 p.m. - Rotherham Council](#)

[Rotherham Council \(2023\) Council Building Decarbonisation Programme Cabinet Report - Monday 18 September 2023](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Climate Emergency Annual Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 30th October 2019 and since then has committed to driving down carbon emissions with a view to achieving the following targets:
 - The Council's carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2030 (NZ30)
 - Borough-wide carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2040 (NZ40)
- 1.2 The Council also declared a Nature Crisis for Rotherham on 25th May 2022. It is recognised that the decline in nature is intrinsically linked with the climate emergency, and this is reflected within the action plan detailed in Appendix 2.
- 1.3 This report details progress to date and presents a proposed Action Plan for 2024/25.
- 1.4 An update on the Council's action plan to reduce Single Use Plastics (SUP) is also included with this report. Single Use Plastics are of public interest and contribute to the Council's carbon emissions (Scope 3). It is therefore important that the Council continues to remove SUP from its operations and to encourage good practice locally.

2. The Climate Change Action Plan Update

- 2.1 A full progress report and action plan for 2024/2025 is detailed within Appendix 1 and 2. Key progress is highlighted below with respect to the specific themes of:
 - Monitoring and measurement
 - Energy decarbonisation
 - Transport
 - Housing
 - Waste
 - Built & Natural Environment
 - Influence & Engagement
 - Adaptation
- 2.2 An eighth theme 'Adaptation' was added in the 2022/23 annual report to reflect scientific evidence that some degree of climate impacts are already being experienced and will continue to be felt in the future irrespective of widespread collective carbon reduction.
- 2.3 **Monitoring and measurement**
- 2.4 Greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's NZ30 climate change target ('NZ30 emissions') have decreased year on year, over the last three reporting years. Total NZ30 emissions decreased 1.9% from 8,121

tCO₂e in 2020/21, to 7,970 tCO₂e in 2021/22. Emissions decreased by another 1.4% the following year, to 7,862 tCO₂e.

- 2.5 NZ30 emissions are comprised of 'scope 1' and 'scope 2' greenhouse gas emissions, plus emissions from 'grey fleet' mileage and other business travel, as per the scope boundary for central government departments' mandatory emissions reporting. Scope 1 emissions are from sources directly owned or controlled by the Council; scope 2 emissions are from purchased electricity, heat, steam or cooling; whereas emissions from business travel are an example of scope 3 emissions.
- 2.6 Since the Climate Change Annual Report 2023, the Council has increased its understanding of scope 3 emissions sources which are outside its direct influence or control. Scope 3 emissions have been estimated for staff commuting and home working; water supply and treatment; transmission and distribution of electricity; waste disposal and recycling; and official business travel and accommodation.
- 2.7 A full climate change data summary, which includes NZ30 emissions and compares historic, local area emissions with recommended carbon budgets, is available in Appendix 3.
- 2.8 **Energy Decarbonisation**
- 2.9 A number of projects are currently ongoing which aim to decarbonise the Council's operational estate. A scheme to decarbonise five Council buildings, including the Town Hall, Riverside House, Clifton Park Museum, the Civic Theatre and the Orchard Centre was presented to Cabinet and approved in September 2023. The works involve the connection of these buildings to a heat network which would then have wider benefits for other decarbonisation schemes across the town centre. This work is still underway, with procurement activity ongoing. This is supported by grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and match funded by the Council. A further paper following procurement activity and a proposal for implementation is planned for submission to Cabinet in June 2024. The overall scheme is estimated to save the Council approximately 482 tCO₂e.
- 2.10 An additional bid to the PSDS has been submitted covering the decarbonisation of eight further Council buildings and officers are now awaiting the outcome. This scheme was approved by Cabinet on 22nd January 2024 in advance to enable prompt progression of the project if the funding is awarded. Should this bid be successful, it is estimated that 301.5 tCO₂e will be saved per annum.
- 2.11 Both schemes will reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's corporate estate, through the removal of gas heating systems, installation of energy efficiency measures such as LED lighting, insulation and solar PV where appropriate.

2.12 Residential decarbonisation

- 2.13 The Council continues to administer the successful ECO4-Flex scheme, through which people living in fuel poverty may access energy performance upgrades to their homes. Between April 2023 and January 2024, the Council approved 452 ECO4-Flex projects, while 134 Households were supported by its Community Energy Support Scheme. The average funding received by each retrofitted property currently stands at £6,745.

2.14 Transport

- 2.15 The Council's Fleet Replacement Programme was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. Consultations and specifications are in progress for the first phase of procurement.
- 2.16 In addition, Fleet Transport has recently begun a trial of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, or 'HVO biodiesel'. HVO is a "drop in" alternative to regular diesel and which can be used in existing, diesel-fuelled vehicles with relatively few alterations. Fleet Transport is trialling HVO biodiesel with ten vehicles, to understand its costs and implications as an alternative, low carbon fuel. Replacement of diesel with HVO could result in a substantial reduction in the Council's carbon footprint and may provide a solution for heavier vehicle classes such as refuse collection vehicles, for which electric vehicle alternatives are not currently feasible due to operational and financial constraints. A report on the outcome of the HVO trial is expected in Spring 2024.
- 2.17 In order to improve access to safe active travel throughout the Borough as part of the Council's NZ40 target, three cycleway schemes are in progress. The Wath to Manvers cycleway scheme has been completed; delivery of Sheffield Road cycleway (phases 2 and 3) is ongoing, with expected completion by August 2024; while the Broom Road Cycleway is expected to be completed by the end of February 2024.
- 2.18 Improving cycleways and public transport infrastructure will allow for the uptake of more sustainable transportation measures and are important step towards a net zero borough.

2.19 Housing

- 2.20 The Council secured £1.357 million investment from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF); matched by £2.93 million of its own capital investment, this has funded an energy efficiency and external works programme, delivered to 130 Council-owned homes in Maltby. Works included external wall insulation, loft and cavity insulation, and the installation of A-rated windows and doors.
- 2.21 As a result of this work, the average annual household energy bill should be approximately £400 less (based on current energy prices) than it would have been if the works had not been completed. Over the 130 properties this should create combined savings of over £50,000 per year.

2.22 Built and Natural Environment

2.23 Planning

2.24 Three additional supplementary planning documents (SPDs) were adopted by Cabinet in July 2023, covering areas such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Trees and Preparing a soils strategy. These SPDs elaborate on local planning policy and give developers additional technical guidance which results in better quality developments.

2.25 Due to the uncertainty around governmental reform of the planning system the action to review and update the Local Plan Core Strategy is carried forward to 2024/25.

2.26 Green Spaces and Tree planting

2.27 Trees provide a number of ecosystem services for the Borough, including providing excellent habitat for wildlife and capturing carbon from the atmosphere. As such, the Council has committed to planting 10,000 woodland trees and 500 urban trees by April 2024. At present, tree planting is on track for delivery, though the planting season has been noticeably delayed by a mild autumn, with trees remaining in leaf longer than usual. Climate change is likely to increase the likelihood of a delayed winter period pushing the start of the planting season back towards December, though it is not expected that this will impact on the Council's ability to meet its planting targets.

2.28 Waste

2.29 A high-level plan to deliver the new South Yorkshire Waste Strategy is on track for completion by April 2024. This considers the transitional arrangements in relation to delivery of household food waste recycling. DEFRA has confirmed that Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley can continue to process food waste as part of residual waste collections using the BDR Waste Partnership's existing anaerobic digestion facility at Manvers until 2040, after which a new process will need to be implemented.

2.30 Actions to review waste contamination policies and deliver behaviour change campaigns have been delayed and will be carried over. However, significant engagement activity has been undertaken to improve the information available to residents throughout the year, including working with schools to provide information and work with children to engage and deliver art-from-waste projects. The waste team attended the Rotherham Show and the Love Where You Live team has facilitated and been involved with a variety of waste-reduction activities across the Borough. The Love Where You Live team has also recently started sharing this good work on its dedicated social media page, to highlight the efforts of its volunteers and to encourage more action in the Borough.

- 2.31 The Love Where You Live campaign has engaged approximately 1,600 volunteers and has worked with a number of other partners such as the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, the Don Catchment Rivers Trust, and the Canals and Rivers Trust, undertaking activities such as river clean ups and litter picking activities Rotherham-wide.
- 2.32 Throughout the annual spring clean week in 2023, 120 litter picks were undertaken by volunteers supported by Council staff, with 3,738 bags picked over 3 weeks: estimated at 41 tonnes of waste in total. This waste can then be recovered for recycling, avoiding impacts on biodiversity and reducing the carbon impact from incorrect disposal. The next spring clean is scheduled for March 2024.
- 2.33 A trial is currently being undertaken of litter picking stencils, which inform residents that volunteers are litter picking their area and signposting the location of the nearest bin. It is hoped that this may reduce future littering in these areas.
- 2.34 The Rotherham Business Waste Service has now launched its paper and card recycling collections, free of charge to existing customers, who include the Council's corporate estate. Additional plans for dry mixed recycling collections are being considered and are included in the 2024/25 action plan.
- 2.35 **Single Use Plastics**
- 2.36 There have been a number of actions to address the problem of Single Use Plastic (SUP), which remains one of the Council's environmental priorities. The Council has since improved the information available on the Council's intranet and undertaken internal engagement to increase awareness of their hazards. An internal information campaign coinciding with the national Recycle Week campaign shared hints and tips for reducing single use plastic at home and in the office. Employees were also asked to identify SUP in their working environment and share ideas for alternatives.
- 2.37 To support future action, the Council has also developed a Single Use Plastic Protocol, which details how officers should commission goods and services with the reduction of single use plastics in mind. In line with this protocol, a new e-learning module has been developed and will shortly be available on the Council's virtual learning environment. The module raises awareness of the environmental impacts of single use plastics and guides officers to include suitable criteria when undertaking commissioning activity.
- 2.38 Specific examples of reductions of single use plastics include the replacement of tree sapling covers with biodegradable alternatives; working in conjunction with suppliers to phase out single use plastic bottles and replacing water bottles with cans or cartons and offering free water refills at Council cafés.
- 2.39 The Council is still working towards plastic free events whilst also improving waste management facilities on offer, to encourage better recycling. At the Rotherham Show, Events Officers worked closely with stall holders to gather

baseline information and to encourage their reduction, though the upcoming change in legislation affecting catering outlets at the time meant that many stalls were running down plastic catering equipment ahead of the October 2023 ban.

- 2.40 A progress report against the 2023/24 single use plastic action plan is in Appendix 4.

2.41 **Influence and Engagement**

- 2.42 In addition to the waste engagement ongoing throughout the Borough the Climate Change Team has undertaken multiple engagement activities, for internal and external audiences.

- 2.43 The Council continues to engage with regional and local partners, including the Rotherham Together Partnership, the Rotherham Growth Board, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Commission, the Local Government Association, and the Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

- 2.44 More focus on local community groups is being undertaken through the delivery of training to those involved in community work, through the Carbon Literacy Project's Community Leaders course. This is scheduled for quarter 4 2023/24, is funded by the Rotherham Together Partnership and will be delivered by the Climate Change Team.

- 2.45 Council Officers have also worked alongside anchor institutions such as Voluntary Action Rotherham, Rotherham and Barnsley Chamber of Commerce, RNN Group, South Yorkshire Police and the Rotherham NHS Trust to create a Climate and Nature Charter, designed to encourage action on climate and nature by organisations across the Borough. This was launched in September 2023 and is published on the Rotherham Together Partnership website.

- 2.46 The Climate Change Team, Energy Team and Greenspaces Woodland Engagement Officer also joined forces at the Rotherham Show to talk to residents, and to engage young people in tree planting and climate-art activities. Energy Officers also provided information to residents relating to energy efficiency and the ECO4-Flex scheme.

2.47 **Adaptation**

- 2.48 The impacts of climate change are already being felt in South Yorkshire, but this theme aims to consider how current and future projected climate change and the incidents such as extreme heat and flooding will affect the Borough of Rotherham and Council services, so that preparations can be made to adapt. Throughout 2023 the Climate Change Team has worked alongside local government colleagues across Yorkshire and the Humber, facilitated by the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, to learn from and share progress on adaptation plans in a 'Local Authority Adaptation Programme'.

- 2.49 The Climate Change Team has delivered three training sessions to colleagues and stakeholders across the Council, to raise awareness of Council services' need to adapt to climate change impacts. Climate Change officers have worked closely with colleagues in Adult Care and Integration, Commissioning and Public Health to trial the integration of adaptation measures with service planning. This has included the consideration of risks and potential mitigating actions. Key impacts on service delivery have been considered including impacts on infrastructure, business supply chains, resourcing, business continuity and an initial consideration of the impacts on external providers. To support this work, geospatial assessments have been undertaken which consider the location of current adult social care assets and their risk of flooding and extreme heat. Assessment of the impact of climate change is an ongoing process and this initial adaptation assessment will inform future service plans for the service.
- 2.50 The next stage of this project will be to identify how the integration of adaptation with service planning could be implemented across the Council, as an action for 2024/25.
- 2.51 **2024/25 Action Plan**
- 2.52 A 2024/25 action plan is included as Appendix 2.
- 2.53 The plan includes the new theme of culture, arts and heritage which reflects the expected increase in activity and public interest in these areas. Young people within the Borough have highlighted their concern for the environment and as such the Children's Capital of Culture team will work with young people to develop a suitable programme of events exploring climate change and the environment.
- 2.54 The culture sector presents an opportunity to raise awareness, increase engagement and explore Rotherham's past, present and future climate and biodiversity.
- 2.55 Arts and crafts can be used as media to develop 'circular skills,' or skills which develop repair and DIY skills, reducing waste and reducing the need for the manufacture of new products. The ability to 'make do and mend' also has cost saving benefits as well as enabling the development of creative opportunities throughout Rotherham. The Makers Spaces, a Libraries Service scheme, supports this and will help to develop a circular economy throughout the Borough. Climate change and nature will also be explored as part of the Council's events programming in 2024/25.
- 2.56 Other significant components of the 2024/25 climate change action plan include the following:
- Continued work to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's estate.
 - Continue to develop the Council's understanding of its impact on scope 3 emissions.

- Development of a plan for the roll out of a climate adaptation plan to cover all Council services.
- Delivery of the fleet replacement programme and trial HVO replacement for diesel vehicles.
- Continue to roll out EV charging infrastructure throughout the Borough
- Plant 10,000 new woodland trees and 500 urban trees throughout the Borough.

2.57 The Council has already incorporated biodiversity communication into its climate change communication plan and the Council's existing programme of biodiversity related events alongside its existing management of local nature sites. However, the Environment Act 2021 places additional duties on the Council. Guidance on complying with a new Biodiversity Duty was published by Government in May 2023. The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23), published in January 2023, sets out government plans for significantly improving the natural environment. It is now expected that the Council will:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration.
- Act to deliver the Council's policies and achieve these objectives.

2.58 The law also sets out specific additional reporting requirements, the first of which is due by March 2025, including the need for both a progress report and forward plan and as such these actions have been included within the climate change action plan. The scale of this report means that more detail will be required than can feasibly be included within future iterations of the Climate Emergency Annual Report. As such it is likely that future biodiversity reports will be prepared and submitted separately to the climate change annual report, though there may still be some overlaps. This is intended to allow for appropriate scrutiny by Members.

2.59 The Council is also required to collaborate with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. SYMCA has been appointed by DEFRA as the responsible body for this piece of work, but it is important that Council Officers are involved to ensure that Rotherham's biodiversity and any local requirements are considered.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report.

3.2 No alternative options are recommended, as it has been agreed that an annual report will be produced to ensure effective monitoring of actions in

response to the Climate Emergency. Larger projects and procurements will be submitted for separate consideration.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 This report has been produced in conjunction with Officers from across the Council, representing each key theme of the action plan. Staff not involved with the programme have also been engaged through focus groups and awareness raising sessions. The Council has also shared the 2024/25 Action Plan with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet for their review and actions incorporated where feasible and engagement has taken place with partners via the Rotherham Together Partnership during 2023/24 as detailed in this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The report is an annual report and it is proposed that an update against the actions is provided towards the end of 2024/25 and reported to Cabinet. Accountability is via the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change and the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this update report. The work to be undertaken as outlined within the report will be funded within the Council's existing revenue and capital budgets. Where additional Council funding is required to deliver the objectives of the Climate Change workstream, this will need to be identified as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.
- 6.2 As projects are developed with an intention to engage third party organisations, it is imperative that Services give appropriate consideration in the development of the specification to climate change and the Council will need to ensure all procurement activity is undertaken in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 set a legally binding target on the UK to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2050. The 80% target was increased to a 100% target in 2019 (the net zero target). Although there are currently no net zero statutory targets for local authorities, many (including the Council as set out in this report), have adopted commitments to reduce Carbon emissions in line with the 2050 net zero target.
- 7.2 The Council's commitment to net zero and the actions towards this as set out in the report are consistent with the Governments Net Zero Strategy and are indicative of the important role local authorities play in achieving net zero.

7.3 In respect of single use plastics, the Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 as referred to above, banned the supply of single use plates, trays, bowls and cutlery. The Council must ensure it complies with the requirements of these Regulations in its operations and has an enforcement function set out in the Regulations in respect of businesses within the Borough.

7.4 The Council's obligations in respect of the Environment Act 2021 in relation to biodiversity are as set out in the body of the report.

7.5 Other than the above there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within the report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no specific human resources implications associated with this report. The Climate Change team have engaged with a Human Resources representative to ensure any human resources implications are captured early.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no specific impacts of this report on Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults, though climate change in general can have a disproportionate impact on these groups.

9.2 The actions relating to children and young people in Appendix 2 have been enhanced to encourage a wider young person engagement.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 As per the Equalities Impact Assessment in Appendix 5 there are no direct implications for equalities and human rights as part of this report due to its administrative nature. However, climate change impacts have the potential to adversely affect certain groups to a greater degree than others. For example, those benefitting from higher incomes will be able to recover from flooding events and increasing food and energy prices through the procurement of 'solutions' whereas those on low incomes will not be able to. Similarly, children and vulnerable adults may also be more susceptible to extreme heat.

10.2 Equality impacts may arise as the programme of works develops and as such consideration of equalities and human rights at the project level should continue throughout development, consultation, and engagement to understand the potential impacts. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken before implementation of change or significant programmes of work particularly when planning adaptive measures for Council services or buildings in relation to climate change impacts.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this the Council has aimed to be net zero as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a whole to achieve the same position by 2040. The intention of this document is to report upon progress towards these commitments and to provide a high-level plan for activities within 2024.
- 11.2 The report itself will have no impact on carbon emissions but the identified actions either have already or will result in a reduction of Rotherham Council's and the Rotherham Borough's carbon emissions. This includes actions designed to raise awareness of climate change and the personal actions that can be taken to reduce carbon emissions.
- 11.3 The associated Carbon Impact Assessment is available within Appendix 6.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 As part of its stakeholder analysis, the Climate Change Team has identified a number of partners in the delivery of its plans for 2024/25. This includes supply chain partners as well as local and regional partners working towards a decarbonised future. Where specific partners are critical to delivery of actions, these are named within the action plan.
- 12.2 In particular, the Council will continue to work with local stakeholders such as the Rotherham Together Partnership and its associated anchor institutions, climate and nature groups and young people. Regionally, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission are also key partners.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Climate change and the loss of nature is one of the biggest challenges the world will face and there will be a need for deep change at pace to effectively reduce the carbon footprint of the borough and work alongside others trying to limit global warming to 1.5°C. The Council cannot achieve this alone and so to mitigate this risk, the Council must work with its partners, use its influence as buyers and as an anchor institution to transform the local area whilst ensuring a just transition for its most vulnerable residents.
- 13.2 Decarbonisation will have immediate financial implications, though with long terms gains, energy resilience and positive health outcomes. There are limited buildings remaining within the Council's corporate estate that are eligible for PSDS funding and the Council's allocated budget will not stretch to meet the anticipated costs of a full operational decarbonisation. Therefore, further work will be undertaken throughout 24/25 to identify the funding gap associated with this and to confirm whether there are other opportunities for funding.

- 13.3 The impacts of climate change remain a threat and are predicted to increase in severity as the earth warms. Changes in the prevalence of flooding, extreme heat events and storms may pose a risk to infrastructure and public health throughout the UK and globally. Mitigation for this risk will be in the form of application of learning taken from research and planning for extreme events. The Climate Change Manager will continue to take part in the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Adaptation Programme to learn best practice that can be applied to Rotherham in the future.

14. Accountable Officers

Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	29/01/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	24/01/24
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	24/01/24

Report Author: Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

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

Appendix 1: Climate Change Action Plan Progress Report

A progress report on the 2023/24 action plan is provided below including a summary of the actions and an update on the progress to January 2024.

BRAGG STATUS DEFINITIONS	
Not yet due to start	Action not yet scheduled to start
On track	Action started and on track to be delivered by the original deadline
Known delays	Action has some risk/delay to delivery or is behind the original schedule by less than three months
Will not be met	Action will not be/has not been met within three months of the original target date
Complete	The action is fully complete and/or operational

OVERARCHING ACTIVITY					
Summary: The primary focus for 2023/24 has been to develop the Council’s monitoring and reporting mechanisms and integrating Carbon Literacy training into business as usual.					
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Monitoring and Reporting	Further develop accounting for scope 3 emissions arising from procurement activities and waste generated from Council operations in baseline and annual reporting data.	Dec 2023	Climate Change Team	Scope 3 emissions reporting now includes emissions arising from Council staff commuting and home working; water supply and treatment; transmission and distribution of electricity, to Council buildings and streetlights; emissions from waste disposal and recycling; and emissions from official business travel and accommodation. Of these, only scope 3 emissions from ‘grey fleet mileage’ i.e., vehicle mileage incurred on official business travel, are considered within scope of the Council’s Net Zero 2030 climate change target.	
	Use of scenario-based projection modelling to create a “roadmap to net zero,” outlining future projects/initiatives, their annual carbon savings, financial costs and projected future energy savings.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	Delays due to staffing within the climate change team. Some modelling has been undertaken on emissions relating to specific projects, but a full net zero outline is not yet complete. Expected completion by Spring 2024.	
	Development of an internal Climate Change Power BI Report Server to house and share key Climate Change Data including baselines,	March 2024	Asset Management	Annual reporting data is now available to all climate change leads through the PowerBi platform and Microsoft Teams application. This reporting is interactive and allows for a degree of manipulation for interrogation purposes.	

	annual reports and projections.				
Management	Develop a mid to long term action plan scoping the full programme of decarbonisation works from 2023 to 2030 and 2040. This will allow for identification of gaps and should also consider work required in relation to the nature crisis and climate adaptation works necessary.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	A gap analysis has been completed and further work is now being undertaken to complete this action by Spring/Summer 2024.	
	Ensure Nature Crisis workstreams are fully integrated within the Climate Change work programme for reporting in 2024.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	Actions have been included in the 2024/25 forward plan to integrate nature into the climate change workstream. Officers have also undertaken focus groups and engagement internally to develop awareness of the nature crisis and some of the actions that can be undertaken at home or in the workplace. The Improving Places Select Committee has undertaken a review which will also need to be considered as part of this agenda.	
Training	Investigate whether changes to the climate change impact assessments could improve accuracy of completion, general awareness and user friendliness.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	A review of the current process has been undertaken and a number of improvements identified. Next steps for improvement are included within the 24/25 action plan.	
	Carbon literacy training to be rolled out across the	March 2024	Climate Change Team	Carbon Literacy training is now available for booking on the Council's training system for all interested staff. This action has now been moved into business as usual.	

	Council , including in-person workshops and e-learning modules.			Sector specific Carbon Literacy training for museums staff has also been delivered by the Climate Change Team. The Council also celebrated Carbon Literacy Action Day by training seven of its graduate trainees during an in-person session at Riverside House.	
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ENERGY

Summary: Decarbonisation activity continues across the Council property portfolio including one successful bid for PSDS funding and two further PSDS 3C bids which are currently awaiting a response.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Decarbonising Buildings	Continued delivery of the proof-of-concept self-generated green electricity scheme to the Rotherham portfolio to enable a reduction in grid supply reliance; installation and operation to be completed in the coming years.	Ongoing	Energy Team	All suitable Council owned sites have been reviewed by Asset Management, however, there have been challenges finding a suitable site that offers both an appropriate grid connection capacity or is of a large enough size to provide a return on investment. This work is proposed to continue into 2024/25.	
	Develop a building decarbonisation standard and working group for new and refurbishment of existing Council buildings to achieve delivery of NZ30.	March 2024	Energy Team	A building decarbonisation standard which builds upon the work to decarbonise the Council's existing property portfolio to ensure the readiness of new builds for net zero and reduce revenue costs is being drafted. This includes recommendations for measures such as standardised insulation levels, creating suitable space for onsite renewable energy generation and sustainable drainage. Where possible, the recommendation is that buildings meet the standard from the build stage but allows for readiness measures where initial funding is not conducive to immediate installation. Wider consultation will be required to finalise and gain approval of this piece of work. This is estimated for completion Summer 2024.	
	Undertake a full decarbonisation	March 2025	Energy Team	A number of suitable buildings have been selected as options but are not yet ready for modelling to be undertaken. Further work	

	modelling on a selected building to fully demonstrate the process utilising current and emerging technologies. This will allow assessment of indicative impact on costs subject to market changes.			required in this area to complete this action, which will be carried over to 2024/25.	
	Continue to support the private sector led development of Templeborough heat network.	Ongoing -private sector led	Energy Team	This action has now been superseded by the Council Building Decarbonisation Report approved by Cabinet in September 2023.	No longer applicable.
Community Energy Support Scheme	Continue to promote and support the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme and support residents to reduce energy and cost.	Ongoing whilst funding lasts	Energy Team	<p>The ECO4-FLEX project is still proving very popular with residents in the Borough. The number of Installers permitted to have ECO4-FLEX work signed off via the council has now increased from four in August 2022 to ten as of July 2023.</p> <p>This now allows more domestic retrofit projects to be completed each month, resulting in the increased rate of decarbonisation of Rotherham's private housing stock.</p> <p>Each of these new installers has been carefully screened by the Energy team and RMBC trading standards. The average funding per ECO4-FLEX project is currently at £6745 per property. This has meant that in a period of 11 months the Council has saved residents approximately £3,507,592.40 in total across the 520 projects delivered.</p> <p>Latest figures relating to project sign off: 452 ECO4 projects signed off since April 2023 – October 23. 134 CESS household support projects since April 2023.</p>	

TRANSPORT

Summary: Delivery of cycleways and identification and installation of EV charging units across the Borough has been a priority through the 23/24 period.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Promote Electric Vehicle Charging	Further analysis required to target areas of need for EV charging in relation to housing/EV density.	Ongoing	Energy & Transport Teams	The Energy team, in association with Transport Planning and SYMCA continue to identify new sites for EV charging infrastructure installation. The most recent programme of works presented 7 additional sites across the Borough to Cabinet. This proposal was approved in October 2023. These sites are on track for delivery by April 2024.	
	Continue roll out of EV charging infrastructure	Ongoing	Energy & Transport Teams	The seven sites approved as part of the latest EV infrastructure programme are currently on track for delivery by April 2024.	
Transport Planning and Data	Funding options to be explored to facilitate a review of baseline model and allow further analysis and bridging of gaps in data	March 2024.	Transport planning	This is delayed and will be carried over into the 2024/25 action plan.	
	Delivery of Sheffield Road cycleways (phases 2 & 3)	As per project plan	Transport planning	The delivery of the second and third phases of the Sheffield Road cycleways is expected to be complete by August 2024.	
	Delivery of Broom Road cycleway	As per project plan	Transport planning	Works to complete the Broom Road cycleway are on track and planned for completion by February 2024.	
	Delivery of Wath to Manvers cycleway	As per project plan	Transport planning	The Wath to Manvers cycleway is complete.	

HOUSING

Summary: Progress continues to be made in increasing energy efficiency within the extensive Council housing stock with the Council portfolio currently having an average EPC of C.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Zero carbon housing	Delivery of 3 zero carbon new build	On Hold	Housing	This project is now scheduled for implementation in 2025/26 financial year due to unfavourable initial costs. Plans are in place	

	<p>properties in Thrybergh (2x 2bed houses 1x 1bed bungalow).</p> <p>This project will help establish an energy efficiency specification for new Council homes to be carbon neutral.</p>			<p>to reduce these by undertaking procurement alongside other ongoing projects to achieve best value for money, However the scheme is currently on hold due to viability concerns</p> <p>Alongside this project the Council is undertaking 10 further units over four sites in East Herringthorpe. These units will be net zero ready, including measures such as air source heat pumps, solar PVs and built to a high standard.</p>	
	<p>Develop delivery plan for achieving Band C for all Council houses by 2030.</p>	March 2024	Housing	<p>This action is delayed and will be carried over into 2024/25. A compliance review is underway which includes information relating to the housing stock. Further surveys will be needed covering 85% of the Council's housing stock to confirm the delivery plan. Interim measures have included increasing the specification of loft insulation to 350mm for voids and new works and an increase in cavity wall insulation surveys have been undertaken. Existing data, which requires update indicates that the average EPC of the Council's housing stock is currently at a Band C.</p> <p>However, budget has been allocated to provide resource for retrofit strategy development which will support this action moving forward.</p>	
	<p>Complete Maltby SHDF project</p>	March 2024	Housing	<p>This is now complete. Further information is available in the case study presented below.</p>	
	<p>Gain approval for and implement a policy for tenants wanting to install renewable technologies to their homes at their cost.</p>	March 2024	Housing	<p>This is now complete.</p>	

WASTE

Summary: 2023/24 has been focussed on the optimisation of commercial waste and planning for the new simpler ways in which household waste will be processed.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023./24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Waste from households	Development of high-level plan to deliver the new South Yorkshire Waste Strategy by April 2024.	April 2024	Waste	A high-level plan is on track for completion by April 2024 which also considers the transitional arrangements in relation to delivery of household food waste recycling. Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley can continue to process food waste as part of its residual waste collection using its existing anaerobic digestion facility at Manvers until 2040.	
	Contamination policies to be reviewed to assist in the reduction of contamination.	March 2024	Waste	This work has been delayed due to other priorities within the service and will be carried over to 2024/25.	
Behaviour	Roll out of behaviour change campaign based on 21/22 HUBBUB Analysis	March 2024	Waste	Some information is being shared via the Waste Less South Yorkshire social media account which is signposted to from the Council site. The work to deliver a specific behaviour change campaign based on the Hubbub analysis is delayed and this action will be carried over into 2024/25.	
Commercial waste	Completion of route optimisation for commercial rounds and develop recycling offer	March 2024	Waste	The Business Waste Service has now launched the paper and card recycling free of charge for existing customers, including the Council's corporate estate. Additional plans for dry mixed recycling inclusion are being considered and will be included in the 24/25 action plan. Route optimisation is on track for completion by March 2024.	

BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Summary: The planting of new trees across Rotherham continues to be a priority, alongside the revision of key planning documents relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Planning	Partial update to the Local Plan Core Strategy including policies related to climate change. To	March 2024	Planning	Critical friend review of the Core Strategy Partial Update draft consultation document completed. Completion expected June 2024.	

	be informed by the Council's October 2019 climate emergency declaration and May 2022 nature crisis declaration, and taking account of the critical friend review recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refresh of the 2019 Core Strategy Review• Consultation on a draft revised Core Strategy			Uncertainty around government reform of the planning system presents a lack of clarity over the strategic direction of national policy, risking abortive work.	
	Introduction of further SPDs relevant to climate change – SPDs elaborate on Local Plan policies, giving developers additional technical guidance, speeding up applications and resulting in better quality development for the community and environment. Adoption of further SPDs relevant to climate change: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biodiversity Net Gain• Trees• Preparing a Soils Strategy	March 2024	Planning	This is complete. Three additional supplementary planning documents were adopted by Cabinet in July 2023 including Biodiversity Net gain, Trees and Preparing a soils strategy.	

Green spaces and trees	Development of tree planting Strategy giving consideration to appropriate species delivery. Planting schemes should be more focussed on native plant species to enhance biological diversity but also needs to recognise the importance of non-natives in climate change resilience and disease tolerance.	March 2024	Green spaces	A tree planting plan which has been written and is expected to be published before March 2024.	
	Planting 10,000 new woodland trees and 500 new urban trees.	April 2024	Green spaces	The Council's Tree Management Protocol & Guidance was adopted in 2021. It sets Key Targets for tree planting including 500 urban trees and 10,000 woodland trees to be planted on average annually. 390 urban trees and over 21,000 woodland trees were delivered. Throughout the 22/23 planting season, 11348 trees were planted including 8919 woodland trees and 2429 urban trees. The planting season is currently ongoing and updated figures will be available in April 2024.	
	Commissioning of an i-tree ECO survey via Woodland Accelerator Funding.	August 2024	Green spaces	Funding has been awarded for an i-tree survey which will detail carbon sequestration potential for the Borough and other ecosystem services provided by Rotherham's natural environment. This work is on-track for completion by the Aug 2024 deadline.	

INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Summary: This year internal engagement has increased significantly, sharing information, training and gaining employee feedback on core topics. Work to engage local stakeholders has been undertaken including young people, local businesses and anchor institutions.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Employee Engagement	Deliver additional opportunities for internal awareness	March 2024	Climate Change Team	This is now completed with 4 focus groups being undertaken throughout the year including topics such as active travel, single use plastics, nature recovery and an employee consultation on the 2024/25 climate change action plan. This group has	

	via the creation of an employee climate change sub-group for the change champions employee network.			developed into a consistent group of committed individuals which plan to form an official employee network in Spring 2024.	
Local & Regional Engagement	Continue to engage with Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, exploring ways in which the Council can contribute to the borough's Circular Economy Initiatives.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	The climate change team continues to engage with the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Commission, including through attending regional policy forums, circular economy local authority forums and other means. The Climate Change Team has enabled a number of inter-Council interactions with the commission, Climate Change lead officers, procurement colleagues and staff from Regeneration and Environment. A cross-Council Community in Practice session was also held with Change Champions and facilitated by the commissions lead officer which encouraged open discussions on the circular economy and generating ideas for future action.	
	Further explore other local and regional engagement opportunities to share knowledge and resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Ensure local groups and individual wards needs are captured with regards to the climate agenda.	Ongoing	Climate Leads	The Council is engaged with regional and national partners through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Commission, the Local Government Association and other groups at the local and regional level. Initial engagement and interest gauged with Youth Cabinet on a more collaborative engagement to support the provision of appropriate communications and education to young people across various settings.	
	Involvement in the Rotherham show to showcase progress made and increase climate awareness.	October 2023	Climate Change Team	This action is complete. The Climate Change Team, Energy Team and Greenspaces Woodland Engagement Officer attended the Rotherham Show to talk to residents, engage young people in tree planting and arts activities. Energy Officers also provided information to residents relating to energy efficiency and the ECO4-Flex scheme.	

Children and Young People's Participation	Continue to engage the Youth Cabinet to hear their thoughts on the Council's plan and works in to 2023/2024. Involvement of Youth Cabinet in reviewing the climate change action plan. Feedback from cabinet on wider recommendations to be incorporated into workstream plan where feasible.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	Ongoing engagement with the Youth Cabinet has occurred throughout the financial year including receiving feedback on 23/24 and 24/25 climate change action plan. All feasible recommendations were incorporated into the plans with reasons given for those not taken up. Officers have also trained 6 members of the Youth Cabinet in Carbon Literacy, funded by the Rotherham Together Partnership.	
Communication	Develop the website and intranet to include up to date and useful information to residents and employees.	March 2024	Climate Change Team	This is on track for completion by March 2024.	
ADAPTATION Summary:					
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2023/24	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	PROGRESS UPDATE	BRAGG RATING
Flood risk	Further development of the 6 priority Flood Alleviation Schemes as per existing reported plan.	Various - as per project plan	Drainage & Flood Risk Teams	<p>A report was submitted to the IPSC on 19th September outlining the progress of the six priority flood alleviation schemes and planned works moving forward.</p> <p>Works are continuing to reduce risk (from the River Don) through Rotherham Town Centre, Parkgate and Kilnhurst (including works at Kilnhurst primary school).</p> <p>Consultants are approaching the completion of several draft outline designs and reports for the preferred option.</p>	

				<p>At the July 2023 Yorkshire and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee meeting, the Council bid for £1.9m of Local Levy funding was approved to support ongoing pre-construction development work</p> <p>Works are also continuing at Parkgate and Rawmarsh and at Whiston Brook. However, flooding occurred in October 2023 due to Storm Babet. The October 2023 flooding events will now need to be reviewed and factored into this work programme.</p>	
Climate adaptation	<p>Develop an updated risk assessment and climate adaptation work plan alongside other local authorities participating in the YHCC's Adaptation Work programme.</p> <p>Include a plan for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness.</p>	Pilot by March 2024	Climate Change Manager & Service Leads	<p>This pilot project is on track for completion by March 2024, with risk assessments and service plan currently being developed by adult services which keeps in mind the vulnerable residents potentially affected by climate change related events. A working group of officers from across Adults, Climate, Risk, Emergency Planning and Public Health have been working alongside the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission to improve knowledge and integrate planning for climate change impacts into business as usual.</p>	

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

The action plan below details climate change actions planned during the 2024/2025 period. Where actions are expected to overlap financial years, these are indicated in the 'Target date' section.

OVERARCHING ACTIVITY				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/2025	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Monitoring and Reporting	Further develop accounting for scope 3 emissions arising from procurement activities.	Ongoing	Climate Change Team	Complex data analysis required to reach the most accurate estimations and bridge gaps in existing activity data.
	Continue to roll out a programme of climate change and single use plastics training and monitor completion.	Ongoing	Climate Change Team	Training is not currently mandatory which may pose barriers for uptake.
	Improve carbon impact assessments to include climate change impacts.	March 2025	Climate Change Team	
ENERGY				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Decarbonising Buildings	Continued delivery of schemes covering 5 buildings associated with the PSDS 3b funding	March 2025	Energy Team	
	If successful, progress year 1 plans for decarbonisation activity related to the recent PSDS 3c application.	October 2026	Energy Team	Requires successful PSDS funding bids for Council property enabling works to support the business case.
Net Zero Modelling	Undertake a full decarbonisation modelling on a selected building to fully demonstrate the process utilising current and emerging technologies. This will allow assessment of indicative impact on costs subject to market changes. This action is carried forward.	TBC	Energy Team	Timescales to be identified as part of the modelling.

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

Community Energy Support Scheme	Continue to promote and support the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme and support residents to reduce energy and cost.	Ongoing whilst funding lasts.	Energy Team	Annual targets currently set at 600 ECO4 sign offs and 300 CESS household support projects completed.
Renewable Energy	Continued delivery of the proof-of-concept self-generated green electricity scheme to the Rotherham portfolio to enable a reduction in grid supply reliance; installation and operation to be completed in the coming years.	March 2025	Energy Team.	This action is carried over from 23/24.
TRANSPORT				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Promote Electric Vehicle Charging	Continue delivery of LEVI Solar PV canopy and EV project at Drummond Street.	March 2026	Energy & Transport Teams	
	Continue roll out of EV charging infrastructure in line with the Rotherham Council Electric vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy. Sites will be selected, assessed for initial feasibility and presented for approval as and when funding allows.	Ongoing	Energy / Transport Teams	Funding secured for further public and residential charging infrastructure. Informed by EV charging strategy.
Fleet Transport	Evaluate the success of the HVO vehicle trials and develop the business case for roll out if successful.	March 2025	Fleet Transport	
	Continue to implement the fleet replacement programme as per timeline agreed in March 2023 Cabinet report.	March 2026	Fleet Transport	
Transport Planning and Data	Funding options to be explored to facilitate a review of baseline model and allow further analysis and bridging of gaps in data. This action is carried over.	March 2025	Transport planning	
	Delivery of Sheffield Road cycleways (phases 2 & 3) July 2024.	August 2024	Transport Planning	

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

	Completion of the Rotherham to Maltby bus priority scheme.	August 2024	Transport Planning	
HOUSING				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Zero carbon housing	Delivery of 3 zero carbon new build properties in Thrybergh (2x 2 bed houses 1x 1 bed bungalow). This project will help establish an energy efficiency specification for new Council homes to be carbon neutral. (This action is carried forward)	March 2026	Housing	This is a carried forward action, with plans for completion by March 26. However, the scheme is currently on hold due to financial viability concerns.
	Delivery of 10 net zero ready properties in East Herringthorpe.	March 2025	Housing	
	Develop delivery plan for achieving Band C for all Council houses by 2030. (This action is carried forward).	March 2025	Housing	
	Undertake Review of District Heating Network using funding from HNES.	March 2025	Housing	
WASTE				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Waste from Households	Contamination policies to be reviewed to assist in the reduction of contamination. This is a carried over action from 2023/24.	March 2025	Waste	
	Delivery of a communication campaign to reduce contamination and encourage the reduction of waste including single use plastics. Encourage residents to reduce, repurpose and reuse before recycling in the first instance.	March 2025	Waste & Climate Team	
Commercial waste	Commercial delivery of dry mixed recycling through the Council's Business Waste Service and	March 2025	Waste	

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

	increasing paper and card recycling through the new service offer.			
Single Use Plastics	Continue to reduce or replace use of single use plastics as identified in the 2023 full Council single use plastic audits.	March 2025	Council-wide	
	Launch external campaign to encourage businesses to go single use plastic free	March 2025	Climate Team	
BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Planning	Partial update to the Local Plan Core Strategy including policies related to climate change. To be informed by the Council's October 2019 climate emergency declaration and May 2022 nature crisis declaration, and taking account of the critical friend review recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh of the 2019 Core Strategy Review • Consultation on a draft revised Core Strategy <p>This action is carried forward from 2023 to 2024</p>	2025 consultation March 2026 adoption	Planning	Uncertainty around government reform of the planning system presents a lack of clarity over the strategic direction of national policy, risking abortive work.
	Keep existing planning SPDs related to climate change under review and revise if necessary.	March 2025	Planning	
Green spaces	Planting 10,000 new woodland trees and 500 new urban trees.	April 2025	Green spaces	Date extended to April to account for pushed back planting season.
Biodiversity	Develop and report upon the Council's response to the Biodiversity Duty	January 2026 then five yearly	TBC	
	Identify suitable sites for biodiversity net gain	March 2025	Green Spaces	

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

	Work regionally with SYMCA and the region's local authorities to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	March 2025	Green Spaces	
INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Local & Regional engagement	Continue to engage with the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission , exploring ways in which the Council can contribute to the regional approach to climate change action.	Ongoing	Climate Change Team	
	Work with the Rotherham Together Partnership to engage locally with voluntary, business and health anchor organisations throughout Rotherham to share knowledge and resources relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.	Ongoing	Climate Change Team	
Children and Young People's Participation	Continue to engage the Youth Cabinet to hear their thoughts on the Council's plan and works in to 2024/2025. Involvement of Youth Cabinet in reviewing the climate change action plan. Feedback from cabinet on wider recommendations to be incorporated into workstream plan where feasible.	Ongoing	Climate Leads	
	Consider climate change and single use plastic issues in the Young Inspectors forward plan, with a specific audit and/or as part of every Inspection.	March 2025	Children & Young People's Service	
Schools Carbon Assessments	Support schools to utilise Keep Britain Tidy's carbon calculator when launched.	Ongoing	Climate Change Team	No launch date available at this time but interest from local schools on pilot.

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

Communication	Develop a set of key messages for sharing externally including both climate, single use plastics and nature recovery.	March 2025	Climate Change Team/ Communication Team	
	Involvement in the Rotherham Show to showcase progress made and increase climate and nature awareness.	October 2024	Climate Change Team/ Events	
ADAPTATION				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Flood risk	Further development of the 6 priority Flood Alleviation Schemes as per existing reported plan.	Various - as per project plan	Drainage & Flood Risk Teams	Work managed separately through the Drainage & Flood Risk Teams and reported annually via the Improving Places Selected Committee.
Climate adaptation	Continue to develop the Council's response to climate change impact alongside other local authorities participating in the YHCC's Adaptation Work programme. Include a plan for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness.	As per project milestones	Climate Change Manager & Service Leads	Input from Service managers will be required when incorporating service level risks, challenges and opportunities into the Strategy to ensure effectiveness.
ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE				
PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIONS 2024/25	TARGET DATE	SERVICE AREA	COMMENTS
Circular Economy	Encourage circular skills development through Makers spaces and other events e.g., sewing and DIY.	Ongoing	Libraries Service	

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan 2024/25

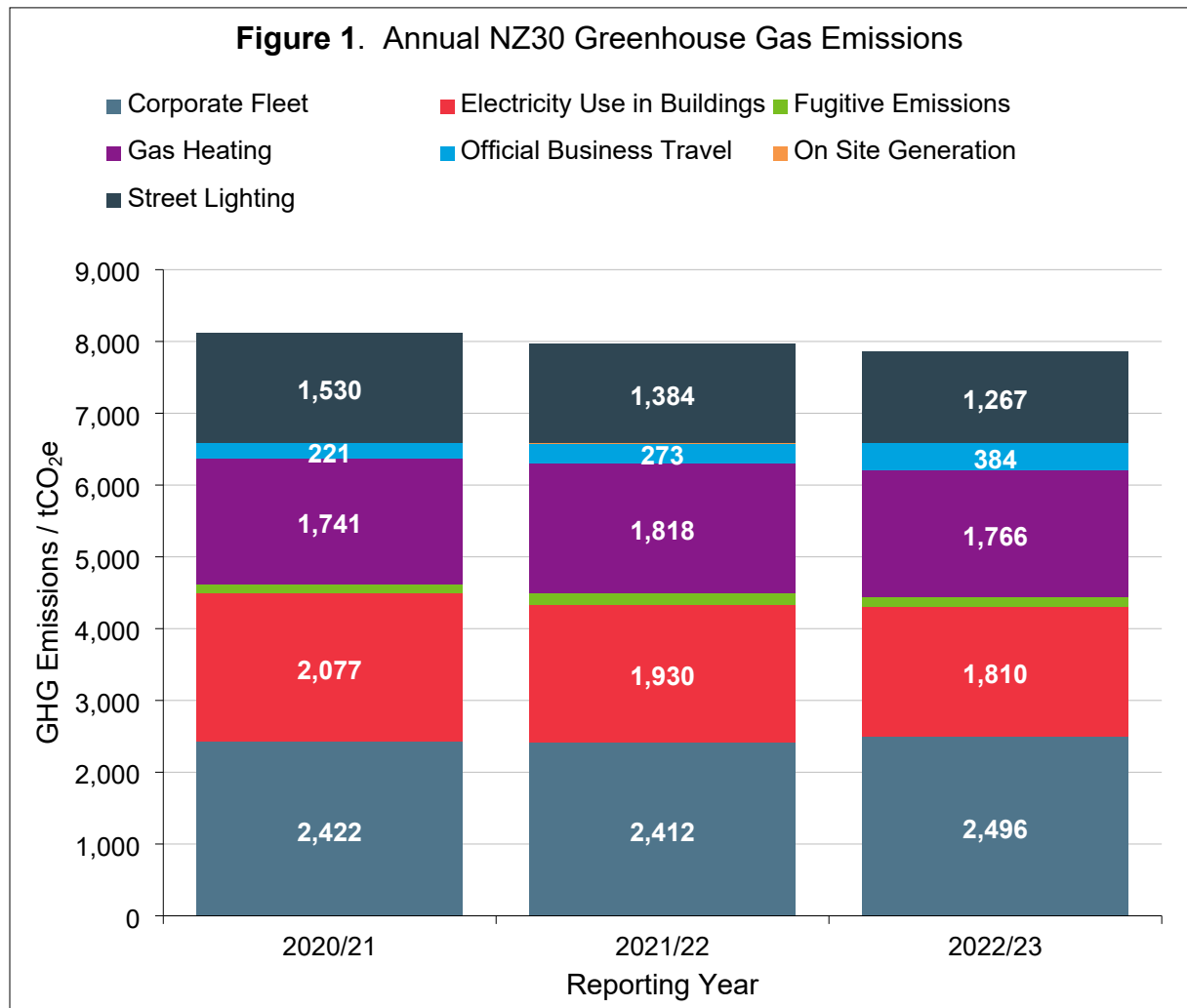
Culture, Sport & Tourism	<p>Include environmental themes in programming linking to Rotherham's natural heritage and landscape, environmental change and its people and artefacts.</p> <p>Consider climate change, single use plastic reduction and nature recovery as themes when developing future exhibitions, shows, engagement programmes and events.</p>	Ongoing	Culture, Sport & Tourism	
Children's Capital of Culture	Develop options for events, performances and activities for climate change as part of Childrens Capital of Culture.	Dec 2025	Children's Capital of Culture Team	
Events	Increase awareness of Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Emergency at Events including Rotherham Show	March 2025	Events Team	
	Capture the carbon footprint of events through tailored evaluation platforms and work towards off-setting once a baseline has been achieved.	March 2025	Events Team	
	Include sustainable transport information as standard when advertising events.	March 2025	Events Team	

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Appendix 3: Carbon Emissions Data Summary

1. Greenhouse Gas Emissions within Scope of the Council's Net Zero 2030 (NZ30) Climate Change Target

1.1

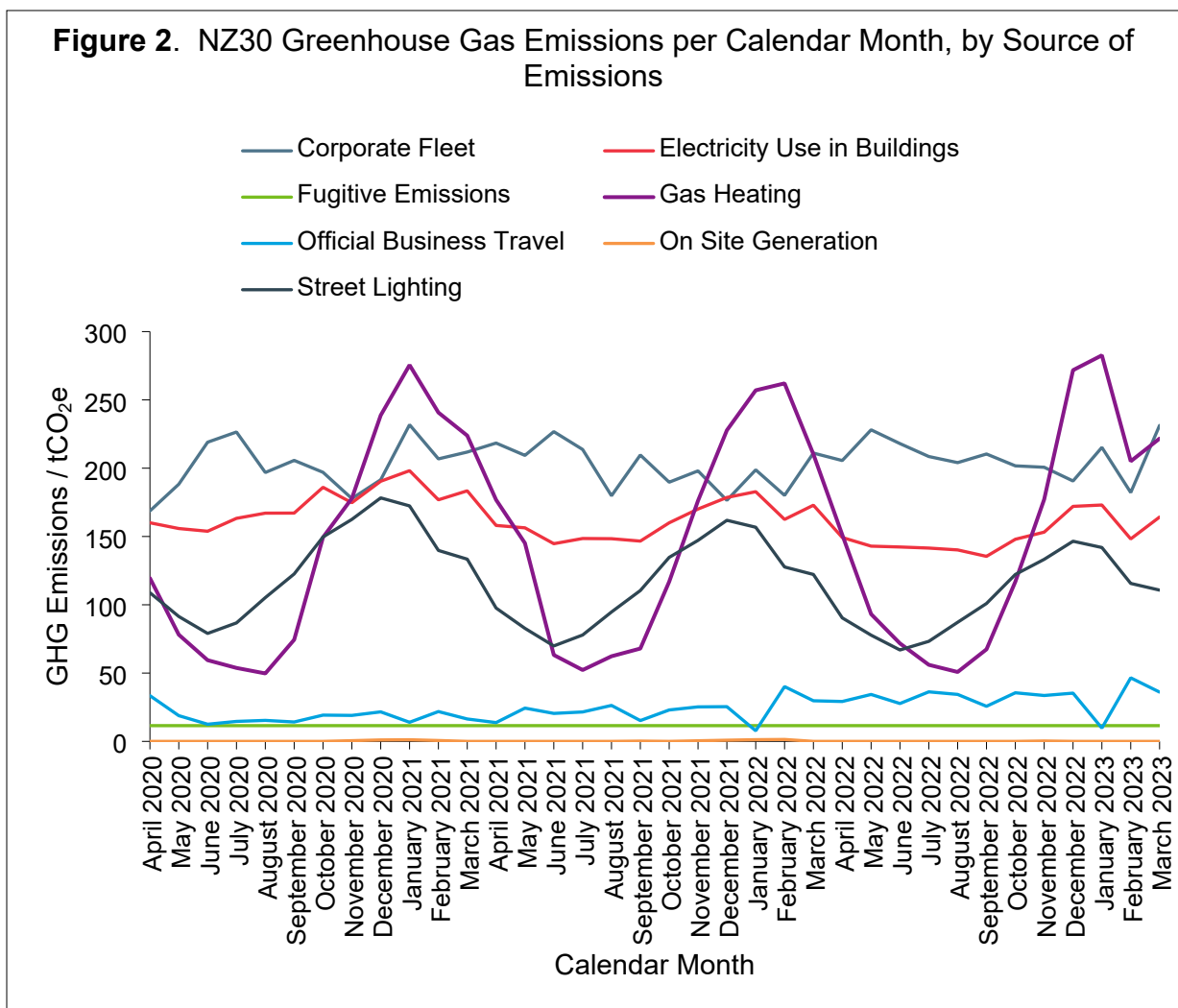


- 1.2** Greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's Net Zero 2030 (NZ30) climate change target have decreased year on year, over the last three reporting years. Total NZ30 emissions decreased 1.9% from 8,121 tCO₂e in 2020/21, to 7,970 tCO₂e in 2021/22. Emissions decreased by another 1.4% the following year, to 7,862 tCO₂e.
- 1.3** Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) are used to express other greenhouse gases, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases, as an equivalent amount of CO₂. For example, methane has a global warming potential 28 times greater than CO₂, over 100 years: over the same period, 1 tonne of methane is equivalent to 28 tonnes of CO₂ i.e., 28 tCO₂e.
- 1.4** Annual NZ30 greenhouse gas emissions are estimated from conversion factors published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, BEIS), applied to energy use and other data held by the Council.

- 1.5** Organisations which do not report emissions over the calendar year are advised to apply conversion factors according to the year which comprises the majority of their reporting period. Conversion factors from 2020 should be applied to 2020/21 and so on, for an April to March reporting period.

- *Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors 2022*. BEIS (September 2022).
- *Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors 2021*. BEIS (January 2022).
- *Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors 2020*. BEIS (July 2020).

1.6



- 1.7** 'Scope 1' and 'scope 2' greenhouse gas emissions, plus emissions from official business travel, comprise the scope boundary for central government bodies' mandatory emissions accounting. Scope 1 emissions are from sources directly owned or controlled by an organisation; scope 2 emissions are from purchased electricity, heat, steam or cooling; whereas emissions from business travel are an example of scope 3 emissions, considered in more detail below.

- *Sustainability Reporting Guidance: 2023-24*. HM Treasury (July 2023)

- 1.8** Applying the same scope boundary as for central government departments' mandatory emissions accounting, the Council's NZ30 emissions are:

- Emissions from corporate fleet vehicles, back-up diesel generators and mains gas heating.

- Fugitive emissions of fluorinated gases from refrigeration, air conditioning units and heat pumps.
- Emissions from purchased electricity used for street lighting and Council buildings.
- Emissions from 'grey fleet' vehicles and other business travel.

1.9 *Corporate Fleet Vehicles*

Corporate fleet vehicles accounted for 32% of NZ30 emissions in 2022/23, the single greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's climate change target.

Since 2020/21, gas oil or 'red diesel' has been phased out from the Council's fuelled sites. Compared with conventional or 'white' diesel, gas oil is taxed at a lower rate, through a rebate on fuel duty. From April 2022, most sectors no longer qualify for the rebate i.e., may no longer use gas oil. Gas oil has a greater greenhouse gas conversion factor than conventional diesel, hence a baseline reduction in corporate fleet emissions of 1.3%, over the last three years.

A change in methodology has obscured this trend. Previous Climate Change Annual Reports have reported emissions from gas oil-fuelled corporate fleet vehicles as emissions from petrol vehicles, in error. This error is corrected in the 2022/23 reporting year, with a commensurate increase in emissions from corporate fleet vehicles, which now include data from fuel cards used to reimburse the drivers of petrol-fuelled corporate fleet vehicles, for the first time.

- *Reform of Red Diesel and Other Rebated Fuels Entitlement.* HM Revenue & Customs (November 2021)

1.10 *Electricity Use in Council Buildings*

Since 2020/21, electricity use in Council buildings has increased ca. 5%, to 9.370 million kWh in 2022/23. This increase may be due to increasing building occupancy: between April 2020 and March 2023, average occupancy at Riverside House increased from 6% to 24%, as working patterns continued to change in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding increased demand for electricity in Council buildings, decarbonisation of the UK electricity system caused emissions to fall 11.6%, over the same period.

1.11 *Gas Heating*

Emissions from mains gas heating, which comprised 22% of NZ30 emissions in 2022/23, were broadly unchanged since 2020/21. Notwithstanding a relative peak in emissions during 2021/22, emissions from heating were 1.4% greater in 2022/23, than in 2020/21. These changes are most likely driven by annual, seasonal variability in external temperatures: 2022 was considerably warmer than 2021.

- *2022 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Provisional Figures.* Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (March 2023)

1.12 *Street Lighting*

Energy demand for streetlighting was essentially unchanged over the last three reporting years, from 6.562 million kWh in 2020/21 to 6.550 million kWh in 2022/23. However, increasing renewable generating capacity and the continuing phase out of coal fired power generation has reduced the greenhouse gas conversion factor for UK electricity from 0.23 kgCO₂e per kWh in 2020/2021, to 0.19 kgCO₂e per kWh in 2022/23: causing

greenhouse gas emissions from streetlighting to fall 17.2%, over the same period.

1.13 Business Travel

In 2022/23, greenhouse gas emissions from 'grey fleet' vehicles were 381 tCO₂e, up from 221 tCO₂e in 2020/21: a 74% increase. Mileage claims have increased, as working patterns have continued to change since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emissions from accommodation and other modes of business travel were estimated to be 3.1 tCO₂e in the 2022/23 reporting year, the first time these emissions have been included in the Council's NZ30 emissions inventory.

1.14 Fugitive Emissions

Fugitive greenhouse gas emissions are produced unintentionally e.g., by accidental leaks from air conditioning equipment. Since many refrigerants have global warming potentials thousands of times greater than carbon dioxide, even trace amounts released by accident can have a significant environmental impact. Following a 'screening method, standard conversion factors are applied to an inventory of air conditioning units to produce an estimate of 138 tCO₂e per annum.

- *Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Guidance.* HM Government (March 2019)

1.15 On Site Generation (Back-up Diesel Generators)

Emissions from back-up diesel generators were 3.4 and 4.1 tCO₂e in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 reporting years, respectively. In 2022/23, emissions fell 93.14% to 0.3 tCO₂e, as the Council ended its participation in STOR (short-term operating reserve). As a member of the scheme, the Council would export power from its back up diesel generators during periods of exceptionally high electricity demand, to help balance capacity in the UK grid. Back-up diesel generators are now used only to ensure business continuity, in case of interrupted electricity supply.

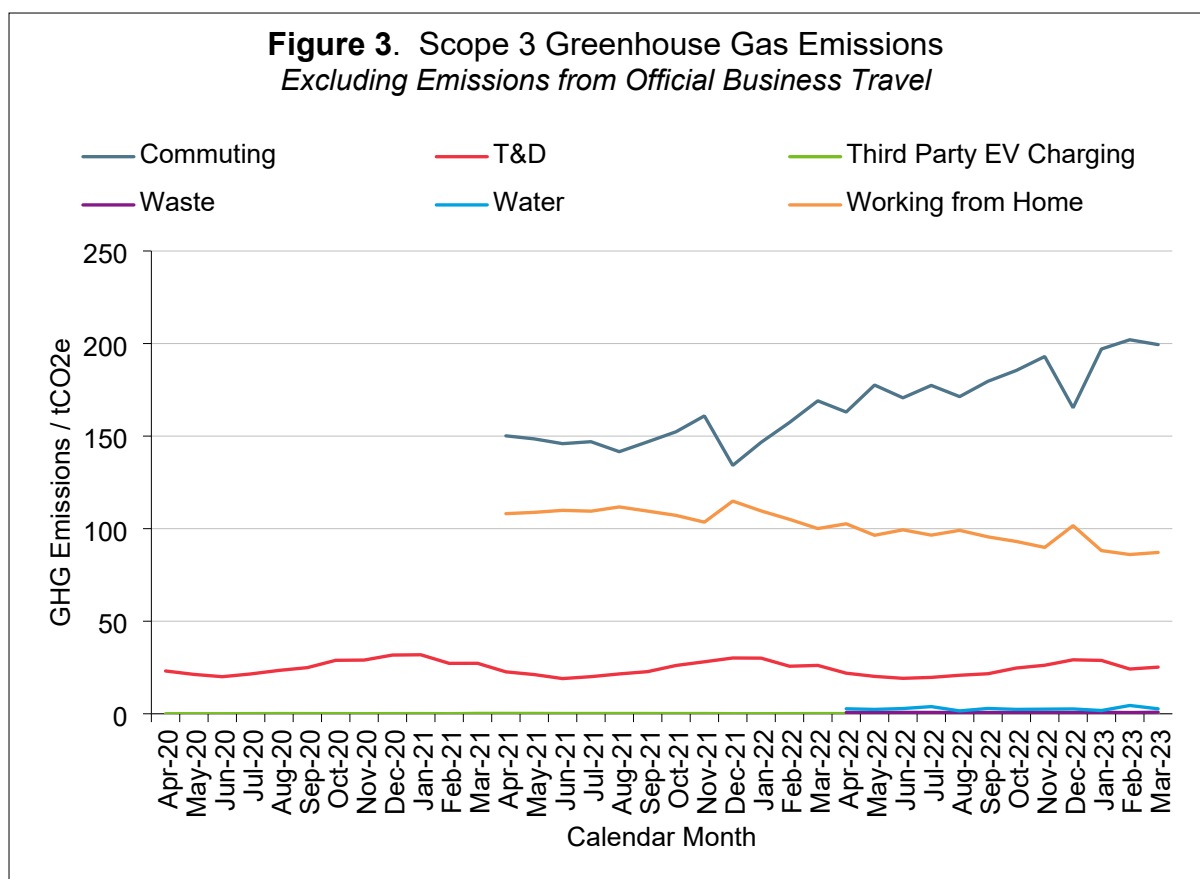
- *Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR).* National Grid (January 2018)

2. Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 2.1** Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions are from sources not directly owned or controlled by an organisation: they include all emissions which are a consequence of the organisation's activity, but which are not caused by its primary energy use, purchased energy or fugitive emissions.
- 2.2** Official business travel is a source of scope 3 emissions. 'Grey fleet' mileage is incurred by Council officers travelling in their own vehicles i.e., vehicles which the Council does not own or control. By reimbursing staff mileage claims; by setting a policy on travel expenses; and by creating a need to travel in the first instance, the Council shares a high degree of responsibility for these emissions, which nonetheless depend on the travel choices and driving practices of its employees.
- 2.3** Such a degree of responsibility for scope 3 emissions implies a corresponding degree of influence or control. As discussed below (**4.9**), the Council directly controls a small percentage of greenhouse gas emissions, within its local authority boundary. Scope 3 emissions are an important 'lever of influence' which the Council must use if it is to achieve its climate change target, for greenhouse gas emissions across the Borough of Rotherham to be 'Net Zero' by 2040.
- 2.4** Scope 3 emissions accounting is an emerging field: in figure 3 above, data series' different start dates reflect the Council's increasing capacity to estimate scope 3 emissions, over the last three years. In principle, scope 3 should include all emissions from work done on the Council's behalf, by its suppliers and contractors; emissions which are 'embodied' in the Council's assets; and emissions associated with the use of Council services.

- *Climate Change: Reporting Guidance for Local Authorities. LGA*
- *Sustainability Reporting Guidance: 2023-24. HM Treasury (July 2023)*

2.5



- 2.6** Transmission and distribution, abbreviated “T&D” above: greenhouse gas emissions from the Council’s purchased electricity, accounting for losses in the electricity system.
- 2.7** Previous climate change annual reports have accounted for emissions from purchased electricity used to charge electric vehicles (EV’s) as scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions. Albeit this is appropriate for EV charging of corporate fleet vehicles, the majority of EV charging points installed by the Council are intended for public use. Moreover, only four EV charging points with their own metered electricity supply were being reported separately from electricity use in Council buildings. Now, transactions data have been used to estimate emissions from ‘third party’ EV charging i.e., from public use of the Council’s EV charging infrastructure.
- 2.8** Since the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected working patterns and led many organisations to adopt hybrid working policies, commuting and home working have been included within scope 3 emissions accounting. Emissions estimates published in a previous climate change annual report were based on a 2021 survey of staff working patterns and travel choices, before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. In the series above, these estimates are supplemented by building occupancy surveys and access data, used as proxy indicators for number of days worked by staff, from home or on site.
- 2.9** Water is pumped and pressurised, using energy and causing greenhouse gas emissions as it is supplied to the end-user. Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are all by-products from the treatment of waste water, before it is returned to the environment. Intercepting rainwater and ‘grey’ water recycling are means to cut greenhouse gas emissions arising from water use.
- *Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Water Supply and Demand Management Options.* Environment Agency (July 2008)
 - *A Critical Decade: Removing Greenhouse Gases from Wastewater Treatment.* Water UK (November 2021)
- 2.10** Emissions from the Council’s own waste are estimated from internal Business Waste customers’ waste collection capacities, supplemented by weight analysis. Paper and card recycling collections were first offered to existing, internal customers in October 2023. Before then, all collections were of residual waste, processed at the BDR Waste Treatment Facility. The carbon intensity of waste treatment at the BDR Waste Treatment Facility is published in the BDR Waste Partnership annual report.
- *Annual Service and Environmental Report: Financial Year 2022/23.* BDR Waste Partnership

2.11

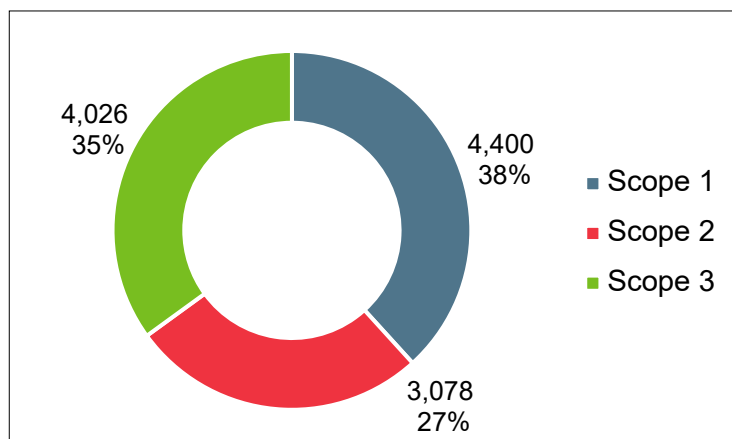


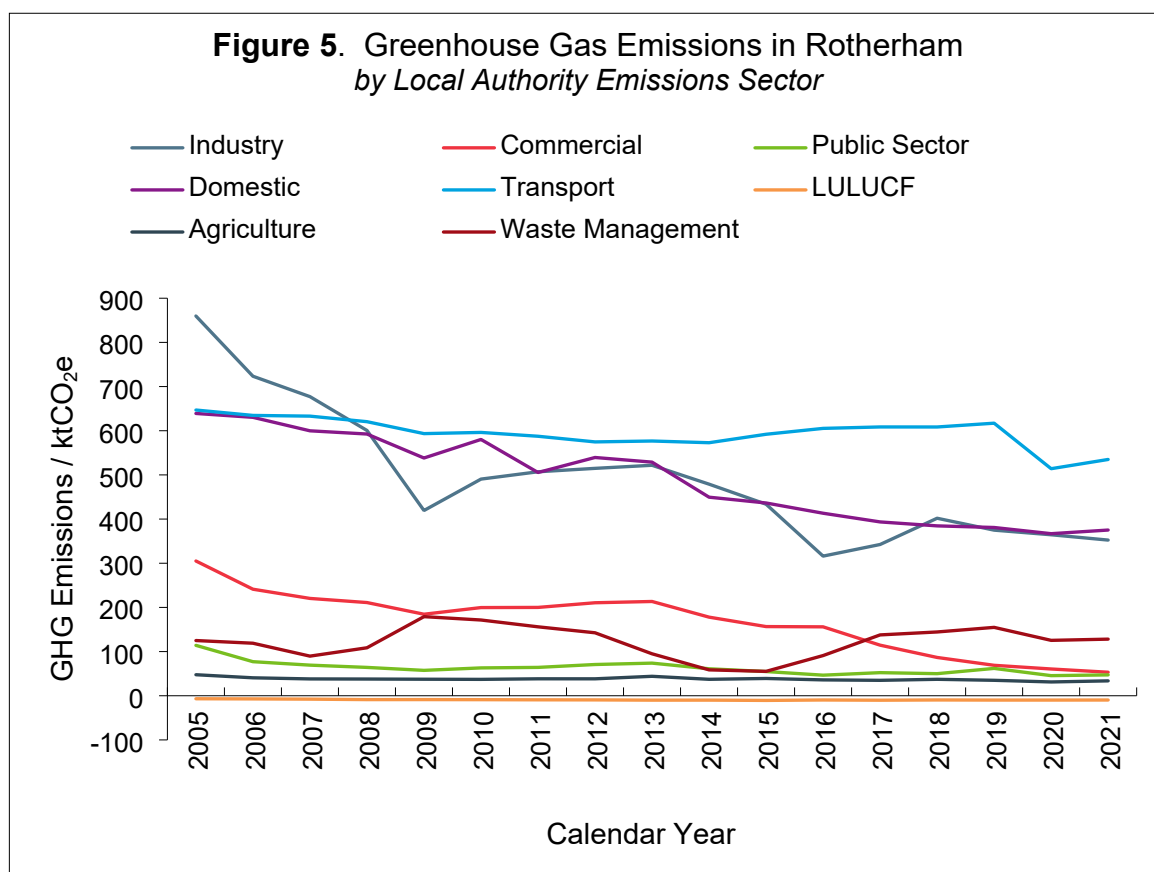
Figure 4. Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scope

1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

All greenhouse gas emissions, irrespective of NZ30 scope boundary, totalled 11,503 tCO₂e in the 2022/23 reporting year. The Council is still increasing its capacity to monitor and report scope 3 emissions.

3. Net Zero 2040: Greenhouse Gas Emissions across the Borough of Rotherham

3.1



3.2 Local authority greenhouse gas emissions statistics for the 2021 calendar year and revised statistics for calendar years 2005-2020 were published in June 2023, by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Fluorinated gases, emissions from aviation and shipping, military transport and trade exports were not allocated to local authority areas; in 2021, these sectors accounted for 6.2% of total UK emissions.

- *UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions National Statistics: 2005-2021. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (June 2023)*

3.3 In Rotherham as elsewhere, greenhouse gas emissions were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Transport is the greatest source of emissions in Rotherham. Transport emissions had been unchanged by more than a few percentage points, for a period of fifteen years, when in 2020 the introduction of lockdowns and other travel restrictions caused them to fall 16.7%, in just one year. As restrictions were eased during 2021, emissions from transport increased; though not to the same level as in 2019, the last full calendar year before the pandemic.

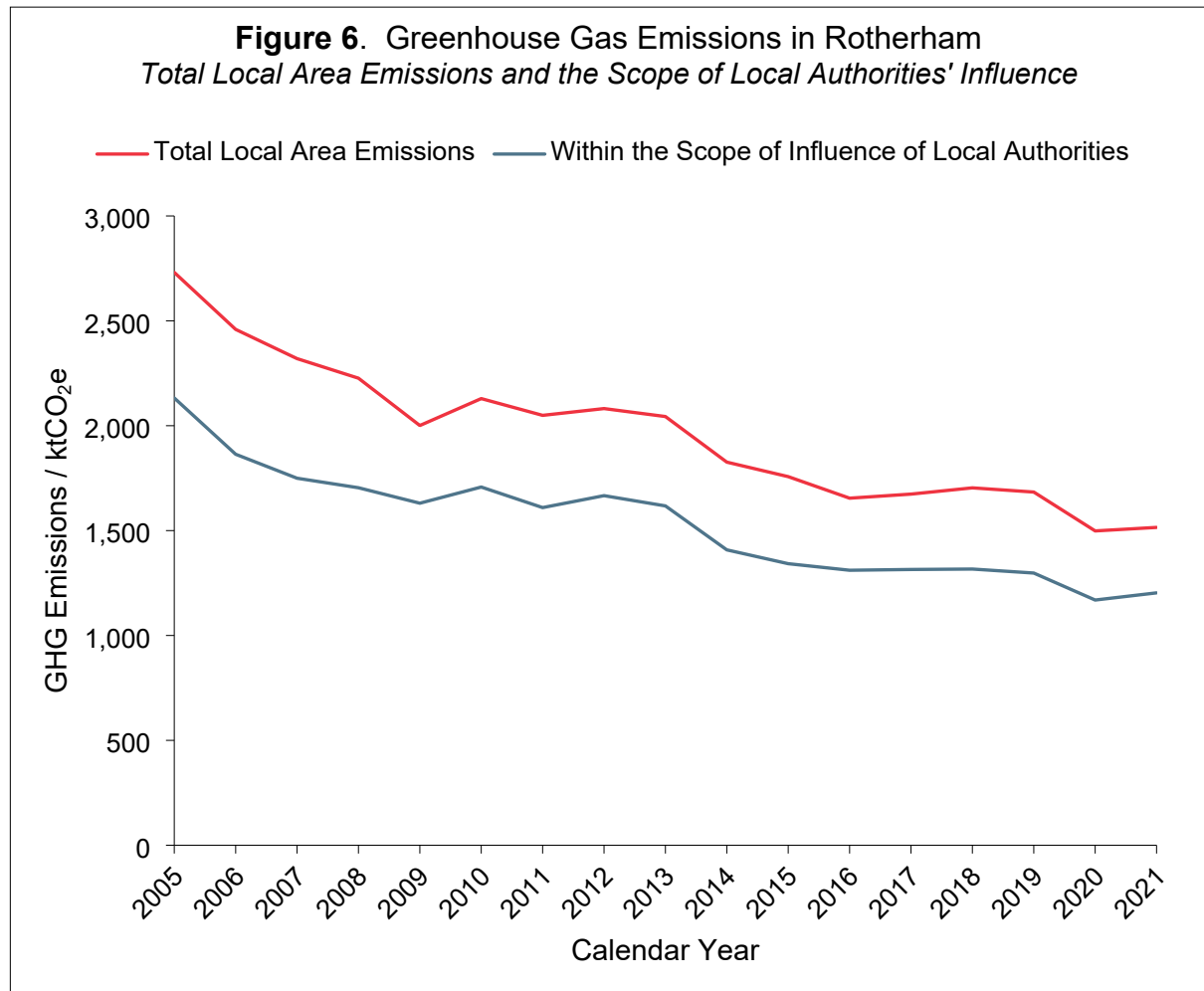
3.4 Longer-term changes in greenhouse gas emissions have been driven by decarbonisation of the UK electricity system, through increased renewable generating capacity and the continuing phase out of coal from the fuel mix used to generate electricity. For the purpose of local authority emissions statistics, emissions related to energy use are allocated by end-user. As such, this national programme of grid decarbonisation translates directly into decreased emissions from electricity use in industry, commercial, public and domestic sectors, in the Borough of Rotherham.

3.5 Agriculture sector emissions, including emissions from livestock and soils, accounted for 2% of local area emissions in Rotherham, in 2021. In the same year, 53.7% of land in the Borough was in agricultural use.

- *Land Use in England, 2021*. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (October 2022)

3.6 Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) made a small, net negative contribution to local area emissions in Rotherham of -9.7 ktCO₂e in 2021 i.e., of a magnitude less than 1% of gross emissions in the Borough, in the same year.

3.7



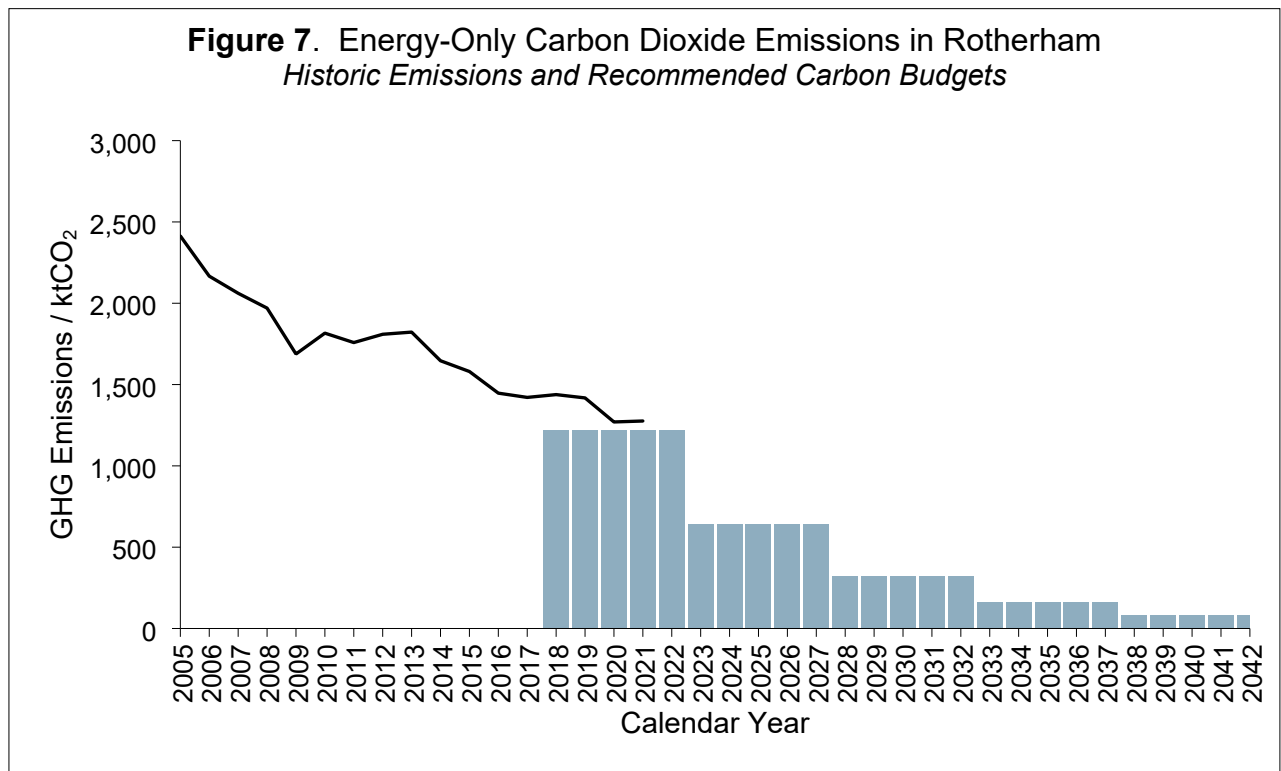
3.8 Greenhouse gas emissions from large industrial installations, railways and motorways, livestock, soils and the LULUCF sector are considered outside the scope of local authorities' influence. Applying the same scope boundary to emissions in Rotherham, in 2021 the Council could influence greenhouse gas emissions of 1,203 ktCO₂e, 78% of gross local area emissions.

3.9 In 2021, the Council's NZ30 greenhouse gas emissions were 8,082 tCO₂e. Compared with gross local area emissions of 1,540 ktCO₂e, this implies the Council had direct control over 0.52% of all greenhouse gas emissions produced in Rotherham that year.

3.10 In a 2020 report, the Climate Change Committee proposed that local authorities could influence up to a third of emissions in their respective areas. Unlike the 78% figure quoted above, this estimate accounts for local authorities' varying degrees of influence: from direct control, through procurement and commissioning, to place-shaping responsibilities, wider communication and engagement.

- *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*. Climate Change Committee (December 2020)

3.11



3.12 Local area, energy-only carbon dioxide emissions are estimated from a sub-set of UK local authority greenhouse gas emissions statistics. Emissions from the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector; waste management, livestock and soils; and ‘other’ domestic and industrial emissions sources are excluded from local area emissions, to indicate energy-only CO₂ emissions.

- *UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions National Statistics: 2005-2021.* Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (June 2023)

3.13 Five-year carbon budgets for Rotherham were recommended as part of a series of “Tyndall Carbon Budget Reports,” published by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and informing the Council’s decision to adopt ‘Net Zero’ climate change targets.

- *Responding to the Climate Emergency.* RMBC (March 2020)

3.14 UK carbon dioxide emissions are provisionally estimated to have decreased 2.4% in 2022, compared with 2021. If the same applies to energy-only CO₂ emissions in the Borough of Rotherham as the rest of the UK economy, then the recommended carbon budget for 2018 – 2022 will have been exceeded by ca. 550,000 tCO₂ (9%).

- *2022 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Provisional Figures.* Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (March 2023)

3.15 Recommended carbon budgets are considered the maximum cumulative CO₂ emissions consistent with a local authority area’s “fair contribution to the Paris Climate Agreement,” which commits signatories to pursue efforts to limit global average temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Exceeding the carbon budget of one five-year period implies steeper cuts in future if a local area is to uphold its “fair contribution.”

- *Setting Climate Commitments for Rotherham: Quantifying the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for Rotherham.* Kuriakose et al. (December 2023)

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Appendix 4 Single Use Plastic Action Plan 2023/24

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council recognises that single use plastics (SUP) are a threat to our natural environment and reducing such plastics are a key factor in reducing the Council's impact on the environment. This work is being aligned with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan as a reduction in single use plastics will also reduce the Council's indirect (scope 3) carbon emissions.

The Council has committed to working towards the following principles:

- Ending the provision of unnecessary single use plastics across council buildings and events
- Providing a supportive internal policy environment to allow appropriate purchasing with reducing single use plastics in mind
- Using recycled or re-usable plastics where complete removal of plastic is currently unfeasible
- Developing internal and external awareness campaigns to reduce the use of single use plastics across the Borough
- Supporting our residents to take action
- Working in partnership with our supply chain and partners to develop innovative solutions to reduce single use plastic use.

Key progress 2023/24

- Council Officers have undertaken an audit of all single use plastic within all 68 Council buildings and the majority of Council services. A finalised list of remaining items, some of which are being run down is included below.
- A single use plastic reduction plan has been identified following this audit which details specific areas for reduction and where items may be considered necessary until a suitable solution is available.
- Engagement of stallholders at the Rotherham show has been undertaken to establish a baseline for reducing single use plastics at events.
- Work has been undertaken throughout 2023 via the BDR Community Education and Liaison Officer, the Love Where You Live programs and internally to increase community awareness of various topics relating to single use plastics, recycling and reducing waste.

COUNCIL USE					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date	Progress Update	Status
Understand the Council's SUP provision.	Extend audit of buildings to include Council services and analyse results to identify specific departmental targets for reduction and removal.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads	August 2023	This has been completed by the Climate Change Service Leads across the Council and confirmed via internal survey. This list, included below will be used to focus action on SUP moving forward.	
Remove use of any unnecessary SUP where feasible from Council use.	Set targets and monitoring for immediate removal or run down of specific unnecessary single use plastics where feasible alternatives exist. There may be situations where it is not yet feasible to remove some types of SUP e.g., PPE. These should be documented, justified and periodically reviewed.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads	March 2024	A list of items and their status within the Council has been collated. This includes items for replacement and/or run down where possible as well as items deemed essential with no current alternative and those where more research is required. This next stage will be undertaken in the coming year.	
Work towards Council events being SUP free.	Work with supply chain to identify suitable options for replacement and calculate impact. Options available for delivery of this target may be limited by suppliers available and their supply chains.	Climate Change Team/ Events	March 2024	The Council had intended to use the Rotherham Show as a showcase event, however this became unfeasible as many catering outlets were running down stocks of previously purchased SUP food containers in light of the imminent ban which came into force October 2023. Events teams worked to share information and encourage stall holders to reduce their impact and further work is planned in 2024/25. Improvements were also made to waste management to encourage better recycling on site.	
Council contracts are free from unnecessary SUP provision	Work with individual services and suppliers to review and implement changes to new contracts where SUPs are provided e.g. vending machines through Facilities Management.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads / Procurement support	March 2024	Products currently included within the vending machines at Riverside House have been reviewed and discussed with suppliers. Where there are costs involved a business case will be put forward in 24/25 detailing full implications of the changes recommended.	

	Procurement support may be required for advice on altering existing contract terms and conditions and on the best way to improve moving forward.			Further work on incorporating single use plastic measures into future procurements is required.	
	Ensure single use plastic plates, trays, bowls* are no longer procured through Council contracts by October 2023. *Excluding pre-packaged food items at present.	Climate Change Team/ Facilities	October 2023	This has now been implemented in line with recent legislation.	
POLICY					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Council policies complement our ambition to eliminate SUPs	Integrate SUP into Climate Change Plan, ensuring that SUP objectives are embedded into other relevant policies and plans.	Climate Change Team	August 2023	A study has been implemented using Clifton Park museum as a pilot. This includes decarbonisation activity, engagement, and possible single use plastic reductions identified as part of a site visit. This template will be used by the climate team moving forward to inform services of possible actions to reduce their carbon footprint and tackle single use plastics.	
	Develop and allow for consultation on a Single Use Plastic Policy to enhance measures already recommended within the Council's Social Value Policy.	Climate Change Team/ Policy	March 2024	A Single Use Plastics protocol has been developed and has been consulted on internally. This is aimed at commissioning officers and encourages early thought about the types of products the Council buys, whether there is a need for these items in the first place and if so what the most environmentally friendly solution is for use. It also raises awareness and sets out the Council's commitment to reducing single use plastics.	

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Ensure staff understand the impact of SUPs	Develop an e-learning module / toolbox talk for all staff about the impact of SUPs and how to minimise their usage.	Climate Change Team	December 2023	An e-learning module and toolbox talk for those without PC access has been created and will be accessible on the Council's e-learning platform in March 2024.	
Encourage staff to make informed decisions about what they use, and what they bring to their working environment	Create an internal Single Use Plastic Campaign to support staff to reduce their SUP use at home and at work.	Climate Change Team/ Communications	March 2024	An intranet page has been developed and shared via corporate communications which provides hints and tips to reducing single use plastic in the home and the workplace and how best to deal with waste products. This activity will continue as part of business as usual moving forward.	
	Keep staff informed of best practice and initiatives through internal communications, e.g., by taking part in WRAP Recycling campaigns.	Climate Change Team/ Communications	March 2024	The Council celebrated WRAP's annual Recycle Now week and shared internally and externally information about single use plastics and those items which are regularly not well recycled. Communications relating to single use plastic campaigns will be incorporated into the annual climate change engagement calendar moving forward.	
ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR COMMUNITIES					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Promote awareness of sustainable waste management practices	Continue to work with schools to provide educational workshops relating to waste and SUPs through linking into existing programmes	Waste via BDR Partnership	Ongoing	The council has worked with a number of schools through the Love Where you Live initiative and BDR waste partnership throughout the year to undertake litter picking activities and share recycling messages. BDR provision through the Community Education Liaison Officer has reduced throughout 2023 due to resourcing but a number of engagement activities have still been undertaken.	
	Encourage schools to commit to reductions in	CYPS	March 2024	Materials have been shared via the ROSIS Circular which shares information about events and materials	

	single use plastic through awareness raising and signposting to appropriate schemes e.g., 'Plastic Free Schools' or 'Eco-schools'.			and through our neighbourhoods team with specific community groups. This includes the Recycle Now week and the associated activities created for schools on this topic. This activity will be incorporated into business as usual moving forward.	
Encourage communities to develop Single Use Plastic-free initiatives	Continue to promote community initiatives such as Love Where You Live.	Neighbourhoods / Environmental Services	Ongoing	Love Where you Live is now active on several social media accounts including Facebook and X. This serves to increase awareness of the activities and value of the hardworking volunteers but also to raise awareness of environmental issues and community events. As part of the annual Big Spring Clean Week in 2023, 120 litter picks took place, picking 3738 bags over three weeks producing approximately 41 tonnes of waste. Regular litter picks are ongoing throughout the year supported by Council officers and approximately 1600 volunteers from across the Borough. This programme, which engages schools, families and businesses throughout Rotherham will continue into 2024/25.	
	Continue to utilise the BDR Community Education Liaison Officer (CELO) initiative.	Waste via BDR Partnership	Ongoing	Communications resulting from this partnership are run through the Love Food Hate Waste social media accounts and include messages such as reducing waste, preventing contamination, encouraging composting and links to seasonal hints and tips.	
	Develop a programme of works to encourage local businesses to sign up to go plastic free, ready for roll out in 2024/2025.	Climate Change Team	March 2024	A single use plastic campaign which encourages businesses to think about their use of single use plastic and reduce them where necessary is being developed for roll out in 2024/25. In line with the Rotherham Together Partnership Climate And Nature Charter, consultation with local businesses around single use plastics was undertaken which indicated that guidance and ideas for replacement products and a shared supply chain approach would be beneficial.	

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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: Climate Emergency Annual Report

Directorate:
Finance & Customer Services

Service area:
Asset Management

Lead person:
Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

Contact:
Louise.preston@rotherham.gov.uk

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☐

Service / Function

☒

Other

If other, please specify: Annual report

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

Annual report covering activity to tackle climate change across the Council and forward plan for 2024/25.

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.

Appendix 5

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

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		X
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		
This consists of an annual report covering a progress report and next steps for the period of 2024/25. All projects which may impact on service users such as EV charging installations are assessed (and reported upon) separately.		

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

Appendix 5

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
Louise Preston	Climate Change Manager	03/01/2024

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	03/01/2024
Report title and date	Climate Emergency Annual Report
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	12 th Feb 2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	03/01/2024

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Appendix 6

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?	Decreases emissions	Buildings which accounted for nearly half of annual gas use in 2022/23 are within scope of the Council's 3B and 3C Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding bids. Replacing gas boilers with e.g., a heat network connection or air source heat pumps may cut annual greenhouse gas emissions from heating by 36%, by 2030. In 2022/23, 36% of emissions from gas heating was equal to 634 tCO ₂ e.			Greenhouse gas emissions from heating are monitored for all buildings within the Council's energy procurement portfolio. Schools, academies and gas-fuelled district heat networks are outside the scope of NZ30 emissions; emissions from other buildings are reported annually.
Emissions from transport?	Decreases emissions	Of 119 corporate fleet vehicles to be procured through the Council's Fleet Replacement Plan, 64 will be battery electric vehicles. These vehicles' operational carbon impact may be 70% less than petrol or	Installing cycleways and prioritising buses are intended to facilitate a mode shift from driving to active travel and public transport. However, people's travel choices are constrained by other factors: longer		Emissions from corporate fleet vehicles are within scope of the Council's NZ30 accounting: NZ30 emissions are published annually.

		<p>diesel equivalents', by 2030.</p> <p>Greenhouse gas conversion factors published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero set carbon dioxide emissions from biofuels to zero, to account for CO₂ absorbed by fast-growing biofuel sources. Methane and nitrous oxide are not absorbed in the same way and organisations must still estimate tailpipe CO₂ emissions from biofuels, outside the scope of their emissions accounting. However, if HVO biodiesel had replaced conventional diesel across the Council's corporate fleet in 2022/23, then total NZ30 emissions might have been cut by 29%.</p>	<p>journeys are harder to make on foot or bicycle. Car journeys between 0 and 5 km (0 - 3.1 miles) are responsible for 5% of all greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the Borough of Rotherham.</p> <p>Similarly, the Council's investment in EV charging infrastructure is intended to facilitate a transition to battery electric vehicles. In the 2022/23 reporting year, EV charging on the Council's public network saved 110 - 150 kg CO₂e, compared with the same mileage in petrol or diesel cars.</p>		<p>Emissions from travel in Rotherham are monitored by the Department for Net Zero and Energy Security. A South Yorkshire regional transport model (SCRTM1) provides greater local resolution, but the carbon impact of the Council's cycleways and bus priority schemes are too small to be detected in these statistics.</p> <p>Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use in the Council's EV charging network are monitored and reported as scope 3 emissions.</p>
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	Decreases emissions	<p>Paper and card recycling has been introduced for existing business waste customers, including internal customers such as Council offices. Separate collections of</p>	<p>In 2022/23, kerbside collections of Rotherham households' paper and card (PC) and dry mixed recycling (DMR) were 14.5% and 19.2% contaminated by weight (annual mean</p>		<p>Scope 3 emissions from the Council's own waste are estimated from weight analysis of Business Waste collections, pro-rated by internal customers'</p>

		<p>'dry mixed recycling' will be introduced in 2024/25, as per the proposed Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix 2). Generic greenhouse gas conversion factors for recycling are 21.28 kgCO₂e per tonne of material, compared with 23.91 kgCO₂e per tonne of contract waste processed at the BDR Waste Treatment Facility. Recycling material recovered from residual waste at the BDR Waste Treatment Facility may be more contaminated than recycling material which has been collected separately, which is not reflected in the conversion factors above.</p>	<p>average). DMR contamination includes fines which are by-produced in the recycling process: contamination due to households' recycling choices may be closer to 11.8%. In the same year, 13.2% by weight of residual waste collected from households in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham could have been recycled, in local authorities' respective kerbside recycling collections. Recycling material is recovered from residual waste at the BDR Waste Treatment Facility, but material which has not been sorted at the kerbside is more likely to be contaminated. If a communications campaign and contamination policy review help households to 'put the right thing in the right bin' then the 2024/25 Climate Change Action Plan could have a positive carbon impact, by increasing the amount of</p>		<p>contracted waste capacities.</p> <p>Contamination of household kerbside recycling collections is monitored internally by Waste Management. Composition of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham households' waste is reported annually, in the BDR Annual Report.</p> <p>Carbon emissions which might be avoided through decreased contamination of households' kerbside recycling material are mainly outside the Council's NZ40 emissions scope boundary. In local authority greenhouse gas emissions statistics published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, emissions from energy use are allocated by end-user, but other emissions are allocated according to where they are produced. Avoided carbon emissions from</p>
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			valid material being recycled in Rotherham. Recycling avoids greenhouse gas emissions from primary material extraction and manufacturing: a 10% cut in contamination (equivalent to 296 tonnes of waste, over P&C and DMR recycling streams) matched by an additional 296 tonnes of valid material being recycled could avoid 100 tCO ₂ e.		primary material extraction and manufacturing will mainly affect emissions in other local authority areas and overseas.
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	Decreases emissions		Improving the energy performance of Council-owned homes, to at least EPC band C by 2030, may cut greenhouse gas emissions from domestic energy use in Rotherham. Retrofit works completed at the Lanes, East Dene cut annual greenhouse gas emissions by 1.51 tCO ₂ e mean average per property, or 36.65%. At the 2021 Census, 16.7% of all households living in Rotherham rented from the Council.		<p>Council-owned homes are monitored after the completion of retrofit works, to measure changes in their energy performance and estimated carbon savings. Works have been completed at 130 and 217 properties, in Maltby and East Dene respectively.</p> <p>Emissions from domestic energy use are within scope of local area emissions statistics published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, however the number of</p>

			Funding to improve homes' energy performance in the owner occupied and private rented sectors is available through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and the Council's Community Energy Support Scheme, for households which meet the eligibility criteria.		properties where retrofit works, ECO4 and CESS projects have yet been completed is small, in the context of the Borough's total housing supply.
Emissions from construction and/or development?	Unknown	<p>Multiple projects are outlined in the 2024/25 Climate Change Action Plan which may be described as construction or development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning a 1 MWp 'proof of concept' solar PV installation • Installing cycleways and prioritising public transport through other highways works • Adding to the Council's existing network of EV charging infrastructure • Building three zero carbon and ten 'net zero ready' homes 	Local area emissions do not explicitly account for embodied carbon emissions. Embodied carbon associated with construction materials e.g., energy use and process emissions from the manufacture of concrete, iron and steel are reported where those materials are produced. Unless the Council uses exclusively local materials, the substantial carbon impact of construction and development in Rotherham is likely to be recorded against other local authorities', or other countries' climate change targets.	As per the 2024/25 Climate Change Action Plan, research is needed to understand embodied carbon across the Council's assets and corporate estate, as well as in construction. The Climate Change Team has started to increase officers' and Members' awareness of the whole life carbon of buildings, by applying generic conversion factors in carbon impact assessments for redevelopment and regeneration projects. For more effective mitigation, learning from case studies should be applied earlier in project design, making the case	Emissions from construction works completed by the Council or its contractors should be within scope of the Council's emissions reporting, as defined by Local Partnerships' Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool, provided free of charge to local authorities by the Local Government Association (LGA). Albeit the Council has defined the scope boundary of its NZ30 climate change target to comprise scope 1 and scope 2 emissions plus business travel, the Climate Change Team continues to increase its

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further developing six priority flood alleviation schemes • Retrofitting Council-owned homes to EPC Band C • Decarbonising heating systems in Council buildings, under phases 3B and 3C of the PSDS <p>Despite being designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions compared with the Council's business as usual operations, each project will have an inherent impact, due to carbon 'embodied' in components and materials.</p>		to retain existing buildings and to avoid demolition wherever possible a core requirement of strategic outline and full business cases.	understanding and capacity to monitor scope 3 emissions: including those from construction and development.
Carbon capture (e.g., through trees)?	Net negative carbon impact (carbon sequestration)	Carbon sequestered by nearly 30,000 trees planted in woodland settings, to create 20 ha (hectares) of new woodland in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 planting seasons: 20 tCO ₂ e per annum, by 2030. Planting a total 45 ha of new woodland by 2031, as per the Council's <i>Tree Management</i>	As trees grow to maturity, the amount of carbon they capture each year increases, up to a maximum value 20 to 25 years since they were first planted. New woodland planted by the Council in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 planting seasons may sequester 200 tCO ₂ e per annum, by 2040. 45 ha of new woodland could	Tree planting can have an initial carbon impact e.g., by disturbing organic soils of from guards used to protect newly planted saplings. Mitigation is possible through appropriate site selection and choice of planting techniques. Tree guards have been identified as a source of single use plastic and replaced with a	Progress towards tree planting targets is reported annually to the Improving Places Select Commission. Conversion factors published by the Forestry Commission may be used to estimate carbon sequestration by newly planted woodland: a similar methodology was applied in an assessment of South

		<i>Protocol and Guidance</i> , may sequester up to 35 tCO ₂ e per annum by 2030. These 'negative emissions' may partially offset greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's NZ30 climate change target.	sequester up to 375 tCO ₂ e per annum by 2040, depending on which year an additional 25 ha is planted. 45 ha is equivalent to 1.37% of land presently in use as forestry or woodland, or 0.16% of total land area in the Borough of Rotherham.	biodegradable alternative, through the Council's SUP audit.	Yorkshire Natural Capital and Biodiversity.
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Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

As noted in the Climate Emergency Annual Report, biodiversity and nature recovery are intrinsically linked with climate change mitigation and adaptation. A 2021 South Yorkshire natural capital assessment highlights carbon storage and carbon sequestration as ecosystem services, which have special relevance to climate change. In Rotherham, existing woodland was estimated to sequester 27,000 tCO₂e each year. If appropriately managed and protected, woodland and other natural habitat may significantly offset any remaining carbon emissions, by 2040.

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

Activity outlined in the 2024/25 Climate Change Action Plan may have a significant, positive impact on the Council's operational greenhouse gas emissions, by decarbonising some corporate fleet vehicles and gas heating systems in some buildings. Combined, these sources accounted for 54% of all greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's NZ30 climate change commitment in the 2022/23 reporting year; how they are cut will depend on the success of an HVO biodiesel trial and a successful PSDS 3C funding bid. NZ30 emissions are monitored and reported annually.

There will be a less significant impact on emissions across the Borough of Rotherham. This may partly reflect the Council's limited influence over emissions within scope of its NZ40 climate change target: in a 2020 report, the Climate Change Committee estimated local authorities could influence up to a third of emissions in their respective areas. Transport comprised 35% of local area emissions in Rotherham, in 2021. Of these, 45% are emissions from travel on motorways, outside the scope of influence of local authorities. As noted above and elsewhere, the Council's investment in cycleways could facilitate a mode shift from cars to active travel, for some journeys. However, car journeys which might reasonably be replaced by bicycle account for only a small proportion of local area emissions. Given the expected magnitude of any cut in NZ40 emissions which may be attributed to the Council's activity, it is unlikely these would be evident from local area emissions statistics, published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in June each year.

Notwithstanding cuts to NZ30 and NZ40 emissions which may be delivered under the Council's 2024/25 Climate Change Action Plan, several projects will have a negative impact in the short term, due to carbon emissions 'embodied' in components and materials. Research to increase the Council's understanding of embodied carbon across its assets and corporate estate is needed, to ensure effective mitigation. An exemplar is available from the Council's tree planting programme, which seeks to minimise any unintended, negative carbon impact, through appropriate selection of sites and techniques. In this way, the Council can realise the best possible value from its investment in a cleaner, greener local environment.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Arthur King, Principal Climate Change Officer, Strategic Asset Management, Finance & Customer Services
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual Service and Environmental Report: Financial Year 2022/23</i>. BDR Waste Partnership (2023). • <i>Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors 2022</i>. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2022). Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2022 • <i>Data Table 1, Green Book Supplementary Guidance: Valuation of Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Appraisal</i>. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023). Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-of-energy-use-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-appraisal • <i>UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021</i>. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023). Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021 • <i>Land use in England, 2021</i>. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023). Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-in-england-2021 • <i>Fleet Replacement Plan</i>. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (2023). Cabinet – 20 March 2023. Available from: https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s140300/Cabinet%20Report_Fleet%20Replacement%20Plan%20SBv4.2.pdf

- *Rotherham Carbon Modelling*. SYSTRA (2022). [SCRTM1 carbon emissions from transport analysis].
- *WCC Carbon Calculation Spreadsheet*. UK Woodland Carbon Code (2021). Available from: <<https://woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/standard-and-guidance/3-carbon-sequestration/3-3-project-carbon-sequestration>>
- *Carbon Metric Factors 2011 - 2020*. Zero Waste Scotland (2021). Available from: <<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/carbon-metric-publications>>

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.

Greenhouse Gas Reporting Conversion Factors 2022, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Emissions Source	Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factor	Unit
Average battery electric vehicle	0.07578	kgCO ₂ e per mile
Average diesel-fuelled car	0.2749	kgCO ₂ e per mile
Average petrol-fuelled car	0.2744	kgCO ₂ e per mile
Biodiesel HVO: <i>within scope of organisations' GHG emissions reporting</i>	0.03558	kgCO ₂ e per litre
Biodiesel HVO: <i>outside of scope</i>	2.47	kgCO ₂ e per litre
Diesel	2.558	kgCO ₂ e per litre
Electricity	0.1934	kgCO ₂ e per kWh
Natural Gas	0.2023	kgCO ₂ e per kWh (Net CV)
Petrol	2.162	kgCO ₂ e per litre
Recycling	21.28	kgCO ₂ e per tonne

Residual waste conversion factor, BDR Waste Partnership Annual Report	
Emissions Source	Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factor / kgCO ₂ e per tonne
Contract residual waste disposed of at BDR Waste Treatment Facility	23.91

Consumption-based recycling emissions factors, Zero Waste Scotland Carbon Metric	
Emissions Source	Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factor / kgCO ₂ e per tonne
Glass	-755
Ferrous metals	-1,768
Non-ferrous metals	-9,961
Paper and cardboard	-547
Plastics (excluding films)	-537

Carbon sequestration by newly planted woodland, UK Woodland Carbon Code	
Years Since New Woodland Planted	Annual Carbon Sequestration / tCO ₂ e per hectare per year
0	0
5	0.4160
10	1.4672
15	4.9888
20	14.4512
25	17.2720
30	12.4944
35	9.0816
40	7.2896

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

Tracking Reference: CIA 214

Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager, Strategic Asset Management, Finance & Customer Services

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 13 March 2024

Report Title

Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Nature Recovery

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

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

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the outcomes and recommendations of the spotlight review into nature recovery undertaken by members of the Improving Places Select Commission. The review was prompted by Council's declaration of a nature crisis at its meeting of 25 May 2022, with a request that a review be held into how the Council can support improvements to ensure a more natural environment is enhanced.

Recommendations

- 1. That OSMB receives the report and considers the following recommendations:**
 - 1) Consider what resources are required to enable RMBC to lead on the Nature Emergency and co-ordinate its response to the Environment Act 2021, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain, and other statutory reporting.
 - 2) In line with the RMBC Nature Crisis Motion (and the mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty), consider how RMBC's response to the nature crisis can be implemented, reported, and resourced (taking note of the response to climate action).
 - 3) Consideration be given to the expansion of the Councillor's role as nature champions. This to include:

- a. How member stewardship of natural assets and geodiversity and be enhanced.
 - b. How nature recovery and climate action can be built into ward plans.
 - c. The involvement in overview and scrutiny in future monitoring and steering of this work.
 - d. Support through the Member Development Programme to ensure Members are equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake this activity.
- 4) Contribute to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (including appropriate resourcing) detailing Rotherham's involvement in meeting South Yorkshire national and global targets of "30 x 30" as required by the Environment Act 2021.
 - 5) Consider and plan for how the RMBC estate including all green and blue infrastructure such as allotments, cemeteries, parks and sports fields, amenity spaces, communal gardens, railway and highway verges, field margins and hedgerows, rights of way and access routes, woodlands and nature reserves canals, rivers and other water dependent habitats; can contribute to biodiversity strategies and targets; demonstrating compliance with the Council's obligations for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (taking external advice where necessary).
 - 6) Prioritise Local Wildlife Sites and Woodlands - especially those in RMBC ownership- to contribute to these targets, with a coordinated 'one council' programme to increase their positive conservation management with resourced management, monitoring and reporting.
 - 7) Continue and expand the positive work already underway including tree planting, meadow management, changes in verge management, community engagement etc (as stated in the RMBC Nature Crisis motion)
 - 8) Utilise appropriate evidence and information from the forthcoming Rotherham State of Nature report, alongside the forthcoming SYLNRS, and the agreed priority species lists, to set local species recovery targets and work plans, and ensure sufficient resources are secured to embed this approach in long term management opportunities.
 - 9) Continue to apply robust planning policies and other policy tools to contribute to nature's recovery across the Borough, noting that Local Planning Authorities must have regard to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published.
 - 10) Plan to work towards zero non-essential use of pesticides and zero glyphosate by the Council;
 - 11) Work with communities to support expansion of household composting, and supporting the development of nature rich gardens, including through awareness raising of the waste hierarchy and minimising the use of new and scarce resources and the associated impacts on the natural environment that these issues have; substantive resourcing and engagement plans will be essential.
 - 12) Work with partners, stakeholders, Parish Councils, communities, schools and residents on the above where appropriate.

2. That the report, as approved, be forwarded to Cabinet for its consideration.

- 3. That Cabinet is asked to formally consider its response to the above recommendations within two months of its receipt, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.**

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Council Meeting: Notice of Motion

Appendix 2 – Acknowledgement and thanks

Background Papers

N/A

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

N/A

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Nature Recovery

1. Background

- 1.1 In May 2022, the Council resolved to declare a nature crisis (Appendix 1). It noted that almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species were at risk of extinction. The motion stated that the climate crisis was hastening the destruction of the natural environment, damaging habitats and disrupting ecosystems. The declaration of a nature crisis was first taken up by local people and groups, and called on the Council to do so too, noting that a thriving environment underpinned a healthy, prosperous society.
- 1.2 The resolution committed the Council to a range of activities, including ensuring its response to tackling climate change was extended to be complement the aligned cause of nature crisis. It also committed the Council to continue its work to enhance biodiversity by adopting innovative approaches to support wild flowered areas and ecological approaches to grounds maintenance.
- 1.3 It asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider commissioning a review into how the Council can support improvements to ensure a more natural environment is enhanced. At its meeting of 14 September 2022, it was agreed that Improving Places Select Commission would add this to its work programme for 2023.
- 1.4 It should be noted that in order to expedite its referral to Cabinet at the beginning of the 2024/25 Municipal Year, the report has been submitted to OSMB for approval prior to its consideration by Improving Place Select Commission.

2. Key Issues

2.1 What is 'nature recovery'?

- 2.1.1 The earth is warming at an unprecedented rate through the activities of humans, particularly burning fossil fuels but also through changes in land and maritime use and agriculture. The long-term changes in climate, commonly referred to as global warming, has had a direct impact on weather systems. This means that locally more frequent heatwaves, flooding and damaging storms and other adverse weather can be expected. These events can all have a significant impact on human lives and nature.
- 2.1.2 As the climate changes, the threat to habitats and wildlife increases. The Local Government Association¹ states that the natural environment has an innate value, fundamental to health and well-being. It is the foundation of a productive economy, providing attractive neighbourhoods and access to green spaces. However, it asserts that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Citing evidence published by the House of

¹ [Nature recovery for local authorities | Local Government Association](#) (2024)

Common and in the State of Nature report², it reports that the UK, along with most other countries, has experienced a significant loss of plants, animals and fungi. Across the UK species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970³.

2.1.3 Nature Recovery is about taking action to take better care of the environment, to ensure that it is healthier for future generations. The UK Government has committed to halting the long-term decline of species abundance and protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030⁴ (colloquially known as “30x30”). This will be achieved by restoring or creating wild-life rich habitats and halting the decline in species abundance. The ambition is to achieve high quality, accessible, natural spaces with increased biodiversity close to where people live and work, with a focus around the equal distribution of environmental benefits and resources to all. EIP23 makes a commitment that everyone should live within 15 minutes’ walk of a green or blue space.

2.1.4 The Environment Act 2021 introduced new duties for local authorities which are relevant to nature recovery and biodiversity including:

- All planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain [mandatory from February 2024 for all major applications and April 2024 for all small sites] (S98-101)
- Enhanced duty for local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity (S102) and report on their actions (S103)
- Local Planning Authorities will need to comply with the above duty and have regard to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in local planning policy and decisions (S102).
- Responsible authorities appointed by the Secretary of State (S105) to lead the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), working with a broad range of stakeholders.

2.2 Methodology:

2.2.1 The purpose of the review was to consider strategic approaches already in place and propose any additional interventions that can help the Council achieve its targets and fulfil its responsibilities in respect of biodiversity and nature recovery under the Environment Act 2021.

2.2.2 The review started its evidence gathering in March 2023, concluding its work later in the calendar year. Evidence was gathered through stakeholder meetings with partners and officers and fact-finding visits. In addition, expert testimony was received from Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and other key organisations. Members of the review group were also provided

² [State of Nature 2023 - report on the UK's current biodiversity](#)

³ as above

⁴ [Climate adaptation for nature \(parliament.uk\)](#)

with written testimony and research, details of which are outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

2.2.3 The review's scope included consideration of the following themes:

1. Protecting existing biodiversity against threats (including wildlife crime) and supporting nature recovery throughout the Borough including animal, plant, and fungi species to contribute to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Nature Recovery Network and targets;
2. Assessing the condition and management of Rotherham's protected sites including Local Wildlife Sites, utilising appropriate evidence and information from the Rotherham State of Nature report⁵;
3. Assessing the implications of climate change on biodiversity in the borough.

2.2.4 The review group consisted of the following members:

- Cllr Ken Wyatt, Chair
- Councillor Tinsley, Vice Chair
- Councillor Havard
- Councillor Browne
- Councillor McNeely
- Councillor Taylor

2.2.5 Witnesses were drawn from the Council and its partners. The Chair would like to put on record his thanks for the contribution of each participant and their evident commitment to tackling this issue.

- Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
- Sorby Natural History Society
- Nature Action Rotherham
- Sheffield Area Geology Trust
- South Yorkshire Police – Rural Crime Unit
- River Catchment Partnership
- Environment Agency
- South Yorkshire Woodland Partnership
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
- Severn Trent Water
- Yorkshire Water
- Members of the Rotherham Local Wildlife Sites Panel
- Renewi
- Regeneration and Environment Services, RMBC

⁵ It was noted that Rotherham State of Nature report was independently produced and therefore its recommendations and conclusion may not be supported in entirety by RMBC.

- Planning Services
- Climate Team
- Green Spaces
- Ecology
- Trees and Woodland
- Asset Management (Cleaning)

2.2.6 The Chair also extends his thanks to Katherine Harclerode (former Governance Advisor) who supported the review and has since left the authority.

2.3 **Summary of issues raised:**

2.3.1 Members assessed the state of biodiversity in Rotherham, examining pollution levels in air, soil and water and the associated impact on biodiversity. The impact of wildlife crime was also considered. Consultees were asked to highlight species and ecosystems currently at risk and identify where efforts should be focussed to ameliorate effects of pollution where possible and protect existing biodiversity.

2.3.2 Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust (SRWT) gave a comprehensive presentation focusing on the state of nature in Rotherham, including:

- 1) Protecting biodiversity against threats
- 2) Rotherham's protected sites
- 3) Implications of climate change on biodiversity
- 4) Pollution – water, (soil, air)

2.3.3 SRWT shared some headlines on the national 'State of Nature' and highlighted that many of the national environmental concerns or threats were also factors in Rotherham. This included the impact of agricultural management, climate change, pollution, woodland and freshwater management, wild-life crime, and invasive non-native species. As an illustration of nature depletion, examples were given of local decline in bird species abundance, the rise in numbers of invasive non-native species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam etc) and the impact of disease and pests. Using data from the Weston Park weather station (Sheffield), it was outlined that there had been a steady rise in mean temperatures locally, with this rise accelerating over recent decades. It was highlighted that the effects of climate change and rising temperature would affect the ecological health and biodiversity of the borough, making it less able to mitigate and adapt to future challenges.

The invasive species data and weather data are from Rotherham where SRWT led a partnership 'Sheffield State of Nature Report' (2018). Bob Croxton from the Sorby Natural History Society and Sheffield Bird Study group was developing a Rotherham 'State of Nature' report which has not yet been published.

2.3.4 As part of a co-ordinated response to the threats, key bodies across the sub-region have formed a Local Nature Partnership. The partnership has

assessed the condition and management of Rotherham's protected sites including Local Wildlife Sites. Current mapping undertaken by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority suggested that just over 3% of Rotherham was identified as core nature sites: priority habitat as 'good' or 'fairly good' condition, with almost 13% identified as restoration: priority habitat not in good condition. Woodland cover in Rotherham was also below the national average of 13%, requiring over 1000 hectares of planting to bring it in line with this standard. However, by mapping sites there was a greater opportunity to increase the size, quality and connectivity of sites and generate Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG) through green infrastructure schemes, woodland creation and local projects.

- 2.3.5 As part of its evidence gathering, Members examined biodiversity improvement actions currently in place. With a view to enhancing biodiversity, the meeting sought to establish what action is already being taken by the Council, community organisations and partners to achieve targets and uphold duties under the Environment Act 2021.
- 2.3.6 Using case studies to illustrate how "30 x 30" (30% of land for nature by 2030) was being delivered, SRWT outlined the work undertaken under the Rotherham Rivers Programme (2013-2027+). The programme aims to create a network of connected, high quality habitats along the waterway corridors of the Don and Rother in Rotherham, supporting clean water, natural flood storage, increased biodiversity and enjoyment opportunities for people as part of a thriving landscape. Working with partners, including the Environment Agency and Rotherham Borough Council, the programme aims to look after habitats in the River Don and River Rother catchments in South Yorkshire, to create a resilient ecological network from the moors of the Peak District to the floodplain of the Lower Don Valley and the heart of urban Sheffield and Rotherham.

Funding from a range of partners allowed improvements to be made to the river corridors, including:

- Better water quality
- More resilience to flooding
- Control of invasive plant species
- Increased the amount of quality ecological data
- More opportunities for the public to enjoy nature reserves
- Better partnership working in the area and involvement of local site users
- This programme involved over 100 volunteers, with RMBC undertaking over 560 hours of community engagement.

- 2.3.7 The RMBC Climate Change Manager outlined that extensive work had been undertaken to reduce the Council's carbon footprint in recent years, with many of the initiatives supporting both climate reduction and nature recovery agendas. This includes tree planting, management of green

spaces and opportunities for ‘greening’ and increasing biodiversity across arable land. It was noted that there were opportunities to closely align both agendas to provide nature-based solutions to reduce the impact of climate change; including construction, landscaping, sustainable drainage, catchment-wide schemes for flood management and sympathetic planting.

- 2.3.8 A detailed presentation was given on the specific implications of the Environment Act 2021 across Planning, Green Spaces and Ecology teams and decision-makers in the Council and the Combined Authority (SYMCA). SYMCA is the Responsible Authority for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), working with each of the four local authorities within the South Yorkshire region and the Peak District National Park. The LNRS was to be completed by March 2025.

The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty is a strengthened duty on the Council who is now required to strategically review its policies and operations at least every 5 years and assess what action they can take ‘to further’ the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Under new legislation, the Council will need to establish appropriate working practices, to deal with all planning applications for both large sites (mandatory from February 2024) and small sites (mandatory from April 2024) to deliver BNG+10% for all development proposals (with few exemptions).

Other requirements include:

- Ensuring the ongoing monitoring and reporting of environmental impacts to satisfy and strengthen the Council’s approach to meet the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.
- Updating of all condition monitoring of the Council’s adopted local sites series: including Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites identified in the Sites and Policies Document.
- Ensuring that the Local Plan “Has regard to... the LNRS when published”
- In the longer term, five to ten years, consider refreshing the Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategies, and the preparation of a State of Nature Report and Biodiversity Strategy. I

It was highlighted that these duties will most certainly cross council joint action and require additional staffing, capacity and funding. It was recognised that this presents a significant challenge for all local authorities and will be a barrier to the delivery of future nature recovery activities.

- 2.3.9 Evidence was presented demonstrating how current planning requirements protected biodiversity and nature recovery, and how requirements were expected to evolve within planning policy.

It was highlighted that over 70% of the borough was allocated as “Green Belt”, with approximately 15% designated as Non-Statutory Protected

Sites⁶. Requirements for biodiversity governed existing planning decisions through legislation (e.g. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance and local planning policy.

In meeting these requirements, key challenges were identified, particularly around enforcement on biodiversity obligations and how skills and capacity of existing and future staff can be supported.

- 2.3.10 In a submission to the review, the Environmental Services Manager highlighted the impact of climate change on the Grounds Maintenance Service. With warmer winters, and wetter summers, it was noted that growth was rarely slowing down, which meant that the maintenance schedules were not as effective as they once were. It was felt that comparison with other local authorities and ground maintenance companies would be helpful to establish how other bodies were coping and adjusting to the continual demand.

Climate change had also made an impact on the die-back of evasive plant species and grasses, which meant that native flowers were taking longer to establish or were not viable. Collaboration between the Climate Change team, and specialists in the Ecology Team could assist Ground Maintenance to adapt.

Over several years, wildflower sites had been planted, (some of which had received national recognition) – it was noted that over the last two years this had increased from 5000m² to 15,000m² however, the Service needed assistance to understand the net gain from this and other activity to encourage natural biodiversity.

- 2.3.11 An overview was given of how Cleaning Services supported the biodiversity and climate change challenge. It was outlined that with over 350k hours of cleaning activity undertaken across schools, Council and community buildings per year, it was important that there was continuous review of utility use; procurement strategies for products and equipment; and environmental impact.

The service only used products which minimised harm across the life-cycle of use i.e. from the sourcing of the raw material, through production, transportation, usage and then environmental impact after use. Current work was on-going to develop cost effective toxin-free sanitisers and cleaning agents.

Rotherham cleaning services only procure from accreditor suppliers who:

- Traded ethically and sustainably;
- Provided supporting information for any claims made;
- Provided only quality, fit for purpose products.

⁶ These are areas which have been designated for protection including local wildlife sites; regionally important geological sites or local nature reserves.

Assurance was given that environmental factors were a material consideration of the service, underpinned by an aim to eliminate any product or process which opposes the biodiversity or climate change challenge objective stated by the Council.

2.3.12 A series of site visits were organised on local wildlife habitats, with the review panel taken through key issues and concerns by expert witnesses:

- Local Wildlife Site 127, 'Centenary Riverside LNR'
- Silverwood
- Herringthorpe Valley Park

Whilst it was noted that there was a good level of monitoring and records of wildlife in Rotherham, the site visits reinforced the previous evidence provided by other expert witnesses. In summary, this included:

- Variable levels of site quality with many wildlife habitats being in poor condition (as outlined in the mapping exercise);
- Decline in varieties of species of wild birds, insects and rare plants;
- Impact of rural crime and site security with examples given of the negative impact of off-road vehicles, poaching, vandalism and arson;
- How greater emphasis could be placed on utilising local conservation expertise.

Other points raised in the discussions included:

- How crime can be 'designed out' of wildlife sites by increasing visitor numbers and natural surveillance. (Although consideration also needed to be given to managing the impacts of increased pressure on wildlife sites created by encouraging increased visitor numbers.)
- Improving communication and information sharing of local projects and initiatives.
- Maximising opportunities for external funding (for example the National Lottery).
- Consider how nature mitigations can be built into new developments. For example, the installation of bat bricks, swift boxes, wildlife-friendly soffits etc should be considered as part of new developments or refurbishment of existing housing stock.

2.3.13 Complimenting the local sites visits, further information was given on Local Wildlife Sites.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) were identified and selected locally using scientifically determined criteria and surveys. Local Wildlife Sites Panel and Local Geological Sites Panel oversaw site selection process. The panels endorsed qualifying sites for the Council approval (through the officer delegated decision process). The boundaries were included in the Council internal and external mapping systems.

2.3.14 In respect of the Local Wildlife Sites Panel, the local sites system duties involve staff from Green Spaces and Planning Policy Teams and the input

of external experts on the panels. The Biological Records Centre was central to its operation. The work required in the maintenance of the local sites system was reported as significant and varied. Although there was a rolling 10-year program of site monitoring, there have been gaps in on site local wildlife site monitoring due to vacancies and backlogs.

- 2.3.15 Local Wildlife Sites were areas of land that were especially important for wildlife and some of the Borough's most valuable wildlife areas. They have a huge part to play in the natural green fabric of our towns and countryside. They made up a web of steppingstones and corridors for wildlife, forming key components of ecological networks. It is anticipated Local Wildlife Sites will be a central component of the forthcoming SYLNRS. The Council had responsibilities to local sites through the enhanced biodiversity duty and the boundaries were needed for the Local Plan satisfying national and local planning policy. The network of sites added to the character and fabric of Rotherham making it more resilient to climate change factors, offering its natural services to the local communities.
- 2.3.16 The LWS panel were concerned about damage to sites from development, vandalism and poor or little management. Most Local Wildlife Sites were privately owned although a significant number were under Council ownership (e.g. green spaces, housing, asset management or schools). Whilst land under the stewardship of Green Spaces were managed for biodiversity, it was unclear if this was extended to other sites in Council ownership. It felt that there was greater potential for the Council to improve biodiversity present on all its sites recognising that issues such as nature recovery and climate actions are cross-cutting.
- 2.3.17 A written submission was received from the Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel (RLGSP). It outlined the rich geodiversity of the Borough and gave examples of the important role of geodiversity in the formulation of a nature recovery strategy. RLGSP advocated a holistic and sympathetic understanding of landscapes and argued that highlighting geological foundations and features of an area and its (natural) sites will enhance the general public interest, understanding and engagement with the natural world and biodiversity.

2.4 Recommendations

- 2.4.1 The motion, as agreed, committed the Council to a range of activities, including ensuring its response to tackling climate change was extended to compliment the aligned cause of nature crisis. It also committed the Council to continue its work to enhance biodiversity by adopting innovative approaches to support wild flowered areas and ecological approaches to grounds maintenance. The review group thanked the local groups and residents for its assistance and advice in bringing forward the motion.
- 2.4.2 The review group thanked officers, partners and expert witnesses for their openness in responding to enquiries. They were assured by the evident commitment across agencies to address the challenges of nature recovery. The examples given showed the complexity and sensitivity of this work and

the part each agency plays. The review hopes that the observations and recommendations make a timely contribution to this vital agenda.

2.4.3 The recommendations are as follows:

- 1) Consider what resources are required to enable RMBC to lead on the Nature Emergency and co-ordinate its response to the Environment Act 2021, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain, and other statutory reporting.
- 2) In line with the RMBC Nature Crisis Motion (and the mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty), consider how RMBC's response to the nature crisis can be implemented, reported, and resourced (taking note of the response to climate action).
- 3) Consideration be given to the expansion of the Councillor's role as nature champions. This to include:
 - a. How member stewardship of natural assets and geodiversity and be enhanced.
 - b. How nature recovery and climate action can be built into ward plans.
 - c. The involvement in overview and scrutiny in future monitoring and steering of this work.
 - d. Support through the Member Development Programme to ensure Members are equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake this activity.
- 4) Contribute to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (including appropriate resourcing) detailing Rotherham's involvement in meeting South Yorkshire national and global targets of "30 x 30" as required by the Environment Act 2021.
- 5) Consider and plan for how the RMBC estate including all green and blue infrastructure such as allotments, cemeteries, parks and sports fields, amenity spaces, communal gardens, railway and highway verges, field margins and hedgerows, rights of way and access routes, woodlands and nature reserves canals, rivers and other water dependent habitats; can contribute to biodiversity strategies and targets; demonstrating compliance with the Council's obligations for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (taking external advice where necessary).
- 6) Prioritise Local Wildlife Sites and Woodlands - especially those in RMBC ownership- to contribute to these targets, with a coordinated 'one council' programme to increase their positive conservation management with resourced management, monitoring and reporting.
- 7) Continue and expand the positive work already underway including tree planting, meadow management, changes in verge

management, community engagement etc (as stated in the RMBC Nature Crisis motion)

- 8) Utilise appropriate evidence and information from the forthcoming Rotherham State of Nature report, alongside the forthcoming SYLNRS, and the agreed priority species lists, to set local species recovery targets and work plans, and ensure sufficient resources are secured to embed this approach in long term management opportunities.
- 9) Continue to apply robust planning policies and other policy tools to contribute to nature's recovery across the Borough, noting that Local Planning Authorities must have regard to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published.
- 10) Plan to work towards zero non-essential use of pesticides and zero glyphosate by the Council;
- 11) Work with communities to support expansion of household composting, and supporting the development of nature rich gardens, including through awareness raising of the waste hierarchy and minimising the use of new and scarce resources and the associated impacts on the natural environment that these issues have; substantive resourcing and engagement plans will be essential.
- 12) Work with partners, stakeholders, Parish Councils, communities, schools and residents on the above where appropriate.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Members are recommended to approve the recommendations.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 See paragraphs 2.2.5 and Appendix 2.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Implementation of any recommendation made to a partner organisation is at the discretion of the relevant partner organisation.
- 5.2 Implementation of recommendations addressed to a directorate of the Council is a matter reserved to the relevant directorate. Timescales for Council directorates responding to scrutiny recommendations are outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution of the Council.

6 Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 Any financial or procurement implications arising from this report will be considered as part of the Cabinet response to its recommendations.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

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

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications directly arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no implications directly arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

–

10.1 Members of the OSMB review group have due regard to equalities and human rights in developing recommendations.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Referenced throughout the report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 The implications for partners are described in the main sections of the report. Implementation of any recommendation is at the discretion of the relevant partner organisation. The recommendations contained in this report are offered acknowledging the contributions that have been made by each of the partner organisations.

13 Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no risks directly arising from this report.

Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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

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

Appendix 1:

[Agenda item - NOTICE OF MOTION - NATURE CRISIS - Rotherham Council](#)**25 May 2022 – Council Meeting**

This Council notes we are in the middle of a nature crisis. Almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species are at risk of extinction. The climate crisis is only hastening this destruction of the natural environment, damaging habitats and disrupting ecosystems. Yet it is these very habitats that have the potential to lock up carbon and fight back against rising global temperatures. It is essential that we not only protect these spaces, but let them thrive – for the benefit of people, planet and nature. We recognise that the terms Nature, Ecological and Biodiversity can be and are often used interchangeably by people and, for the purpose of this motion, all mean the same thing.

Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta's review into The Economics of Biodiversity, commissioned by Her Majesty's Treasury, highlighted that humanity does not exist in isolation from nature but sits within it. Nature is an asset on which all aspects of our society depends and with biodiversity declining faster than at any time in human history, we are undermining the productivity, resilience and adaptability that nature lends our society.

As we recover from the Covid-19 crisis, the need for nature-rich green spaces where we live and work is clearer than ever and will help health, education and the economy build back stronger. We recognise that the Climate and Nature emergencies are intrinsically linked with each other and also to social justice; and by building a better world to deal with the Climate and Nature Crises we will also be building a better society. We recognise that action must be taken now to remedy this and to put nature into recovery at a local level, not only to benefit Rotherham, but in support of regional, national and international work to do the same.

This Council therefore notes and recognises that

- a) Nature is in long term decline and urgent action must be taken to reverse this.
- b) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society.
- c) The nature and the climate crises are intrinsically linked and that the impacts of the climate crisis drive nature's decline, while restoring nature can help to tackle the climate crisis.
- d) Local people and groups have recognised the issues and have declared a Nature Crisis for Rotherham themselves and call on the Council to do so too.

This Council resolves to:

- 1. Therefore, this Council proposes to declare a Nature Crisis for Rotherham.
- 2. Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider commissioning a review into how the Council can support improvements to ensure a more natural environment is enhanced.

3. Ensure our responsiveness on tackling climate change is extended to be complimentary to this separate but well aligned cause.
4. Continue to further our work on enhancing biodiversity by adopting innovative approaches to support wild flowered areas and ecological approaches to grounds maintenance.
5. Note the ongoing significant progress the Council is making through its Climate Change Action Plans for a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and Borough by 2040.

On being put to the vote, the motion as submitted was declared as carried by majority.

Appendix 2:

The Chair thanks the following Subject Matter Experts and Advisors consulted:

- Abbi Reid, MCIWM
- Robert Croxton, Naturalist
- Bill Bailey, Naturalist
- Cara Case, CPSS
- Dr Nicola Rivers, MCIEEM, SRWT
- Liz Ballard, Chief Executive SRWT
- Roy Mosely, SRWT
- Duncan Hawley, SAGT
- Kim Phillips, MBE
- Erika Phoenix, Catchment Partnership
- Sgt. James Shirley, SYP Rural Crime
- Sgt. Paul Jameson, SYP Rural Crime
- Katie Dearnley, SYP Engagement and Consultation Officer
- Richard Sulley, SYMCA Policy
- Laurie Heykoop, SYMCA Policy
- Andrew Fairburn, Severn Trent Water
- Tim Myatt, Yorkshire Water
- Claire Barrow, Environment Agency

Appendix 1: Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme 2023-24**Chair: Cllr Maggi Clark****Senior Governance Advisor: Caroline Webb****Vice-Chair: Cllr Joshua Bacon****Link Officer: Jo Brown**

The following principles were endorsed by OSMB at its meeting of 5 July 2023 as criteria to long/short list each of the commission's respective priorities:

Establish as a starting point:

- What are the key issues?
- What is the outcome that we want?

Agree principles for longlisting:

- Can scrutiny add value or influence?
- Is it being looked at elsewhere?
- Is it a priority – council or community?

Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.

- T: Time: is it the right time, enough resources?
- O: Others: is this duplicating the work of another body?
- P: Performance: can scrutiny make a difference
- I: Interest – what is the interest to the public?
- C: Contribution to the corporate plan

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
14 June 2023	School Accessibility Strategy Finance Update Multiply Programme
5 July 2023	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report (2022/2023) Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report Outturn report
2 August 2023	UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Years two and three Rotherham Markets & Library Redevelopment
13 September 2023	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action plan July 2023-24 Financial Monitoring Report
11 October 2023	Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report. 2021 Census Presentation (informal)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
15 November 2023	Medium Term Financial Strategy Update Crisis Support 2024 - 2027 Complaints Annual Report
13 December 2023	Social Value Mid-Year Report Adult Social Care Mental Health Review Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy Work Programme – mid-year update
16 January 2024	Mid-Year Council Plan 2022-2025 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress report HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting Charges 2024-25
07 February 2024	Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 Single item agenda
13 March 2024	Early Help Strategy 2024-2029 (pre-decision scrutiny) Climate Emergency Annual Report Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Nature Recovery LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan (Update – requested September 2023) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (briefing to be circulated)
10 April 2024	Meeting Cancelled

Items for Scheduling

	Spotlight Review - Byelaws/Life saving equipment (schedule summer 2024)
	Referral from Council (28.02.2024) petition
21 February 2024	Spotlight Review - Consultation and Engagement
DATE TBC	Children Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – meeting with Youth Cabinet
Visits/meetings to be arranged	Cost of living pressures Focus on energy efficiency; financial inclusion; crisis food support (specifically social supermarkets); school uniform (working with the Youth Cabinet); and communications, awareness and targeting
	Employment Support Team

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
1 March 2024 – 31 May 2024

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 2023/24 are:

19 June 2023	7 August 2023	16 October 2023	18 December 2023	12 February 2024	15 April 2024
10 July 2023	18 September 2023	20 November 2023	22 January 2024	18 March 2024	

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 and Housing
Councillor Saghir Alam	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance
Councillor Amy Brookes	Cabinet Member for Housing (Currently on maternity leave. For all Housing Portfolio matters, please contact Cllr S Allen)
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 and Environment

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 18 MARCH 2024								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Housing Delivery Programme: Developments at Greasbrough and Thornhill	December 2023	Approve development of the Grayson Road and Tenter Street sites to build an estimated 31 new homes, and delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to optimise design of the scheme according to strategic need, site constraints, and any requirements resulting from the planning process.	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood Working	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	Greasbrough; Rotherham West	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Housing Delivery Programme – Grant Funding from Homes England	February 2024	Recommendation: Approves the Council entering into a Grant Funding Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (trading as 'Homes England') in relation to the Affordable Homes Programme (2021-26).	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood Working	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S								
Social Value Annual Report and Social Value Policy	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive the Social Value Annual Report. To approve the updated the Social Value Policy. 	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
SEND Sufficiency Phase 4	December 2023	To seek cabinet approval to increase number of Social Emotion Mental Health Places at Elements Academy through further capital investment to develop level of provision by 40 places.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk
Early Help Strategy 2024-2028	August 2022	To endorse the Early Help Strategy 2024-2028 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	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@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
The Fostering Plan Update	February 2024	To receive an update on progress and agree the Fostering Plan 2023- 2026.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy	December 2023	To approve the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.	Leader of the Council	Report and appendices.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Home to School Transport Policy	December 2023	To approve the Home-to-School Transport Policy.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Transport Capital Programme 2024/2025	December 2023	Approval of the Transport Capital Programme for 2024/2025.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Indicative Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025	February 2024	To approve the proposed Indicative Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025 and delegate authority to authorise the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment to approve the final programme.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
Capital Project Updates	February 2024	To update on schemes and approve final project budget and implementation.	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
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 18 MARCH 2024								
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								

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
Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Visit	February 2024	To note and endorse the observations made by the Corporate Peer Challenge Team to the Council.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES.								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief for 46th Rotherham Scout Group and Rotherham Unit 287 of The Sea Cadet Corps	December 2022	To consider the recommendations for new applications for Business Rates discretionary 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								
Modern Slavery Transparency Statement - Annual Refresh	February 2024	To approve the annual refresh of the Councils Modern Slavery Transparency Statement and agree publication.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Paul Woodcock Tel: 01709 822971 paul.woodcock@rotherham.gov.uk
NO CABINET MEETING IN APRIL 2024.								
NO CABINET MEETING MAY 2024								

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.