



Council

Wednesday 19 July 2023
2.00 p.m.

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council 

WELCOME TO TODAY'S MEETING

GUIDANCE FOR THE PUBLIC

The Council is composed of 59 Councillors, who are democratically accountable to the residents of their ward.

The Council Meeting is chaired by the Mayor, who will ensure that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to respecting the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and the interests of the community. The Mayor is the Borough's first citizen and is treated with respect by the whole Council, as should visitors and member of the public.

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. The Council appoints its Leader, Mayor and Deputy Mayor and at its Annual Meeting will appoint Councillors to serve on its committees.

Copies of the agenda and reports are available on the Council's website at www.rotherham.gov.uk. You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain private information and these will be marked accordingly on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Council meetings. A member of the public may ask one general question in person which must be received in writing to the Chief Executive by 10.00 a.m. on the Friday preceding a Council meeting on the following Wednesday and must not exceed sixty words in length. Questions can be emailed to governance@rotherham.gov.uk

Council meetings are recorded and streamed live or subsequently uploaded to the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Mayor will confirm if the meeting is being filmed. You would need to confirm your wish not to be filmed to Democratic Services. Recording of the meeting by members of the public is also allowed.

Council meetings are open to the public, but occasionally the Council may have to discuss an item in private. If this occurs you will be asked to leave.

FACILITIES

There are public toilets, one of which is designated disabled with full wheelchair access, with full lift access to all floors. Induction loop facilities are also available in the Council Chamber, John Smith Room and Committee Rooms 1 and 2.

Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained via the ramp at the main entrance to the Town Hall.

If you have any queries on this agenda, please contact:-

Contact:- Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
governance@rotherham.gov.uk

Date of Publication:- **Tuesday 11 July 2023**

COUNCIL

Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

THE MAYOR (Councillor Robert Taylor)
DEPUTY MAYOR (Councillor Sheila Cowen)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Sharon Kemp)

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

ANSTON AND WOODSETTS

BAUM-DIXON, Timothy J.
WILSON, Tracey H
TARMEY, Drew Simon

ASTON AND TODWICK

BACON, Joshua
BARKER, Aaron

AUGHTON AND SWALLOWNEST

PITCHLEY, Lyndsay
TAYLOR, Robert Paul

BOSTON CASTLE

ALAM, Saghir
MCNEELY, Rose M.
YASSEEN, Taiba K.

BRAMLEY AND RAVENFIELD

MILLS, Lewis H.M.
REYNOLDS, Gregory

BRINSWORTH

CARTER, Adam J.
CARTER, Charlotte R.

DALTON AND THRYBERGH

BAKER-ROGERS, Joanna
BENNETT-SYLVESTER, Michael D.P.

DINNINGTON

CASTLEDINE-DACK, Sophie
WHOMERSLEY, Benjamin J.
Vacancy

GREASBROUGH

ALLEN, Sarah A.
ELLIOTT, Robert W.

HELLABY AND MALTBY WEST

ANDREWS, Jenny
BALL, Simon A.

HOOBER

BARLEY, Emily J.
LELLIOTT, Denise
ROCHE, David J.

KEPPEL

BROWNE, Tony
CLARK, Maggi
FOSTER, Carole

KILNHURST AND SWINTON (EAST)

CUSWORTH, Victoria
SANSOME, Stuart J.

MALTBY EAST

HUNTER, Lee J.
TINSLEY, Adam J.

RAWMARSH EAST

HUGHES, Rachel E.M.
SHEPPARD, David

RAWMARSH WEST

BIRD, Bob
THOMPSON, Jill

ROTHER VALE

BROOKES, Amy C.
MIRO, Firas

ROTHERHAM EAST

COOKSEY, Wendy
HALEEM, Rukhsana B.
KHAN, Tajamal

ROTHERHAM WEST

AVEYARD, Ben
JONES, Ian P.
KEENAN, Eve

SITWELL

BURNETT, Simon L.
FISHER, David F.
GRIFFIN, Tony

SWINTON ROCKINGHAM

MONK, Gina
WYATT, Ken

THURCROFT & WICKERSLEY

COLLINGHAM, Zachary A.
COLLINGHAM, Thomas R.

WALES

BECK, Dominic E.
HAVARD, Marnie A.

WATH

ATKIN, Alan
COWEN, Sheila A.

WICKERSLEY NORTH

ELLIS, Sue
HODDINOTT, Emma E.
READ, Chris

Council Meeting Agenda

Time and Date:-

Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

Venue:-

Town Hall, The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham. S60 2TH

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

To consider any announcements by the Mayor in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3(2)(ii).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING (Pages 9 - 47)

To receive the record of proceedings of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 19 May and 24 May 2023 and to approve the accuracy thereof.

4. PETITIONS (Pages 49 - 53)

To report on any petitions received by the Council received by the Council and receive statements in support of petitions in accordance with Petitions Scheme and Council Procedure Rule 13.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To invite Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting, to confirm the nature of those interests and whether they intend to leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To receive questions from members of the public who may wish to ask a general question of the Mayor, Cabinet Member or the Chairman of a Committee in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Mayor, to consider excluding the press and public from the meeting in relation to any items of urgent business

on the grounds that private information is likely to be divulged.

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

To receive a statement from the Leader of the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

9. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING (Pages 55 - 66)

To note the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19 June 2023.

10. ANNUAL REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION (Pages 67 - 80)

To consider the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group in respect of proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution and to adopt the document for the 2023-24 municipal year.

11. MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS (Pages 81 - 87)

To report on the establishment of political groups, the political balance of the Council and the entitlement of each group to seats on the authority's committees.

12. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - REVISION TO DISTRICT HEATING CHARGES 2023/24 (Pages 89 - 116)

To approve the amendments to the District Heating charges for 2023-2024.

13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 (Pages 117 - 135)

To receive the annual report on the activities of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny bodies in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.

14. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM ROTHER VALE WARD COUNCILLORS (Pages 137 - 138)

To receive updates from ward councillors from Rother Vale on the activities supporting Thriving Neighbourhoods across the Borough.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION - SEWAGE DISCHARGE INTO RIVERS

Notice of Motion – Sewage discharge into rivers

To be moved by Councillor Sheppard and seconded by Councillor Monk:

This council notes:

That there is great public concern over the recently released statistics detailing sewage discharges into our local rivers by Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent Water.

The number of occasions when this happens and the total numbers of hours involved show that these discharges have now become routine practice, rather than an emergency response to extreme weather events.

Since privatisation, water companies in England have paid out an average of £2bn per year in dividends to shareholders, paid out huge salaries and massive bonuses to executives whilst ignoring the need to invest in their creaking infrastructure.

The effect of the horrific levels of sewage discharge into our rivers is seen in a negative impact to local wildlife coupled with the detrimental effect on the quality of life for residents who live near rivers. It also restricts the enjoyment of water-based activities for everyone.

This council believes:

That government inaction has allowed Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent Water, along with the other water companies in England, to prioritise their profitability as a business over their responsibilities to their customers and the environment.

Whilst this affects local areas to different degrees, as rivers flow across local authority and geographical boundaries, the government has to lead on this issue and provide a strong national response.

The rules on sewage discharges must be tightened and the Environment Agency needs to be given the resources to monitor and enforce on any breaches of the rules.

This council resolves to:

Write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, requesting that the government set out an ambitious strategy to reduce and ultimately eliminate sewage discharges into rivers and the sea. The financial cost of this programme must not rest on the shoulders of bill payers whilst at the same time these water companies continue to pay out dividends on their profits.

Ask our Improving Places Select Committee to invite Yorkshire Water, Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency to attend a meeting to explain what measures they are taking to reduce sewage discharges into our rivers now, plus outlining their future plans to address this issue in the medium to long-term, with annual updates on their progress to follow.

16. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Pages 139 - 145)

To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee.

To confirm the minutes as a true record.

17. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE (Pages 147 - 150)

To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standards and Ethics Committee.

To confirm the minutes as a true record.

18. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

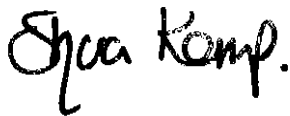
To put questions, if any, to the designated Members on the discharge of functions of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Pensions Authority, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11(5).

19. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

To put questions, if any, to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairpersons (or their representatives) under Council Procedure Rules 11(1) and 11(3).

20. URGENT ITEMS

Any other public items which the Mayor determines are urgent.



SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

**The next meeting of the Council will be on
4 October at 2.00 p.m.**

This page is intentionally left blank

**COUNCIL MEETING
Friday 19 May 2023**

Present:- Councillor Tajamal Khan (in the Chair); Councillors Taylor, Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Ball, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, C Carter, Clark, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Fisher, Foster, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Hunter, Jones, Keenan, Lelliott, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Tarmey, Wilson, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

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

181. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved: That Councillor Robert Taylor be elected Chairman of the Rotherham Borough Council for the ensuing Municipal Year and that he be entitled to the style of Mayor by virtue of Section 245(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mover: Councillor Pitchley

Seconder: Councillor Keenan

Councillor Taylor thereupon made and subscribed the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

(Councillor Taylor assumed the Chair)

182. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR (COUNCILLOR TAJAMAL KHAN)

Resolved: That the Council tender its sincere thanks to Councillor Tajamal Khan for the excellent manner in which he has carried out all his duties as Mayor of the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham. And that the best thanks of this Council be recorded for the kind and admirable way in which Mrs Shagufta Kausar performed the duties of Mayoress.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Allen

183. PRESENTATION OF THE PAST MAYOR'S PENDANTS

The Mayor asked the Council to join him in offering his sincere thanks to Councillor Tajamal Khan for the excellent manner in which he had carried out all of his duties as Mayor and formally presented him and the Mayoress with their past Mayor's pendants.

184. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Resolved: That Councillor Sheila Cowen be elected Vice-Chairman of the Rotherham Borough Council for the ensuing Municipal Year and that she be entitled to the style of Deputy Mayor by virtue of Section 245(1) of the

Local Government Act 1972.

Mover: Councillor Cusworth

Seconder: Councillor Bird

185. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, Burnett, A Carter, Castledine-Dack, Cooksey, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Sansome, Sheppard, Thompson, Tinsley, and Whomersley.

186. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

187. APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR'S CADETS

The Mayor formally announced the names of the Mayor's Cadets for the Municipal Year 2023/24 to the Council:

- Air Force Cadets – Sergeant Logan Cooke
- Army Cadets – Cadet Lee Edwards
- Sea Cadets – Ordinary Cadet Jenson Bailey

Sergeant Logan Cooke from the Royal Air Force Air Cadets was unable to join the meeting today as she was taking an exam and therefore her mum, Melodie and her Commanding Officer, Flight Lieutenant Kevin Wright, accepted the badge and certificate on her behalf.

The Mayor invited Cadet Lee Edwards, Ordinary Cadet Jenson Bailey to receive their Mayor's Cadet badge and certificate.

188. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 24 May 2023

Present:- Councillor Robert Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Cowen, Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Ball, Barker, Barley, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, A Carter, C Carter, Clark, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Fisher, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Hunter, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Tarmey, Thompson, Tinsley, Whomersley, Wilson, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

189. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that a very important pillar of his local community and a truly wonderful person was involved in a horrific accident whilst out running. Karen Chamberlain was the founder and lead runner of Aston Chasers all ladies running club. The club have done some incredible work not only inspiring fitness but instilling confidence and a sense of unity and belonging within the club.

Karen was really poorly, and the council sent its best wishes and support to Karen, Chris, Esme and Noah at this difficult time.

He was delighted to share that he received news from the Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, that a resident had been recognised as a Coronation Champion by Their Majesties the King and Queen.

Peter Dye, who volunteers for Lost Chord UK attends interactive sessions in care homes and the community, where he helps people living with dementia to get the most out of every session through compassion, encouragement, humour and by simply being open to the needs of the clients.

He recently completed a course of chemotherapy, continuing to volunteer until his treatment started and as soon as he was able, he got back to volunteering. He truly lives every day as if it were his last and inspires the session leaders and fellow volunteers with his positivity and constant smiling. A round of applause was held in congratulations.

190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Baum-Dixon, Councillor Castledine-Dack and Councillor Foster.

191. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 12 April 2023, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Allen

192. PETITIONS

There were no Petitions to report.

193. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

194. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: From: Sallyanne Kenny

Do you think it is acceptable for places and venues to not be accessible for disabled and wheelchair users, such as people with MS (Multiple Sclerosis)?

Councillor Lelliott responded that public buildings were required under the Equality Act 2010 (which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act) to provide access for people with disabilities. Disabled people have the right to 'reasonable adjustments' that make jobs and services accessible to them. Building regulations also required all new buildings to be fully and easily accessible to everyone who needs to use them.

In her supplementary question Ms Kenny described how she went to a private establishment the previous day and could not access the building. Councillor Lelliott said she would be happy to meet with Ms Kenny to discuss what the Council could do to support work with private operators.

Question 2: From: Keith Ollivant

Planning and Adult Social Care Departments are allowing Rhodus Properties with Heathcotes Care Group to operate from 24 Spinneyfield. This was opened on covenant protected land without consultation with residents and disregard to Council procedures. We request both Directors consider the legality of this business and act to close it. Civil proceedings will commence if this business continues operating.

Councillor Lelliott responded and advised that the building does not need planning permission so does not look like there's anything from a planning point of view that can be done.

It was understood that the house was being used by no more than six adults living together as a single household which does not result in a

change of use that would require planning permission.

If there are aspects that you would like us to look into then please leave your contact details so we can pick this up with you.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ollivant stated that he believed there to be a change in appearance that required planning permission. Councillor Lelliott stated that if that was the case, the Council could look into this, but all authorities are under a national building and compliance framework. The rules changed recently for permitted developments and planning was not always required.

Question 3: From: Michael Norton

RBC is allowing business operations since October without planning permission on residential land that does not allow it. The owner dishonestly purchased the house, has not consulted residents and has intentionally mislead RBC. Social Services place vulnerable residents in there with minimal overnight care. Will both department heads review this business and take immediate action to suspend all operating licences?

Councillor Lelliott responded by stating that the house was being used by no more than six adults living together as a single household which did not result in a change of use that would require planning permission; there was therefore no planning breaches in place.

The Council had a statutory duty to meet an adult's needs for care and support where the relevant eligibility criteria was met. It was good practice for adult social care providers to engage, as appropriate, with local residents to build positive relationships. It was the responsibility of the developer and/ or provider to ensure all legal restrictions are met.

The service had been operational since October 2022. The provider was registered with the Care Quality Commission and is monitored as part of the Council's Quality Assurance Process.

In his supplementary question, Mr Norton advised that no objections had been made at the time of the application as nobody had advised them that six adults would be living there.

The Mayor advised that questions 4 – 6 would receive a written response.

195. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters requiring exclusion of the press or public.

196. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader opened his statement by paying tribute to the outgoing Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Denniff. He became Chief Executive at Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber in 2010 having joined the organisation from Sheffield Chamber in 2008. During his time at the Chamber, he played an instrumental role in the merger of the Chamber with Barnsley and its subsequent success was in large part testament to the dedicated hard and leadership that he had delivered.

Throughout all of the meetings that the Leader had held with him over the years, he had always been struck by his commitment to the business community, ensuring the Chamber had its membership and the businesses of Rotherham and Barnsley as its focus. As a long-standing member of various partnership forums, he had been a great supporter of partnership working in Rotherham. In all of those forums his contributions had always been trenchant, honest and constructive and his commitment to the town of Rotherham, its businesses and its people had shone through.

Thanks were offered for his contributions to Rotherham along with best wishes for the future and a long healthy retirement.

He explained that the Council had been shortlisted in this year's national Social Value Awards, in the Public Sector Leadership category. The awards recognised organisations and individuals which went above and beyond in providing added value to their communities. The Council's submission recognised the progress made since the launch of the social value policy in December 2019 which included:

- regular reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny,
- all contracts with a greater value than £100,000 to include social value commitments,
- weighting social value commitments at 20% of the bidding process, for which Rotherham was the only local authority in the country to make that requirement, and
- raising the living standards of the other residents through the real living wage.

He was pleased to report that on National Offer Day on 17 April for school place, that 99% of children in the borough were offered one of their preferred school choices in primary school or moving from infants to juniors.

There was great news in Children's Services for our children's home Liberty House, which provided short breaks for children with complex health needs, which was rated as outstanding for the third time in succession. Congratulations were offered to all the staff involved in that achievement

Lastly, he added a reminder about the Blood Donation Service hosting a

“What’s your blood type?” event on 31st May at Riverside House Café.

197. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Resolved: That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24 April 2023 be received.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Allen

198. YORK AND LANCASTER REGIMENTAL MUSEUM COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which sets out the updated Collections Management Policy for the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum. It was explained that RMBC was the sole trustee of the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum, which consisted of 3,900 objects, which were managed by the Museums, Arts and Heritage Collections and Exhibitions team. Around 11,000 photographs and archive items were managed by the Archives team. It was a great testament to the Museums team that the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum chose Clifton Park Museum to host and display this extensive collection.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester sought clarification that the Council was not benefiting or receiving items that had been culturally misappropriated from other areas of the world. Councillor Sheppard explained that as rigorous tests as possible would be conducted to secure knowledge of the provenance of where any new items came from before determining if they should be accepted. In terms of items already held, nothing could be changed other than reporting on the provenance to be as open and transparent where possible.

Resolved: That Council:

1. Approved the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum Collections Management Policy (2023).
2. Approved the delegation to the Assistant Director of Culture, Sport and Tourism in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion for any future changes or new versions of the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum Collections Policy.

Mover: Councillor Sheppard

Seconder: Councillor Cusworth

199. MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS

Consideration was given to the report that detailed the membership of political groups on the Council, political balance and the entitlement to seats on, and the proposed appointments to Committees, Boards and Panels.

It was noted that Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 placed a duty on local authorities to set out the principles to be followed when allocating seats to political groups and for these principles to be followed when determining such allocation following formal notification of the establishment of political groups in operation on the Council. It was noted further that there was a requirement on local authorities to annually review the entitlement of the political groups to seats on the committees of the Council.

The report stated that the allocation of seats must follow 2 principles:

- a) Balance must be achieved across the total number of available seats on Committees; and
- b) Balance must be achieved on each individual Committee or body where seats are available.

There were presently 4 political groups in operation on the Council – the Labour Group (majority), Conservative Group (opposition), Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) Group and Independent Conservative Group – with 5 non-aligned councillors (members who are not in a political group).

There are 149 seats available on committees, boards and panels, which were allocated according to the political balance.

It was noted that there had been changes in the political groups since the report had been published and these would be reflected in a subsequent report to Council.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester requested that his vote against the appointment of Scrutiny Chairs involving the Executive be recorded.

The Monitoring Officer sought clarification that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester was not proposing to vote against the recommendations as his understand was that would prevent any independent member from being appointed seats on any committee but that he was asking for the minutes to record the points made.

Councillor Elliott sought assurance that he would be appointed to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester requested that his vote against the appointment of Scrutiny Chairs involving the Executive be recorded.

Again, the Monitoring Officer sought clarification that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester was requesting that his view was noted in the minutes and was not proposing a vote against the recommendations.

Councillor A Carter explained that when the Liberal Democrat Group voted they were voting on the Liberal Democrat appointments to those

committees.

The vote being carried with one vote against as per Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 appointments to committee for political groups were approved by majority, however the nomination to political balance to permit the appointment of independent councillors to committees was not approved.

Resolved:

1. That the entitlement of the membership of the political groups be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of members to committees.
2. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to committees, boards and panels, and the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.
3. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to joint committees, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.

Cabinet

Leader – Councillor Read

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working – Councillor Allen

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Cusworth

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health – Councillor Roche

Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy – Councillor Lelliott

Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment – Councillor Beck

Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion – Councillor Sheppard

Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Brookes

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance –

Councillor Alam

Audit Committee

Cllr Baker-Rogers (Chair)

Cllr Browne (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt

Cllr Ball

Cllr Mills

Licensing Board

Cllr Ellis (Chair)
Cllr Hughes (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt
Cllr Clark
Cllr Pitchley
Cllr Cooksey
Cllr Hoddinott
Cllr Monk
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Browne
Cllr Aveyard
Cllr Haleem
Cllr Barker
Cllr Castledine-Dack
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Mills
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Licensing Committee

Cllr Ellis (Chair)
Cllr Hughes (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt
Cllr Clark
Cllr Pitchley
Cllr Cooksey
Cllr Hoddinott
Cllr Monk
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Barker
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Mills
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Planning Board

Cllr Atkin (Chair)
Cllr Bird (Vice Chair)

Cllr Taylor
Cllr Cowen
Cllr Andrews

Cllr Keenan
Cllr Sheppard
Cllr Khan
Cllr Havard
Cllr Ball
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Burnett
Cllr Fisher
Cllr Tarmey
1 x Vacancy

Staffing Committee

Cllr Read (Chair)
Cllr Allen (Vice Chair)

1 x appropriate Cabinet Member as determined by the matter to be considered

Cllr Ball
Cllr T Collingham

Standards and Ethics Committee

Cllr McNeely (Chair)
Cllr Griffin (Vice Chair)

Cllr Hughes
Cllr Sansome
Cllr Yasseen
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Z. Collingham
Cllr Tarmey

Parish Councillor Alan Buckley
Parish Councillor Monica Carroll
Parish Councillor Richard Swann

Independent Members:

Mrs. Adela Bingham
Mrs. Mags Evers
Ms. Kate Penney
Mr. Peter Edler

Independent Persons:

Mr. Phil Beavers
Mr. David Roper-Newman

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Cllr Clark (Chair)

Cllr Bacon (Vice Chair)

Cllr Baker-Rogers

Cllr Pitchley

Cllr Cooksey

Cllr Yasseen

Cllr Wyatt

Cllr Browne

Cllr Tinsley

Cllr Baum-Dixon

Cllr Miro

1 x Vacancy

Health Select Commission

Cllr Yasseen (Chair)

Cllr Miro (Vice Chair)

Cllr Griffin

Cllr Havard

Cllr Bird

Cllr Cooksey

Cllr Sansome

Cllr Hoddinott

Cllr Andrews

Cllr Keenan

Cllr Foster

Cllr Baum-Dixon

Cllr Hunter

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Vacancy

1 x Vacancy

Improving Lives Select Commission

Cllr Pitchley (Chair)

Cllr Cooksey (Vice Chair)

Cllr Baker-Rogers

Cllr Griffin

Cllr Hughes

Cllr Monk

Cllr McNeely

Cllr Khan

Cllr Haleem

Cllr Atkin

Cllr Bacon

Cllr Z. Collingham

1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Improving Places Select Commission

Cllr Wyatt (Chair)
Cllr Tinsley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Taylor
Cllr Havard
Cllr Cowen
Cllr Ellis
Cllr Atkin
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Aveyard
Cllr Khan
Cllr Andrews
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Castledine-Dack
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Conservative Vacancy
Cllr C Carter
1 x Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Corporate Parenting Group

Cllr Cusworth (Chair)
Cllr Pitchley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Browne
Cllr Burnett
Cllr Z. Collingham

Introductory Tenancy Review Panel

Chair and Vice Chair to be drawn from members of the Improving Lives Scrutiny Commission or Improving Places Scrutiny Commission

Cllr McNeely
Cllr Cooksey
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Joint Consultative Committee

Cllr Alam (Chair)
Cllr Allen (Vice Chair)

Cllr Clark
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Conservative Vacancy

Health and Wellbeing Board

Cllr Roche (Chair)
Cllr Cusworth

JOINT AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board

Cllr Read

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board Rotational Member

Cllr Lelliott

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Local Enterprise Partnership Board

Cllr Read
Cllr Allen – Substitute

Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Housing and Infrastructure Board

Cllr Brookes
Cllr Beck - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Transport and Environment Board

Cllr Read
Cllr Beck - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Education, Skills and Employability Board

Cllr Lelliott
Cllr Cusworth - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Business Growth and Recovery Board

Cllr Lelliott

Cllr Allam – Substitute

Sheffield City Region Audit, Standards and Risk Committee

Cllr Castledine-Dack
Vacant - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Clark
Cllr Wyatt - Substitute
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Hunter - Substitute

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Cllr Sansome
Cllr Ball

South Yorkshire Pension Authority – RMBC Vice-Chair for 23/24 & 24/25

Cllr Havard (s41 responsibilities)
Cllr David Fisher

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Cllr Haleem
Cllr Baum-Dixon

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Joint Committee

Cllr Atkin

200. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS - THURCROFT & WICKERSLEY SOUTH

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward updates for Thurcroft and Wickersley South as part of the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy.

Update reports had been provided as part of the agenda. However, each Ward Member was invited to speak.

Councillors Z Collingham and T Collingham provided an update on Thurcroft and Wickersley South Ward making the following points:

- Their first priority was to strive for a stronger and cohesive community focusing on empowering the residents.
- Thurcroft Village boasted litter pickers, community gardeners, a

regional veterans association, a bowling club, multiple churches, and residents' associations.

- The energy and passion for doing good in Thurcroft was incredible.
- Wickersley South has a community that had already empowered itself, with a profession and organised Parish Council.
- The residents had a collective voice for community concerns and had worked to preserve and promote long standing community assets such as the community centre.
- A targeted approach to assisting smaller groups where the biggest difference could be made using limited resources to expand or champion existing projects in both villages.
- Their second priority was to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour including the causes and symptoms wherever possible.
- They were cultivating a close relationship with the neighbourhood policing team and holding events or providing equipment to residents.
- The final priority was to develop and improve the local environment.
- They were very lucky to have so many lovely groups, residents and volunteers to interact with.
- Their thanks were offered to the whole neighbourhood's team, the Member and Civic Support team.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

Mover: Councillor Z Collingham Seconded: Councillor T Collingham.

201. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS - BRAMLEY & RAVENFIELD

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward updates for Bramley & Ravenfield as part of the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy.

Councillor Reynolds shared that it he was grateful of the opportunity to serve Bramley & Ravenfield, that it had been a privilege to get to know the people and the area he lived in.

He gave thanks to the exceptional Council staff who he had worked with, in particular Nicola Hacking, Nicola Harding and Mark Hill. He felt that they had been a conduit and a channel for making things happen.

Councillor Reynolds highlighted the facelift Ravenfield crossroads had received and that it was now a focal point for the village, alongside the army of talented helpers and volunteers that ensure that clean up days occurred within the ward.

Councillor Mills echoed Councillor Reynolds sentiments around the support he had received from the housing team and also mentioned Lynn Paul and Andrea and South Yorkshire Police.

He thanked the local community groups, organisations and charities and commented that one of the projects he was most proud of was the British Sign Language signs within the parks in their ward and ensures that the park is accessible for those with disabilities.

It was agreed that details of this scheme would be shared with all members so they could consider this for their own wards.

In summary their ward report focused on successfully integrating themselves into their neighbourhoods, adapting their way of working and listening to their constituents as environments, ways of working, learning and community living have noticeably changed.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

Mover: Councillor Reynolds

Seconder: Councillor Mills.

202. NOTICE OF MOTION - COAL MINES

Notice of Motion – Coal Mines

It was moved by Councillor Miro and seconded by Councillor A. Carter that:

This Council notes:

That planning approval was granted in December 2022 for a coal mine in Whitehaven, Cumbria. This is the first new coal mine to be approved in the UK for over 30 years and it will produce approximately 2.8 million tonnes of coal per year.

The U.K. Climate Change Committee estimates that the mine and the coal it will produce will result in annual emissions of approximately nine million tonnes.

Whilst recognising the historic economic benefits of the coal mining industry on the borough in the past. That Greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal to produce electricity and in industrial processes (for example, in the production of steel) are internationally recognised as the single biggest contributor to climate change, dwarfing the impact of other industries.

This Council Believes:

That opening new coal mines in the U.K. is not the answer to the problems faced by the country.

New coal mines should not be opened in the borough.

That the U.K. should be investing in greener technology in electricity generation and the steel industry.

This Council therefore Resolves:

To affirm its belief that opening new coal mines is wrong.

That council group leaders are requested to write to the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister and members of parliament representing the Borough of Rotherham asking them to bring forward legislation for a permanent ban on the opening of new coal mines in the U.K.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (2) Councillor Mills requested that a recorded vote should be taken on the proposed motion.

In accordance with the Rule of Procedure 5 Members stood to show their support for a recorded vote to be taken on the motion.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (1) a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:

For: Councillors Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, A. Carter, C. Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Ellis, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Tarmey, Taylor, Wyatt, and Yasseen.

Against: Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barley, Burnett, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Elliott, Fisher, Hunter, Jones, Mills, Reynolds, Thompson, Tinsley, Whomersley, and Wilson.

Abstentions: None.

203. NOTICE OF MOTION - TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**Notice of Motion – Support the Expansion of Free School Meals to all Primary School Children**

It was moved by Councillor Elliott and seconded by Councillor Jones that:

According to the Joseph Rowntree trust, 35% of children in our Borough

are living in poverty, this is a similar number of all nearby local authorities.

The ethos of RMBC is “every child to fulfil their potential” to help us achieve that we must make sure that every child has the nutrition they need to be able to learn and work towards their potential during the school day. Not doing so will undermine the efforts of the education and health care workforce to tackle inequalities.

There is no disputing the benefits of free school meals provide to those currently entitled, for many it is the only hot nutritious meal they have in a school day. A quality school meal helps improve children’s concentration and behaviour during lessons and can have an effect on improving school attendance, academic performance and not least on children’s health.

One in three school age children in England living in poverty missed out on free school meals despite families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, this is because of the restrictive eligibility criteria and the lack of universal provision, 7 in 10 children from families on universal credit are not eligible for free school meals.

Excluding so many vulnerable children to free school meals is a real barrier to learning and must be urgently addressed. Now is the right moment for the Government to commit to an expansion of free school meals, providing a nutritional safety net that supports all children to learn and achieve. The clear solution to ensuring fairness and equality across our schools is to extend universal provision as Wales, Scotland and London have committed to deliver.

This Council recognises that:

When children are hungry, they cannot learn properly because it is harder for them to concentrate and so reach their potential.

Free school meals for every child will put money back into parents’ pockets which can be used to pay for other essentials such as heating and food at home or after school clubs or hobbies.

This Council resolves to:

Write to the Secretary of State for Education Gillian Keegan, copying in in our three local MPs, urging her to introduce universal free school meals for all Primary school children at the earliest opportunity.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (2) Councillor Allen requested that a recorded vote should be taken on the proposed motion.

In accordance with the Rule of Procedure 5 Members stood to show their support for a recorded vote to be taken on the motion.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (1) a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:

For: Councillors Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Barker, Barley, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, A. Carter, C. Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Miro, Monk, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Thompson, Wilson, and Wyatt.

Against: Councillors Bacon, Ball, Burnett, Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hunter, Mills, Reynolds, Tinsley, and Whomersley.

Abstentions: None.

204. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Roche Second:- Councillor Cusworth

205. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis Second:- Councillor Hughes

206. PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Planning Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin Second:- Councillor Bird

207. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were no questions to designated spokespersons.

208. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(1) Councillor Whomersley asked why RMBC were not letting Dinnington Town Council see their detailed plans and submitted documents for the successful funding bid for Dinnington main street.

Councillor Lelliott explained that detailed plans and submitted documents included commercially confidential information, for example, on the budget available for land purchase, disclosure of which could prejudice future negotiations. The final documentation would include the bid document with some redactions and describe the elements of the scheme

that the government has agreed to fund, would be published and available to Dinnington Town Council and any other interested party once a final version of the funding agreement was received and signed. It was expected that the funding agreement would be signed by the middle of June and therefore the documentation could be generally issued at that time.

Councillor Lelliott invited Councillor Whomersley to meet 1:1 to view the documentation in his capacity as a Councillor. She stressed that he would be bound by the same confidentiality requirements and would not be lawfully able to share those details with the Town Council.

(2) Councillor Tinsley asked whether RMBC were taking part in 'No Cut May' this year.

Councillor Beck explained that May is an exceptional growing period for the areas that the Council maintain, and by not cutting in May, would have a knock-on effect for the following visit and would take vastly longer to complete, meaning we would fall behind in maintaining standards across the Borough. By not mowing in May, this would also leave increased waste cuttings on the following cut, which could present safety issues.

He went on to explain that the Council was working across services to look at how we better support nature and biodiversity, in line with the commitments made around climate change and biodiversity. Short term actions like not cutting for a single month was unlikely to promote biodiversity in a sustainable way

In his supplementary question Councillor Tinsley expressed his surprise that the Council were not taking part in the scheme and that certain areas in his ward, the grass was quite long. Councillor Beck advised that this time of year, the weather would impact on the grass and it is more challenging to maintain due to the reduced funding from central government.

(3) Councillor Tinsley raised that there was a Charge of £525 for TTRO's for Road Closures for Community Event and that neighbouring Authority's waive this Charge and asked whether this could be reviewed.

Councillor Beck responded by explaining that the Council had a fee in place of £1106 for events that require road closures, and some community events already benefited from the reduced fee.

The Council has waived the road closure fees for managing recent events such as the street parties for the late Queen's Platinum Celebration and the Kings Coronation and the management of the temporary traffic regulation orders for the Remembrance Parades which take place each November across the borough.

He advised that there were no current plans to consider any further

reduction in fees.

(4) Councillor Jones stated that Kimberworth St Thomas' cemetery had now been classed as closed and had been transferred into the Council's grounds maintenance team's portfolio and asked why it had not been added to the Dignity contract.

Councillor Sheppard responded by explaining that The Local Government Act (s215) made it incumbent on the Council to maintain closed churchyards.

The Church retained ownership of the land but the Council was legally required to maintain it. Dignity managed the Council's operational Cemeteries and Crematorium and not closed churchyards which is why it did not fall under the Dignity contract.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that there were other closed cemeteries under the Dignity contract and at present residents were expected to lower standards as a result of it being transferred to the Council. Councillor Sheppard explained that this did not fall under his portfolio but he would ensure that clarification was received and Councillor Jones would be updated.

(5) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked about progress of plans to mark the occasion of the 600th birth anniversary of Thomas Rotherham.

Councillor Sheppard responded by updating that Rotherham Council's Museum, Arts & Heritage service had researched Rotherham Archives and Museum Collections for items related to the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham and that unfortunately there were very few items in the collections related to the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham.

As such the service had been limited in its ability to develop a full exhibition, however it agreed that the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham was an important figure in the Borough's history and a small exhibition would be created at Clifton Park Museum with items from the achievements of this important historical figure.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for reassurance that that Council would give emphasis to this. Councillor Sheppard confirmed that the exhibition would start in July to coincide with the start of the school holidays, hopefully meaning that more children and families would be engaged in the story.

(6) Councillor Tinsley explained that there was once a dog litter bin on a parcel of land between Delta Way and Thicket Drive in Maltby. This had disappeared within the last few years and the Council disputed there ever was one. He asked whether the Council would look into putting a bin back in place.

Councillor Beck confirmed that the service had been out on site and assessed that a bin would be beneficial at the location and that a bin was installed on Monday 22 May and that it had been added to the relevant cleansing team's schedule.

(7) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked that, given the considerable Irish population in Rotherham had any discussions been held with the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust to chronicle its former owner's role in the colonial rule of Ireland.

Councillor Sheppard explained that although the Culture, Sport & Tourism service had a strong working relationship with the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, as an independent organisation, the Trust set its own strategic priorities with regards to the interpretation of the history of the house and its owners, and also its work to engage local communities.

The service was not currently aware of any plans that the Trust had to chronicle its former owner's role in the colonial rule of Ireland.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for assurance that this story would be told. Councillor Sheppard offered to connect Councillor Bennett-Sylvester with the Chief Executive of the Wentworth Woodhouse Trust.

(8) Councillor Tinsley stated that he had recently attended rural and off road crime meeting along with four other Councillors and asked what partnership working the Council was doing along with the police to tackle both off road vehicles and rural crimes.

Councillor Alam explained that the Council worked closely with South Yorkshire Police and as part of wider partnerships to address Community Safety concerns, including off-roading and other rural crimes.

He went on to explain that the Council had taken a range of actions to prevent use of off-road vehicles in rural areas which included target hardening sites, introducing access controls, patrolling hot spot areas and installation of signage. The Council also worked with landowners or farmers for example to assist them in identifying ways to target harden their own land. He advised that the police had the responsibility to address the criminal behaviour itself however the Council aimed to try and prevent the activities to support local communities.

(9) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for initial observations on the impact of voter suppression legislation in recent local elections.

The Leader responded by explaining that officers of Rotherham supported other local Councils on polling day including Barnsley, Kirklees and Sheffield.

The Electoral Commission were evaluating the full impact of the voter ID

requirements by collecting and analysing data collected at polling stations, hearing from electoral administrators and candidates about their experiences of polling day, as well as conducting a national public opinion research about voters' experiences.

There was some analysis by the BBC based on information from 160 of 230 councils where elections were held this year. It showed that 26,165 voters were initially denied ballot papers at polling stations. Of these, 16,588 people came back with valid ID, whilst 9,577 did not return.

It is expected the electoral commission would publish their initial analysis of the implementation of voter ID in June, followed by their full report in September.

To help successfully implement the new voter ID requirements for Rotherham's May 2024 elections, Rotherham would be looking to learn from those councils that had elections this year, as well as having regard for the Electoral Commission's report.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that he was concerned about the potential number of people who did not turn out to vote and not just those who were turned away. The Leader confirmed a plan would come forward to support that work.

(10) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked how many days had passed since repaving work had commenced on Frederick Street.

Councillor Lelliott responded by stating that works commenced on the 17th January 2022 and were completed at the end of April 2023 – total time on site was 67 weeks (316 working days). Work was continuing on Howard Street and the paving needed to link to Frederick Street which is why the area where Frederick Street joined Howard Street still required further work.

In his supplementary questions, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester highlighted the length of time taken and Councillor Lelliott responded by advising that there had been a number of outside influences that had impacted on the delay such as different legislation around town centre bollards. She confirmed that she would look at how delays to works are better communicated with residents.

(11) Councillor Jones raised that at the last Council meeting the Leader agreed to release all the outstanding documentation that the Council holds around the access issue at Grange Park and requested an updated.

The Leader responded that he had hoped to have released the information already however both Solicitors for the Action Group and MHH had objected to the release of the information on the grounds that they are legally privileged and it was not in the public interest to release the information.

The Council was considering those objections. He stated that Action Group could help hurry this process along if it would waive its objections to the release of information that they had provided.

The Council was the only party that was trying to make sure that as much information as possible was available to the Public.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones said that the withdrawal to the objection was on its way and the Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to adhere to the legal process.

(12) Councillor Jones stated that two years ago he was told that he had been given all the documentation he could be given by Legal Services around the Droppingwell access, yet more pages have now been released, why was he told they were legally privileged.

The Leader responded that the Council was of the view that the information was legally privileged and the public interest was not in favour of releasing the information as it could have prejudiced the Council's legal position.

The application of the legal privilege exemption under the Freedom of Information Act required that it is balanced against the public interest. The advice from legal services following correspondence with the Action Group's solicitors and further detailed consideration was that there was not the reasonable prospect of litigation on this issue and therefore the balance was considered to have moved in favour of release.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that the information that has now been released should not have been legally privileged. The Leader advised Councillor Jones that should he have any issues with professional conduct he should raise that through the correct process and not at this meeting.

(13) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked whether this year the totals claimed by members under the members allowance scheme be published on the RMBC website ideally next to each member's profile as well as being in the public notice section of the Rotherham Advertiser.

Councillor Allen confirmed that the Members' Allowances and Expenses for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2023 had been added to the Modgov Library and were available on the Council's Website.

Individual Member Allowance and Expenses information would be added to Modgov and displayed on the Member's home page and updated annually.

(14) Councillor Jones stated that the Council had served a second PCN on Grange Landfill Ltd, around the more than 5 acres out of cultivation in

any period and asked why a “stop order” could not be at the same time if we believed planning permission has been broken.

Councillor Lelliott explained that the planning department had served an enforcement notice on Grange Landfill Ltd regarding the potential breach of the 5 acre limitation condition which required the operator to restore the land that is over 5 acres back so that it is not out of cultivation. An appeal had been received against the serving of the enforcement notice which would be determined by the Planning Inspectorate.

A breach of condition of the planning permission does not render the permission void and subject to the breach being remedied, tipping operations could be undertaken. As a stop notice should only be served where it is essential to safeguard amenity or public safety in the neighbourhood; or to prevent serious or irreversible harm to the environment in the surrounding area. It was not deemed expedient to do so here as the breach in itself did not result in any of these matters over and above the consequences of the planning permission if it was to be carried out lawfully.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that the operator was frantically trying to cover up their violations. Councillor Lelliott said she was happy to meet with Councillor Jones and the planning team to explain what action could be taken within planning law and conditions.

(15) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester raised that he often visited council homes in his ward with no carpets. He asked whether the Council had looked at leaving serviceable carpets of former tenants in place for new tenants as called for by the campaign group End Furniture Poverty?

Councillor Brookes responded that the Council recognised that the costs of furnishing a new home could quickly add up, and that many of our residents were already struggling with increased cost of living. When former tenants left carpets in a good condition, they are left in place for the new tenants. However, unfortunately, in the majority of cases carpets had to be removed due to their age or condition. In those cases, our Furnished Homes service offered affordable furniture and carpet packages to new tenants.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked how often the tenant was given a choice on whether they would like to retain the carpets. Councillor Brookes confirmed she would have to check that level of detail and confirm it to Councillor Bennett-Sylvester.

(16) Councillor Jones stated that Dan Jarvis the ex-SCR Mayor set up a veteran’s homeless fund and at the last covenant group meeting they were told the funding would be in place until the end of the year it’s now been returned. He asked why and who at RMBC had authorised its return.

Councillor Brookes stated that it was a South Yorkshire Mayoral

Combined Authority (SYMCA) fund, administered by local authorities. Rotherham received £16,250. The scheme provided financial support to assist veterans with securing accommodation in the form of rent in advance and bonds, deposits, furnishing and carpeting new homes and other household items. The fund could be personalised to help financially in other ways. Any person who was classed as a veteran and who required financial assistance was eligible.

The rules for the funding were determined by SYMCA. SYMCA agreed to roll over the fund from April 2022 to March 2023 but not from April 2023 to March 2024. This was outside of the Council's control. If a veteran was homeless or at risk of homelessness, the Council could assist using the homelessness prevention fund.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that veterans should not have to turn to charities for support and Councillor Brookes advised that she could not answer for the SYMCA but the Council does provide a number of areas in which they support veterans and serving forces.

209. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor Denise Lelliott – Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

Riverside House

Main Street

Rotherham

S60 1AE

Tel: (01709) 822700

E-mail: denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Email the Council for free @ your local library

Our Ref:

DL/LH

Direct Line:

(01709) 822700

Please Contact:

Cllr Denise Lelliott

16th June 2023

Mr John Gamble

Via email

Dear Mr Gamble

Public Question – Council Meeting 24th May 2023

Thank you for submitting the following question to the Council Meeting on Wednesday 24th May 2023:

24 Spinneyfield has not just altered from a private residential property to a HMO it is also operating as a business, with the adult social care dept it's main client. A change of use should surely have been posted to allow neighbours an opportunity to air their views!

I can advise that in planning terms, an HMO is a house that is shared and occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom but who do not live together as a single household.

While I understand your concerns about the lack of consultation, I am advised that the current use of the property is considered to fall within Class C3 and does not require planning permission.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Denise Lelliott

Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor Denise Lelliott – Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

Riverside House

Main Street

Rotherham

S60 1AE

Tel: (01709) 822700

E-mail: denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Email the Council for **free** @ your local library

Our Ref:

DL/LH

Direct Line:

(01709) 822700

Please Contact:

Cllr Denise Lelliott

16th June 2023

Mr and Mrs Cobley

Via email:

Dear Mr and Mrs Cobley

Public Question – Council Meeting 24th May 2023

Thank you for submitting the following question to the Council Meeting on Wednesday 24th May 2023:

The care business operated by Rhodus Properties with Heathcote Care Group was set up in an underhand manner not allowing neighbours any opportunity to object until the business had started operating. We would like an explanation as to why Planning Department have only recently asked them to submit an LDC. Why wasn't this asked for at the beginning of development.

I can advise that the use does not require planning permission and so there is no opportunity for the occupiers of neighbouring properties to object. The planning department cannot force someone to submit a Lawful Development Certificate for something that does not require planning permission, however, following complaints received the developers were advised that a lawful development certificate could clarify that planning permission was not required. My understanding is that the operators are now engaging in this process voluntarily.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Denise Lelliott

Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor Denise Lelliott – Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

Riverside House

Main Street

Rotherham

S60 1AE

Tel: (01709) 822700

E-mail: denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Email the Council for **free** @ your local library

Our Ref:

DL/LH

Direct Line:

(01709) 822700

Please Contact:

Cllr Denise Lelliott

16th June 2023

Mr Whelan

Via email

Dear Mr Whelan

Public Question – Council Meeting 24th May 2023

Thank you for submitting the following question to the Council Meeting on Wednesday 24th May 2023:

Can the Council Planning Department confirm why they let the development of 24 Spinneyfield proceed without appropriate consultation. Since opening, the premises there has been some disruption on the road as well as excessive noise coming from the rear garden on numerous occasions in the afternoon, bearing in mind I live three doors down the road.

I can advise that the current use of the building does not result in a change of use (in planning terms) and therefore does not require planning permission. Similarly, if you were to rent your own house out to students for example, providing that there are no more than 6 in total and that they live together as a single household and share basic facilities then you would not need to obtain planning permission as there is no change of use – it is still being used as a house.

This is the same here where 6 non-related people are living together as a single household and where care is being provided.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Denise Lelliott

Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

E-mail: cllsaghir.alam@rotherham.gov.uk

Email the Council for free @ your local library!

Ref	Direct Line:	Please Ask For
SA/LH	01709 255959	Cllr Saghir Alam

16th June 2023

Councillor Ian Jones
Elected Member

Via email: cllrjan.jones@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Jones

Supplementary question to Council – 24th May 2023

Dear Cllr Jones

Thank you for your supplementary question at the last Council Meeting regarding other closed cemeteries under the Dignity contract and at present residents were expected to lower standards as a result of it being transferred to the Council.

I think there may be some confusion between “closed church yards” and “closed cemeteries”.

Dignity/Glendale Services do not manage any “closed churchyards” under the Council contract, but do manage one municipal “closed cemetery”, which is High Street Cemetery in Rawmarsh.

A church yard can be closed and the maintenance of it transferred to the Council through the correct procedures. This “closed church yard” is then managed by Green Spaces, not Dignity/Glendale, but ownership of the church yard remains with the Church of England.

The only other sites that are maintained by Glendale Services are three Parish Cemeteries. These are Thurcroft, Treeton and Aston/Swallownest.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Saghir Alam OBE
Boston Castle Ward
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance

This page is intentionally left blank

**Councillor Dave Sheppard, Cabinet Member
For Social Inclusion**

Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

E-mail: cllr david.sheppard@rotherham.gov.uk
Email the Council for free @ your local library!

Ref	Direct Line:	Please Ask For
DS/LH	01709 255948	Councillor Dave Sheppard

7th June 2023

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester
Elected Member

Via email: Michael.sylvester@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Bennett-Sylvester

Council Meeting – Wednesday 24th May 2023

Thank you for your question at Council regarding Wentworth Woodhouse and its intentions regarding the chronicling of its previous owner's colonial links.

As discussed at the meeting, the Culture, Sport & Tourism service has a strong working relationship with the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, as an independent organisation, the Trust sets its own strategic priorities with regards to the interpretation of the history of the house and its owners. However, I did agree to connect you to the Chief Executive of the Trust for you to follow up with them directly.

The Chief Executive is Sarah McLeod who can be contacted by email at:
Sarah@wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Dave Sheppard
Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor Amy Brookes – Cabinet Member Housing

Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE
Tel: (01709) 23566
E-mail: amy.brookes@rotherham.gov.uk
*Email the Council for **free** @ your local library!*

Our Ref: AB/LH	Direct Line:	Extension: 23466	Please Contact: Councillor Amy Brookes
--------------------------	---------------------	----------------------------	--

5th June 2023

Councillor Michael Bennett-Sylvester
Elected Member

Via email: Michael.sylvester@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Bennett-Sylvester

Council Meeting – Wednesday 24th May 2023

Thank you for your supplementary question at Council on 24th May regarding how often the tenant was given a choice on whether they would like to retain the carpets.

I have made further enquiries with the Housing Service regarding how often carpets fitted by the previous tenant are left in the property for the new tenant. Whilst the service does not record such incidences, the service estimates that carpets are left in approximately 10% of properties vacated, with half of those being assessed as of sufficient quality to remain. The new tenant then has the choice to retain the existing carpets or remove them and have their own carpets fitted.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Amy Brookes
Cabinet Member for Housing

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting
Council – 19 July 2023

Report Title
Petitions

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?
No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive

Report Author(s)
Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
01709 823566 or emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
01709 807665 or barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected
Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides Members with a list of all petitions received by Rotherham MBC since the last Council meeting held on 24 May 2023 and details which petitions will be presented by members of the public at this Council meeting.

This report is submitted for Members' awareness of the items to be presented to the Council meeting.

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Council receive the petitions listed at paragraph 2.1 of the report and the lead petitioners be entitled to address the Council for a total period of five minutes in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
3. That the relevant Strategic Directors be required to respond to the lead petitioners, as set out in the Petition Scheme, by Wednesday 2 August 2023.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

PetitionsPetitions

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council refreshed its Petition Scheme in May 2019, following its introduction in 2010 after legislative changes requiring local authorities to respond to petitions. Whilst the Localism Act 2011 repealed that statutory requirement, the Council has maintained its commitment to responding to issues raised by local people and communities in respect of matters within the Council's remit.
- 1.2 The current Petition Scheme sets thresholds for various routes that petitions can take through the decision-making process:-
- Up to 20 signatures – not accepted as a petition.
 - 20 to 599 signatures – five-minute presentation to Council by Lead Petitioner and response by relevant Strategic Director.
 - 600 to 1,999 signatures – five-minute presentation to Council by Lead Petitioner and referral to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for review of the issues, followed by response by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board setting out their findings and recommendations.
 - 2,000 signatures and above – five-minute presentation to Council by Lead Petitioner followed by a 15-minute debate of the petition by the Council, followed by response by relevant Strategic Director on behalf of the Council.
- 1.3 This report is submitted for information to detail the number of petitions received since the previous Council meeting held on 24 May 2023 and the route that these petitions will take through the Council's decision-making processes.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The following petition has been received which meets the threshold for presentation to the Council meeting and for a response to be issued by the relevant Strategic Director:

Subject	Number of Valid Signatures	Lead Petitioners	Directorate
Speeding and overweight vehicles, Brampton Road	112	Mr Andy Robinson	Regeneration & Environment
A57 pedestrian crossing near Elmwood Farm public house roundabout	213 verified (Total number of signatures received – 221)	Mr Liam Fletcher	Regeneration & Environment

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 This report is submitted for information and Members are recommended to note the content and resolve that the petition received be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 This report is submitted for information in order to detail the petition received by the Council since the previous Council meeting held on 24 May 2023. There are no consultation issues directly associated with this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Under the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme, Strategic Directors are accountable for the provision of responses to petitions received by the authority. The scheme provides for responses to be issued to the lead petitioner following the Council meeting. As a customer service standard, the Council has committed to responding to petitions within ten working days of the Council meeting.

5.2 The deadline for responding to these petitions is Wednesday 2 August 2023.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no financial or procurement implications directly associated with this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications directly associated with this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

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

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no specific equalities or human rights implications directly associated with this report.

11. Implications for Ward Priorities

11.1 There are no direct implications on ward priorities arising from the petition referred to earlier in this report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no known implications for partners arising from the petition referred to earlier in this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 As this report is submitted for information, there are no risks associated with the presentation of information in respect of petitions received.

14. Accountable Officers

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Report Author: Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
01709 823566 or emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
01709 807665 or barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk

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

This page is intentionally left blank

THE CABINET
Monday 19 June 2023

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Allen, Beck, Cusworth, Lelliott, Roche and Sheppard.

Also in attendance Councillor Clark (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alam and Brookes.

160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Member	Agenda Item	Interest Type	Nature of Interest
Councillor Beck	Agenda Item 7 (SEN Resource Bases)	Personal Interest.	School Governor

161. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A question was received from Mr Azam who asked why it was so difficult to share the Terms of Reference or give enough advance notice of when the consultant was meant to come as part of the independent review.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Consultant had withdrawn at the last moment.

In his supplementary question he advised there was a Muslim bereavement liaison group that didn't know the terms of reference and he believed the Council were creating a toxic environment.

The Monitoring Officer responded saying he disagreed and that the Council were committed to consultation and involve various groups and consult with groups of various religious communities. The Leader suggested that Mr Azam provided his details to the Monitoring Officer and this could be followed up.

Mr Hussain asked a question relating to the Muslim public graveyard and stated that Councillor Alam previously advised he had only been aware of the flooding issues since the Easter weekend which was conflicting information.

In Councillor Alam's absence, the Leader recalled that Councillor Alam was recounting when he had personally been advised of the issues.

Mr Hussain advised that the flooding issues had been there for years, before Dignity had taken over the contract and questioned when exactly the Council became aware of the issues.

The Leader said he would attempt to find out the information and for Mr Hussain to leave his details so this could be clarified.

Mrs Khan stated that the Muslim Burial Council had been notified at the last minute that the review had been cancelled and wanted an explanation as to why this had happened.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Consultant withdrew from the process and that the Council were considering its next steps.

In her supplementary question she stated that she had been advised that the Consultant felt like they were being controlled by the Council. The Monitoring Officer advised this didn't tie in with his understanding and that he would check and respond in writing.

162. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2023 should include an amendment at minute 152 recommendation 3 needs to say 'bases' as opposed 'basis' but then be approved as a true and correct of the proceedings.

163. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that appendices to Minute No. 171 contained exempt information, however, the meeting remained open to the public and press throughout.

164. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

Consideration was given to the report submitted that summarised the findings and recommendations of the Health Select Commission spotlight review into access to primary care. The review was prompted by insight provided by Healthwatch Rotherham, regarding continued enquiries from residents who were having difficulty accessing GP appointments.

The report sought approval for the recommendations to be submitted to NHS South Yorkshire / Rotherham Place Board for consideration and response.

Although it wasn't a large study, Scrutiny took feedback from partners and residents seriously, access to services were a priority of the Health Select Commission and the review took a closer look at the availability of GP

appointments.

The review found after speaking to GP representatives and primary care commissioners, that in the recovery from the pandemic, Rotherham's numbers of appointment rebounded the fastest in South Yorkshire and at the time of the review, there were approximately 5000 GP appointments available across Rotherham every day. There was more work that can be done to address the delays and improve understanding around accessing GP appointments and the report sought the approval for the recommendations to be submitted to South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, in particular Rotherham Place Board.

The recommendations were then proposed

Resolved: That Cabinet

1. Approved the submission of the following recommendations to NHS South Yorkshire / Rotherham Place Board for their consideration and requested a written response to the Director of Public Health for reporting to a future Cabinet meeting:
 - a. That the principle should be agreed that responsibility for patient access to primary care would be shared between the primary care practices and their patients.
 - b. That consideration was given to how all Place Partners demonstrated responsibility to communicate honest wait times, where this information was available, for all health and care services system-wide.
 - c. That any trend connecting a practice or GP with excessive delays or Urgent and Emergency Care Centre attendances should be analysed, and appropriate action taken.
 - d. That consideration was given to how to increase general understanding of how to recognise symptoms as needing medical attention, where to seek help, and within what timeframe.
 - e. That Place partners, including the Primary Care Networks (PCNs), considered how to expand general understanding of the wider options when seeking medical advice, with a view to expediting consultation with the most appropriate professional or service to be able to address their need.
 - f. That NHS South Yorkshire/Rotherham Place Board gave due consideration to enhanced safety-netting to mitigate risks associated with an increasingly patient-led model of care initiation and follow up.

- g. That NHS South Yorkshire/Rotherham Place Board considered how messaging and communications would figure in managing patient expectations around waits in the evolving model of care.
- h. That consideration was given to how Councillors may play an expanded role in signposting and managing expectations among Rotherham residents, as the sector worked toward a new model of care which takes account of ongoing resource pressures on health services.
- i. Whereas recruitment remained a limiting factor for expansion of social prescribing, that recruitment to social prescribing roles be prioritised, and consideration given to how to make participation in social prescribing in Rotherham more attractive to professionals.

165. SEN RESOURCE BASES

Consideration was given to the report submitted which provided an update in respect of SEND Sufficiency Phase 4 delivery of the SEND Resource base education provisions in mainstream schools following the SEND Sufficiency Phase 4 approved by Cabinet paper in October 2022.

The report detailed the key activities undertaken in completing an expression of interest process for schools to host a SEND resource base, with updates on the selection process, due diligence undertaken to date and next steps in relation to delivering the roll out of Rotherham SEND Sufficiency Strategy Phase 4.

In Rotherham there were just under 20% of pupils identified as having special education needs or disability and this included those with an Education, Health and Care Plan but also those receiving support without such a plan.

Cabinet heard that, to continue to meet the educational needs of children in Rotherham there was a responsibility to create a sufficiency of education provision to meet the needs of all pupils.

SEN resource bases were provisions attached to mainstream schools providing specialist therapeutic input and support for pupils with a specific SEND need. Pupils would be able to access mainstream classes with peers but also individual support.

The first of the planned 140 places should be available from September with the remainder available over the next two academic years. The bases would allow the Council to support parental wishes to access education in Rotherham as opposed to out of area placements where could benefit from remaining in the community they live. They also provide value for money, avoiding the need to leave to go to a specialist provision

which is more expensive for the Council.

The Leader remarked that it was good news for Rotherham and that 3.3 millions pounds was being invested on the 140 places.

The Leader listed the following schools as being part of the investment: Thrybergh Academy, Winterhill Academy, Dinnington Academy, St Pius Catholic High School, Wales High, Brinsworth Academy, Dalton Foljambe, Bramley Sunnyside, Meadow View Highfield Farm, Thurcroft Junior Academy, Maltby Manor Academy, Brinsworth Whitehill.

He acknowledged that for many parents it was too difficult to access appropriate school places, right across the country and parents were given difficult decisions to make. He stated that a significant amount of money would make a difference to young people to access more appropriate education closer to their homes.

The recommendations were then proposed.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the activity undertaken and progress to date on SEND Sufficiency Phase 4 including changes to the original profile of provision following the expression of interest process.
2. Formally approved 140 places at the 13 schools successful in their expression of interest to host a SEN resource base as outlined in paragraph 2.6 and limited to the High Needs Safety Valve capital allocation as outlined in paragraph 6.1 subject to Department of Education approval.

166. SCHOOLS ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report submitted which detailed that all schools had a statutory duty to provide 'reasonable adjustments' for their pupils to make sure disabled students were not discriminated against. There were three main categories of adjustment that schools were expected to make for children: Improving access to the curriculum, improving physical access to buildings including providing specialist equipment and improving access to information.

The updated Rotherham School's Accessibility Strategy identified all schools' statutory responsibilities to support their pupils and the support available to schools from the Council in relation to their own Accessibility planning.

Rotherham were committed to delivering improved special educational provision with a capital allocation of £375k per year (two separate pots of money) for both mainstream and special schools for the next four years.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board acknowledged the work that had taken place on this when it was presented to Scrutiny and a comprehensive session had taken place and that it was an extremely good news story for Rotherham.

The recommendations were then proposed.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the School Accessibility Strategy.
2. Approved the Capital Accessibility Funding Framework and schools' accessibility application process.
3. Agreed that there would be a future report provided to Cabinet to approve the outcome of the application for the capital funding.

167. FINANCE UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report that provided an update to Cabinet on a number of financial matters. The report was provided as an interim update for Cabinet, following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2023/24 report at Council on 1 March 2023 and in advance of the Financial Outturn 2022/23 report and May Financial Monitoring 2023/24 report that should be submitted to Cabinet in July 2023.

This report also provided an update on the Council's administration of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment and Household Support Fund for 2023/24 along with a number of Capital Programme variations and an update on Feasibility Funding received from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

The expected outturn position had improved and was now down to £8.4 million. The biggest single pressure being the impact of inflation and energy prices, but the £8.4 million position should improve before the year end. This was an improvement from £7.3 million at the end of 2022-2023 and the Council was able to use less reserves than anticipated.

The main improvement was down to a number of adult care placements that were able to be picked up through NHS funding and further improvements in terms of Children and Young People's placements.

The recommendations were then proposed.

Resolved:

1. That the update on the revenue budget financial outturn 2022/23 was noted.
2. That the Council's progress on the delivery of the Local Council

Tax Support Top Up payment 2023/24 was noted.

3. That the Council's delivery of the Household Support Fund 2022/23 was noted.
4. That Cabinet delegated the decision to allocate and spend the £3m Feasibility Fund to the Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director Financial Services.
5. That Cabinet approved the capital budget variations as detailed in section 2.7 of the report.

168. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - MODERN SLAVERY

Consideration was given to the report to outline the outcomes and findings of the spotlight review into modern slavery. The review was prompted following the Council's adoption of the Charter against Modern Slavery, to examine the effectiveness of partnership interventions that aimed to tackle modern slavery in Rotherham.

Councillor Clark advised that there was an innovative approach to this spotlight review which was an overview rather than in depth analysis. The key challenges faced were discussed with partners in dealing with this issue and explored what was working well and exchanged ideas on areas for improvement. The Cabinet Member, Officers and partners were thanked for their openness in responding to the enquiries. The Board was assured by the evident commitment across South Yorkshire Modern Slavery partnership to tackle exploitation. The examples provided showed the complexity and sensitivity of this work along with the part each agency played. The Safer Rotherham Partnership 2022-25 sighted tackling modern slavery and human trafficking as one of its priorities. It was hoped that the observations and recommendations made a timely contribution to the agenda. The recommendations were submitted to Cabinet and the Safer Rotherham Partnership for response.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety & Street Scene echoed his thanks for everyone's engagement with this review. The detailed work following the report would be carried out and brought back to Cabinet in due course.

The recommendations were then proposed.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet received the report and considered the following recommendations:
 - i. That the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) gives consideration to rolling out a targeted learning and

development offer/campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery, how to spot the signs, risks and how to raise concerns and make referrals:

- a) to front-line staff across key agencies;
 - b) to elected members;
 - c) to the general public and targeted business such as letting agencies (commercial and residential).
- ii. That the SRP gives consideration to mapping the local modern slavery landscape to identify high risk industries and hot spots (using the example of Bristol City Council).
 - iii. That consideration is given to establishing an RMBC Modern Slavery Internal Governance Group including representation from services who may encounter modern slavery (for example, Procurement, Licensing, Environmental Health, Training Standards, Neighbourhood teams, Social Care and Housing).
 - iv. That consideration is given to how young adults at risk or experiencing modern slavery are safeguarded during the transition from children to adult services and are age assessed appropriately.
 - v. That consideration is given to developing referral pathways to ensure that modern slavery victims (both adult and child) have access to appropriate support (housing, advocacy, mental health support) on a timely basis.
 - vi. That consideration is given to re-launching the Strategic Partnership information sharing group at the earliest opportunity to improve the way that agencies can share data and intelligence, including examining how IT systems can work better together.
 - vii. That consideration is given to widening the levels of investigation and auditing of contracts procured by the Council to focus on the 'layers' of sub-contractors, including binding specifications to audit or 'dip sample' contracts along the supply chain.
 - viii. That consideration is given to how the Procurement Team can engage with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Supply Chain Advisor to improve processes, joint working and awareness.
 - ix. That consideration be given to allowing victim advocates to make representations to Housing Assessment Panels on behalf of victims of modern slavery.

2. That Cabinet formally considered its response to the above recommendations within two months of its receipt, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
3. That the recommendations as approved, will be submitted to the Safer Rotherham Partnership for dissemination to the South Yorkshire Modern Slavery Partnership for consideration and response.

169. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which detailed that in March 2020, the Council introduced a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. This Policy built on the previous Policy (introduced in 2015) which was widely seen to be setting the standard for other local authorities to benchmark against in relation to Taxi and Private Hire Licensing.

The 2020 Policy was now due for review and provided an opportunity to ensure that the Council's approach to Taxi and Private Hire Licensing continued to reflect best practice, addressed local challenges and set standards that would ensure that the standard of licensed driver, vehicle and operator in Rotherham remained high.

The report outlined the key changes being considered and sought approval from Cabinet to commence a period of consultation in relation to these proposals.

The recommendations were then proposed.

The key changes to the policy included out of town vehicles, vehicle age and emissions, disabled access for wheelchair users.

The current policy was recognised as national best practice but a revised policy was required to drive forward and so that the public were kept informed about the services they were receiving.

The Leader confirmed that there would be a substantial piece of public consultation on this policy.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approved the draft policy that should be consulted upon and authorised officers to commence consultation as outlined in the report.

170. MULTIPLY PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the reported that detailed the next steps for the Multiply programme. Multiply was a national programme to improve numeracy skills, focusing on supporting people aged 19+, who did not have a Level 2 Maths qualification.

Multiply funding was allocated through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), which intended to devolve funding to the four local authorities in South Yorkshire to arrange delivery in their local area. The Council received £194,000 for 2022/23, which was granted to voluntary and community organisations for local delivery of predominantly engagement and confidence building work.

SYMCA was providing a further £408,000 per annum to the Council for each of the years 2023/24 and 2024/25. This would provide funding for a Multiply Manager to design and secure implementation of a Multiply Programme in Rotherham and grant funding to commission third party organisations to contractually deliver the programme outcomes and activity agreed with the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority.

The recommendations were then proposed and it was highlighted that when presented at Scrutiny that it was a concern that members had not heard about the programme and more effective communication was required to ensure there was a greater reach.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the acceptance and planned spend of an annual Multiply grant of £408,000 from SYMCA, for each of the years 2023/24 and 2024/25.
2. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, to agree grant awards, within the terms and conditions of the funding, to colleges, community organisations and other training providers to deliver the agreed learning activity and outputs for the Programme.
3. That consideration was given to how the Council's recruitment and selection processes recognised and promoted successful completion of the Multiply programme as evidence of an applicant's numeracy skills.
4. That further updates of the programme's progress should be submitted to OSMB.

171. 3-7 CORPORATION STREET COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update to Cabinet on progress of the Compulsory Purchase Order for 3-7 Corporation Street (comprising of two derelict, fire damaged buildings, formerly a nightclub/bar and a restaurant) and confirmed the Council's commitment to the redevelopment of the site following acquisition.

The recommendations were then proposed.

It was confirmed that the Council was a step closer to achieving its aims and that ultimately looking for a private developer but should that fail, the Council would have plans in place for the development to still go ahead. It was a key gateway site in the Town Centre and aligned with the Master Plan.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress made, next steps, and anticipated timescale to confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order for 3-7 Corporation Street.
2. Noted the cost of the proposed redevelopment of the site and the sources of funding currently available (as set out in Appendix 1)
3. Approved the proposed use of the Town Centre Investment Fund to ensure sufficient funding is in place for the redevelopment of the site in the event that a private sector development partner is not found and/or further external funding is not secured.

172. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PROJECT - DRUMMOND STREET CAR PARK

Consideration was given to the report that sought approval for the Electric Vehicle Charging Project at Drummond Street Car Park, contributing to the Council's Net Zero 2040 Carbon Targets. The project included Electric Vehicle (EV) charging systems using power from solar photovoltaic (PV) canopies and would be funded through a combination of Government Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot funding and private investment.

The recommendations were then proposed.

The funding would be used for 28 charging bays which would be appropriate for a number of different charging vehicles. There were over 2000 properties without off-street parking within a 10 minute walk of Drummond Street Car Park and would provide the opportunity for many homes to be able to charge their vehicles.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approved the £1.29m funding into the Capital Programme for the delivery of the Electric Vehicle Charging Project at Drummond Street Car Park, subject to planning approval.
2. That Cabinet approved the procurement of a concession contract to design, install and operate the Electric Vehicle Charging systems.

173. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Consideration was given to this report. Outside bodies were external organisations which had requested that the Council appoint a representative to them. Outside bodies had separate governance structures to the Council. Appointments to outside bodies could be an important mechanism for community leadership, partnership and joint working and knowledge and information sharing.

The Council's Constitution stated that Cabinet was responsible for the appointments to Outside Bodies. This report presented the nominations received and recommended the appointment of the nominees to the various organisations and partnerships.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed that councillors be appointed to serve on outside bodies, as detailed on the schedule in Appendix 1.

174. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Consideration was given to the circulated report, the contents of which were included as part of the relevant items and the details included accordingly.

175. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 10 July 2023, commencing at 10.00am in Rotherham Town Hall.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 19 July 2023

Report Title

Annual Review and Adoption of the Constitution

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report is submitted to recommend the approval of amendments to various parts of the Council's Constitution following a periodic review by the Constitution Working Group.

The proposals within this report have been reviewed and are supported by the Constitution Working Group which is a cross political group of Councillors.

The Council is recommended to approve the amendments to the Constitution.

Recommendations

That Council approve:

1. The Substitution Scheme set out in Paragraph 2.7 be added to the Constitution.
2. The amendments to the Motions process and the Motion/Amendment Flow Chart set out in Appendix 1 be added to the Constitution.
3. The provisions of the Constitution relating to administrative amendments set out in Paragraphs 2.15 and 2.16 be made to the Council's Constitution.
4. The amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee set out in Appendix 2.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Rules of Debate for Motions and Amendments Flow Chart

Appendix 2 Audit Committee - Revised Terms of Reference

Background Papers

- The Council's Constitution
- The report of the Governance Manager, Democratic Services presented to the Constitution Working Group
- The reports of the Assistant Director, Legal Services/Monitoring Officer presented to the Constitution Working Group.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Annual Review and Adoption of the Constitution

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council continues to seek to strengthen its governance arrangements as part of its continued improvement journey and continues to review all aspects of its Constitution under the oversight of the Constitution Working Group.
- 1.2 Good governance is a core tenet of both the Council's improvement journey and the way the Council now operates. The Constitution has been subject to external review and significant changes have been made to the way in which proposals are developed by Members and officers and how decisions are made across the authority. As the Constitution is the document that empowers the Authority to discharge its function, it is important that the provisions are reviewed, and changes made to strengthen the Council's governance and accountability arrangements.
- 1.3 This report presents the minor amendments identified through discussions with Members of the Constitution Working Group as means of improving the Council's governance regime as set out in the papers and approved as a part of that process.

2. Key Issues

Substitution Scheme

- 2.1 The proposal is to allow Councillors to nominate substitutes themselves from within their Group. It is felt that this would allow the substitution of Councillors and enable support to be provided from within their Group.
- 2.2 Councillors are appointed to Committees based on nominations from their Groups via the Group Leader further to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 2.3 There have been various issues which have required that substitute Councillors are able to support colleagues by attending meetings on behalf of colleagues where particular issues arise. These have included maternity leave, illness, vulnerability, among other reasons.
- 2.4 The Council is required to ensure that Committees are Politically Proportionate and therefore substitutions must be from within the same Group as the Councillor who is a member of the Committee.
- 2.5 The present position is that substitutes are not permitted. This has presented a number of issues in the Council being flexible in supporting Councillors as their circumstances change in a temporary way. For this reason, it is not considered that this approach fits with the broader policy context and enables Councillors to support each other.

- 2.6 The proposal is to allow Councillors to nominate substitutes themselves from within their Group. This would allow the substitution of Councillors and enable support to be provided from within their Group.
- 2.7 Should Council approve the change the scheme would be as follows:

Substitute Members

Councillors may nominate substitutes from within their political group for committees, joint committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels (and the Monitoring Officer shall have authority to give effect to those nominations in accordance with this procedure rule), provided that in the case of the:

- (a) Regulatory committees, sub-committees and Audit Committee, substitutes must have received suitable training;*
- (b) Scrutiny committees, all councillors except Cabinet members are permitted to be substitutes*

Notice of substitution (or any cancellation) stating the name of the substitute must be given to Democratic Services before the commencement of the meeting concerned. Notification is for each meeting or until further notice.

If the original appointed member arrives when the meeting is in progress, the substitution will remain effective and the original appointed member will not be allowed to participate in the decision making. It is not possible to substitute for part of a meeting only.

The meeting shall be informed of any substitutions before the commencement of the meeting.

Substitute members have all the powers and duties (including compliance with any mandatory training requirements) of any appointed member but are not able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the appointed member.

Rules of Debate for Motions and Amendments Flowchart

Part 1 – Appendix 4, Procedure Rule 15 – Notices of motions, order of Motions, consideration of motions and unconnected business

- 2.8 It is proposed that the Council meeting Motion/Amendment Flow Chart (Appendix 2) be added to the Constitution to provide a clear guide of the process to be followed when considering a motion and any subsequent amendments.
- 2.9 It is important that the process by which the motions and any subsequent amendments should be considered during the Council meeting is clear,

transparent, and easy to understand for Councillors, officers and members of the public.

- 2.10 Whilst the process is set out within the Council's Constitution in Appendix 4, Council Procedure Rules, the inclusion of a flowchart creates a simplified guide. This will enable Members, Officers and members of the public to understand how the motion, along with any amendments, will be introduced, debated and voted upon during meetings.
- 2.11 In addition, it is proposed to reduce the time permitted for seconding a motion to 5 minutes from the present 10 minutes with the rationale that the main presentation of a motion is with the presentation made by the Councillor proposing the motion.
- 2.12 There will also be administrative changes to the wording in the Constitution to ensure that the approach taken is clear in the wording and to make clear that where those proposing a motion have accepted a proposed amendment prior to the meeting the amendment will be incorporated into the Motion for debate before Council and will therefore not need moving and seconding separately.

Administrative Changes

Part V – Paragraph 18.3

- 2.13 The Constitution currently sets out that “the full Council will only approve changes to the Constitution after considering proposals from the Chief Executive, the Assistant Director of Legal Services and the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services. The Assistant Director of Legal Services may make clerical amendments to the Constitution to reflect any changes in legislation or changes in the title and responsibilities of Council officers or bodies without need for reference to the Council.”
- 2.14 The terms of this read as if they are limited to changes relating to legislation and the names of roles of Council Officers or bodies and would not seem to cover clerical amendments such as errors in dates etc in the Constitution. The proposed amendment would remove this ambiguity.

Overview of Changes

- 2.15 Changes to the Constitution will only be approved by Full Council, after consideration of the proposal by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services.

If, in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer, a change is:

- (a) a minor variation; or
- (b) required to be made to remove any inconsistency, ambiguity or typographical correction; or
- (c) required to be made as a result of changes to legislation;
- (d) required to be made so as to put into effect any decision of the Council.

Then the Monitoring Officer may make such a change. Councillors will be advised accordingly.”

- 2.16 It is also proposed to confirm in the Constitution that Council would be required to continue to confirm the Constitution annually.
- 2.17 It should be noted that none of the above affect the role of the Constitution Review Working Group.

Audit Committee

- 2.18 At its meeting on 14th March 2023 The Audit Committee approved proposals to recommend to Council amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Committee. This was considered following updates to the CIPFA Guidance for audit committees and adapted these recommendations for this Council.
- 2.19 Revised Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 2 and the main changes are:
 - The increased number of independent members, from one to two.
 - Paragraph 6 The inclusion of reviews of risk registers, to bring it into line with current practice.
 - Paragraph 8 The review of compliance with CIPFA’s Financial Management Code. (This has previously been considered as part of the paper on the Annual Governance Statement.)
 - Paragraph 13 To deal with any matters referred to the Committee by the Statutory Officers. (previous provision was for s151 officer only.)
 - Paragraph 15 More in-depth review of the Annual Governance Statement.
 - Paragraph 17 Monitoring the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met. (This has previously been considered as part of a paper from Finance prior to the year-end.)
 - Paragraph 22 To receive reports on progress in implementing actions from external inspections and audits. (The committee receives reports every six months.)
 - Paragraph 31 The provision of free and unfettered access for the external auditors to the audit committee chair and the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee. (In reality, this has always been the case.)

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The Council has committed to continue to review the Constitution on an annual basis. The proposals set out above in this report have been put forward through discussion and observation by Members and officers on the basis of strengthening governance arrangements.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Constitution Working Group has been consulted in the development of the proposals submitted to Council for approval.

4.2 In addition, the Audit Committee has proposed the amendments set out in paragraph 2.19 above.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 If Council approves the recommendations set out above, then the changes to the Constitution could be implemented with immediate effect.

5.2 The Assistant Director of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring implementation of the changes once agreed.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no further financial or procurement implications arising from the proposed changes to the Constitution.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 As required by statute, the Council should require the Constitution to be current and coherent as the key enabling document that enables the Authority to exercise its decision-making powers and procedures.

7.2 The changes proposed within this report are compliant with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, which introduced the requirement for Local Authority Constitutions, and subsequent legislation which has further strengthened Local Authority governance.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no implications for children and young people, or vulnerable adults associated with this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 In reviewing all recommendations, the Constitution Working Group had regard to equalities requirements and did not identify issues within the proposals recommended as part of this report. Consequently, there are no equalities or human rights implications arising from the proposals within the report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change arising from this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are no implications for partners arising from the proposed amendments to the Constitution.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Any update to constitutional procedure creates the potential for confusion and misunderstanding. Mitigations will be put in place to address any such risks.

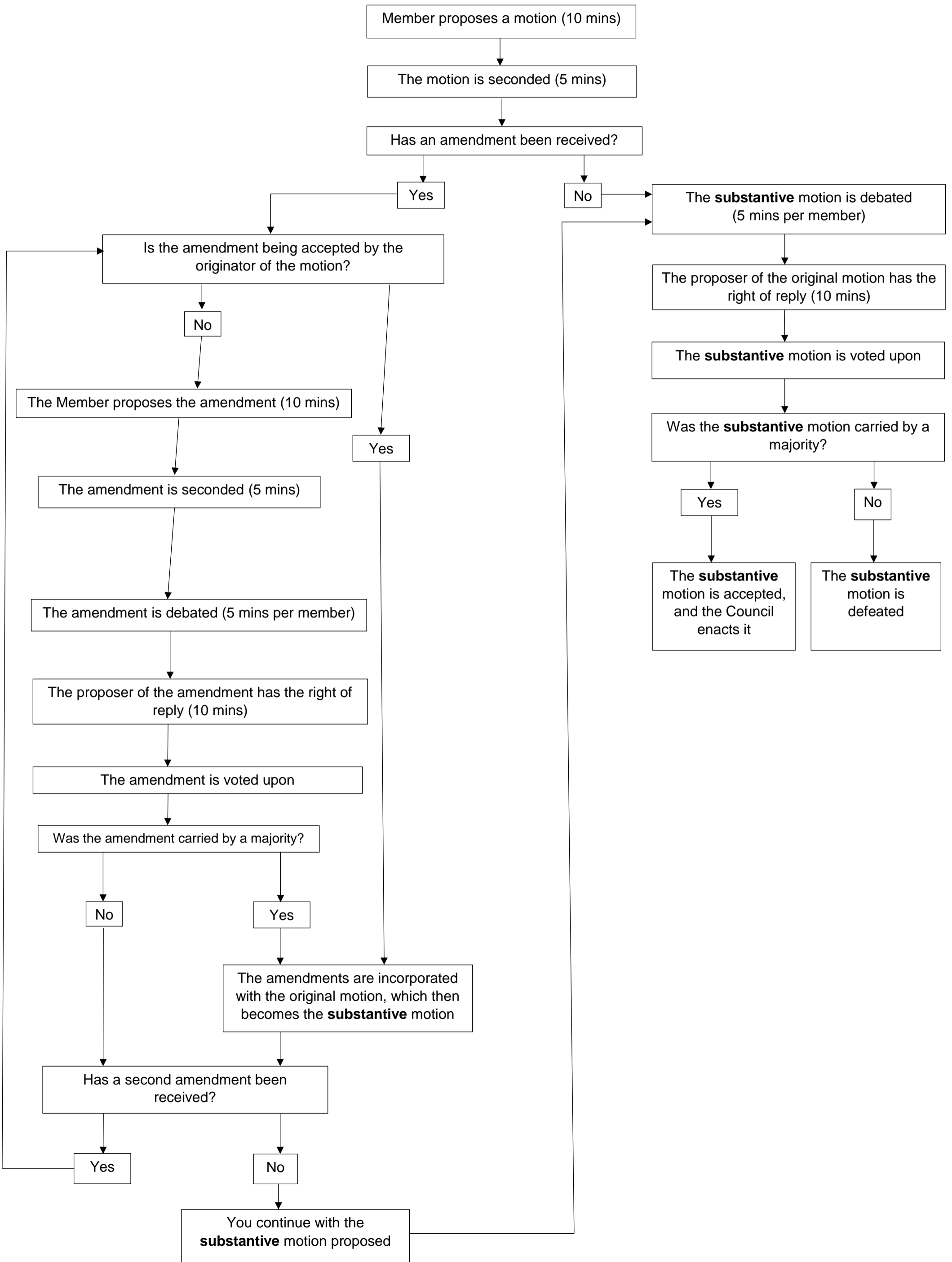
Risk	Mitigation
Members may be unaware of the new procedure rules	Clear communication of the changes All web pages and online guidance will be updated Member bulletins will be used to further communicate information.
New rules and procedures may be unclear or have ambiguities	Monitor the application of the new rules The Monitoring Officer to provide advice and guidance where required
The public may be unaware of the new procedure rules	All web pages and online guidance will be updated

Accountable Officer(s)

Phil Horsfield, Assistant Director of Legal Services
Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Report Author: Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

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



This page is intentionally left blank

Audit Committee Terms of Reference March 2023

Committee Size

To be comprised of:-

- Five Councillors, none of which are members of the Cabinet.
- Two people who are not councillors or officers of the Council (independent members).

Statement of purpose

- 1 The Committee's purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to the Council that those arrangements are effective.
- 2 The Committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

Governance, risk and control

- 3 To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the Good Governance Framework, including the ethical framework and consider RMBC's Code of Governance.
- 4 To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council
- 5 To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Committee.
- 6 To review risk registers and consider their adequacy and effectiveness in capturing and assessing risks and completing mitigating actions.
- 7 To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- 8 To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
- 9 To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 10 To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
- 11 To monitor the Counter-Fraud Strategy, actions and resources.
- 12 To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.
- 13 To deal with any matters referred to the Committee by the Statutory Officers.

Governance Reporting

- 14 To review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account Internal Audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's Framework of Governance, risk management and control.
- 15 To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the Authority's objectives.
- 16 To approve the final AGS for publication.

Financial Reporting

- 17 To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
- 18 To review the draft annual Statement of Accounts following approval by the s151 Officer. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed.
- 19 To approve the final audited annual Statement of Accounts for publication. Specifically, to consider whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- 20 To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Arrangements for Audit and Assurance

- 21 To consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
- 22 To consider reports on progress against actions from external inspections and audits.

External audit

- 23 To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).
- 24 To approve the external auditor's annual plan.
- 25 To approve any revisions to the external auditor's plan.
- 26 To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
- 27 To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- 28 To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- 29 To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.

- 30 To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies
- 31 To provide free and unfettered access to the Audit Committee Chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Committee.

Internal Audit

- 32 To approve the Internal Audit Charter.
- 33 To approve the risk-based Internal Audit plan, including Internal Audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- 34 To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based Internal Audit plan and resource requirements.
- 35 To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Internal Audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- 36 To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- 37 To approve the internal or external assessments of Internal Audit against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 38 To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on Internal Audit's performance during the year. These will include:-
 - updates on the work of Internal Audit including progress against the plan; key findings and issues of concern; action in hand as a result of Internal Audit work; and performance indicators.
 - regular reports on the results of Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
 - reports on instances where the Internal Audit function does not conform to the PSIAS and LGAN, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS
- 39 To approve the Head of Internal Audit's annual report including:-
 - The statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results of the QAIP that support the statement.
 - The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion.
- 40 To consider summaries of specific Internal Audit reports.
- 41 To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Internal Audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- 42 To contribute to the QAIP and in particular, to the External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit that takes place at least once every five years.
- 43 To provide free and unfettered access to the Audit Committee Chair for the Head of Internal Audit, including the opportunity for him/her to meet privately with the committee.

Treasury Management

- 44 To review Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and procedures and to be satisfied that controls are satisfactory
- 45 To receive annual reports on Treasury Management, specifically the outturn report and the mid-year report
- 46 To review the treasury risk profile and adequacy of treasury risk management processes
- 47 To review assurances on Treasury Management, for example an Internal Audit report, external audit report or other review.

Accountability arrangements

- 48 To report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.
- 49 To report to full council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.
- 50 To submit a report on the work of the Committee to the Council on an annual basis, including a conclusion on compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 19 July 2023

Report Title

Membership of Political Groups on the Council, Political Balance and Entitlement to Seats

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

Not applicable

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
01709 823566 or emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, places on local authorities the duty to allocate seats to political groups and sets out the principles to be followed when determining such allocation, following formal notification of the establishment of political groups in operation on the Council.

There is a requirement to annually review the entitlement of the political groups to seats on the committees of the Council.

The allocation of seats must follow two principles:

- (a) Balance must be achieved across the total number of available seats on committees; and
- (b) Balance must be achieved on each individual committee or body where seats are available

There are presently 4 political groups in operation on the Council – the Labour Group (majority), Conservative Group (opposition), Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) Group and Independent Conservatives (IC) Group – with 5 non-aligned councillors (members who are not in a political group). This figure includes the current (at the time of writing the Report) Dinnington Ward vacancy.

The Political Balance of the Council has changed due to changes in the number of Conservative, Non-aligned Members and the creation of a new Conservative Independent Group which took place in May 2023.

The vacancy in Dinnington Ward created by ex-councillor Wooding's disqualification as per the Local Government Act 1972 Section 85(1) "if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority".

The results of the By-Election will be factored into the Political Balance report to the next Council Meeting in October 2023.

There are 149 seats available on committees, boards and panels and under the calculation the Labour Group is entitled to 86 seats, the opposition Group (Conservative) has reduced from 43 to 35 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group 10 seats, the Independent Conservative Group 5 seats. The seats allocated to the non-aligned councillors have risen from 5 to 13. It should be noted that there may be minor differences between the nominal allocation and actual allocation to ensure appropriate balance across all committees.

Recommendations

That Council are asked:

1. To note the political balance of the Council has changed due to changes in the number of Conservative, Non-aligned members and the creation of a new Conservative Independent Group which took place in May 2023.
2. That the entitlement of the membership of the political groups be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of members to committees as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.
3. That the nomination for the Local Pension Board Rotational Member and Transport for the North Audit & Governance Committee be agreed as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

The Council's Constitution.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Membership of Political Groups on the Council, Political Balance and Entitlement to Seats

1. Background

- 1.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, places on local authorities the duty to allocate seats to political groups and sets out the principles to be followed when determining such allocation. The main principles, which must be satisfied sequentially, include:
- (a) That the number of seats on ordinary Committees/Bodies which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary Committees of that Authority, as is borne by the Members of that group to the membership of the Authority (i.e. the allocation of the **total** number of seats available must mirror the political composition of the council).
 - (b) That the number of seats on the Body (Committee, etc.), which are allocated to each political group, bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that Body as is borne by the number of Members of that group to the membership of the Authority (i.e. the allocation of seats on **individual** committees must mirror the political composition of the council).
- 1.2 Local authorities are able to depart from the statutory provisions where there is no vote against doing so.
- 1.3 Those members not in a political group may still at the discretion of the Council, be allocated a due share of seats, although the Council will decide how to allocate seats to non-aligned councillors.
- 1.4 Councillor Wooding, at the date of the last Council (24 May 2023) was an Independent Councillor. That Dinnington seat is currently vacant with the By Election taking place on 13 July 2023. The seat allocation for Independent members takes account of this additional seat. This allocation would potentially alter the allocations to the various Select Committees. However, as the seat is currently vacant this has been discounted for the purposes of seat allocation on this occasion.
- 1.5 In line with the provisions of the Council's Constitution, appointments were made to committees of the Council at its annual meeting. This report confirms and updates the entitlement to seats on committees.

2. Political Groups

- 2.1 The Proper Officer has received formal notification, under the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, of the establishment of four political groups in operation on the Council, namely:

Name of Group	Designated Leader & Deputy Leader (Number of Members)
Labour	Leader – Councillor Chris Read Deputy Leader – Councillor Sarah Allen (34 Members)
Conservative	Leader – Councillor Simon Ball Deputy Leader – Councillor Lewis Mills (14 Members)
Name of Group	Designated Leader & Deputy Leader (Number of Members)
Liberal Democrat	Leader – Councillor Adam Carter (4 Members)
Independent Conservative	Leader – Councillor Emily Barley (2 Members)

- 2.2 Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, Councillor Wilson, Councillor Elliott and Councillor Jones are unaffiliated to a political group. For the purposes of this report, these members are regarded as non-aligned councillors along with the current Dinnington Ward vacancy.

3. Allocation of Seats

- 3.1 The existing allocation of Committee seats is as follows:

Regulatory Committees/Boards	Seats Available	L	C	LD	IC	NA
Audit Committee	5	3	1	0	0	1
Licensing Board	21	12	5	1	1	2
Licensing Committee	15	9	4	0	1	1
Planning Board	15	9	4	1	0	1
Staffing Committee	5	3	2	0	0	0
Standards and Ethics Committee	8	5	2	0	0	1
Overview and Scrutiny	Seats Available	L	C	LD	IC	NA
Overview & Scrutiny Management Board	12	7	3	1	0	1
Health Select Commission	18	10	4	2	1	1
Improving Lives Select Commission	18	10	4	2	1	1
Improving Places Select Commission	18	10	4	2	1	1

Other Bodies	Seats Available	L	C	LD	IC	NA
Corporate Parenting Group	5	3	1	0	0	1
Introductory Tenancy Review Panel	4	2	1	0	0	1
Joint Consultative Committee	5	3	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	149	86	36	9	5	13

- 3.2 The revised allocation will be included in the Mayor's letter together with the nominations to those bodies.
- 3.3 The allocation process must be applied 'so far as is reasonably practicable' to achieve a balanced outcome. The allocation of the 149 seats to the political groups is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Members of Political Group} \times \text{Number of Seats to be allocated}}{\text{Total Number of Members of Council}}$$

For the 149 seats available in applying principle (a) in paragraph 1.1 and providing for seats to non-aligned members in line with the Council's custom and practice, this gives:

Political Group	New Seat Entitlement
Labour	86
Conservative	36
Liberal Democrat	9
Independent Conservative	5
Non-Aligned	13
Total	149

- 3.4 In the table in paragraph 3.1 above, the committees and panels listed have locally agreed provisions in respect of their membership which were determined by the Council. For ease of reference additional information relating to appointments is set out below:

Panel	Description of Role and Function
Employment Appeals Panel	Appeal Panels shall comprise three members of the Council selected from a pool of 8 members (two of whom shall be Cabinet Members, four who shall be scrutiny members and two whom shall be members of the opposition.)

Panel	Description of Role and Function
Corporate Parenting Group	The Corporate Parenting Group shall comprise of five members (three of whom shall be from the majority political party and two of whom shall be from the majority opposition party).
Introductory Tenancy Review Panel	The Panel shall comprise of at least three elected members from the Improving Lives Scrutiny Commission or Improving Places Scrutiny Commission and a housing policy advisor.
Joint Consultative Committee	The Committee shall comprise of the Deputy Leader, two Cabinet Members and two members of an opposition group.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 The Local Government and Housing Act and the Council's Constitution provide for the appointment of members to serve on committees and other bodies as a power reserved to the Council.
- 4.2 The Council may determine not to appoint to the committees at this meeting, however this will delay the conduct of the Council's business until the next available Council meeting. This option is not recommended.
- 4.3 As listed in the recommendations section at the beginning of the report, the preferred option is:
- That the entitlement of the membership of the political groups be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of members to committees as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.

5. Consultation on proposal

- 5.1 The respective political groups have been advised of the requirement for political balance and have been requested to provide amendments to the Head of Democratic Services for the available seats ahead of this meeting.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 There is a requirement for the Council to make appointments to committees, boards and panels at its meeting on 19th July 2023 to ensure it is meeting its requirements relating to political balance.

7. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no financial and procurement implications directly arising from this report.

8. Legal Advice and Implications

8.1 The legislative requirements are set out at paragraph 1.1 above.

9. Human Resources Advice and Implications

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The appointment of members to serve on committees and other bodies of the Council will indirectly impact on children and young people and vulnerable adults through the activities and decisions of those bodies. There are no apparent direct implications at the time of writing this report.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the report. Political groups are required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 when nominating Member appointments to committees and other offices.

12. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

12.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change arising from this report.

13. Implications for Partners

13.1 The appointment of councillors to serve on its committees, boards and panels is designed to have a positive impact on the Council's relationship with partners and stakeholders to enhance the relationship through the presence of accountable and elected representatives.

14. Risks and Mitigation

14.1 By having regard to the detail of the report above in respect of meeting statutory requirements, any risk implications will have been mitigated. Therefore, there are no risks to be borne in mind in respect of the recommendations.

Accountable Officer(s)

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager, Democratic Services
Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
01709 823566 or emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk
This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 19 July 2023

Report Title

Recommendation from Cabinet – Revision to District Heating Charges
2023/24

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager
Paul.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval to revise the price of District Heating for 2023-24 given the significant reduction in the price of utilities to the Council since the price was agreed by the Council on 1 March 2023.

It is also proposed that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Financial Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree revised pricing in certain circumstances.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Notes the decision Council took in March 2023 to increase the District Heating unit charge to 20.68 per Kwh for 2023-24 so that an average bill was equivalent to the heating element of the then Government's Energy Price Guarantee, leading to a proposed District heating budget deficit of £2.592m.
2. Notes that the actual cost to the Council of purchasing energy to supply District Heating schemes is lower than the cost assumed in March 2023; and that the agreed unit charge now exceeds the Energy Price Guarantee and the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) price cap for July 2023 onwards.
3. Agrees that in light of these changes, the District Heating unit charge per Kwh for 2023-24 is reduced to 15.94 pence per kwh and weekly prepayment charges are reduced by 59% to 67% depending on property size (Option 4 in this report),

bringing prices into line with the Ofgem price cap for July 2023 onwards and well within the Energy Price Guarantee.

4. Agrees that this charge should be backdated to 3rd April 2023.
5. Agrees that the decision to reduce the price further during 2023-24 be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Financial Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. The delegation would only be used to respond to a change in Government policy or a significant change in the Ofgem price cap that has the effect of necessitating a lower unit price, and the approved budget deficit of £2.592m cannot be exceeded through a delegated decision.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Revised 2023-24 Pricing Options
- Appendix 2 Part A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment form
- Appendix 3 Part B – Equality Analysis form
- Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

- Housing Revenue Account Rents & Service Charges 2023-24 – (Council - 1 March 2023)
- District Heating Scheme Charges Review – (Council -13 December 2017)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Cabinet – 10 July 2023

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 10 July 2023

Report Title

Revision to District Heating Charges 2023/24

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager

paul.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Thurcroft & Wickersley South, Boston Castle, Bramley & Ravenfield, Hellaby and Maltby West, Maltby East, Keppel, Greasbrough, Kilnhurst and Swinton East, Hooper, Brinsworth, Aston & Todwick, Aughton and Swallownest, Wickersley North, Rotherham West, Anston & Woodsetts, Dalton & Thrybergh

Report Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval to revise the price of District Heating for 2023-24 given the significant reduction in the price of utilities to the Council since the price was agreed by the Council on 1 March 2023.

It is also proposed that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing and Assistant Director of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree revised pricing in certain circumstances.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet note the content of the report and recommends that Council: -

1. Notes the decision Council took in March 2023 to increase the District Heating unit charge to 20.68 per Kwh for 2023-24 so that an average bill was equivalent to the heating element of the then Government's Energy Price Guarantee, leading to a proposed District heating budget deficit of £2.592m.
2. Notes that the actual cost to the Council of purchasing energy to supply District Heating schemes is lower than the cost assumed in March 2023; and that the

agreed unit charge now exceeds the Energy Price Guarantee and the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) price cap for July 2023 onwards.

3. Agrees that in light of these changes, the District Heating unit charge per Kwh for 2023-24 is reduced to 15.94 pence per kwh and weekly prepayment charges are reduced by 59% to 67% depending on property size (Option 4 in this report), bringing prices into line with the Ofgem price cap for July 2023 onwards and well within the Energy Price Guarantee.
4. Agrees that this charge should be backdated to 3rd April 2023.
5. Agrees that the decision to reduce the price further during 2023-24 be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Financial Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. The delegation would only be used to respond to a change in Government policy or a significant change in the Ofgem price cap that has the effect of necessitating a lower unit price, and the approved budget deficit of £2.592m cannot be exceeded through a delegated decision.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Revised 2023-24 Pricing Options
- Appendix 2 Part A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment form
- Appendix 3 Part B – Equality Analysis form
- Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

- Housing Revenue Account Rents & Service Charges 2023-24 – (Council - 1 March 2023)
- District Heating Scheme Charges Review – (Council -13 December 2017)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

- Cabinet – 19 June 2023
- Council – 19 July 2023

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Revision to District Heating Charges 2023/24

1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for revised District Heating charges for 2023-24 given the reduction in utility prices paid by the Council since the Council approved the Housing Revenue Account Rent and Service Charges 2023-24 on 1 March 2023.
- 1.2 Approximately 1,260 properties receive heat through the Council's 18 District Heating schemes.
- 1.3 During 2017-18, there was an extensive review of District Heating pricing to ensure that charges were fair and reasonable for all tenants. A revised schedule of charges was approved by the Council on 13th December 2017. Scheme charges were fixed until April 2022, when a tapered increase over 4 years was agreed.
- 1.4 During 2022-23, significant increases in gas and electricity costs led to the Council operating the District Heating network at a deficit of £1.612m. This equates to support of £1,279 per District Heating user. In 2021-22 the total deficit was only £29.5k.
- 1.5 At the time of writing the HRA Rent and Service Charges 2023-24 report, it was predicted that the Council's gas price for 2023-24 would increase by approximately 100%. This meant the cost of operating the District Heating network was predicted to increase from £2.273m in 2022-23 to £4.738m in 2023-24. The Council approved a recommendation to increase District Heating charges by 186.43% for 2023-24 to 20.68 pence per kwh. Even with this increase, the forecast operating deficit was £2.59m for 2023-24.
- 1.6 The energy market remains volatile. Whilst the market has stabilised over the past few months, some uncertainty is anticipated to continue during 2023/24. However, projected falls in energy costs and changes to Government policy means a revision to District Heating pricing is necessary. In developing revised pricing proposals, a balance has been sought between achieving sufficient income to deliver a viable District Heating network, and the impact the price charged will have on tenants and residents.
- 1.7 Ongoing work mitigating the effects of the cost-of-living crisis is a priority. The Council is committed to supporting tenants and will do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention. This includes supporting tenants to continue to pay their District Heating charges by offering support with money, benefits, and debt advice.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Cost of gas to the Council

- 2.1.1 The Ofgem price cap for an average dual fuel bill reduced to £2,074 from the 1 July 2023 meaning it is less than the Government's Energy Price Guarantee.

This reduction in the cost of gas and electricity is also reflected in the price the Council will pay in 2023-24. At the time of budget setting it was anticipated the price paid by the Council for gas would increase by approximately 100%.

2.2 **Government Policy**

2.2.1 The Council decision to increase prices by 186.43% was based on matching the then proposed Energy Price Guarantee that an average dual fuel bill would be £3,000 per year. This was considered the fairest way to ensure all tenants were paying a similar price for their energy. This meant an average gas bill would have been £1,611 per year and so District Heating prices were increased to match that figure.

2.2.2 Subsequently, in the national budget of 15 March 2023 the Government announced that the Energy Price Guarantee would remain frozen at £2,500 per year for an average dual fuel customer until the end of June 2023, instead of increasing to £3,000 per year as was proposed. It is unclear what will happen to the Energy Price Guarantee after this date. However, given the Ofgem price cap reduced to £2,074 per year on the 1 July 2023, even if the Energy Price Guarantee remained at £2,500 per year it will make no difference to the price paid for energy.

2.2.3 In the budget the Government also announced an extension to the Energy Bill Discount Scheme (EBDS) with a cap on the price heat network providers (i.e. the Council in this instance) pay for gas and electricity during 2023-24. The Council needs to apply for support. If secured, it is anticipated that EBDS will halve the price the Council would pay for gas and electricity. Daily standing charges would remain at the contract value as they are not supported by EBDS.

2.3 **Impact on the cost of operating the District Heating Network**

2.3.1 As a result of the factors outlined above, the cost of operating the District Heating Network in 2023-24 will be significantly less than anticipated. Depending upon the Council's eligibility for the Energy Bill Discount Scheme this could be up to £3m less than budgeted. Further details are provided in Section 6 of the report.

2.3.2 In reviewing the pricing, the following principles have been applied:

- As far as possible, pricing should be aligned with other residents' bills, i.e. those not on District Heating.
- Further spikes (up or down) in District Heating pricing should be avoided.
- The operating deficit should be reduced over time.

2.3.3 Given the uncertain economic and policy environment, it is proposed that authority to reduce the price further (should this be necessary within 2023-24), is delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Financial Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. The delegation would only be used to respond to a change in Government policy or a significant reduction in the Ofgem price cap. The approved budget operating deficit of £2.592m should not be exceeded.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Appendix 1 shows the impact of each proposed option in terms of actual unit charge and both weekly and annual prepayment charges per type of property. It should be noted that the prepayment charge is the amount a tenant would pay to their rent account on an annual basis. The annual cost to the tenant will depend on their actual usage, therefore the annual cost could be higher or lower than the amounts in Appendix 1.

3.2 A tapered reduction to the weekly pre-payment charges have been applied based on property size to ensure the charges are proportionate. Tenants will be advised of their usual annual usage so that they can consider their payment options.

3.3 Under all options, it is proposed to back date charges to the 3 April 2023. Residents on credit meters will receive an adjustment to their rent accounts on 31 July 2023 and weekly payments for the remainder of 2023-24 will be as detailed in Appendix 1. All residents will receive a letter confirming the price reduction and details of how they can request a refund for any credit on their rent account. A refund will only be paid where there is a credit and the equivalent of one week's rent will be left on the account in accordance with rental agreement terms and conditions.

3.4 For residents on pre-payment meters, a credit based on their actual usage between 3 April and 31 July 2023 will be applied to the heat meter in early August 2023.

3.5 Option 1 – Retain approved 2023-24 pricing

3.5.1 This option would leave pricing unchanged at 20.68 pence per kwh for the remainder of 2023-24. The cost of operating the District Heating network under the Council's utility contract is forecast to be £2.775m for 2023-24. Retaining current pricing would mean the Council would operate the network at a deficit of £0.629m. This option is not recommended as it does not align an average District Heating bill to those of other residents and is inconsistent with the Government Energy Price Guarantee and, from July, the Ofgem price cap.

3.6 Option 2 – Full cost recovery

3.6.1 Pricing would need to increase to 31.77 pence per kwh, an increase of 11.09 pence, to achieve full cost recovery. This would result in an average bill of c£2,140. This option is not recommended as it would see bills of District Heating customers increase whilst other residents are forecast to see significant falls in their utility bills. It is also inconsistent with the Government Energy Price Guarantee and, from July, Ofgem price cap.

3.7 Option 3 – Match an average bill to the Government’s energy discount guarantee (currently £2,500 per year for an average dual fuel bill)

3.7.1 Under this option, the unit rate would decrease from 20.68 pence to 19.86 pence per kwh, giving an average annual cost per user of £1,337. If the Council receives EBDS support, District Heating would generate a surplus of £127k in 2023-24. The Scheme would return to deficit in 2024-25. If EBDS support is not received, District Heating would run at an operating deficit of £981k in 2023-24. This option is not recommended as it would result in the average District Heating bill being higher than the forecast bill for other residents not on District Heating as, from July, it will be inconsistent with the Ofgem price cap.

3.8 Option 4 – Match an average bill to the Ofgem energy price cap (from July, c. £2,000 per year for an average dual fuel bill) - Recommended

3.8.1 The unit rate would decrease from 20.68 pence to 15.94 pence per kwh and would mean an average annual cost per user of £1,074. If the Council receives EBDS support, District Heating would run at a deficit of £195,432 in 2023-24. If EBDS support is not received, District Heating would run at an operating deficit of £1,303,432 in 2023-24. This option is recommended as it would result in the average District Heating bill being similar to other resident’s gas bills under the Ofgem energy price cap, assuming the price cap of £2,074 from July 2023 for a dual fuel bill remains at a similar price for the rest of the financial year.

3.8.2 If the actual Ofgem energy price cap dropped significantly below c£2,000 per year for a dual fuel bill it is proposed authority is delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing to reduce the price to match the revised Ofgem price cap for an average dual fuel bill. Any reduction in price would be capped at a rate so that the budgeted deficit for operating the District Heating network would not exceed £2.59m in 2023-24.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The Council has a strong track record of tenant engagement and has recently been recognised by the Tenant Participation and Accreditation Service for the excellent framework that is in place to consult and work with tenants on how services are developed and improved.

4.2 The Housing Involvement Panel will be updated in respect of District Heating charges on 12 July 2023.

4.3 Officers have held multiple drop-in sessions with tenants throughout March 2023 about the increased cost of District Heating in 2023-24 offering benefit checks, referrals to support agencies and supporting applying for the Council’s Energy Crisis Scheme.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 This report will be considered by the Council on 19 July 2023 and subject to approval, would be implemented from 31 July 2023 with pricing back dated to 3 April 2023.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 The District Heating charges and budgets for 2023/24 were set during a period of high-cost volatility. At that time, it was anticipated that there would be a 100% increase on actual costs. The District Heating fuel contract costs were not finalised until early May 2023 and are significantly lower than those anticipated at budget setting. The usage during 2022/23 was also lower than anticipated.

6.2 The fuel costs in all options consider the revised costs of contract fuel and the lower usage rate. Table A below provides a breakdown of current revenue budget and anticipated costs as a result of the new contract rates.

Table A: Fuel Costs 2023/23	Current Budget	Updated Contract Cost	Updated Contract Cost with EBDS Support
Electricity	373,428	238,996	205,631
Gas	4,162,468	2,399,971	1,294,051
Bio Fuel	202,451	136,162	136,162
Total	4,738,347	2,775,129	1,635,844

6.3 The Government portal to apply for the EBDS monies opened early in late April 2023. The Council is in the process of completing an application and if secured this support will be provided for the full financial year to 31 March 2024.

6.4 Impact on budgets

6.4.1 Table B below shows the potential District Heating expenditure and the net income that each option could achieve based on the proposed District Heating unit rates and the same unit usage as in 2022/23. The deficit position for each of the options is also shown. Option 4 (recommended) would see a reduction in the deficit from £2.592m to £1.303m or £0.195m if EBDS support is secured.

TABLE B		OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3		OPTION 4	
Impact on budgets	2023/24 Budget (current)	New Contract Cost but retain agreed charge rates	New Contract Cost Full Cost Recovery	New Contract Cost - Cap at £2.5k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost with EBDS - Cap at £2.5k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost - Cap at £2.0k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost with EBDS - Cap at £2.0k avg dual fuel
Expenditure (Fuel only)	4,738,347	2,775,129	2,775,129	2,775,129	1,635,844	2,775,129	1,635,844
Net Income*	-2,145,759	-2,145,759	-2,774,846	-1,794,028	-1,762,742	-1,471,698	-1,440,412
Deficit	2,592,587	629,370	283	981,101	-126,898	1,303,432	195,432

* net income figure includes income from a primary school in Greasbrough which is in contract to pay a percentage of the costs of the fuel.

6.5 Financial Impact of Option 4

6.5.1 The new contract rates without the EBDS support would see the HRA budget position improve from an anticipated deficit of £2.593m to a deficit of £1.303m. If the EBDS monies are secured, the anticipated deficit reduces to £0.195m.

6.5.2 The District Heating unit rate (including VAT) would reduce from 20.68p to 15.94p. The weekly prepayment charge would reduce per the values in Appendix 1. The average annual bill would reduce from £1,610 to £1,074.

6.6 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 Under section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) the Council has a broad discretion in setting such reasonable charges as it may determine, and the Council must from time-to-time review such changes as circumstances may require.

7.2 The duty to review and make changes is itself subject to the requirements for notice of a variation set out in Section 103 of the 1985 Act. Prior to serving a notice of variation a preliminary notice must be served which informs the tenant of the proposed variation and invites them to comment upon the proposal within a reasonable time frame. This should follow any Council decision following a recommendation from Cabinet.

7.3 The Council must ensure that any support provided via various schemes is passed on in a just and reasonable way to end users.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 No direct implications.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The Local Authority is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. An initial equalities screening has been carried out to assess the impact of the proposals within the report to reduce District heating charges for 2023/24 and an Equality Impact Assessment put in place. This will ensure the Council continues to promote positive impact and reduce or remove any negative impact as a result of the changes. An Equalities Analysis is attached at Appendix 2 and 3.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 This report recommends decreases to the unit and prepayment charges for tenants on the Council's District Heating schemes and this may impact on their future energy usage. A completed Carbon Impact Assessment is attached to this report at Appendix 4.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. No direct implications for partners and other directorates.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The greatest risks are the continued volatility in the energy market and an uncertain policy and regulatory context, including no visibility of what the Ofgem price cap will be during winter 2023/24 and into 2024. This is mitigated through the proposed delegation and the budget headroom.
- 13.2 All budgets carry a certain level of risk in that unforeseen circumstances may arise, causing additional pressures on the level of resources applied.

14. Accountable Officers

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk

James Clark, Assistant Director of Housing
james.clark@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	26/06/23
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	21/06/23
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	20/06/23

Report Author: Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 – Revised District Heating Charging Options 2023-24

District Heating Options	2023/24 Budget (current)	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3		OPTION 4	
		New Contract Cost but retain agreed charge rates	New Contract Cost Full Cost Recovery	New Contract Cost - Cap at £2.5k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost with EBDS - Cap at £2.5k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost - Cap at £2.0k avg dual fuel	New Contract Cost with EBDS - Cap at £2.0k avg dual fuel
Unit rate (Inc VAT)	0.2068	0.2068	0.3177	0.1986	0.1986	0.1594	0.1594
Expenditure (Fuel only)	4,738,347	2,775,129	2,775,129	2,775,129	1,635,844	2,775,129	1,635,844
Net Income	-2,145,759	-2,145,759	-2,774,846	-1,794,028	-1,762,742	-1,471,698	-1,440,412
Deficit	2,592,587	629,370	283	981,101	-126,898	1,303,432	195,432
Difference Budget Fuel vs Option fuel		-1,963,217	-1,963,217	-1,963,217	-3,102,503	-1,963,217	-3,102,503
Difference budget deficit vs Option deficit		-1,963,217	-2,592,304	-1,611,486	-2,719,486	-1,289,155	-2,397,155
<u>Pooled Schemes Weekly Charge (inc VAT)</u>							
Bedsit	16.00	16.00	19.50	12.00	12.00	9.50	9.50
1 Bed	25.88	25.88	34.50	22.00	22.00	17.50	17.50
2 Bed	32.65	32.65	43.50	28.00	28.00	21.50	21.50
3/4 Bed	42.93	42.93	57.50	36.00	36.00	28.50	28.50
<u>Annual average Prepayment (inc VAT)</u>							
Bedsit	832.00	832.00	1,014.00	624.00	624.00	494.00	494.00
1 Bed	1,345.76	1,345.76	1,794.00	1,144.00	1,144.00	910.00	910.00
2 Bed	1,697.80	1,697.80	2,262.00	1,456.00	1,456.00	1,118.00	1,118.00
3/4 Bed	2,232.36	2,232.36	2,990.00	1,872.00	1,872.00	1,482.00	1,482.00
<u>Annual average Bill (inc VAT)</u>	1,610.91	1,610.91	2,140.93	1,337.90	1,337.90	1,074.00	1,074.00

This page is intentionally left blank

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: Revision of District Heating Charges 2023-24

Directorate: ACH & PH

Service area: Housing Services

Lead person: Paul Elliott

Contact number: 22494

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

The impact on existing and future council tenants of decreasing District heating charges from 20.68 p per kwh to 15.94p per kwh in 2023/24 (back dated to 3 April 2023). This is a result of the energy prices beginning to stabilise which will reduce the cost of operating the district heating schemes.

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.

APPENDIX 2

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

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

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

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

District heating charges are charged direct to service users and not the wider community.

District heating charges are not an employment matter.

District heating are fixed assets and the proposal will not affect location, who provides the service of procurement of utilities.

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).

APPENDIX 2

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

Some of the key elements of the Housing Strategy are about tackling fuel poverty, providing a customer focus and efficient housing repairs service and provide an effective support service for all neighbourhoods within the borough.

The proposal is to reduce the price of District heating from 20.68 pence per kwh to 15.64 pence per kwh. This will mean service users who need or wish to maintain their homes at a higher temperature, for instance those with disabilities, elderly or with young children, will benefit more from the proposals as District heating is priced per unit. As they use more units they will see a bigger cost savings.

The proposal will result in a District heating bill for an average user being the equivalent of that of an average gas bill as the price of a bill will be matched to the Ofgem price cap of c£2,000 per annum, thus ensuring equity across District heating and non District heating residents.

- **Key findings**

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other income sources approaching £94m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties). This includes approx. 1,260 properties in the Council's District Heating Scheme.

The Council is required to set a balanced self-funded Housing Revenue Account budget annually and to ensure that we have a viable Housing Service that meets the needs of tenants of Rotherham.

The recent reduction and stabilisation in energy costs as meant a review in the pricing of District heating can take place albeit it with the Council still operating at a deficit. The reduction will bring pricing in line with the predicted Ofgem Price Cap of c£2,000 per year from Quarter 3. Whilst many tenants will still be in fuel poverty even after the price reduction, support will continue to be targeted at those in most need.

Customers which require their homes to be a higher temperature will proportionately benefit greater from the proposals as the price is based on per kwh so the more heat that is used the greater the cost saving will be. Groups most likely to benefit are disabled, elderly and those with low incomes.

These same groups will benefit from government support such as cost of living payments and disability payments to help with the increased cost of living, pensioners will also receive assistance via a winter fuel payment of up to £500.

- **Actions**

A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the impact of the general financial pressures tenants face as a result of the increasing cost of living. The Council is committed to minimising any effects of on tenants and to do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention. Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to

APPENDIX 2

pay their rent (including District heating); by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits, and debt advice; this is being done through our Financial Inclusion team.

A bid has also been made to government to fund a review of the efficiency of the District heating network. If this is successful it will identify improvements that are necessary to improve efficiency and in turn reduce costs for residents.

The Council are also operating an Energy Crisis support scheme which will pay £250 for eligible households on a first come first served basis. It is anticipated this scheme will close at the end May 2023.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	09/05/2023
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	23/05/2023
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Paul Elliott, Head of Service – Business and Commercial

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
James Clark	AD for Housing	23.05.23

6. Publishing

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

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

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

Date screening completed	9 May 2023
Report title and date	Revision of District heating charges 2023-24
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	19 June 2023 (Cabinet) 19 July 2023 (Council)
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	23/05/2023

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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

This form:

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

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

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

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Revision of District Heating Charges 2023-24	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 10 May 2023	
Directorate: ACH & PH	Service area: Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott	Contact number: Extn 22494
Is this a: <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify 	

APPENDIX 3

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 (e.g. service user, managers, service specialist)
Paul Elliott	RMBC	Manager
Mark Edmondson	RMBC	Manager
Chris Stacey	RMBC	Manager

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

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.)

The purpose is to seek approval to revise the price of District Heating for 2023-24 given the significant reduction in the price of utilities to the Council since the price was agreed by the Council on 1 March 2023.

It is also proposed that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing and Assistant Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree revised pricing should there be a further reduction in the cost of operating the service.

This will make it more affordable for tenants to heat their homes which will be of greater benefit to particular groups such as disabled, unemployed, families with young children and pensioners.

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

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £89m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties). This includes approx. 1260 properties in the council's district heating scheme.

The Census population of Rotherham in 2021 is 265,800, an increase of 8,200 (+3.2%) compared with the 2011 Census, with around half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. The remainder live in smaller towns such as Wath, Dinnington and Maltby, and in numerous large villages and rural communities, all of which have their own distinct identities

The 2021 Census further shows that Rotherham had 113,900 households, compared with 108,300 in the 2011 Census, an increase of 5,600 or 5.2%. In 2021, 17.7% of Rotherham's population were under 15 years, whilst 25.8% were aged 60 or over. The population of Rotherham aged 60 or over is slightly higher than the England figure of 24.2% and the Yorkshire and Humber figure of 25%.

Rotherham's young population (under 15) increased from 46,000 in 2011 to 47,100 in 2021 (a 2.4% increase). This increase followed a 6% fall from 48,900 in 2001 to 46,000 in 2011. Whilst the school age population has increased, the number of children aged 0-4

APPENDIX 3

has decreased from 15,738 in 2011 to 14,600 (a 7.3% reduction) which reflects the impact that the pandemic has had on the birth rate.

Rotherham's older population (over 60) has increased from 61,500 in 2011 to 68,600 in the 2021 Census, an 11.5% rise (51,700 in 2001). Rotherham's population is ageing broadly in line with national trends and the percentage aged over 85 increased from 2.1% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2021.

120,600 Rotherham residents are in employment whilst 106,000 people have workplaces in the Borough, giving a net outflow of 14,700 workers. One in five workers who live in Rotherham are employed in Sheffield and another one in five work elsewhere outside Rotherham.

Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing. Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles.

Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani & Kashmiri (4% of the population), followed by the Slovak & Czech Roma (1.5% of the population). Rotherham also has smaller Black African, Indian, Chinese, Irish and Arab communities, all with between 500 and 2,000 people.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long term health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,306 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

Most neighbourhoods in Rotherham offer a good living environment and 78% of adults are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, which showed 19.5% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Central Rotherham forms the main area of high deprivation although there are also pockets in Maltby, Rawmarsh, Dinnington, Thurgroft, Wath, Swinton and Aston. The main forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are low levels of qualification, poor health, high rates of disability and high worklessness, notably long term sickness.

The HRA budget which feeds into the HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by continuing to invest in Tenant Involvement Services and capacity in the housing management teams.

APPENDIX 3

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?	
No data is collected in respect of gender reassignment and religion and belief protected characteristics.	
What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?	
Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)	Drop in sessions were held across all District heating schemes throughout March 2023
Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)	Meetings with M3 managers and emails seeking feedback into the rents, charges and HRA Budget throughout April and May 2023 The proposals have been developed with support from Council Officers and input from the Strategic Leadership Team, Cabinet Member for Housing and Leader of the Council.

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

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

The proposed reduction in the cost of district heating will be beneficial to all service users as it reduces the cost of district heating. That said the reduction will have a greater benefit to groups that have their homes heated to a higher temperature or on lower incomes such as:

Unemployed
Single parents
Families with young children
Disabled
Pensioners

These groups will benefit more as they have less disposable income and/ or use more heat so will benefit more from the cost reduction as this is charged as a price per unit of heat used.

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

The proposed reduction in the cost of district heating whilst beneficial to all service users as it reduces the cost of district heating it will still be expensive when compared to previous years. At the revised price of 15.94p per kwh the cost will be more than double to 2022-23

APPENDIX 3

price of 7.2 p per kwh. As a result there will continue to be challenges for the following groups to afford the price charged:

Low income households
Families with young children
Pensioners
Disabled tenants

As a result of challenges in affording the cost of heat / energy and wider impact due to the increased cost of living the same groups will benefit from government support such as cost of living payments and disability payments to help with the increased cost of living, pensioners will also receive assistance via a winter fuel payment of up to £500.

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

Vulnerable people are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community.

A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the impact of general financial pressures tenants face. The Council is committed to minimising any effects on tenants and to do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention.

Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to pay their rent/ district heating; by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice. Support available in Rotherham includes:

- RMBC Tenancy Support Service – provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service – provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/home insulation etc
- RMBC DHP Fund- residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
- ESF/RMBC Pathways and Inspire Employment Projects – provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit

APPENDIX 3

- RMBC Household Support Fund – will be used to support vulnerable people through help with energy costs with a grant of £250 to those with a disposable income of less than £150 per month.
- RMBC Advocacy and Appeals Team – providing people with practical support to maximise their income by claiming any benefits they are entitled too. The Team can assist with application and also with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/tribunals.
- Foodbanks – provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis. Referrals have historically been made through the RMBC Community Hub
- Social Supermarket – Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills
- Rotherfed ‘Making your money go further’ project – This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
- Citizens Advice Rotherham – providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt.

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)

It is not envisaged that the proposals will have any negative impact on community relations.

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

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

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

Title of analysis: Revision of District heating charges 2023-24
Directorate and service area: ACH & PH – Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott
Summary of findings:
The reduction in the price of district heating will assist all groups but have a greater benefit to low income groups, disabled, pensioners and households with children. These groups will continue to be provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor the demographics of tenants in rent arrears (incl District heating) on a bi-annual basis	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	03/2024
Monitor the impact the price reduction has on the take up of tenancy support services by affected groups.	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	03/2024

***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
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	

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	23/05/23
Report title and date	Revision of District Heating Charges 2023-24
Date report sent for publication	26/05/23
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	23/05/23

Appendix 4 : Carbon Impact 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?	Impact unknown	Decrease in district heating charges could increase emissions of boiler houses as tenants will no longer have a price incentive to reduce use.	N/A	Undertake work to increase efficiencies of existing systems to reduce carbon footprint. Where feasible, increase use of bio-fuel in Council District heating schemes.	
Emissions from transport?	No Impact				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	No Impact				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	Impact unknown	Decrease in district heating charges may potentially increase emissions of boiler houses as tenants will no longer have a price incentive to reduce use.		Community Energy Support scheme launched in March 2021. Consider improving efficiencies of systems to reduce heat loss (government funding available to support). This will reduce carbon emissions. Where feasible, consider increasing the use of bio-fuel on Council district heating schemes.	Measurement will be through annual carbon reporting.

Emissions from construction and/or development?	No Impact				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	No Impact				

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

The report focuses on the proposed reduction in District heating charges. There are 18 separate District Heating Schemes throughout the borough, 2 of which are currently operate partly with bio-fuel which generates Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) income depending on the amount of heat generated.

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

It is not clear whether the decrease in rate will increase energy use or whether the current impact of cost of living will continue to drive down energy use within homes despite this. Opportunities exist to reduce heat lost (therefore increasing energy use to provide the necessary heat to homes) through grant funding for efficiency measures. Future opportunities may exist to increase the amount of biofuel used (or other alternative fuel sources) to supply boilers currently in operation following consideration of cost, feasibility and carbon cost.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Paul Elliott Head of Service – Business and Commercial, Housing 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]	CIA080 -Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 19 July 2023

Report Title

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Katherine Harclerode, Governance Adviser

katherine.harclerode@rotherham.gov.uk**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

As described in Section 8.6 of the Constitution of the Council, this report is an annual update presented to Council on activities and outcomes achieved in respect of Overview and Scrutiny during the 2022/23 municipal year.

Recommendations

1. That the report be noted.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

Background Papers

Agendas and minutes of Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), Health Select Commission (HSC), Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) and Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) during the 2022/23 municipal year.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

1. Background

- 1.1 This report is submitted in accordance with Section 8.6 of the Constitution, which states, “The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will report annually to the full Council on the operation of overview and scrutiny select commissions and make recommendations where appropriate for future work programmes and amended working methods.”
- 1.2 The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Select Commissions are set out in Appendix 9 of the Constitution – Responsibility for Functions. Details of the specific areas for scrutiny by each select commission are also set out in Appendix 9.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The appendix to the report displays the range of scrutiny activity and highlights key findings and recommendations. Selected outcomes resulting from work in response to recommendations are also reflected in the report where these have been delivered. Where future outcomes are expected, these are noted.
- 2.2 An explanation of how the overview and scrutiny function works and how this process adds value is also provided in the first two pages of Appendix 1.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The 2022/23 Annual Report provides an overview of activity undertaken by Scrutiny over the last year through key lines of inquiry, evidence gathering, and findings leading to recommendations. The report provides a selection of the year’s achievement of Scrutiny as a supplement to full agendas and minutes of Cabinet, OSMB and Select Commission meetings throughout the year. The recommendation to Council is to note the report.
- 3.2 It was agreed in 2021/22 that future Annual Reports would be organised by Council Plan theme. This approach reflects a fully joined up approach by Scrutiny to work programming, reducing overlap through efficient allocation of Scrutiny attention.
- 3.3 As noted above in 3.2 this year’s report is organised by Council Plan 22-25 themes. However, it should be further noted that the relevance of each agenda item, review, and recommendation may span multiple Council Plan themes, especially where improvements pertaining to wider determinants of health such as environmental and economic circumstances lead to cascading benefits. Therefore, the report should be considered as an indicative rather than definitive account of outcomes.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 As this is the report of the OSMB and Scrutiny commissions, consultation with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of these committees was undertaken and feedback incorporated in the final report. The first of these consultations was held in person on 22 February 2023, when the Chairs and Vice Chairs agreed the style of the report. Reports to and Minutes of various Committees and Boards of the Council including Cabinet were also consulted during the drafting process in order to compile the outcomes resulting from recommendations.
- 4.2 Where appropriate, specifics were confirmed with relevant lead officers and partners; however, as a principle, the report describes outcomes that are already in the public domain. This is because it is not the province of the report to speculate on possible future outcomes, except in terms of the agreed work programmes of OSMB and the Select Commissions and the Scrutiny Procedure Rules of the Council.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 This report is submitted to the meeting of Council on 19 July 2023, which is the first Council meeting following the completion of the 2022/23 municipal year. This allows a retrospective on the year in full.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

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

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 Human Resources implications directly arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

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

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no equalities and human rights implications directly arising from this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no climate or carbon emissions implications directly arising from this report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no implications for partner organisations directly arising from this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no risks arising directly from this report.

Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*Report Author: Katherine Harclerode, Governance Advisor
katherine.harclerode@rotherham.gov.uk*

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022 / 2023



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD, CLLR MAGGI CLARK

Scrutiny is an important non-political process carried out by Councillors on behalf of the people of Rotherham. Scrutiny raises standards by challenging the Council's performance and by checking whether policies and services meet people's needs. Scrutiny also considers the work of other organisations that partner with the Council to deliver services. Pre-decision scrutiny maintains strong ties to decision-making by examining the Council's Cabinet decisions and holding them to account.



This report presents a summary of scrutiny work by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and the Select Commissions: Health (HSC), Improving Lives (ILSC) and Improving Places (IPSC). To showcase the impact of scrutiny in helping the Council achieve its goals, this report describes outcomes across all six Council Plan 2022-2025 themes:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1: Every Neighbourhood Thriving | 4: Expanding Economic Opportunity |
| 2: People are Safe, Healthy and Live Well | 5: A Cleaner, Greener Local Environment |
| 3: Every Child Able to Fulfil Their Potential | 6: One Council |

Scrutiny considers and feeds into shaping direction for strategies and policies and delivers an annual work programme. An important example of this is pre-decision scrutiny, which examines Cabinet decisions before they are agreed. Last year, OSMB considered 24 pre-decision strategies and policies, keeping a close eye on the in-year budget position and service pressures among other issues. The work programme's main focus is on monitoring specific Council Plan performance objectives, key initiatives and partnership work while retaining an element of flexibility allowing it to respond to important issues as they arise. Scrutinising the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and pandemic recovery have been major themes this year, featuring in the work programmes of each of the Commissions and OSMB.

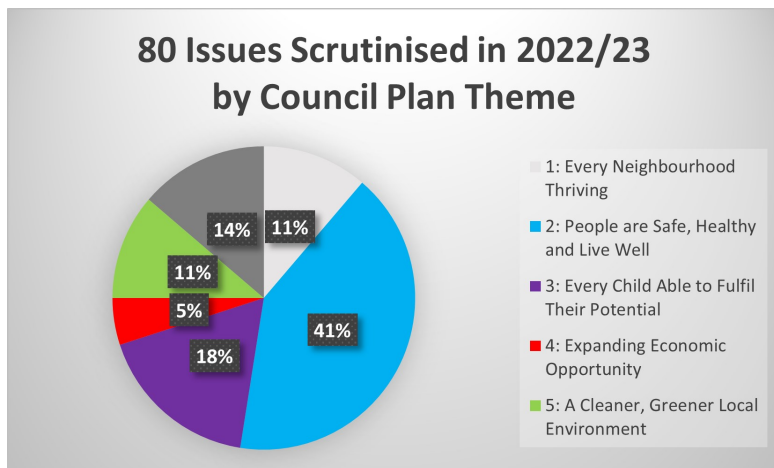
A substantial portion of the scrutiny work programme focusses on monitoring specific Council Plan performance objectives, key initiatives and partnership work. The work programme also retains an element of flexibility, to consider and respond to other important issues as they arise. 2022/23 was an important year for Rotherham's continued recovery from the pandemic and response to the cost of living crisis. One of the highlights of the year is the opportunity to work with Rotherham Youth Cabinet when they take over an OSMB meeting in the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge (CCTC). A further highlight was participating in the LGA pilot on Scrutiny of Children's Services.

I wish to thank all Scrutiny Members and co-opted members for their hard work and commitment to carrying out meaningful scrutiny in Rotherham. Together we have worked cross party to hold the executive to account, scrutinise key decisions and provide feedback to the cabinet before their decision making.

CLLR MAGGI CLARK,

CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

2022-2023 SCRUTINY AT A GLANCE



Scrutiny examined 80 issues this year to monitor the Council's performance on its objectives within five Council Plan themes, delivery of key initiatives and partnerships, and future directions for policies and services including scrutiny of decisions before they are agreed. Scrutiny also examined the impact of local or national issues as they emerged.

SUGGEST A TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY

Suggest a Topic for Scrutiny - we want your views

If you have an issue or a topic of concern for Scrutiny to consider, please fill in the form below. Make sure to click 'submit' at the bottom of the page once completed.

Hi, Council, does your submit the form, the cover without your name and email address.

1. What is the problem or nature of your concern?
Enter your answer
2. Who does this affect?
Enter your answer
3. What would help solve the problem?
Enter your answer
4. What have you done to try and resolve this (if anything)?
Enter your answer
5. Which Council Plan theme does it relate to?

<input type="checkbox"/> Every neighbourhood thriving	<input type="checkbox"/> People are safe, healthy and live well
<input type="checkbox"/> Every child able to fulfil their potential	<input type="checkbox"/> Expanding economic opportunity
<input type="checkbox"/> A cleaner, greener local environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Our Council

Send me an email receipt of my responses

The content is owned by the Council of the City of Rotherham. The user you submit will be used to further Rotherham. We cannot be held responsible for the privacy or security of your information. We will not share your information with other Council members. Thank you for your responses.

To suggest a potential topic, Councillors can now use an online form through the Members' Portal to show how scrutiny of the topic could make a difference, or how it would help the Council achieve objectives in the Council Plan 2022-2025.

FAQ:

WHAT IS SCRUTINY?

Scrutiny aims to ensure that public services and policies best meet the needs of Rotherham Residents. Scrutiny acts as the check and balance to the Council's Executive decision makers, the Cabinet, by contributing to policy review and development; holding the Council's Cabinet and partners to account for decisions and performance; investigating issues that matter to residents; working with Council officers and partners to improve services.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Any Councillor who is not a member of the Cabinet can participate. Committees also have co-opted members and dedicated officer support. Cabinet Members, Strategic Directors, and representatives of partner organisations are invited to attend meetings to discuss issues.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN SCRUTINY LOOK AT?

Councillors and Co-opted Members prioritise issues. Because of the time commitment and effort required. It is not possible to look at every issue. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board manages the overall Work Programme, considering whether scrutiny can make a real difference by looking at an issue.

IS THERE ANYTHING SCRUTINY CAN'T EXAMINE?

Individual complaints or regulatory decisions are not appropriate topics for scrutiny.

IS SCRUTINY POLITICAL?

Councillors across all political groups participate, setting aside party politics to look objectively at issue, basing findings on evidence.

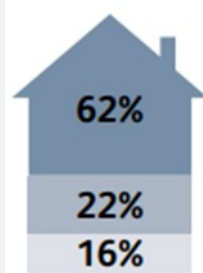
CAN I SUGGEST A TOPIC?

Yes, contact your ward Councillor to suggest a topic.

THEME 1: EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD THRIVING

REVIEW OF IMPACT OF SELECTIVE LICENSING

An IPSC spotlight review of the Impact of Selective Licensing was undertaken to provide feedback on the implementation of the scheme at its halfway point. The Scheme seeks to raise standards by inspecting homes in Private Rented Sector Housing, and asking landlords to address any health and safety hazards. Private Rented Sector plays an increasing role in Rotherham, having trebled since 2001 and currently making up 16 percent of the housing accommodation in Rotherham.

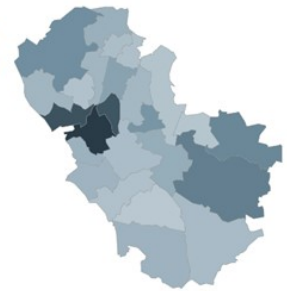


% tenure split

62% owner occupied

22% social housing

16% privately rented



Rotherham's Selective Licensing scheme aims

to address areas where there are high levels of relative deprivation or housing that is below decent standards. This requires inspectors who have knowledge of how structures are built, how structures fall apart, how defects link to health or safety risks, what specific repairs are needed, enforcement and Council powers, and effective communication.

Several recommendations emerged from the review:

- Prioritising reinspection for landlords whose properties required action previously.
- Due to the shortage of experienced inspectors, considering how the Council can recruit and develop trainee inspectors and retain experienced inspectors.
- Finding ways to reward responsible landlords, and, where there is a proven track record, empowering landlords to self-assess, provided that the Service can still obtain assurances that decent standards are maintained.
- Being clear around messaging that selective licensing is a measure focused on the health of residents rather than beautification or regeneration.
- Further promoting cost-of-living support with a view to identifying gaps and promoting financial inclusion.
- Given the complexity of measuring impact on deprivation and difficulty in improving relative levels of deprivation, considering how internal metrics may better reflect the real impact of the scheme.
- Joining up Selective Licensing with relevant Council strategies and services, with partner and voluntary sector organisations and with resident led initiatives prior to any future selective licensing declaration.
- Emphasising the need for engagement with landlords and with tenants to be considered alongside any response to Scrutiny recommendations, and making sure responses to the recommendations line up with the learning from engagement.

THEME 1: EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD THRIVING (CONTINUED)

RESPONSE TO PETITION: ROAD SAFETY CUMWELL LANE

As part of the 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving' Council Plan Theme, the Council works with communities on the issues that are important to them.

For example, OSMB responded to a petition for Improved Road Safety on Cumwell Lane which had been referred to scrutiny at a meeting of the full Council. Scrutiny endorsed action proposed by the service in response. Scrutiny also asked that following the conclusion of legal processes a review of learning takes place. This review of learning will receive further scrutiny during consideration of Road Safety at IPSC in 2023-2024.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

Since 2016, IPSC has closely monitored the delivery of bereavement services through the contract with Dignity plc. This service has elicited strong representations from the community since that time and Scrutiny again heard local people articulate their disappointment and frustrations at the contractor's performance over a number of years. In reviewing the performance of the contractor, Scrutiny identified that equalities obligations remained a weakness in this service and the contractor needed to double down on efforts to better meet the needs of the diverse community it served.

The Council's role in managing the contract includes being assured that equalities requirements are met by Dignity, and Scrutiny reiterated the need for officers overseeing the contract to provide challenge on this to ensure that legal obligations are met. Recognising the ongoing concerns from the community in respect of this contract, Scrutiny recommended that all Members be invited to a session to facilitate further dialogue aimed at improving service delivery through the five-year service development plan for Rotherham Crematorium and Municipal Cemeteries.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING ANNUAL REPORT

Delivery against the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy is a key measure of success for the Council and the fifth annual report to IPSC detailed the progress made to the Improving Places Select Commission in September 2022. As an initiative that puts Members at the very heart of the communities that they represent and serve, Scrutiny was keen to see greater participation from parish councils in ward meetings in recognition of the key role these bodies can play in building and creating capacity.

One of the main recommendations emerging from Scrutiny was to ensure that there was greater awareness and oversight of the use of Community Infrastructure Levy monies. This was in response to queries that Members had received locally and was considered to be the kind of information that can help address myths amongst the local community on the use of funding from developments. Leading from this, Scrutiny felt that the continued devolution of budgets to ward level to address deprivation was consistent with the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and should be pursued further to enable Members to directly lead the response to pockets of deprivation in their wards.

THEME 2: PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

PEOPLE ARE SAFE

- Recommendations from a recent OSMB review into Modern Slavery asked the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) to offer targeted learning and development to raise awareness of modern slavery, how to spot the signs and risks, and how to raise concerns and make referrals. To accomplish this, the SRP was asked identify industries of higher risk and work with Council services which may encounter modern slavery in their day-to-day work. Scrutiny also asked the SRP to consider how best to safeguard young people during the transition from children to adult services and to develop referral pathways that provide the appropriate support on a timely basis.

To help agencies work better together, Scrutiny suggested re-launching the Strategic Partnership information sharing group. Scrutiny also asked that sub-contractors be included in contract and supply chain audits, and that the SRP collaborate with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Supply Chain Advisor. Scrutiny also recommended that the voices of advocates be included by inviting representations to be made to Housing Assessment Panels on behalf of victims of modern slavery. Response from SRP is forthcoming.

- In response to an HSC review of Covid-19 Care Home Safety, the Council has continued to provide significant investment into the independent care and support sector. Fee rates were set following the Fair Cost of Care exercise and Market Sustainability Plan to support providers to be able to attract and retain care staff within Rotherham. Health Protection practice in Rotherham, particularly with relation to outbreaks and ongoing Covid-19 management continues to maintain some of the practices developed through the pandemic, with close working with UKHSA, SY ICB and Rotherham schools continuing.

Some areas of practice have not been maintained as resource levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels, with a significant local gap identified for Rotherham in respect of Community Infection, Prevention and Control. This gap has been discussed at Rotherham's Place Leadership Team with all Health and Social Care Partners, but funding has yet to be identified to change the current position. Further reporting on the impacts of the Pandemic is forthcoming to the June meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board, which will be received for Overview, and the next update to scrutiny will be considered on 25 January 2024.

- In response to an HSC review of the Community Hub Befriending Programme, a new model for the programme has been continued by Rotherham Federation of Communities. In a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Rotherfed Representatives showed the continued impact of the programme and peer support in breaking down barriers to access.
- Following recommendations from IPSC on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, the Council designated sustained funding for permanent staff. Previously, time-limited funding meant the Service had continually trained new staff, who were excellent but impossible to keep without the job security of sustained funding. The team had a full permanent staff prior to the increasing number of clients following the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.
- Implementation of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan, establishment of a Financial Abuse and Exploitation Service, maintenance of Council-owned lifesaving equipment, adult safeguarding, and Operation Linden were also monitored.

THEME 2: PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY

TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

- Overview of the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report by HSC demonstrated the continued commitment of the Council to tackle health inequalities with the goal of extending the healthy lifespan of local people. This involves preventing the onset of chronic conditions and promoting equal access to care.
- Monitoring of Maternity Services by HSC included considering a new survey study by Healthwatch Rotherham. Recommendations affirmed the Service goal that a woman would receive care from a maximum of two midwives throughout her maternity experience.
- Scrutiny of Intermediate Care and Reablement Services by HSC showed innovative processes had been implemented to meet changing Government requirements and ensure service continuity during Ambulance Service industrial action. Collaboration is underway with Rotherham Speak Up for Autism to inform support to people who are preparing to go into hospital or needing to activate the service when they leave hospital.

PROMOTING EQUAL ACCESS TO CARE

- An HSC review into Access to Primary Care was undertaken in response to a study by Healthwatch Rotherham which raised concerns about access to GP appointments during the pandemic. Scrutiny found that the number of GP appointments in Rotherham had rebounded the fastest in South Yorkshire, with approximately five thousand appointments available across the Borough each day. The quality contract requires urgent appointments to take place within 48 hours, and approximately half of all NHS appointments were scheduled within a day. Recommendations were made to help promote awareness of the right place to seek medical help and to promote greater transparency around waiting times.
- HSC found that mental health services achieved significant progress this year in clearing backlogs in the memory clinic and the acute assessment clinic amid significant workforce challenges.

THEME 2: PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY (CONTINUED)

- Discussions of access to dental care by HSC assessed the impact of the pandemic and a shrinking skilled worker pool that have resulted in pressures on local NHS dentists and in new Government reforms to the commissioning of dentistry services.
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) Annual Report; Urgent and Emergency Care Centre Services; Medicine Management; Place Partners Winter Planning; and Quality Accounts for TRFT, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH), and Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) were also scrutinised.

PREVENTION

- An HSC review aimed at identifying ways to improve oral health among children and adults in the Borough is currently ongoing with outcomes forthcoming.
- An HSC discussion of diagnostic screenings yielded assurances that screenings for breast, cervical and colon cancers that temporarily paused or lagged in take-up rates during the pandemic were getting caught up. To help avoid later stage diagnosis, everyone is encouraged to take up their screenings when invited.
- Discussions of suicide prevention by HSC showed Rotherham's strong offer for post-bereavement support and identified a need for more focus on early intervention. In response, Rotherham along with South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Partners have co-produced with young people the 'Walk with Me' Suicide Prevention Toolkit which has garnered a Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Public Partnership Award.

The LGC judges said of the Toolkit:

Outstanding project around adaptive leadership on a challenging area of suicide prevention. Excellent design delivery and evaluation. Collaboration with a range of public partners including the police, transport, coroners and health. Clearly scalable and exciting innovation around a mobile app and also the real time data recording and analysis to target suicide risk.

- The Carers Programme and Young Carers and Strategic Physical Activity were also scrutinised.

THEME 2: PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

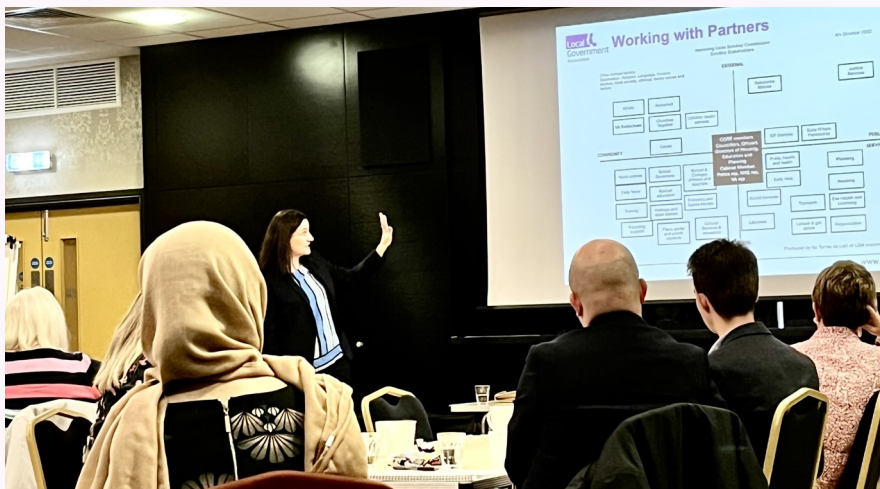
PEOPLE LIVE WELL

- Learning Disability transformation, scrutinised at HSC, affirmed the Council's commitment to co-production and resulted in the request for collaboration with Speak Up for Autism to ensure people with disabilities are taken into account in the development of the flexible purchasing system model for adult social care.
- Proposals for day opportunities for people with high support needs had been subject to lengthy consultation prior to consideration by OSMB and decision by Cabinet. The modernisation of the service to adapt to the needs of service users to incorporate education, job and volunteering activities and independent living skills. In supporting the proposals, Scrutiny ensured that decision makers took account of the differing needs of current prospective service users across the range of protected characteristics, as well as the carbon impact of disposing of or demolishing assets connected to the scheme.
- IPSC found that the draft Tenant Engagement Framework demonstrated the very real value of the tenant engagement panels which provided insights, but it also pointed to the need to better publicise consultations as the feedback provided suggested that tenants wanted greater flexibility without having to engage with formal structures for engagement. That said, Scrutiny welcomed the reduced call-back times which suggested that there was greater responsiveness from the service and that was resulting in reduced waiting times for appointments.
- IPSC discussed the Council's response to a tenant scrutiny review of communications by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel of RotherFed. It was really pleasing to see the use of plain language being prioritised within the action plan arising from the review. Scrutiny also used the opportunity to challenge performance on customer experience where the six-minute target to take calls from tenants was considered to be too long.
- Scrutiny of housing repairs and maintenance at IPSC again demonstrated the value of tenant scrutiny and highlighted the importance of meeting the expectations of customers in a timely way. Getting the basics right continues to be a key line of enquiry and evidencing the impact of tenant engagement through "You Said We Did" was considered to be an effective tool of demonstrating impact and improvement.
- Scrutiny of Housing aids and adaptations by IPSC reaffirmed the need for the next iteration of the Housing Strategy to include a principle for those in greatest need to be served first.
- Scrutiny of the Housing Development Strategy at IPSC provided assurance on the delivery of the priorities previously endorsed but with the service now operating in a vastly more challenging environment. Recognising the disruption associated with interventions that saw people moving onto the housing register, Scrutiny felt greater thought was needed to enable and support those individuals to continue with existing tenancies.

THEME 3: EVERY CHILD ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

LGA – EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES

ILSC was asked to be considered as part of a LGA learning and development programme. The LGA sessions were part of a wider national pilot to strengthen scrutiny of children’s services (Rotherham is one of a few authorities participating) and the LGA has received funding from the Department for Education to support this work.



The first workshop took place on 4 October. It was an interactive session and focussing on different approaches to scrutiny of children services and how to make it more effective. The second session took place on 25 October starting using practical examples to plan and scope scrutiny activity. The outcomes of the workshops are being built into the scrutiny work programme.

SPOTLIGHT REVIEWS

OSMB invited ILSC members to join them to scrutinise the outcomes of the independent report into Child Sexual Exploitation undertaken by a team commissioned by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. Members were able to question the report authors’ findings in-depth to establish how they had arrived at their conclusions and what evidence had been considered. The Review Team found no evidence that CSE was occurring on the same scale as it had in the past. The Review Team provided assurance that robust partnership processes in place to address concerns when they came in. Evidence had been provided to support that conclusion.

A series of recommendations emerged from the meeting which included the following areas:

- Training and awareness raising for elected members;
- Maintaining partnership engagement with scrutiny activity;
- Communications;
- Clarity about how concerns are escalated;
- Ensuring that the voice of survivor is heard;
- Performance monitoring.

Cabinet’s response to ILSC’s review of the draft Child Exploitation Strategy included the addition of an ‘Our Journey’ section within the strategy to acknowledge the progress that has been made through multi-agency partnership to address child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. The organisation roles and responsibilities were also clarified, and information regarding how survivor voices and perspectives inform the Strategy.

THEME 3: EVERY CHILD ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

Cabinet's response to an ILSC Review of Early Help refined the core principles of the offer as well as performance objectives and links to neighbourhood working and learning and development.

In response to a joint IPSC/ILSC Review of the Cultural Strategy, Cabinet worked with leisure centres to expand access to swimming lessons, and water safety, further diversified the venues hosting events for children and young people, and began the groundwork for expanded access to leisure and recreation respite for young carers.

ILSC MONITORING:

- Monitoring of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services showed that there had been no change in the waitlists for neurodevelopmental assessments because of the increase in referral rates in 2022-23.
- Discussion of implementation of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy refined performance objectives and cascaded the offer of foster carer opportunities more widely into communities to encourage greater take-up and retention of Rotherham's valued and dedicated foster carers.
- Consideration of counter-extremism in schools confirmed that agencies were working together effectively with robust referral processes and good oversight.
- Children and Young People's Services Performance, Rotherham Youth Justice Service Progress Report, Ofsted Action Plan and One Adoption South Yorkshire were also monitored.

Scrutiny Councillors prioritise potential topics for the work programme of Improving Lives Select Commission.



THEME 4: EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

RESPONSE TO MARKETS ENGAGEMENT AND RECOVERY

- A large amount of face to face and group consultation has taken place in response to this review by IPSC. Face to face consultation continues to take place with market tenants regarding the redevelopment of the Markets, how it will affect them and what mitigating actions are taking place. Visits have been made to a number of other markets which have been given as examples of good practice in delivering redevelopments. These include Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and Leicester.
- Plans to move to cashless as soon as possible were made difficult by poor Wi-Fi connectivity, which will be rectified during the redevelopment. Ways to improve are still on-going, and a new chip and pin device has just been tested by Markets staff. This proved more efficient than previous kit and is being adopted on a long-term basis.
- A review of staffing requirements for sustainability and success of the markets is being undertaken as part of the redevelopment project.
- Take up of the introductory offer by vendors was good, although a high proportion did not continue trading after the initial 6 months, probably due in a large part to the challenging trading conditions in the retail sector. The offer is currently paused and will be reviewed and restarted once the redevelopment is complete.
- Retaining of traders during the redevelopment is a top priority. A reduction in rents for the period of the redevelopment has been agreed. All traders have been kept informed of proposed timescales for work and how this will impact on their business

TOWN DEAL AND LEVELLING UP FUND

The Council has successfully bid for funding from the Towns Fund to deliver regeneration projects for the leisure economy and Rotherham Town Centre. In the summer of 2022 the Council submitted additional bids for regeneration projects in Dinnington and Wath, and has sought additional monies through the Government's Levelling-Up Fund. Whilst Scrutiny has wholeheartedly supported the Council's endeavours, assurances were sought in respect of the democratic oversight of project governance. In response to IPSC's previous review of External Funding, IPSC later contributed to Rotherham's successful £20 million Levelling Up Bid by strengthening the markets angle.

TOWN CENTRE / FORGE ISLAND IMPLEMENTATION

Detailed consideration was given to a key stage in the delivery of the flagship regeneration project for the Council in October 2022. OSMB/IPSC considered the proposals to move to the construction stage which included the Council acting as the funder of the scheme and contracting the delivery of the scheme by Muse Development Ltd. This continues to be an area of interest for Scrutiny in order to provide constructive challenge and give assurance to the public that the project will be delivered according to planned timeframes and agreed budgets. Scrutiny focused on ensuring value for money in a challenging financial environment.

THEME 5: A CLEANER GREENER LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

ROTHERHAM YOUTH CABINET TAKEOVER CHALLENGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE



In response to the Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC) Takeover Challenge on Climate Change, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment met with members of RYC to discuss potential action to minimise single-use plastics and pollution. The RYC also visited Renewi anaerobic treatment facility.

The Assistant Director for Education worked with the RYC to develop an

environmental awards scheme for schools, which has been piloted in Wickersley and is posed for wider rollout this year. Carbon literacy training is also being piloted by the RYC with the aim of further developing the training for wider delivery. Next, the Climate Change Team will work with RYC to create a version of the course that is young people friendly.

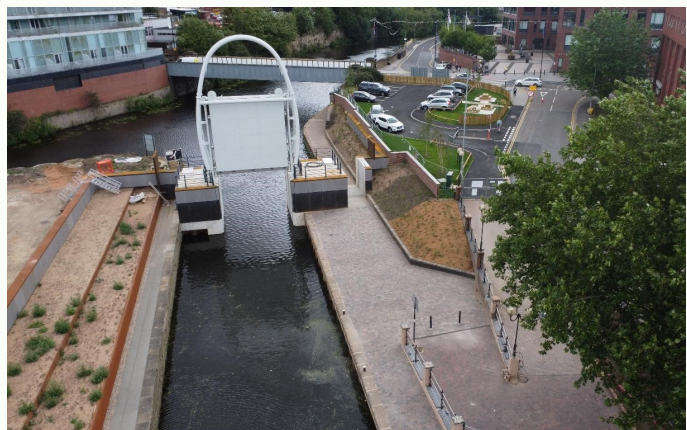
ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021 AND THE FUTURE OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES

Discussion of the Council's responsiveness to changing legislation is an important part of the scrutiny process of IPSC around the future of household waste recycling centres. The Environment Act 2021 includes a new requirement for many authorities to collect food waste separately. Doing this would mean high costs for Rotherham, Barnsley, and Doncaster because our state-of-the-art treatment facility, Renewi, incorporates food waste in its anaerobic process. Together with our regional partners, Rotherham persistently lobbied DEFRA for an exception to this requirement and recently received a decision.

MONITORING

Also monitored were:-

- Draft Enviro-crime Strategy,
- Fly tipping,
- Tree Programme,
- Flood Alleviation, and
- Allotments Self-Management



Canal barrier, July 2022

THEME 6: ONE COUNCIL

FINANCIAL MONITORING

OSMB maintained a 'big picture' view of the financial pressures affecting the Council and provided challenge to how these might impact on existing budgets and budget setting for future years as well as understanding the proposals about prudent levels of reserves. The Board challenged the assumptions underpinning the budget, their alignment to Council Plan themes and proposals for the level of council tax. In particular, Members probed the thinking that lay behind the main savings proposals to establish if these would be of detriment to existing services. For example, during the discussion on Early Help savings, assurances were given that one-off savings could be made without significant impact on the service, with a further commitment given that this would be subject to review.

BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX REPORT

OSMB undertook detailed scrutiny of budget proposals in February 2023 ahead of the formal budget and council tax setting by the Council in March 2023. In reviewing the Cabinet's proposals, Members were mindful of the impact of inflationary pressures which were driving the cost of living crisis, as well as creating new challenges for the authority. Scrutiny Members endorsed the budget proposals whilst seeking reassurance in respect of the deliverability of savings proposals and recognised that uncertainty of the public finances nationally and the ongoing inflationary pressures would provide challenges for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26. The MTFS was subject to scrutiny earlier in the year when the financial position was less certain.

Areas for additional investment such as Household Waste Recycling Sites, Markets and Customer Services had been considered previously by OSMB as part of pre-decision activity and also subject to in-depth scrutiny work. These contributed to the themes of a cleaner, greener environment, expanding economic opportunity, and one Council approach.

Mindful of pressures on household budgets, in respect of the proposals for housing rent and charges, OSMB asked that additional measures, such as tenancy advice and support, could be introduced to mitigate the impact of rent increases for residents who are particularly vulnerable to changes in rent levels (for example recipients of Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living Allowance for children). The Board also asked that consideration is given to developing a communication strategy, including drop-in sessions, to raise awareness of changes to the district heating charges and support available to households.

COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD PROGRESS REPORT

Throughout the year, OSMB has held Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Team to account for performance against the Council Plan and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan. With 88% of measures being on target, the focus of Scrutiny has been on those areas that were not achieving the expected levels or where feedback from residents to Members had prompted specific queries. One of the outcomes from this activity has been to inform the work programme for the 2023-24 municipal year with a review planned on the effectiveness of the Consultation and Engagement Framework.

THEME 6: ONE COUNCIL

LGA CUSTOMER SERVICES PEER CHALLENGE

OSMB reviewed the recommendations and action plan arising from the peer challenge of Customer Services and sought reassurances around the adoption of a One Council approach to handling customers and staff were encouraged to put themselves in the place of a customer to appreciate the importance of resolving queries promptly. Progress against the action plan will continue to be of interest to Scrutiny.

In addition to this, OSMB scrutinised the proposals for Rothercard and recommended closer alignment with the cost-of-living work streams to ensure that low-income households have wider access to services and discounts. This has been actioned with all residents who receive council tax support being written to with details of Cost of Living advice, how to apply for a Rother card and tell them about where to go for more help/support. Its recommendation to extend the eligibility criteria for the card to young adults with education, health and care plans and care leavers will be considered as part of its annual review.

COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT

Each year OSMB has the opportunity to review annual complaints data and performance in respect of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. The focus in considering the report in 2022 was to identify improvements in the recording of compliments, as well as making more effective use of complaints data to inform service improvements. Given the concerns expressed by the LGO, Scrutiny also wanted to understand the proposals for improvement to address those issues.

SOCIAL VALUE MID-YEAR REPORT

Recommendations from OSMB's previous scrutiny of social value activity had also been implemented, with a focus on providing case studies to communicate successes. The Council is the country's lead authority for social value and it is incredible to be party to this success. Earlier in the year, Scrutiny had identified opportunities for the Council to better promote its social value commitments through briefings for Ward Members and social media, such as LinkedIn.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT

In recognition of the importance of this to all aspects of policy and service delivery, OSMB received an annual report on the Council's performance in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion. Members continue to challenge the organisation to improve the way it undertakes equality impact assessments which contribute to decision making. It was recommended that officers consider how best to present equalities considerations within reports.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 2022-23



Cllr Maggi Clark, Chair,
Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board



Cllr Tom Collingham,
Vice-Chair, OSMB
May 2022 to March 2023



Cllr Joshua Bacon,
Vice-Chair, OSMB
March 2023—May 2023



Cllr Taiba Yasseen,
Chair, Health Select
Commission



Cllr Tim Baum-Dixon,
Vice-Chair, Health
Select Commission



Cllr Lyndsay Pitchley,
Chair, Improving Lives
Select Commission



Cllr Wendy Cooksey,
Vice-Chair, Improving
Lives Select
Commission



Cllr Ken Wyatt,
Chair, Improving
Places Select
Commission



Cllr Adam Tinsley, Vice-
Chair, Improving Places
Select Commission

This page is intentionally left blank

Covering Catcliffe, Treeton and Waverley



Councillor
Amy Brookes



Councillor
Firas Miro

Report to Full Council

July 2023

Ward priorities

- Support and contribute to a clean and green environment
- Support and develop community safety
- Support health, economic and social issues
- Support initiatives and events that encourage community cohesion and develop an understanding of diverse communities.

How these Ward Priorities were agreed

- Listening to residents and consulting with local people is key to setting priorities that meet the needs of our ward. We feel that local people are best placed to tell us about where they live and what matters to them.
- By using this local information and the existing knowledge made available to us, we have developed a set of ward priorities that are meaningful to people within our ward.
- Consultation with partner agencies and voluntary and community organisations has enabled us to gather further information and intelligence to feed into the ward priorities and identify any gaps.
- The Ward statistics and other data, have been analysed and information on the demography and geography of the area has been used to further enhance our knowledge of the ward and feed into the priorities

How these Ward Priorities support the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy

To deliver our priorities we feel it is vital to work together within our communities and support a 'place-based' and 'strength based' approach as set out in the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

Bringing people together who live and work within the ward helps us to identify what matters most to them; it helps us identify the existing strengths and assets within a neighbourhood and use this information to build stronger communities. It allows us to achieve and deliver projects that would not be possible without sharing skills, knowledge, expertise, and funding.

We are committed to using this approach to get the best possible outcomes for our communities and getting the most value for money from our ward budgets.

Working in partnership

Our approach has always been to recognise the importance of working in partnership on issue and projects to get the best possible outcome. Joining funding, expertise and knowledge can strengthen links between individuals and partners and build relationships that change communities for the better.

We have used our ward capital budget to deliver several projects jointly with Parish and Community Councils within the Ward. Without working together and pooling resources these projects would not have been possible.

- We have restored a rundown play area with Treeton Parish Council providing new benches and play equipment, with the help of probation services, residents, and green spaces.
- We have provided security gates and fencing on the recreational ground with Catcliffe Parish Council to prevent trespassing and improve community safety, working alongside Police, Community Protection Unit, and residents.
- We have worked with Waverley Community Council to install flashing slow down signs to reduce incidents of speeding vehicles in the new development at Waverley, supported by RMBC Highways, Harworth and residents.

Progress so far

Our capital ward budget and Community Leadership Fund has supported around 30 projects within Rother Vale. We have worked with 15 community groups and several partner agencies, including schools, Parish and Community Councils, Police, Housing, Environmental and Green Spaces to deliver these projects. We have many more ideas and projects to be developed over the coming months and look forward to meeting new people and partners. Here is a brief outline of just some of these and how they contribute towards our ward priorities

Ward Priority 1 – Support and contribute to a clean and green environment

We have provided funding for litter picking groups in Waverley and Treeton who are an invaluable asset to our ward, helping to keep the streets and pavements free of litter. These sessions are often run alongside community skips days.

In Waverley we support the Waverley Buds' Group who provide a community garden for everyone to enjoy and get involved in.

In November we will support the planting of over 100 trees in Catcliffe and will be launching an adopt a tree scheme.

We are hosting a 'design a sign competition' with Treeton CofE Primary and Treeton Parish Council and are asking pupils to design two signs for stop littering and pick up your dog poo. The designs will be made into metal signs and attached to lamp posts around the village.

Ward Priority 2 – Support and develop community safety

CAP meetings and multi-agency drop-in sessions give the community and partners the opportunity to come together, problem solve and give direct access for the community to speak to agencies.

We have supported Waverley Academy with road safety initiatives and bike marking kits

In response to complaints about inconsiderate and dangerous parking in Treeton we have fitting wooden posts to the perimeter of the green spaces.

We have worked with partners to provided funding toward a throw line at Treeton Dyke, to improve water safety.

Ward Priority 3 – Support health, economic and social issues

We have contributed funding to Waverley Academy to support alternative and active ways to travel to school safely, by purchasing bike and scooter pods.

We have continued to support intergenerational work, with Brinsworth Academy and Treeton Lunch Club who provide a two-course meal for older people bi-monthly. This is a lifeline for many people in the ward, with around 50 people attending each session.

We have supported the development of a new toddler group and youth provision within Catcliffe which is starting to become very popular within Catcliffe and the surrounding villages

There are many community groups providing valuable community activities for people that promote health and well-being, combating social isolation and helping people to feel a sense of pride and belonging within their neighbourhood. Groups such as the indoor bowling club, Treeton Sewing Group, Treeton Community Centre, Catcliffe Coffee Pot, Catcliffe outdoor bowling club, Waverley Wonders all contribute towards this ward priority.

Ward Priority 3 – Support initiatives and events that encourage community cohesion and develop an understanding of diverse communities.

Catcliffe Cone Community Group have gone from strength to strength and have hosted several community events over the past two years. They are now working in partnership with the Transport Museum to bring people to the cone as part of a heritage trail around significant sights in Rotherham. We have supported the group with many activities and have provided funding to purchase much needed storage facilities to enable them to continue delivering projects.

Flux Rotherham are an art-based programme who are providing activities within Catcliffe to bring people together through arts and music. Four events have taken place so far which has provided the opportunity to meet new people who we would not normally engage with.

We have supported Waverley events team to deliver a variety of events and activities aimed at bringing people together within a new community to build links and increase community engagement and relationships. We will continue to support the new and growing community of Waverley with the many challenges faced by people living within a new and developing community.

AUDIT COMMITTEE
Wednesday 7 June 2023

Present:- Councillor Baker-Rogers (in the Chair); Councillors Browne, Ball, Mills and Barber.

Apologies were received from Councillor Wyatt.

92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wyatt.

93. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14TH MARCH 2023

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Audit Committee held on 14 March 2023.

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Audit Committee be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

95. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OR THE PRESS

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting nor had any questions being received in advance of the meeting.

96. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for Minute No. 104 (Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Directorate Risk Register – Appendix 1) as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

97. ITEMS FOR REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY

There were no items for referral.

98. DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022-2023

Consideration was given to a report presented by Rob Mahon, Assistant Director - Finance, which introduced the draft Statement of Accounts, which had been published on the Council's website by the deadline of 31 May 2023. The Council was now into the public inspection phase, which would then follow on to the external audit phase of the process. It was

proposed that the final accounts would be produced by the end of September 2023 with the final sign off taking place in November 2023,

The Statement of Accounts included 4 appendices, the first was the narrative report, which was a more user-friendly summation of the Council's financial position, which covered the key areas of the accounts. Appendix 4, was a report on a new process introduced this year, which was a series of questions around audit risk, fraud and risk assessment of accounting estimates that the Council took in terms of it's day to day management.

A key change in the accounts was the movement within the Pension Fund moving from a deficit to a surplus position. Whilst the movements within the Pension Fund position had been significant, it was clarified that this did not impact the Council's Pension Fund contributions.

In response to a query regarding assumptions for the future, around unknown facts and situations it was explained that the sources of the estimations in the accounts were more around asset valuations, the valuations around the Council's property, pensions as apposed to the more Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) considerations relating to the economic environment such as inflation and payroll. The biggest challenges to the Council were external factors such as pay increases and inflation which was covered by the MTFS.

Discussions took place regarding how many questions had been received on the accounts and it was queried if more could be done in the future to publicise that the accounts were available to residents to view. It was agreed that officers would give consideration as to what additional methods could be used to publicise the Statement of Accounts within the borough.

The External Auditors clarified that they had not received any formal questions from members of the public on the Council's accounts within the past four years and highlighted that members of the public had the opportunity to raise questions with them during the next 30 days.

Resolved: That Audit Committee:

1. Received the draft unaudited Statement of Accounts 2022/23.
2. Agreed that officers would give further consideration to publicising that the draft unaudited Statement of Accounts is available for consultation within the borough.

99. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

Consideration was given to the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the 2022/23 financial year as presented by David Webster, Head of Internal Audit. This was published alongside the Councils Statement of Accounts on 31 May 2023. The paper briefly set out the

process that was followed to construct this AGS.

He clarified that the process followed for constructing the 2022/23 AGS involved each Strategic Director overseeing a self-assessment of governance within their Directorates. This information was reviewed, and the Strategic Directors added their own Statement of Assurance based on the information arising from their review of current and previous governance issues. The Corporate Governance Group then reviewed those statements and produced the AGS. The AGS was then reviewed by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services, the Monitoring Officer, The Chief Executive and the Leader.

The AGS included a framework of governance arrangements and how it related to the CIPFA guidance. It included how it was monitored and the assurances it received along with an update on matters referred to in the AGS for 2021/22. It also contained a statement from the Leader and Chief Executive.

A suggestion was made that the section referring to the Chief Executive, Strategic and Assistant Directors in the table setting out the key elements of an effective governance framework be updated to include reference to the Monitoring Officer. That was agreed and will be included in the Final AGS.

Resolved: That Audit Committee: Reviewed the draft 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement and raised queries, as necessary.

100. GRANT THORNTON EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022-2023

Gareth Mills, Grant Thornton, presented the External Audit Plan in which the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, praised the Council that the draft accounts had been prepared in line with the end of May deadline given the pressures and difficulties faced by many Local Authorities across the country to achieve it.

He highlighted that the core audit team remained consistent, and this was the fifth year that the same team had led on the audit, providing a consistent approach to the audit process for both parties.

The report covered both the national and local contexts and discussed the key matters. The ongoing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) position was noted along with the receipt of the Safety Valve Funding (SVF). The receipt of the SVF was in recognition of the Council's good performance, in managing the DSG deficit along with its stable financial position.

There were around 600 Local Authority audits outstanding at the time of the meeting and it was expected that this could increase due to the issues around the national backlog. They were proposing to conclude their audit in November 2023, which was after the national deadline of 30 September 2023.

The areas of significant risk were the same as in previous years, centring around management over-ride of controls, valuation of land and buildings and valuation of the net pension fund balance. Materiality was calculated on a similar principle as previous years but if items went above those thresholds they would be considered separately within the audit.

Most of the value for money work would be undertaken during the summer and autumn with an aim to conclude the work by the end of the year when a report would be presented to the committee in January 2024.

The audit fee was broadly in line with the previous two years however next years fee would be increased. He also clarified that they remained independent from the Council.

In response to queries Gareth Mills made the following points:

- They had seen a strengthening of arrangements in terms of financial stability and governance over the previous 4 years but that was not to say that the Council was without its risk.
- The official deadline for completion of the audit was 30 September 2023 however auditors were discussing the feasibility of that deadline given there were around 600 audits to be signed off by that date. He clarified that completing the audit by the end of November would be feasible.
- A significant proportion of audit time was spent looking at the Pension Fund balances which were subject to loss of fluctuations and variations due to outside influences. As part of the regulation's auditors are asked to challenge those assumptions and other factors that could affect the Pensions and Land and Buildings funds.

Resolved: That Audit Committee noted Grant Thornton, External Auditor's 2022/23 audit plan.

101. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST FEBRUARY 2023 TO 30TH APRIL 2023

Consideration was given to a report presented by David Webster, Head of Internal Audit, which provided an up-to-date position on the Internal Audit Plan, a summary of Internal Audit work completed during 1 February to 30 April 2023 and the key issues that had arisen from it. Appendix A indicated the latest position however since publication another seven audits had been finalised.

The Chair explained that she had been notified of an audit report that had received an audit opinion of 'No Assurance' which was the Tree Management audit. Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture, Sport & Tourism and Leanne Buchan: Head of Creative Programming & Engagement attended the meeting.

Polly Hamilton explained that three reports had been commissioned with the Internal Audit review being focused on specific areas of concern. The review provided a series of 20 recommendations to strengthen areas of weakness. She clarified that 14 of the 20 recommendations were complete and a further 2 would be completed by the end of June. All the urgent and red rated tree works had now been addressed and a quality assurance system had been developed and implemented to address the recommendations.

It was clarified that the audit was commissioned as a result of a specific incident of which it was deemed the Council was not at fault but emphasis around strengthening the processes followed.

The Head of Internal Audit explained that a follow up audit would be planned before the end of the year. The Chair requested to see a copy of that audit report regardless of the rating it received. She was pleased that the audit had been seen as a positive tool to improve and hoped those improvements would be sustained.

Resolved: That the Audit Committee:

1. Noted the Internal Audit work undertaken since the last Audit Committee, 1st February 2023 to 30th April 2023, and the key issues that have arisen from it.
2. Noted the information contained regarding the performance of Internal Audit and the actions being taken by management in respect of their performance.

102. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Consideration was given to a report presented by David Webster, Head of Internal Audit, which summarised the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Department. The report provided the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the adequacy of the Council's control environment, risk management and governance. His opinion and the contents of the report feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

The report provided information on the definition and role of Internal Audit, confirmed their independence and outlined the work carried out during the year.

A section of the report listed that there were five Partial Assurance audit opinions in the year and one with No Assurance and he highlighted an error within that Partial Assurance table which was 'Museum Collections' for R&E should have been included in the table and S278 Agreements should have been removed.

He explained that forty-seven audits had been completed within the year. No investigations had been completed but 70 days had been spent on

investigations during the year. Expertise was brought in to complete any ICT audits on their behalf.

It was suggested that information on any overdue recommendations be included within the report going forward. In terms of receiving feedback, fourteen client satisfaction surveys were completed. He did not feel that it would be higher in other authorities, and it was not something that he would want to insist that managers complete.

In response the Head of Internal Audit explained that 40 days had been spent on anti-fraud work during the year, most of which took place during the National Fraud Initiative.

Resolved: That the Audit Committee:

1. Noted the Internal Audit work undertaken during the financial year 2022-23 and the key issues that have arisen from it.
2. Noted the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control within the Council.

103. AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

Consideration was given to the proposed forward work plan for the Audit Committee, which was presented by David Webster, Head of Internal Audit.

The Chair explained that if any member could speak with the Head of Internal Audit or herself regarding adding an audit to the work plan.

Resolved: That the Audit Committee reviewed the Forward Work Plan.

104. ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH (ACPH) DIRECTORATE RISK REGISTER

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Ian Spicer, Strategic Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, which provided details of the Risk Register and risk management activity within the Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Directorate.

A detailed breakdown was given of the Directorate's approach to risk management and monitoring and the efforts to ensure transparency and the understanding of risk management by all staff.

During discussions, it was requested that future reports include a comparison to show the difference between the information presented at the last meeting against the current information.

Resolved: That the Audit Committee noted the progress and current position in relation to risk management activity in the Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health Directorate, as detailed in the report.

105. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

106. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That a further meeting be held on 27 July 2023, commencing at 2pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

This page is intentionally left blank

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE
Thursday 15 June 2023

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Griffin, Bacon, Z. Collingham, Hughes, Sansome, Tarmey, Buckley, Carroll and Mr. R. Swann and also Mrs. A. Bingham, Mr. P. Edler and Mrs. K. Penney.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Yasseen and Mrs. M. Evers.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for (insert item of business) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

31. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY, 2023

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th January, 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

32. TRAINING UPDATE

Consideration was given to a verbal update on proposed training planned with Town and Parish Councils and the details shared with the Committee.

It was explained that arrangements were being made for Code of Conduct training to be arranged to take place in July and August 2023. This training would be available to all parish councillors. The training would be delivered remotely however consideration could be given to conducting the training in a hybrid manner. Following discussions, it was agreed that when notification of the training was issued, views would be sought on the delivery method for the training. This training would also be offered to any independent members.

Resolved:- That the details of the training be received and the contents noted.

2B

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - 15/06/23**33. CONSIDERATION OF GRANTING OF A DISPENSATION RELATING TO HOUSING MATTERS**

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager which set out in detail the granting of dispensations to enable Members of the Council who have Council tenancies to participate and vote on Council business related to Housing.

The Localism Act and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 introduced “Disclosable Pecuniary Interests” and new rules on the grant of dispensations to allow Council Members to take part in decisions or vote on matters in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary interest (“DPI”).

The grounds for the grant of a dispensation under Section 33(2) of the Localism Act were, if, after having regard to all relevant circumstances, the Council considers the five grounds set out in detail as part of the report.

In order to obtain a dispensation on any of the five grounds set out under Section 33 of the Localism Act, a Member must make a written request to the Council’s Monitoring Officer. Any grant of a dispensation must specify how long it lasts for, up to a maximum period of four years.

A discussion ensued that highlighted the dispensation could last for a period of four years. The proposal was seeking to widen the democratic process which would give every councillor the ability to speak within the debate. Following concerns being raised it was suggested that the dispensation was reviewed at the first meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee following an Election.

Resolved:-

1. That any Members of the Council who are tenants of Rotherham Borough Council be granted a dispensation pursuant to Section 33(2) (e) of the Localism Act to allow them to participate and to vote on matters in relation to housing (provided that those functions do not relate particularly to the tenancy or lease of the Council Member concerned). Such requests should be submitted in writing to the Monitoring Officer.
2. That a review of the dispensation granted pursuant to Section 33(2) (e) of the Localism Act be carried out at the first meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee following an Election.

34. OUTCOME OF STANDARDS AND ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE HEARING RE ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT - MALTBY TOWN COUNCILLOR

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager which set out the outcome of a Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing which took place on 4th April 2023 in relation to an alleged breach

of the Code of Conduct by Maltby Town Councillor Christopher McMahon.

Attached to the report was the full Decision Notice and the minutes of the hearing itself.

As part of the discussions it was confirmed that the training offered was not compulsory but was available for all parish councillors to attend.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the outcome of the Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing on 4th April 2023 be noted.

35. **CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS**

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager, detailing the progress with the handling of complaints relating to breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and Town and Parish Councillors. The report listed the current cases of complaint and the action being taken in respect of each one.

Reference was made to each related case and recommended outcomes/actions identified were highlighted.

The involvement of the Independent Persons in this process was welcomed and deemed very beneficial.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

36. **A REVIEW OF CONCERNS RAISED PURSUANT TO THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report and appendix presented by the Service Manager, which provided an overview of the Whistleblowing cases which have been received over the past year.

Particular reference was made to the appendix to the report which set out clearly the description of the concerns received and action taken.

Resolved:- That the Whistleblowing concerns raised over the previous year and the actions taken to address these matters be noted.

37. **URGENT BUSINESS**

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

38. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be held on Thursday, 14th September, 2023 commencing at 2.00 p.m.

