



# Council

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**Wednesday 15 January 2025**  
**2.00 p.m.**

Rotherham  
Metropolitan  
Borough Council 

# WELCOME TO TODAY'S MEETING

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## GUIDANCE FOR THE PUBLIC

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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](http://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](mailto: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.

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## FACILITIES

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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](mailto:governance@rotherham.gov.uk)

Date of Publication:- **7 January 2025**

# COUNCIL

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Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

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THE MAYOR (Councillor Sheila Cowen)  
DEPUTY MAYOR (Councillor Rukhsana Ismail)

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Sharon Kemp OBE)

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## MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

### ANSTON AND WOODSETTS

BAUM-DIXON, Timothy J.  
BLACKHAM, John M.  
TARMEY, Drew S.

### ASTON AND TODWICK

ALLEN, Sarah A.  
BACON, Joshua

### AUGHTON AND SWALLOWNEST

PITCHLEY, Lyndsay  
TAYLOR, Robert P.

### BOSTON CASTLE

ALAM, Saghir  
HUSSAIN, Ashiq  
YASSEEN, Taiba K.

### BRAMLEY AND RAVENFIELD

DUNCAN, Elizabeth J.  
REYNOLDS, Gregory

### BRINSWORTH

CARTER, Adam J.  
CARTER, Charlotte R.

### DALTON AND THRYBERGH

BENNETT-SYLVESTER, Michael D.P.  
RYALLS, Jodie

### DINNINGTON

CLARKE, Amanda M.  
CASTLEDINE-DACK, Sophie  
HALL, Julia

### GREASBROUGH

BERESFORD, Linda J.  
ELLIOTT, Robert W.

### HELLABY AND MALTBY WEST

BALL, Simon A.  
STABLES, Lynda J.

### HOOBER

BRENT, Rajmund E.  
LELLIOTT, Denise  
WILLIAMS, John

### KEPPEL

CURRIE, Simon  
FOSTER, Carole  
GARNETT, Gillian S.

### KILNHURST AND SWINTON (EAST)

CUSWORTH, Victoria  
HARPER, Nigel

### MALTBY EAST

SUTTON, Donna E.  
TINSLEY, Adam J.

### RAWMARSH EAST

HUGHES, Rachel E.M.  
SHEPPARD, David

### RAWMARSH WEST

BAKER-ROGERS, Joanna  
STEELE, Brian

### ROTHER VALE

ADAIR, Terry  
BAGGALEY, Jamie

### ROTHERHAM EAST

AHMED, Angham S.T.  
ISMAIL, Rukhsana B.  
RASHID, Haroon

### ROTHERHAM WEST

JONES, Ian P.  
KEENAN, Eve  
MCKIERNAN, Cameron D.P.

### SITWELL

BOWER, Michael A.  
FISHER, David F.  
THORP, Paul S.

### SWINTON ROCKINGHAM

MONK, Gina  
READ, Chris

### THURCROFT & WICKERSLEY

COLLINGHAM, Zachary A.  
COLLINGHAM, Thomas R.

### WALES

BECK, Dominic E.  
HAVARD, Marnie A.

### WATH

COWEN, Sheila A.  
JACKSON, David R.

### WICKERSLEY NORTH

KNIGHT, Stuart  
MARSHALL, Lynda  
MAULT, James J.

# Council Meeting Agenda

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**Time and Date:-**

Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

**Venue:-**

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

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**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 7 - 40)**

To receive the record of proceedings of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2024, and to approve the accuracy thereof.

**4. Petitions (Pages 41 - 45)**

To report on any petitions 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 47 - 77)**

To note the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

**10. Recommendation from Cabinet - HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26 (Pages 79 - 139)**

To consider and approve the Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges 2025-26.

**11. Overview and Scrutiny Update (Pages 141 - 160)**

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

**12. Notice of Motion - Protecting our farmland and countryside by prioritising solar panel installations on roofs and car parks (Pages 161 - 162)**

To be moved by Councillor Ball and seconded by Councillor Thorp.

**13. Notice of Motion - Proactive action at the Maltby Colliery site (Pages 163 - 165)**

To be moved by Councillor Tinsley and seconded by Councillor Stables.

**14. Notice of Motion - Kier Starmer's Labour Government have failed WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) Women (Pages 167 - 168)**

To be moved by Councillor Tarmey and seconded by Councillor A Carter.

**15. Notice of Motion - Save Rotherham Post Office (Page 169)**

To be moved by Councillor C Carter and seconded by Councillor Tarmey.

**16. Audit Committee (Pages 171 - 182)**

To note receipt of the Audit Committee minutes.

**17. Health and Wellbeing Board (Pages 183 - 205)**

To note receipt of the Health and Wellbeing Board minutes.

**18. Licensing Board and Licensing Committee (Pages 207 - 219)**

To note receipt of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee and Licensing Sub-Committee minutes.

**19. Planning Board (Pages 221 - 229)**

To note receipt of the Planning Board minutes.

**20. Staffing Committee (Pages 231 - 232)**

To accept the recommendations and note receipt of the Staffing Committee minutes.

**21. Members' Questions to Designated Spokespersons**

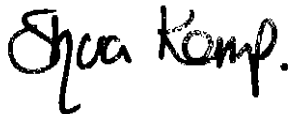
To put questions, if any, to the designated Members on the discharge of functions of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Pensions Authority, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11(5).

**22. 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).

**23. Urgent Items**

Any other public items which the Mayor determines are urgent.



**SHARON KEMP OBE,**  
Chief Executive.

**The next meeting of the Council will be on  
5 March 2025 at 2.00 p.m.**

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**6th November, 2024**

Present:- The Mayor of Rotherham (Councillor Sheila Cowen) (in the Chair); Councillors Ismail, Ahmed, Alam, Allen, Bacon, Baggaley, Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Beresford, Blackham, Bower, Brent, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Clarke, Z. Collingham, Currie, Cusworth, Duncan, Elliott, Foster, Garnett, Hall, Harper, Havard, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Marshall, Mault, McKiernan, Monk, Pitchley, Rashid, Read, Reynolds, Ryalls, Sheppard, Steele, Sutton, Tarmey, Taylor, Thorp, Tinsley, Williams and Yasseen.

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

**71. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor was deeply saddened to report on the death of Roland Benton, former Mayor and Councillor for Swinton. As a mark of respect, the meeting stood and observed a minute's silence.

The Mayor was pleased to be able to welcome officers representing the winners of the Transport News, Northern Local Authority 'Fleet of the Year' award to the meeting. The award was made for being forward thinking over low carbon alternative fuels, by trialling 10 vehicles on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil which has delivered a carbon saving of 65 tonnes over the 6 month trial period. Had diesel been used in the sample vehicles for the trial, this would have emitted 70.35 tonnes, but the alternative fuel meant only 5.28 tonnes of carbon was emitted.

A full list of engagements was appended to the Mayor's letter.

**72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Resolved: That apologies for absence be received from Councillors Adair, Ball, T. Collingham, Fisher, Keenan, Knight, Lelliott and Stables.

**73. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous Council Meeting held on 11 September 2024.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 September 2024 be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Sheppard

**COUNCIL MEETING - 06/11/24**

**74. PETITIONS**

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the one petition that had been received since the last Council meeting. The petition was titled: Traffic Lights to be Installed at the Junction of Wentworth Road/Stubbin Road B6089. It had received 77 valid signatures and as such the lead petitioner, Ms Walston, had been invited to address the Council in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme. Ms Walston did not attend and the matter was therefore referred directly to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment for a response.

**Resolved:**

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Council received the petition listed at paragraph 2.1 of the report and the lead petitioner or their representative be entitled to address the Council for a total period of five minutes in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
3. That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment be required to respond to the lead petitioner, as set out in the Petition Scheme, by Wednesday 20 November 2024.

**75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Currie made a declaration of interest in regard to the Minute 88 as a family member was a police officer.

**76. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

11 public questions had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12:-

1. Mr Jonathan Smith: Madam Mayor, to reiterate my colleagues email to yourself in September can you confirm that you have formally requested, on our behalf, our cordial invitations to all the Rotherham MPs, Councillors, council officers and local dignitaries to the solemn occasion of Raising the Palestinian Flag at the Town Hall on Friday the 29th of November?

The Leader explained that the Mayor had asked him to respond on her behalf. It was confirmed that the Mayor had not received the information relating to the event, neither had the Leader. If that information was provided, it would be circulated but not to all Council officers.

In his supplementary, Mr Smith stated that Rotherham had a proud history in supporting humanitarian causes in South Africa, Chile and Ukraine. He asked the Leader to extend the historical precedent and to work with Rotherham residents, especially Rotherham Palestinians. Residents had



invited the Mayor and the Leader to extend the invitation weeks in advance as a further step to developing a respectful working relationship. Mr Smith asked the Leader to confirm that those requested had been invited to the rising of the Palestinian flag for 5.30pm on 29 November as requested at the Cabinet meeting on 14 October? An email was sent but not responded to. Mr Smith also asked for how long the Ukrainian flag was raised on Council premises and asked for the appropriate documentation to be sent to their official email address. Finally, Mr Smith asked the Leader to confirm how the Council would be responding to the petition recommendations whilst involving the community.

The Leader reiterated that he had not received any information about an event people may be organising on the evening of 29 November and as such, could not send out an invitation. In relation to flag flying, the Leader explained that there were two separate processes. The first, which took precedence, was the guidance from the Government. The Ukrainian flag was flown in accordance with that guidance and was therefore flown for a number of weeks. The second process was that the Council could choose to make its own localised arrangements. Following the petition and recommendations from OSMB, the Palestinian flag will be flown on 29 November. This was a gesture of solidarity with the people suffering in Palestine. It was not helpful to anyone to compare how long flags flew for.

2. Mr A. Burton: How do you intend to proceed with the People's Palestine Petition recommendations whilst involving the community moving forward?

Mr Burton did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

3. Ms Carol Boote: Who is the Cabinet spokesperson?

The Leader stated that Councillor Sheppard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Social Inclusion was the Cabinet Spokesperson in relation to the Gaza Petition recommendations.

In her supplementary, Ms Boote referenced a letter sent from Councillor Read to her colleague on 24 October 2024 where he had stated that the Council would continue to engage in dialogue with the petitioners, where appropriate, and where this could practically and constructively contribute to the objectives of peace in Palestine and the wider Middle East region. Ms Boote stated that there had been requests for divestment in Israel on numerous occasions. The Council's Solicitor had stated that this was categorically illegal. Ms Boote asked that, to ensure petitioners that this was not true, could Councillor Read commit to fulfil all the points of the petition in full and without delay? Could that written commitment be sent to the official email address? Yes or No?

**COUNCIL MEETING - 06/11/24**

The Leader said no. The commitments that Cabinet had made, based on the OSMB recommendations and legal advice, had been clearly set out in good faith. The Leader could not overrule that and there would be no further commitments.

4. Mr Sabir Hussain: Eastwood has a high crime rate, high unemployment, health, inequality, poor aspirations, low incomes and overcrowding. How would a cycle lane and bus lane resolve these issues?

Councillor Taylor explained that cycle lanes and bus lane would not address those issues in their entirety. No single issue would. However, studies on schemes that had been embedded for much longer than those in the Rotherham Borough had shown that road casualties and street crime were reduced. The reduced emissions and more physical exercise resulted in better health outcomes. There was no expectation that the bus and cycle lanes would fix every issue in Eastwood. However, the current active travel consultation that was open proposed to use £4.6m of government grant to improve public transport through the area, support more people to cycle, improve the public environment and close subways many residents felt unsafe in. There was also a further £11m confirmed investment in housing on three sites in the Eastwood area which would ensure better access to high quality, affordable homes for local residents. The showed that the Council was working on a transformational proposal for people in that part of the borough.

5. Mr Nasser Alam: Why is the council proposing cycle lanes along Fitzwilliam road which will create destruction for residents, local businesses and commuters alike, when with hindsight similar schemes along Wellgate /Broom have had woeful effect on all concerned. Why have cycle lanes not been incorporated into the new cinema development or into the new tram/ train station link road for Parkgate?

Councillor Taylor stated that he did not accept the premise of the question. These points made previously also applied to the schemes delivered on Wellgate and Broom Road, which had used external funding to deliver significant improvements to the roads and footways and general appearance of the area, without any significant loss of parking or traffic capacity.

Regarding cycle lanes into the new cinema at Forge Island, new cycle lanes had been provided along Wellgate and Westgate, which linked into the town centre streets connecting into Forge Island, with the previous ban on cycles on Frederick Street also lifted. This included the new bridge provided to the development which was open to cyclists. The old bridge had not.

Regarding the Parkgate Link Road, this was led by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. This scheme was developed prior to the introduction of enhanced Government requirements in 2020 – had the

development of the scheme started after then, SYMCA would have included cycling measures to meet the Government's standards to access funding to deliver the scheme.

In his supplementary question Mr Alam asked if the Council had consulted the residents of Wellgate and Broom on how they feel about cycle lanes?

Councillor Taylor explained that he was not in post when the consultation for Wellgate and Broom was carried out. However, the current consultation for Eastwood was very significant. There had been a number of events and Councillor Taylor urged everyone to get involved with the consultation. Nothing had been imposed on anyone. The Council would consider all responses.

6. Ms Umamah Yusufi: During discussions with OSMB we suggested raising the Palestinian flag for the duration of the ongoing Genocide. What are your intentions for how long the Flag will be raised and do they comply with your legal obligations under the Equality Duty i.e. Will the Palestinian flag be raised for the same amount of time as the Ukrainian flag?

The Leader explained that the recommendation from OSMB was that the Palestinian Flag be flown on the United Nation's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2024) and this is what had been agreed. The Leader had explained earlier the different processes that had been gone through in relation to this and the flying of the Ukrainian Flag. The Equalities Act did not apply in this situation as it was not a matter of service provision. There should not be a competition over how long a flag should be flown. The length of time that a flag was flown did not reflect the strength of feeling about a situation. The flying of the Palestinian Flag was the Council's way of showing solidarity with those suffering. The Council was doing what was asked of it.

In her supplementary, Ms Yusufi stated that the petition process had taken far too long and that communication from the Council had not been good enough. Ms Yusufi stated that flying the flag for five hours on a Friday, when many Muslim's would be in Friday prayers and many Jewish people would be starting Sabbath, was an insult to what the Palestinian people had had to endure. She stated that the petitioners should have been consulted on the timings and she questioned where the role of democracy was in this process. The Ukrainian flag had been flown without a petition and without the level of upset from the Rotherham people.

The Leader explained that there was no length of time that the flag could be flown that would reflect the suffering in the Middle East or atone for that suffering. Cabinet and the Council had agreed to do what was asked of them by OSMB. Councillor Sheppard was available to speak with the petitioners if they wanted to. The Leader reiterated the different processes for flying the flag and explained that flags could not be flown for every incident.

The “event” the Leader was referring to was the flying of the flag on 29 November. The gathering of people later in the afternoon/evening on 29 November was arranged by the petitioners and he had no further information on this.

Following a request from the Leader, the Mayor allowed Ms Yusufi to respond. Ms Yusufi agreed that this was a token gesture. She suggested that a better gesture would be to impose sanctions on Israel and have an arms embargo. She stated that arms were being produced in South Yorkshire which would kill children in Gaza. The flying of the flag was just the start to show that the people of Rotherham cared about what was going on. The response from the Council had been very disappointing.

The Leader was sorry that Ms Yusufi felt like that but he believed that the Council had been asked to do things and were doing the things that they were able to do. He recognised the strength of feeling but neither he nor the Council could impose sanctions on Israel or start an arms embargo. The Leader’s job was to run Council services in Rotherham and that had to be the top priority.

7. Mr Abrar Javid: What advantage has been seen in the Wellgate/broom bicycle lane scheme, that you think an expansion in Eastwood would benefit from it?

Mr Javid withdrew his question at the meeting as it had already been asked and answered.

8. Mr M Ashraf: Following Israel’s widespread, indiscriminate terroristic electronic devices bombing campaign which caused untold mayhem and civilian deaths especially among the Lebanese medical sector and even children. Will the Council Leader and Chief Executive condemn these actions and as it is in their power to do so, raise the Lebanese flag like they have done for other nations that suffered terrorism?

The Leader referred Mr Ashraf to the answers given previously. All war crimes and human rights abuses were condemned. The Council could not commit to responding to every act of violence that took place during the current war in the Middle East. There was no commitment to fly the Lebanese flag or the Iranian Flag or any other flag. Views had been expressed to the former Conservative Government and to the current Labour Government that they should use all available diplomatic levers to bring peace to the region.

In his supplementary Mr Ashraf stated that the Lebanese were again the wrong colour. He referenced the riot that took place in August in Manvers and asked for equality before the law. Mr Ashraf then talked about the definition of terrorism and suggested that Israel had links to ISIS. He asked the Leader whether he would provide a commitment to fully divest from the ISIS-funding Israel? He also asked the Leader for a timeline of

when the IHRA definition of antisemitism would be removed. He asked every Rotherham Councillor to give a written commitment to fulfilling all the points of the petition and to send that commitment to the official email address.

The Leader explained that these were all points that were considered by OSMB as part of the petition process. No further commitments would be made in relation to the matters raised. A view in support of the Palestinian people had been taken. The Council would be the first in South Yorkshire to fly the Palestinian flag and were not doing anything actively that would support military aggression in the middle east. The Leader asked Mr Ashraf to accept the outcome and that the Council had acted in good faith

9. Mr Masood Hanif: What specific data or evidence supports the decision against a cycle lane on a busy major A road lead, particularly in terms of safety and traffic flow for all road user?

Mr Hanif did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

10. Ms Roswana Khan: Why has the Council Leader Read not flown the Palestinian flag after the horrendous Genocide we have all witnessed for the past 13 months? If you can raise it for months on end for the Ukrainians. You can have the decency to raise it for the Palestinians who have suffered unimaginable War Crimes, Ethnic-Cleansing and Genocide.

Ms Khan did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

11. Mr Tony Mabbott: Since the Israeli invasion of Gaza in October 2023, occupying forces have deliberately targeted infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and water and electricity supplies, and continued bombing civilians, all against international law. Given this, will Rotherham Council support flying the Palestinian flag outside Council buildings for the same length of time as it flew the Ukraine flag after February 2022?

The Leader explained that he had nothing further to add as he had responded to similar questions earlier in the meeting.

In his supplementary, Mr Mabbott explained that the group had been in discussions with a teacher in Gaza who had stated that all the schools and some of the hospitals had been bombed as a part of a deliberate strategy. Tens of thousands of children had lost their lives. As Rotherham was to be the Children's Capital of Culture, Mr Mabbott saw it as an international opportunity to raise the plight of children in Gaza. He asked the Leader to consider this.

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The Leader explained that he would consider what could be done. However, a lot of the funding for the Children's Capital of Culture did have rules and regulations regarding what the funding could be used for. The Council would have to ensure they adhered to all these rules and regulations.

**77. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no such items that required the exclusion of the press and public from this meeting.

**78. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT**

The Leader was invited to present his statement. He stated that he was conscious that it was a long agenda with many questions. If a significant numbers of Members had left the meeting before the end, the Leader confirmed that he would want to draw the meeting to a close. Members would receive answers to their questions in writing.

The Leader highlighted the following:

Work had started on the site for a new café at Rother Valley Country Park. The works were part of a series of £7.4m improvements at the park which were long awaited.

Work had started on the new housing and independent living development on Warden Street in Canklow as part of the Castle Hill development. This was an £11m scheme which would bring state of the art facilities for people with learning disabilities.

Demolition works had started at Rotherham Markets with the demolition of the former Drummond Street shops – also known as the Guardian Centre buildings, paving the way for the development's brand-new town centre library. This was the second biggest investment in the town centre.

Residents living in Rotherham could once again receive support with their energy bills this winter, as the latest round of the Council's Crisis Support Scheme opened for application. The scheme offered payments of up to £250 for households that were struggling to meet the costs of their energy bills as a result of the significant rise in energy costs. The Leader urged Members to help residents access that support.

In conclusion, the Leader passed on his thanks to the team involved with the Bonfire Night event at Clifton Park which was very successful.

Councillor Currie stated that it would be better for the meetings to be held at 10am. He also asked that, if the meeting did finish early, could supplementary questions be emailed in for a written response?

The Leader confirmed that they could if this happened.

Councillor Reynolds asked a question in relation to the laying of tarmac and why it was rippling. He also asked if the new entrance to Parkgate would be open in time for the Christmas rush?

The Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided in relation to the tarmac question. He also confirmed that he expected the new entrance at Parkgate to open shortly. The delay had been due to flooding and drainage issues.

Councillor Z Collingham stated that the way in which public questions were being presented and asked was not beneficial to the questioners, the Members or anyone watching. This was an ongoing issue and the rules continued to be broken. He asked if the matter could be looked at on a cross-party basis as it was detailing the meeting.

The Leader agreed entirely with the comments. The Constitution Working Group would look into the matters raised.

Councillor Bacon asked why the Leader did not mention the Budget in his statement.

The Leader stated that he believed the Budget was a triumph for public services and the best for public services for 15 years. The Chancellor had been given a choice between making the austerity errors like George Osborne had in 2010 or making some difficult decisions to point the economy in the right direction. This chosen option would put money back into council services. The allocations for Rotherham had not yet been confirmed.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked if conversations could be started regarding whether the Castle View development could be used by families fostering children with disabilities?

The Leader agreed to look into the question.

Councillor Steele asked why Members were not using scrutiny to ask Cabinet Members questions on policy and procedure? He asked the Leader if the Constitution could be looked at as the cut off from questions from Members used to be 20 minutes. He also urged Members to use the proper procedures for getting questions answered.

The Leader agreed and stated that the Constitution Working Group would look into the matters raised.

Councillor Bower referenced the event at Clifton Park which he thought was great. He had however been approached by residents who felt unsafe, and Councillor Bower felt there was a lack of stewarding and security. He asked the Leader if this could be reviewed?

**COUNCIL MEETING - 06/11/24**

The Leader stated that an internal review would take place.

**79. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING**

Consideration was given to the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 16 September and 14 October 2024.

Resolved: That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 16 September and 14 October 2024 be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Sheppard

**80. CABINET'S RESPONSE TO THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION SCRUTINY REVIEW - NATURE RECOVERY**

Consideration was given to the report which presented Cabinet's response to the Improving Places Select Commission Scrutiny Review on Nature Recovery. On 25 May 2022, Council resolved to declare a Nature Crisis for Rotherham. It noted that almost half of all UK wildlife was in long-term decline, with 15% of species at risk of extinction. The motion stated that the climate crisis was hastening the destruction of the natural environment, damaging habitats, and disrupting ecosystems. The declaration of a Nature Crisis was first taken up by local people and groups; the motion called on the Council to do the same, noting that a thriving natural environment underpinned a healthy, prosperous society.

The recommendations resulting from the 2023 review were endorsed by OSMB in March 2024, and presented to Cabinet in June 2024. On 16 September 2024, Cabinet approved its response. The key issues, risks and recommendations were therefore detailed within Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

Resolved:

1. That Council note Cabinet's response to the recommendations summarised in the report – Cabinet Response to the Improving Places Scrutiny Review – Nature Recovery at Appendix 1 and 2.

Mover:- Councillor Sheppard

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

**81. NOTICE OF MOTION - A BAD START FROM THE NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT**

An amendment to the original motion was accepted by the mover and seconder of the original Motion and, therefore, further to Procedure Rule 18(14) the amendment was incorporated into the Motion for debate (inclusions highlighted in bold italics).



The original Motion and amendment were moved by Councillor A Carter and Councillor Tarmey.

**That this Council notes that:**

1. The Labour Party won a majority in the 2024 general election to form the Government of the UK with a manifesto that included a pledge not to increase taxes for working people.
2. There was no manifesto commitment to the removal of universal winter fuel payments for pensioners.
3. Rotherham Labour Group proposed a motion in recent years condemning the removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift, which was passed by the Council.
4. Inflation has recently returned to below the Bank of England target, and this has happened more rapidly than forecast earlier this year which provides the government with more fiscal headroom to support working people.
5. ***The Government has announced they are going to increase the bus fare cap to £3 per journey in 2025.***
6. ***The Government has announced that regulated rail fares in England are to rise by 4.6% from 2nd March 2025.***
7. ***The Government has chosen to keep a freeze on the personal allowance until 2028/29 financial year, increasing the amount of tax working people on the national living wage will pay.***
8. ***The Chancellor has listened to Liberal Democrat calls for an increase in the carer's allowance earning threshold, meaning that 60,000 more carers will be able to keep Government support while continuing to work.***
9. ***The Government's Budget will "leave the size of the economy largely unchanged at the end of the five-year forecast period", according to the Office for Budget Responsibility analysis.***

**That this Council believes that:**

1. Promises made in an election manifesto of a party who wins a parliamentary majority should not be broken.
2. Self-employed people, and employees of small and medium sized businesses are 'working people'.
3. Self-employed people may be liable for employee and employer national insurance contributions.
4. The private sector is an essential part of our economy and is key to economic growth, job creation, and revenue for the Treasury.
5. Increasing the tax burden for the self-employed and small and medium sized businesses risks fewer jobs, lower growth, and redundancies.
6. The Government should reinstate the Universal Credit uplift as the council resolved in recent years.

7. The borough's three MPs - John Healey, Sarah Champion and Jake Richards - were wrong to vote to remove universal winter fuel payments for pensioners.
8. ***Working people who use public transport should not be made to pay above inflation bus and train fare increases to get to work.***
9. ***It is wrong that low-income working people will have to pay more tax due to this Budget.***
10. ***Carers in receipt of carer's allowance should be able to work alongside their care responsibilities, without being penalised for doing so.***

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Ask group leaders to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the borough's three MPs, asking them to oppose hikes to tax and national insurance for the self-employed and small to medium sized businesses.
2. Express its regret that the borough's three MPs voted to remove universal winter fuel payments.
3. Ask group leaders to write the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the borough's three MPs to ask them to reinstate the Universal Credit uplift, ***and to oppose above inflation train and bus fare increases.***

On being put to the vote the Motion fell.

**82. NOTICE OF MOTION - REMEMBERING ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED AND SACRIFICED FOR OUR COUNTRY**

An amendment to the original motion was accepted by the mover and seconder of the original Motion and, therefore, further to Procedure Rule 18(14) the amendment was incorporated into the Motion for debate (inclusions highlighted in bold italics).

The original Motion was moved by Councillor Tarmey and seconded by Councillor C Carter. The amendment was moved by Councillor Tinsley and seconded by Councillor Baum-Dixon.

**That this Council:**

1. Thanks military veterans for their service to our country.
2. Recognises the sacrifices that military personnel have made during their service to our country.
3. Commits to always remember those who have lost their lives in their military service for our country.
4. Is grateful of the work charities such as the Royal British Legion and others do in supporting all our military veterans.

5. Recognises the role played by local charities for their invaluable work in supporting the financial, physical health, and mental health needs of our military veterans.
6. Believes that historical armed forces policies that were in place as late as the year 2000, discriminated against LGBT+ people and have done significant harm to those military personnel: both by discharging them from the military; or the effect that hiding that their identity had on mental health during someone's military service.
7. Notes that the Royal British Legion have introduced Pride Poppies to commemorate the contribution of LGBT+ military personnel to the armed forces and resolves to fully support this initiative.
8. Believes that the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance Sunday are inclusive events where we remember and thank all our military personnel and veterans irrespective of background, orientation, religion, or personal beliefs.
9. **Reaffirms its commitment to supporting Remembrance parades across the Borough, including providing Traffic Management Orders to ensure safety.**
10. **Notes the importance of cenotaphs and war memorials as spaces for veterans, residents and communities to gather, show respect and participate in acts of remembrance.**
11. **Commits, where the Council is the custodian of memorials and cenotaphs, to maintaining these sites with adequate funding and resources, recognising their significance for veterans and local communities.**

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

### 83. AUDIT COMMITTEE

**Resolved:** That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee be noted.

Mover: Councillor Marshall

Seconder: Councillor Baggaley

### 84. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Mover: Councillor Baker-Rogers

Seconder: Councillor Cusworth

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**85. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE AND LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:** That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee and the Licensing Sub-Committee be noted.

Mover: Councillor Hughes

Seconder: Councillor Beresford

**86. PLANNING BOARD**

**Resolved:** That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Planning Board be noted.

Mover: Councillor Williams

Seconder: Councillor Mault

**87. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:** That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be noted.

Mover: Councillor Monk

Seconder: Councillor Clarke

**88. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS**

There were 6 questions for the designated spokespersons:

1. Councillor Baum-Dixon: Please could you give the council an update on the situation regarding the errors in the South Yorkshire Police accounts and forecasts, which we are led to believe could total almost £65m, including an overview of the error and why it happened, what steps are being taken to prevent this happening again and the potential impact upon policing in Rotherham?

Councillor Harper, Spokesperson on South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, explained that the South Yorkshire Mayor had commissioned a review into the matter. The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Police were working with the Government to determine sustainable solutions. Work was also underway to determine the impact on services should savings be required. It would not be appropriate to speculate on the outcomes of the review and investigations.

In his supplementary, Councillor Baum-Dixon stated that this was a cross-party issue, and everyone needed to work together to stop it from happening again. Given that the auditors in this situation were Grant Thornton and Rotherham Council's auditors were also Grant Thornton, Councillor Baum-Dixon suggested that the Audit Committee look into whether the Council still had confidence in Grant Thornton's abilities to conduct a thorough audit of Council finances.

Councillor Harper confirmed that he was happy to work on a cross-party basis.

2. Councillor Currie: What is the percentage of meetings you have attended since you were placed on the panel?

It was confirmed that both Councillor Harper and Councillor Baum-Dixon had attended one out of the two meetings (50%).

In his supplementary question, Councillor Currie stated that Councillor Baum-Dixon had been on the Panel for a number of years. The £65m error was an accounting error and it should have been scrutinized by Members on the Panel. He asked if Councillor Baum-Dixon would resign?

As Councillor Baum-Dixon was not the Designated Spokesperson he was not asked to respond during the meeting.

3. Councillor Ball: How much additional pressure will the increase in NI cause to the finances of SYP and will you provide a forecast of how much this will cost to implement these labour tax hikes?

Councillor Ball did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

4. Councillor Ball: How much additional pressure will the increase in NI cause to the finances of SYFR and will you provide a forecast of how much this will cost to implement these labour tax hikes?

Councillor Ball did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

5. Councillor A Carter: Do you think the £65 million black hole in South Yorkshire Police's Budget shows that the previous Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as the South Yorkshire Mayor have failed in their duty to local taxpayers?

Councillor Harper answered no to the question. He explained that it was too early to start blaming people. With regard to the South Yorkshire Mayor, he was not responsible for South Yorkshire Police at the time. The responsibility was with the then Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Carter stated that this pointed to a failure of the overall Police and Crime Commissioner role; it did not bring the relevant expertise to the table. Whilst Councillor Carter was glad the role had gone, he did not believe that the South Yorkshire Mayor was in a position to fully scrutinise it. Councillor Carter asked what commitments Councillor Harper would give to say that the failures

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would not impact front lines services and staffing levels within the Police? Would it cost South Yorkshire taxpayers more money in the long term?

Councillor Harper explained that both panel Members would commit to scrutinising what they were told, and the information provided. However, it was not within their power to control the Budget.

6. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Can you please advise on what work is being done to scrutinise the reported £65m "black hole" in the policing Budget and potential impact on frontline services?

Councillor Harper reiterated that there was an investigation ongoing. He hoped some answers would be provided at the next meeting of the Panel in December 2024. Councillor Harper would feedback whenever he got some information.

In his supplementary, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that it was a concerning situation and he asked if the scrutiny function itself would be reviewed in order to look at practices and make sure everything was as it should be? This would build confidence in the scrutiny function and prevent a similar situation.

Councillor Harper stated that the Panel Members he had met so far were serious, honest people who would not allow something similar to happen again. There would be increased scrutiny.

**89. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS**

There were 41 questions:

1. Councillor C Carter: Parents are rightly frustrated about the dangerous parking, lack of crossing patrol, and infrequent parking enforcement outside Brinsworth Manor Infant and Junior Schools. How will the council make things safer?

Councillor Taylor explained that this was a good example of how walking and cycling were important to communities, and dealing with parking and providing safe crossing points was part of that.

At present, available funding for transport infrastructure improvements was fully allocated until 2027. Brinsworth Ward Members had chosen to allocate their Local Neighbourhood and Road Safety Fund to a higher priority elsewhere in the ward. However, officers would record the concern so it could be considered should funding become available in future.

In her supplementary, Councillor Carter asked if patrols could be increased in the area or if patrols within the town centre could be

diverted schools in villages in order to improve safety? She also asked what additional measures could be considered.

Councillor Taylor explained that there had been some patrols, but it was a finite resource. So far this year Civil Enforcement Officers had carried out patrols both on foot and in the CCTV vehicle on 4 occasions outside Brinsworth Manor Infant and Junior Schools to enforce the no waiting restrictions and had issued 2 Penalty Charge Notices. The Council would continue with the enforcement action. Councillor Taylor encouraged Councillor Carter to report the matter again if the situation continued or got worse and it would be looked into further.

2. Councillor Thorp: The Budget has raised employers NIC and lowered the threshold that the employer starts to pay employer NIC, could you confirm how much per year this is going to cost RMBC?

Councillor Alam explained that the Government had indicated that employer NI increases for local authorities would be funded by increases in grant. It was not anticipated that there would be any net loss of funding. The Council was awaiting detail on how any grant awards would be transacted.

Councillor Thorp stated that care workers and similar workers were employed by companies on behalf of the Council. He asked how the Council would pay the extra money since those companies would surely have to pay the raised employer National Insurance Contributions and therefore the cost to the Council would increase.

Councillor Alam confirmed that officers were looking at the details following the Budget announcement. The core cost to the Council would be funded by the Government.

3. Councillor Ball: Can the Leader inform me if he will be applying to GB energy to supply small scale clean energy projects such as solar panels on council houses, schools and hospitals?

Councillor Ball did not attend the meeting and, as such, would receive a written response.

4. Councillor Cusworth will you join with me in offering congratulations to the LEAF centre based at Rockingham J&I school in being awarded the title of "Alternative Provision of the Year " by NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs). in recognition of their work supporting Rotherham Children with SEMH needs.

Councillor Cusworth was delighted to join in offering heartfelt congratulations to the LEAF Centre at Rockingham J&I School for being awarded the prestigious title of "Alternative Provision of the Year" by NASEN (National Association for Special Educational

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Needs). This recognition was a testament to their dedication and impactful work in supporting children in Rotherham with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Their commitment to creating a nurturing and inclusive environment was truly commendable. Councillor Cusworth said well done to the entire team at the LEAF Centre and would write them a congratulatory letter.

In his supplementary, Councillor Elliott stated that he had particular pride in the LEAF centre as it was in his ward and he and other ward Members at the time had played a significant role in getting it built and established. A grant of £140k was secured from Rotherham Borough Council. Councillor Elliott explained that it was therefore difficult to understand why the provision was not used by RMBC. It was not even on the map of provision sent to Members. He asked if Councillor Cusworth would investigate the lack of use and, at the very least, make sure it was reinstated on the map?

Councillor Cusworth confirmed that it was an oversight that it was not on the map and she would ensure that this had been rectified by the service. In relation to the grant funding, Councillor Cusworth explained that this had been a good investment because the provision was still there for the children of Rotherham. It was explained that LEAF offered a 12-week step out provision for children with SEMH needs. There was an expectation from the Department for Education that schools, not the Council, commission those services. There had been a pilot scheme that had shown that getting children into the provision early did not prevent the need for Education Health and Care Plans. Councillor Cusworth reiterate that it was a fantastic centre and she planned to visit. Alternative provision was commissioned by Aspire.

5. Councillor Thorp: Could the Cabinet member tell me how the impact of vacant premises at Forge Island on its projected Revenue?

Councillor Alam explained that the Council had agreed the Forge Island development for the purposes of regeneration of the Town Centre, not as a commercial venture. The Cabinet approval for the scheme was that it would pay for itself over the life of the development. The scheme was projected to do so through a complex financial model which included provision for periods of time when some of the units could be empty. The Council were negotiating with a number of potential new tenants and as such, were not concerned about the implications of this.

In his supplementary, Councillor Thorp asked for an update in relation to food outlets as he understood that Rustic Pizza had pulled out?

Councillor Alam explained that negotiations were ongoing with a number of different tenants.



6. Councillor Thorp: If we have a revenue shortfall due to vacant premises, how do you plan to mitigate this problem and does this affect the loan repayments?

Councillor Alam explained that the Cabinet approval for the scheme was that it would pay for itself over the life of the development and it was still projected to do so. The financial model also assumed that the borrowing would be charged to the service from the first year after completion of the scheme (this was the standard approach). The scheme completed in quarter 1 2024/25, so borrowing would be charged from 2025/26. The Council were assured that the vacant premises would not cause long term problems.

In his supplementary, Councillor Thorp stated that it would be hard to get tenants in when so many had pulled out already. There would also be increased costs due to the rise in employer National Insurance Contributions and potential tenants did not know what the footfall would be like. Further, the Council had given up on chasing the Westgate for nearly £0.5 million.

Councillor Alam confirmed that Council officers were working with the developers to attract tenants.

7. Councillor Z Collingham: Can the Leader outline the information he currently has regarding the shape of 2025/26 core funding allocation for local government and by extension RMBC, following the recent Government Budget?

The Leader stated that he could not speculate as the final settlement had not yet been received. In the Budget, the Chancellor had announced an extra £1.2 billion of core funding for Local Authorities as part of a £3.5 billion pack of funding which will benefit Local Authorities. The exact numbers for Rotherham would be published as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Update once confirmed.

In his supplementary, Councillor Collingham asked if the Leader was disappointed like he was that there was nothing in the Budget about reforms to social care funding? The proposals brought forward by Theresa May a number of years ago had been ruined by the Labour Party and, more recently, the Dilnot report had been shelved.

In response, the Leader made reference to “Gordon Brown’s Death Tax” and how neither party had managed to work together to reform Adult Social Care. He claimed that he was not disappointed in the sense that he would have been very surprised if it was in the Chancellor’s first Budget. The principle of reforming the way in which Adult Social Care was funded absolutely needed to be resolved.

8. This question had been withdrawn.

9. Councillor Z Collingham: Over a year after Cabinet approved the Dinnington Levelling Up scheme, there remains land to be acquired to start work. What reassurance can you provide that this will happen in time and that if the Compulsory Purchasing Order (CPO) process has to be engaged it can be completed before the funding deadline in March 2026?

Councillor Taylor explained that the scheme aimed to tackle years of under investment by the private sector and in doing this the Council had the challenging job of acquiring all property interests.

In the year since funding was allocated, the Council had successfully acquired or was in the process of concluding negotiations on the majority of all land holdings required to facilitate the Dinnington scheme. It was always the Council's objective to acquire property interests by negotiation and CPO powers were always a last resort. However, where necessary and in the absence of an alternative approach, the Council was committed to utilising its CPO powers. To this end, Cabinet committed to making a CPO order in October 2024 and this process was now underway.

The extent and therefore timescales to complete a CPO was to some degree out of Council control. However the current anticipated timeline aimed to see CPO matters concluding before the end of March 2026.

10. Councillor Z Collingham: The Labour Government has announced huge changes to agricultural inheritance tax reliefs in their recent Budget; does you share my concern that these will sound the death knell for small, cash poor, family-run farms across our Borough, leading to more of our countryside being owned by landowners and big business outside of Rotherham?

Councillor Sheppard did not share the concerns that this would affect the majority of small, family run farms. According to an economics professor at the University of Warwick, a married couple owning a farm together could split it in two, which would mean a farm worth £3 million would not pay inheritance tax. Councillor Sheppard stated that some prominent individuals had railed against this decision including one that had said previously that avoiding inheritance tax was the critical thing in their decision to buy a farm. Councillor Sheppard was very pleased that the changes had been introduced as it would mean that wealthy people who had hoovered up farmland in order to avoid inheritance tax would no longer be able to do so. That would hopefully see a return to more family run farms in Rotherham and across the country.

Councillor Collingham asked if Councillor Sheppard really believed that people bought farms to avoid inheritance tax? 70% of the Borough was rural – did Councillor Sheppard believe the farmers in that 70%

were looking to avoid tax rather than work the land and pass it on to their children?

Councillor Sheppard explained that that was not what he had said at all. He had quoted an individual that had done that. When sorting out the mess that the country's finances had been left in, Councillor Sheppard stated that actioned needed to be taken against people who had taken advantage of things like this. The country needed excellent public services, and no one should live in poverty.

11. Councillor Collingham: Can you confirm how many people responded to the recent consultation on the Council Plan for 2025 and any trends in the issues and priorities raised?

The Leader explained that the trends were not yet known as the team were still working through the responses. There had been 1,700 interactions across all methods of engagement as part of the consultation process. This was up by 400 interactions compared with the consultation in 2021. A summary of the responses would be produced and shared as the new Plan was developed. A Members session was planned for 12 November.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Collingham stated, whilst it was great that the number was up, 1,700 was still not a lot of people. In order for the Council Plan to have a democratic mandate and deliver what residents wanted, did the Council need to drive up the numbers?

The Leader agreed that he would like to see as many people involved as possible. The team had tried to make responding as easy as possible and they had been out meeting people face to face in a variety of places. They had written out to 500 randomly selected households in the Borough but only 8% had responded. There was also online activity and focus groups. The Leader thought the team did well to get the levels of interactions they did. He also stated that it was the responsibility of elected Members to act on behalf of their residents.

12. Councillor A Carter: Given the council leader disagrees with the housing target for Rotherham imposed by the new Government, how does the cabinet member think we can achieve building the houses we need in this country?

Councillor Taylor stated that he too disagreed with the housing target. He acknowledged that the Council did have a responsibility to build the houses that the country desperately needed to address years of undersupply and affordability issues in some parts of the country. But as the Leader set out in the last meeting, if simply allocating more land gave more homes in Rotherham, it would have been doing that for the last two decades, but it had not. Using the new methodology,

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Rotherham's housing target would increase from the current figure of 544 to 1,233 which was an increase of 127%. Councillor Taylor did not think that was achievable.

In his supplementary, Councillor Carter stated that when the Local Plan had been agreed, a previous Cabinet Member had lauded the fact that they had negotiated to reduce the target. However, since Sheffield had now had their target reduced under the new methodology, Rotherham were being asked to do more. Councillor Carter asked if the Labour Group in Rotherham were acting as NIMBY's in regard to planning and asked if Councillor Taylor agreed that the Labour Government's plan for building new houses was destined to fail.

Councillor Taylor stated that Sheffield had not had their number reduced due to being more successful at housebuilding. They had been awarded an uplift by the previous government and that figure had since been adjusted.

As a Local Authority, Councillor Taylor stated that he believed Rotherham Council had done everything it could to promote housebuilding. In the representations made to government, the Council had asked for help in moving forward the 4,800 homes that already had planning permission but that had not been built, as well as significant additional financial support to deliver truly affordable homes that Rotherham families needed.

13. Councillor A Carter: Do you think it is fair that people who rely on bus travel working low paid jobs will now have to work an extra hour to pay for the £1 hike in bus fares?

The Leader explained that, prior to the new Government's autumn statement, the national bus fare cap of £2 was to end entirely from January 2025. The proposal was that fares would be set as a wholly commercial decision by private bus operators, without any cap or means for the Council, Passenger Transport Executive or others being able to influence this. It was highly unlikely operators would have chosen to hold fares as low as £3 without the continuation of the fare cap. Prior to the cap fares had been as high as £3.50 and beyond. Moving the cap to £3 was more sustainable and therefore a sensible compromise.

In his supplementary, Councillor Carter stated that the bus service was not reliable and was outdated. He asked if the Leader agreed that Mayor Coppard needed to get on with the job of franchising the buses and making sure it was fit for the purpose.

The Leader stated that he supported franchising and that the competitive processes of running bus services had failed totally. He encouraged everyone to take part in the consultation. Franchising

would not address the big issue of buses getting stuck in congestion. The Leader was confused by some of the opposition to bus priority measures. If people wanted buses to run on time and more reliably, they needed to give up road space to buses. Franchising would help but more funding was required to fully improve the services.

14. Councillor A Carter: Do you believe that Rotherham is losing out because the South Yorkshire Mayor has failed to secure one of the first integrated settlements of funding in the recent Budget?

The Leader responded by saying that he did not believe that because the Mayor had secured one of the first integrated settlements of funding in the recent Budget.

15. Councillor A Carter: Elsewhere in South Yorkshire the social prescribing scheme has been curtailed or stopped. Will you commit to maintaining the social prescribing service within the borough?

Councillor Baker-Rogers stated that the commitment had already been made.

In his supplementary, Councillor Carter asked how the social prescribing scheme had benefitted Rotherham residents?

Councillor Baker-Rogers confirmed she would respond in writing.

16. Councillor A Carter: Do you think that the Government's proposed changes to the national insurance contributions could jeopardise vital apprenticeships in the borough?

The Leader hoped that that would not be the case. He stated that cutting public services and running down the private sector economy would jeopardise apprenticeships. There was always a balance to be made. The Leader believed that the right judgement had been made. Across the Council's partnerships there was a commitment to 400 apprenticeships over the next four years.

In his supplementary, Councillor Carter stated that it was reassuring to hear that the Council's own apprenticeship commitment was not under threat. However, he was worried about the apprenticeships in the private sector. He asked how the Council and Labour Government could support those.

The Leader stated that the team within the Council were on hand to provide specialist support to private sector businesses looking to take on apprentices. In terms of the Government, there were suggestions regarding reforming the Apprenticeship Levy and improving flexibility.

17. Councillor A Carter: How will the council leader make sure that Rotherham gets a fair deal from future integrated settlements and stop

all the money just being used in Sheffield?

The Leader explained that all of the money was not used in Sheffield. He suspected that Doncaster had the largest single proportion of funding coming through the SYMCA. The reason for that was that the money followed where the best return on investment was. A big scheme such as Doncaster Sheffield Airport required a big allocation of funding. However there were arrangements in place to ensure each Local Authority area got its share. The money had to go to the best projects, business and schemes to support the whole of the South Yorkshire economy. Rotherham did very well at fighting its corner in those discussions.

In his supplementary, Councillor Carter stated that this was reassuring. His main concern was that the Mayoral funding had many strict conditions on how it could be spent. He asked if the Leader shared his concerns that this could lead to fewer schemes in Rotherham? He did place on record the Liberal Democrats support for Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

The Leader stated that he was not concerned about that. He was worried that the single settlement funding would come with so many targets that the money would be stretched too thinly. Although the large amount of funding sounding like anything could be done, the requirements as set out by Government would limit how it could be used.

18. Councillor A Carter: After years of failure, how is the cabinet member planning to stop years of social care overspend?

Councillor Baker-Rogers stated that Councillor Carter was wrong as for the financial years 2021/22; 2022/23; 2023/24; Adult Social did not overspend. There had always been funding pressures in Adult Social care often relating to increasing costs of providing and commissioning care services, increasing demand, complexity of more people who are eligible for adult social care. The Council would continue to manage those pressures using the best Budgeting information it had, and by building on the strengths-based approach to give people maximum independence whilst prioritizing spend where it was most needed.

In his supplementary, Councillor A Carter queried the impact of the employer National Insurance Contribution increase on the Council's Adult Social Care providers and subsequently the Council's Budget. What measures were being taken to mitigate that?

Councillor Baker-Rogers was committed to ensuring spend met need and the Council would continue to work with thirds parties as normal.

19. Councillor A Carter: What demographic analysis has the council conducted on out of area placements compared to those who are placed within the borough?

Councillor Cusworth explained that the Council were committed to ensuring that children had the best possible start in life and endeavoured to house children in care as close to their family home as possible.

Analysis of the data showed that, although 52% of children were placed outside the LA boundary, 80.2% of those were placed within 20 miles (as at 30/09/24). Within 20 miles meant anywhere from 1 mile up to 20 miles. Those figures had been steadily improving for years, with the number of children placed within 20 miles now considerably better than the regional and national averages.

Demographic analysis was undertaken for all children in care, with a particular focus on children in external residential placements, where children were often living further away from their network and community than the Council would like. Demographic analysis indicated that boys aged between 10 years and 15 years were most likely to be placed more than 20 miles from Rotherham. There were no significant differences in ethnic makeup compared to the wider cohort of Looked After Children. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children were more likely to be placed more than 20 miles away, but this was often in line with their own wishes or to provide placements meeting their language or religious needs. This matter was often discussed at the Improving Lives Select Commission and at the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board.

In his supplementary, Councillor A Carter stated that it was reassuring that there was no ethnic difference. He asked whether it was a national trend that teenage boys aged between 10-15 were most likely to be placed more than 20 miles away or if this was unique to Rotherham? Did it cause harm to the young boys in terms of development and progression to adult life?

Councillor Cusworth did not have that information available but would provide a written response. She did state that it was always preferable to keep children closer to home if this benefited the children. Sometimes it was necessary to place children out of area. Additional placement stability training was taking place with social workers to enable them to access support as soon as possible. The offer for children that lived out of area was also being reviewed. Placement disruptions had reduced but finding foster carers for pre-teen and teenage boys was still very difficult.

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20. Councillor C Carter: Adam and I share the frustration of residents that the upgrade to parking outside the Brinsworth Lane shops still hasn't started. Will you now commit to a timeframe for delivery of this project?

Councillor Sheppard explained that the challenging aspect of this scheme had been securing the necessary landowner permissions to undertake the work. This had led to a number of delays to the scheme commencing. However, that issue was now resolved and a contract price for the work had now been received and was currently being evaluated ready for contract award. The Council anticipated work to start on site early in the new year with completion before the end of the financial year.

In her supplementary, Councillor Carter asked whether Council officers had been diverted to focus on other priority projects and therefore the Brinsworth project had not been given the attention it needed? The project was seven months delayed. Councillor Carter asked for reassurance that Councillor Sheppard would personally ensure that this project got the attention it needed and ensure that it would stick to the timeline just provided?

Councillor Sheppard confirmed that the project had not been deprioritised and the Council would do their best to deliver the project as soon as possible for the people of Brinsworth.

21. Councillor Yasseen: How does the Council justify the arbitrary timing for raising the Palestinian flag, excluding many from this symbolic gesture, and made without consulting lead petitioners, including Dr Sahar Awadallah, representing Rotherham's Palestinian community and thousands of residents? Would you agree this approach lacks transparency and is a significant oversight?

The Leader did not agree with this comment. There had been a Scrutiny Working Group that Councillor Yasseen had been part of that had made a number of recommendations. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered those recommendations and Councillor Yasseen was again part of that process. What had been done was exactly what had been asked for. In relation to the flag, the Leader stated that he had concerns about flying the flag overnight as it could be damaged which would be harmful. He was however happy to look at what arrangements could be made. The Leader noted that Councillor Yasseen had not contacted him about this issue prior to the day of the meeting.

In her supplementary, Councillor Yasseen stated that she had contacted the Council along with many individuals. The reason the Leader had not been contacted was that he had not been party to any of the discussions in OSMB. Councillor Yasseen confirmed that she had personally contacted after the event on 23 October to update the



community on the petition. As it happened, the Leader had sent a letter to the lead petitioner with a summary of the outcomes. An email had been sent to the Chief Executive and Councillor Yasseen had assumed that the Leader and the officer leadership of the Council had discussed this as it was quite a lengthy email. A response had been received and that is when the petitioners were informed about the flag flying timings. That was why there had been frustration from Members of the public earlier in the meeting. Councillor Yasseen believed that the implementation of the recommendations from OSMB would be done in partnership with residents. This would stop them from having to come to Council meetings and express their frustration about the process. Councillor Yasseen stated that the Council was not working in a collaborative way.

After the response to her email, Councillor Yasseen had informed the community that the Council's plan was to fly the flag from 12 noon until 5pm on Friday 29 November. It was explained that four of the five Muslim prayers would fall within that timeframe. This showed a lack of consideration. A day had 24 hours. Councillor Yasseen asked for the flag to be flown all day, if not longer and she asked that the Council honour the agreement that had been made.

The Leader stated that it was not appropriate to send the Chief Executive emails expected for him. It would be odd and dangerous for the Chief Executive to share every email she received with him. The Leader confirmed that the Council would not be in a position to fly the flag for 24 hours. He would not instruct a member of staff to raise the flag at midnight and take it down again 24 hours later. That was not reasonable. For reasons already outlined, the Leader stated it would not be a good idea to fly the flag overnight. In the past, flags had attracted unwanted attention and criminal damage. If there was a request to lower the flag later in the evening in order to tie-in with the community events, the Leader would action that. A confrontational approach was not helping the situation and the Leader asked for Councillor Yasseen's assistance in ending this approach.

22. Councillor Yasseen: Do you agree that Herringthorpe Playing Fields has a legally protected purpose as a recreational and leisure space, with historical significance to Rotherham residents?

Councillor Allen stated that the land which contained the Herringthorpe Playing Fields was acquired in 1928 as part of the Rotherham Corporation Act which sought to acquire land for the purposes of housing, roads, tramways and playing fields. It was covered by legislation which gave it that protection. Possible development of the site adjacent to the Playing Fields, known as Boswell Street/Arundel Road, was being explored and was in the very early stages. However, the Council was not proposing development on the Playing Fields, nor any change of designation.

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In her supplementary question, Councillor Yasseen stated that she was referring to the land that had been reclassified. In 2008 there was a campaign and Councillor Yasseen and others had since inherited the campaign to keep the land a green, recreational space. The group were referring to a piece of land that had always been used for leisure and was purchased in 1928. Mr Marston had been to previous meetings and had done much research into the topic. The piece of land was always known as Herringthorpe Playing Fields and money was granted from the Carnegie UK Trust and from Fields In Trust to purchase that land for the sole purpose of it being a green recreational space. In 2008, the Council planned to sell the land for private housing. The campaign and petition group stopped this from happening. An article from 2008 stated that there were legal restrictions on the land. Councillor Yasseen stated that instead of selling the land, the Council were now reclassifying it from a green space to a brown field space. This felt like the Council were trying to find a legal loophole to get around the wishes of the community.

Councillor Yasseen asked Councillor Allen if she would be willing to uphold the original agreement with those two trusts as agreed in 1928?

Councillor Allen reiterated that the potential development of Boswell Street/Arundel Road was in the very early stages. She confirmed that she had met with Mr Marston and others who had presented their understanding of the situation. The Council had taken internal legal advice and external counsel and the advice received was that there were no impediments to the Council developing the land at Boswell Street/Arundel Road. It was stressed that Herringthorpe Playing Fields would not be touched.

23. Councillor Yasseen: Despite significant resident backlash and complaints over unwanted, underused cycle lanes in Boston Castle, the council persists in expanding these costly schemes with no evidence of benefit—particularly in deprived areas that bear the disruption and negative impact while gaining no advantage. How does the council justify imposing these vanity projects rather than planning with communities?

Councillor Taylor stated that he believed the schemes had more benefits than Councillor Yasseen perceived them to have. Councillor Taylor reiterate that it was often in the poorest communities, with the worst air quality and resulting health consequences, and lowest car ownership, that the impact of improved public transport and active travel measures, including better conditions for walking, could have the most significant benefit. As an elected Member. Councillor Taylor did not understand why anyone would want to withhold those benefits from those communities.

In her supplementary Councillor Yasseen stated that there was not the evidence to back up those claims and the Councillor Taylor was wrong. The Council documents were very vague, and Councillor Yasseen had raised this at OSMB when looking at the Active Travel Strategy. The claims of a modal shift were a myth. There was no working with the communities about where cycle lanes would go. The consultation did not speak to cyclists. Councillor Yasseen stated that the Council needed to stop imposing infrastructure onto the most deprived communities without working with them. Councillor Yasseen asked if the Council would work with local communities to make cycle lanes that were needed and wanted, not the ones they had?

Councillor Taylor responded by saying that Councillor Yasseen was wrong. There were national studies in places where schemes were far more embedded than in Rotherham that showed this. It was not fair to judge Wellgate for example that had not up and running for 12 months. There was an extensive consultation process and the communities were being engaged with. The fact that residents were coming to meetings and asking questions showed that information was getting through. Councillor Taylor reiterated that nothing was being imposed. Councillor Taylor urged Councillor Yasseen and residents to get involved with the consultation and he confirmed he would send Councillor Yasseen the links to the studies.

24. Councillor Jones: On the lead up to Remembrance Sunday, our thoughts turn to those who lost their lives protecting our democracy and making sure their memory lives on. Can you please tell us how much the council receives to administer and display the Regimental museum of the Yorks and Lancs, and what is the plan for it moving forward?

Councillor Sheppard stated that the Council did not receive any funding towards the care or display of the Yorks and Lancs collections. Any displays, events or conservation work regarding this collection required grant funding. The Council's role as the sole trustee of collections was to maintain and manage those collections. There was no requirement to display the collections although the Council did so as it was an important part of Rotherham's history and heritage.

In his supplementary Councillor Jones stated that the Council had received over £200,000 two years ago in an Arts Council grant and that was the only way that Clifton Park got museum accreditation. Councillor Jones explained that the Yorks and Lancs regiment was a significant part of the armed forces with over 73,000 men serving in it. 10,000 were killed in action. Councillor Jones gave more details on the regiment and their role in protecting the country along with his personal connection to the Regiment. He was angry that the Regimental museum at Clifton Park was one room, a broom cupboard,

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with around 12 items in it. When Councillor Jones asked why, he was told by management that it no longer fit with the image the Council were trying to portray. Councillor Jones asked for an explanation as to why this was the case and if it should therefore be moved elsewhere?

Councillor Sheppard stated that it was disingenuous to say there was only 12 items when there were far more. The Council did not have an obligation as custodians of the collection to display it, but it did choose to do so as it was seen as important to residents and those who had served along with their families. It was confirmed that there was a grant two years ago, but grants had a lifespan. If further grants were to become available and if further exhibitions were mooted, Councillor Sheppard stated that the Council could display parts of the collection in other parts of the museum. Councillor Sheppard was proud that Rotherham's museum continued to display part of the collection and respect those who served.

25. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: On September 30th Aldwarke Lane was closed due to flooding near the new Parkgate link road, can you assure us that flood prevention is part of this scheme and what work is left to do?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

26. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Given the Leader's answer regards the cost of any possible renewal of the Imagination Library, what were the benefits in your opinion of the scheme when operating?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

27. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: What is the estimated number of private households who will be using the replacement to Rothercare when the service changes next year?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

28. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: The number of new changing places toilet facilities is welcome but what training is being given to staff at venues regards their operation, enabling access for users and maintenance?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

29. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Please report on the measures taken since our last meeting to increase uptake of pension credit in the borough and any perceivable results?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

30. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: What would a £12m investment mean in terms of the number of footpaths we could bring up to standard in the borough?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written response to his question.

31. Councillor Thorp: In the consultation for Rotherham East Network Improvements why is the priority given to cycle lanes instead of the Rotherham bound bus lane, on Fitzwilliam Rd and why does safer crossings only come with cycle lanes?

Councillor Taylor stated that he was not wholly clear as to the detail of the request, but if the suggestion is to provide a longer bus lane instead of one or both cycleways, that was certainly something Councillor Thorp could feed into the ongoing public consultation so that it could be considered in detail. In respect of why the proposal did not provide only crossings, this was because the previous Government have stipulated that the funding had to be used for transformational change, furthering the objectives of the national bus, cycling and walking strategies launched in 2021 and 2020 respectively.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Thorp stated that the strategies in no way suggested that cycling had to be prioritised. It was looking for systems to decarbonise by people taking the bus or walking or cycling. Councillor Thorp stated that the consultation grouped walking, pushing prams, crossing the road and cycling together. That would mean anyone ticking that box for walking is also ticking it for cycle lanes. There was no option to say no to cycle lanes. Councillor Thorp agreed with the Leader that there should be more buses and more bus lanes. He stated that it would be better to get rid of cycle lanes since many people cannot use them and replace them with bus lanes. Councillor Thorp asked why the Council kept pushing cycle lanes.

Councillor Taylor agreed to provide a written response.

32. This question was withdrawn.

33. Councillor Thorp: How is RMBC funding the new cycle lanes that are been forced on the people of Rotherham since they have to fund 15-20% themselves?

Councillor Taylor explained that the proposed interventions on Fitzwilliam Road and Broom Road were fully funded by the

**COUNCIL MEETING - 06/11/24**

Department for Transport, with no specific local funding requirement for these measures on a 'project by project' basis as these were funded via a Programme of works, known as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

In his supplementary, Councillor Thorp stated that the CRSTS required the Council to contribute 15-20% to the scheme. He asked for an explanation.

Councillor Taylor agreed to provide a written response.

34. This question was withdrawn.

35. Councillor Thorp: How many strategic CIL applications have you received either internally from RMBC or externally from outside RMBC?

Councillor Taylor stated that there were seven internal applications and no external applications.

36. Councillor Tarmey: Residents in Woodsetts are disappointed by slow progress in starting construction for planned road safety improvements. Can the cabinet member confirm when work will begin?

Councillor Taylor confirmed that the project had a long lead in time owing for the need to co-ordinate some legal and governance processes with the adjacent Nottinghamshire County Council. It was anticipated that the scheme would be constructed during 2025.

In his supplementary, Councillor Tarmey asked if it would be early or late 2025.

Councillor Taylor could not confirm an exact date.

37. Councillor Tarmey: What is being done to handle the backlog of advisory white line markings to help prevent nuisance parking across the borough?

Councillor Taylor explained that the Council received a high volume of requests for white line markings across driveways which were offered free of charge. As such, these requests needed to be programmed in where possible around the larger funded projects. Any resulting backlog was reviewed on an annual basis and appropriate action undertaken to target long-outstanding requests and consider the available resources.

In his supplementary, Councillor Tarmey explained that the casework in North Anston had been dealt with brilliantly by officers and the white lines had been put in very quickly. However, a promise had been made for white lines in Woodsetts and this had not happened. Ward

Members did not feel that this had been handled well and asked Councillor Taylor to look into the matter.

Councillor Taylor agreed to raise the matter with officers. He also provided an update on the backlog. The current backlog stood at 10 H markings and 30 Advisory Disabled markings. It was anticipated that this backlog would be cleared over the coming weeks.

38. Councillor Tarmey: What is being done to ensure that electoral offences (for example, non-submission of spending returns) committed by candidates and agents are taken seriously by police in South Yorkshire?

Councillor Alam stated that the Returning Officer worked closely with a dedicated Single Point of Contact at South Yorkshire Police to ensure everything possible was put in place to protect the integrity of an election. Information was provided to all candidates and agents and Councillor Alam explained that, should anyone report allegations of electoral malpractice to the Returning Officer, they were forwarded on to the Police. It was a matter for the Police to determine what action was required for any reported allegations and the Council would provide any assistance required to support their investigation.

39. Councillor Tarmey: What is being done to ensure that threatening behaviour towards candidates in elections or elected Members is being taken seriously by police in South Yorkshire?

Councillor Alam explained that violence, threats and intimidation of anyone taking part in the democratic processes were totally unacceptable and should be zero tolerance. Recently introduced legislation had simplified and clarified the offence of undue influence and defined the types of illegal behaviour used to unfairly influence someone's vote. It was hoped that this should make it simpler for the Police to act when allegations of undue influence were reported. There was also now an extra sentencing option to strengthen the deterrent against intimidation of candidates and campaigns. The Returning Officer, Rotherham Council and South Yorkshire Police worked closely to share intelligence. Councillor Alam urged Members to report any such incidents to the Police.

40. Councillor Tarmey: Do you agree that the reduction in specialist dementia nurses (e.g. Admiral nurses) in Rotherham is a cause for concern?

As Councillor Baker-Rogers had left the meeting, Councillor Tarmey would receive a written response.

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41. Councillor Tarmey: Where emergency repairs to infrastructure (e.g. sewers) are necessary, do officers proactively assess, and attempt to manage the impact such work will have on traffic movements and other roadworks?

Councillor Taylor explained that officers worked with utility companies to plan and coordinate the delivery of service repairs on the adopted highway to minimise the disruption to our residents and visitors. When unplanned emergency repairs were needed the team worked with the service providers to determine the most efficient and effective way, including rigorous duration challenges where appropriate.

**90. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items to consider.



**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Council – 15 January 2025

**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)**

Samantha Mullarkey, Governance Advisor  
01709 247916 or [samantha.mullarkey@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.mullarkey@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 6 November 2024 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 petitioner or their representative 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 Director be required to respond to the lead petitioners, as set out in the Petition Scheme, by Wednesday 29 January 2025.

**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.
- 1.3 This report is submitted for information to detail the number of petitions received since the previous Council meeting held on 6 November 2024 and the route that these petitions will take through the Council's decision-making processes.

### 2. Key Issues

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

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Valid Signatures</b>	<b>Lead Petitioner</b>	<b>Directorate</b>
Installation of Gates in the alleyway joining Grosvenor Road to Milton Road, Eastwood	55 Valid Signatures	Wajid Hussain	Regeneration and Environment
Eastwood Road Network Changes	342 Valid Signatures	Nizz Sabir	Regeneration and 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 petitions 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 petitions received by the Council since the previous Council meeting held on 6 November 2024. 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, these petitions will not be debated. They will be sent to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to provide a written response.

5.2 The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment is required to provide a written response to the lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting. Responses are therefore due by Wednesday 29 January 2025.

**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*            Samantha Mullarkey, Governance Advisor  
01709 247916 or [samantha.mullarkey@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.mullarkey@rotherham.gov.uk)

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

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**THE CABINET**  
**18th November, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Baker-Rogers, Sheppard and Taylor.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cusworth.

**66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**67. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were two questions from members of the public:

1. Mr Ashraf asked the Chair to commit to providing documentation to his email address from the second sub-OSMB meeting held on 30 April 2024 and the appendices of the OSMB recommendations of 24 July 2024. Mr Ashraf also asked for documentation to be sent that showed Cabinet had done or where in the process of doing any of the actions from the 22 OSMB Palestine recommendations that had been unanimously passed by the Cabinet. Mr Ashraf asked why there were discrepancies between those, and the letter sent by the Leader to Councillor Steele on 10 September 2024.

The Leader stated that there were no discrepancies. The Leader agreed to provide all publicly available information from the scrutiny meetings and to provide an update on the actions. The Leader was confident that actions were being delivered.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ashraf asked for any and all of the Council's legal opinions and the sources of those legal opinions in relation to Palestine to be sent to his email address. That included information discussed inside and outside of the Council Chamber and communicated in any format.

The Leader explained that Mr Ashraf should submit a Freedom of Information request in relation to his question.

2. Mr Azam asked for an update on Dignity. He stated that Councillor Sheppard has missed the last Muslim Bereavement Group meeting. Mr Azam understood that Dignity had given three proposals at the beginning of September, but the community were none the wiser on how the Council was progressing these proposals. He asked what the latest was and how the matter could be concluded?

Councillor Sheppard explained that it was a long and technical process. The Council continued to have regular talks with Dignity. In relation to burials plots at East Herringthorpe and Wath, Councillor Sheppard stated that progress was being made. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes and an update would be provided in the near future.

Mr Azam stated that the response was disappointing. The row of earthen graves was now complete. Mr Azam believed that three revised plans had been submitted for the Council to consider as well but there was still no update. The situation over the past two years had left the community feeling blindsided and having to go through processes multiple times. There was no movement forward. This particular matter was first raised in August 2024 as an urgent issue but in November 2024 it was still ongoing. Mr Azam asked the Council to make a decision as it was of the upmost importance and it was frustrating for the Muslim community.

Mr Azam made reference to the Kaushar Tai independent review and stated that a report had been submitted to the Council for consideration. He asked when this would be made visible so that work could be done on the feasibility of the recommendations.

The Council's Head of Legal Services explained that the draft report had been received by the Council and was with legal services for review. It would be a number of weeks before that review was complete, after which the community would be consulted. The Leader committed to try and share a copy of the report with the Community prior to January 2025 Cabinet meeting.

**68. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 October 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

**69. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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



**70. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) SUFFICIENCY UPDATE (INCLUDING THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS UPDATE)**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the proposed addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028 which summarised the needs of Care Leavers. The report also included an update to the LAC Sufficiency Strategy delivery plan to better reflect the needs of Care Leavers.

The Local Authority had a duty to ensure that it had carried out appropriate needs analysis of both its children in care and care leavers' placement and accommodation needs. It then needed to create a strategy that addressed the resultant sufficiency priorities and a clear local offer for Care Leavers. The delivery of the residential development programme remained a clear priority within the LAC Sufficiency delivery, but it was also important to focus explicitly on the needs of Care Leavers. The Care Leavers Addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy (Appendix 1) did that and identified a requirement to further develop provision to meet the needs of young people and young adults. It was also important to ensure that this provision provided positive outcomes and value for money.

The analysis of future need within the Care Leavers addendum suggested that there would be 551 Care Leavers in Rotherham in 2027. This was significantly higher than the 353 Care Leavers in Rotherham in May 2024. In May 2024, 88 Care Leavers were accommodated in externally commissioned accommodation; the forecast number of Care Leavers in externally commissioned accommodation in 2027 was 156.

An update was also provided on the in-house children's residential development that was agreed at Cabinet on 17 February 2020. Previous progress updates had been reported to Cabinet in June 2020, September 2021, and October 2022.

The four phases of the programme aimed to deliver 20 residential beds and 2 emergency beds across 11 registered settings. So far, the programme had delivered 10 residential beds and 1 emergency bed across 6 registered settings. This included 1 x 4 bed provision, 3 x 2 bed homes and 1 x 1 bed emergency provision. There was a current total in house capacity of 11 beds.

In January 2023, a new judgement for Care Leavers was introduced to the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Services for Children (ILACS) inspection framework. In March 2023, the Government introduced new national standards for the registration, regulation, and inspection of supported accommodation for Looked After Children aged 16 and 17 years, to be overseen by Ofsted.

A Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review took place between 12 to 15 March 2024, at the request of the Council. The Peer Review identified “Services are making a real difference to the lived experience of care leavers, however, the range of accommodation services needed for Care Leavers in Borough is insufficient.”

The Peer Review had recommended the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028 be updated to better reflect the needs of Care Leavers in the context of the regulatory changes.

In relation to the Peer Review comment that “the range of accommodation services needed for Care Leavers in Borough is insufficient”, it was confirmed in the meeting that the Service were confident that the actions as outlined in the Strategy would lead to a sufficient range of accommodation.

The challenges of providing appropriate accommodation were outlined in the meeting. This included finding appropriate properties, getting Ofsted approval and hiring qualified staff. It was noted that there was no quick fix, but the Strategy did present a strong, positive way forward.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. There had been some concerns regarding the target and the budget but overall, OSMB felt that it was a good Policy. An additional recommendation had however been made, relating to ensuring that the local neighbourhood teams and ward members were consulted when identifying properties within their localities. The Strategic Director confirmed that this was already being done.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made to deliver the in-house children’s residential development, the positive impact for Children in Care and financial efficiencies that will be achieved.
2. Approve the Care Leavers addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028.
3. Agree that the LAC and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy Delivery Plan be updated to increase the appropriateness and number of available accommodation options for Care Leavers as per the Care Leaver addendum to the LAC sufficiency strategy (see 2 above).
4. Note that on 16 October 2023 authority was delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to acquire up to 100 properties in line with the Housing Acquisitions Policy, which includes scope to

acquire properties to meet the accommodation needs of Children and Young Peoples Services.

5. Authorise the Councils Designated Property Officer, or relevant Strategic Director in their absence, to negotiate any additional accommodation required and complete necessary transactions, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, Strategic Director Children's and Young Peoples Services, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director of Legal Services.
6. That Cabinet give consideration to ensuring that the local neighbourhood teams and ward members were consulted when identifying properties within their localities.

## **71. ROTHERHAM LEAVING CARE STRATEGY 2024-2027**

Consideration was given to the report which presented the Rotherham Leaving Care Strategy 2024-27. The Strategy outlined the three-year plan for Rotherham Care Leavers and set out priorities for care experienced young people. It also outlined improvements to services and practice for children who were Care Leavers or Care Experienced.

The Leaving Care Strategy as a standalone document was the first of its kind in Rotherham and was a recommendation of a Peer Review undertaken in March 2024. The consideration of Good and Outstanding Local Authorities offer to Care Leavers had confirmed that having a bespoke Care Leaver Strategy was best practice. This Strategy compared well to other examples across the Care Leaver landscape. Corporate Parenting responsibilities were taken seriously by Rotherham Council and its partners, and it was recognised that there should be greater development of the Leaving Care Service over the next few years. Leaving Care strategic and operational service plans had been devised to track the progress of development work and these aligned with the Leaving Care Strategy priorities.

The Strategy demonstrated how partners across Rotherham would work together to ensure the needs of Care Leavers were met. The six priorities had been selected as the key areas for development in Leaving Care services and in the offer to Care Leavers. These young people had often experienced adversity and as such, were more vulnerable than their peers who had not had care experience. As such, the Strategy had to outline priorities which met the complex needs of all Care Leavers and determine how these needs could be met over the next three years.

Initially, the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board, alongside performance clinics, would review the progress of the Leaving Care Strategy, 2024-2027 and of the service plans which sat alongside the document. Progress reports would be provided to the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board every six months. These would include metrics used to

measure performance and quality, such as performance data around key areas and audit outcomes in respect of quality.

The Council was committed, as Corporate Parents, to ensuring that all Care Leavers needs were met and that they were supported to achieve their aspirations and transition successfully to adulthood. The proposed Strategy and governance arrangements would support to achieve this.

It was confirmed that the Strategy pulled together all current actions and was an overarching document of existing arrangements.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet approve the Leaving Care Strategy and approve the three-year plan as set out within the Strategy.

**72. MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to the report which contained changes to and updated information relating to the place-based arrangements for the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP), which included additional arrangements for South Yorkshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. The previous arrangements were published in 2019 and had been updated to reflect the changes within the new Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) statutory guidance.

The additional Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement for South Yorkshire would mean that the Chief Executive of the ICB, Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police and the Chief Executive of the Council would meet twice a year to provide strategic oversight and agree the vision and priorities for safeguarding children in Rotherham. This would be replicated with the other South Yorkshire Local Authority Chief Executives and any safeguarding matters across the region in which collaboration would prove effective would be considered. It would also enable the sharing of good practice across the region.

As outlined in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, Rotherham would continue to have its own arrangements which would be monitored locally by representatives from the ICB, South Yorkshire Police and the Chief Executive.

During the meeting it was noted that the system in place in Rotherham was rigorous and involved a high level of scrutiny.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet endorse the South Yorkshire Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements which include the place-based Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP) Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

2. That Cabinet approve the Local Authority involvement in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and receives appropriate reports on progress against the RSCP priorities and the Annual Report on impact of the RSCP in safeguarding children and young people.

### **73. SEPTEMBER 2024-25 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report which stated that the Council currently estimated an overspend of £5.3m for the financial year 2024/25. This was largely due to demand led pressures on children's residential placements, adults social care packages, home to school transport and the expected impact of the Local Government Pay Award. In addition, the Council was still impacted by the inflationary pressures in the economy. Even though inflation had fallen to 1.7%, the Council's base costs had significantly increased across the recent high inflation period by well in excess of 20%. Increased costs across this period were also being felt by the social care market in particular, leading to market prices increasing at above inflation levels and placing further pressures on the Council's Budget.

It was noted that a number of the Capital Programme's had been completed sooner than expected which was positive news.

Reference was made to the Adoption of the Department for Education's model for calculating kinship allowances for Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) as set out in paragraphs 2.42 and 2.43 of the report. The Council had decided several years ago to calculate SGO payments according to a bespoke RMBC payment model, using a locally devised formula for the calculation of kinship allowances. The DfE had since produced a calculation form to help local authorities financially assess Special Guardians. It was known as the standardised means test model and when issued was not a statutory requirement for local authorities, though was to be used as a guide. Most Local Authorities had adopted this model, though the Council had continued to use its own model. However, recent legal challenges and best practice suggested that the means test should be undertaken using the Government's recommended allowance calculator for SGOs, Child Adoption Orders (CAOs) and Adoption. This would result in the payment of higher levels of allowance. The estimated financial impact of the Council adopting this approach was £560k per annum, the impact of which for 2024/25 (£140k) was already factored into the CYPS forecast position. It was proposed that the Council adopted this approach from January 2025.

It was also proposed that the Council write off a debtor balance in relation to Iliad (Rotherham) Ltd, to the value of £466,360.22, dating back from March 2013 as set out in paragraphs 2.44 and 2.45 of the report. The Council had pursued the debt through a variety of channels over a significant period of time. However, it was believed that all avenues had

been exhausted and the debt should be written off. The Council had used the normal debt collection routes to no avail and had sought external legal support through its contract with Greenhalgh Kerr, who lodged a case with the liquidator but had informed the Council that it was unlikely to ever see any return from this process. The Council would continue to monitor the case with the liquidator but given the unlikely ability to recover the debt it was proposed to write off the debt.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £5.3m.
2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it is possible that the Council will need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2024/25 financial position.
3. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme, including proposed capital programme variations to expenditure profiles and funding.
4. Approve the adoption of the Department for Education's procedure to help local authorities financially assess Special Guardians as part of the process for setting up Special Guardianship Orders.
5. Approve the proposed debt write off detailed at 2.44.

**74. HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which presented the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, attached to the report at Appendix 1. The revised Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy set out the Council's approach to delivering a responsive repairs and maintenance service which met the needs of tenants and leaseholders, and enabled the Council to meet its statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations.

The Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy, attached at Appendix 3, and the Gas and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Policy, attached at Appendix 2, set out the Council's approach to managing its responsibilities for gas safety, electrical safety, smoke alarms and CO alarms in housing assets in line with legislation and best practice.

The introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, 2023, prompted the Council, and social housing landlords nationally, to examine all aspects of housing service activity. This self-assessment enabled the Council to gauge how well it was meeting the expectations of the Regulator's consumer standards, to identify gaps in delivery, and focus on

areas for improvement. Increasing the number of published policies was identified as an area of improvement.

The Council currently awarded £25 per room to tenants following damage to tenants' décor. The Council had not revised its approach to Decoration Allowance, and the sums awarded to tenants, since 2005. Inflation since 2005 meant that the decoration allowance should be increased. Cabinet was asked to approve a new allocation of £50 per room, which compared favourably with neighbouring social housing landlords. A limit of £350 per property was also proposed.

Following consideration by Scrutiny, it was confirmed that a change to the proposed Policy had been suggested and accepted by the Cabinet Member. The report, at paragraph 2.18, stated that the sums in relation to the Decoration Allowance would be reviewed every three years under the delegations proposed in Recommendation 6. Following Scrutiny, it had been agreed that the sums awarded for the Decorating Allowance be increased in line with the corporate Fees and Charges annually.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. Councillor Steele explained the process behind the new proposal and thanked Cabinet for their support on that matter. Discussions at Improving Places and OSMB had included replacing fences and concerns around appointment times. However it was felt that no further changes to the Policy were required.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the increase in decoration allowance from £25 to £50 per room, up to a maximum of £350 per property, as proposed in the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Note the ongoing work to scope the future repairs and maintenance delivery model for Rotherham and agrees to receive a further update on this work in 2025.
4. Approve the Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy (Appendix 2).
5. Approve the Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy (Appendix 3).

6. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make amendments to the following housing policies in line with operational, regulatory and legislative demands:
  - Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy
  - Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy
  - Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy
  - Housing Services Fire Safety Policy Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy as it relates to housing assets.
7. That Cabinet supports the proposal that the sums awarded for the Decorating Allowance be increased in line with the corporate Fees and Charges annually.

## **75. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of a new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy as attached at Appendix 1. The report set out the objectives and principles that were reflected in the Policy and explained how the Council intended to meet its statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996 and The Homeless (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012, in line with the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and the objectives and principles of Rotherham's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The report also provided Cabinet with an update on the growing demand for temporary accommodation and the work being undertaken by the Council to improve outcomes for residents and reduce the impact on the Council's financial position. The report requested a specific, time-limited delegation to expand the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio to meet demands.

National rates of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation were currently the highest on record. According to national housing charity Shelter, 112,660 households were homeless and living in temporary accommodation at the end of 2023, a record high figure and up 12% in a year. In the same year, 317,430 households were accepted as either homeless or at imminent risk of it by their local authority, the highest number since records began, and up 9% on the previous year.

Rotherham Council had experienced significant increases in demand for homelessness services over the last few years. In the financial year 2022/23, 1,409 homelessness applications were received. During the same period, there were 771 placements into hotel/bed and breakfast temporary accommodation. In 2023/24 the number of homelessness applications increased by 7.9% to 1,521, while the number of placements increased by 29% to 995. The placement of families with children also increased in 2023/24: 258 families with children were placed in hotel/bed



and breakfast accommodation, a 14.2% increase from 2022/23. It was noted that some households could have been placed more than once.

The Leader noted the scale of homelessness and how it was often perceived incorrectly.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the increase in homelessness and growing demand for temporary accommodation and the work being undertaken by the Council to respond to this demand.
2. Approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health for a 3-year period in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make operational amendments to the Policy when the need is identified.
4. Note officers' intention to continue to pursue opportunities for a 3-year period to increase the portfolio of Council-owned temporary accommodation to meet service demands, subject to available budget and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

**76. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report which explained that the Household Support Fund (HSF) had been extended by Government from October 2024 to March 2025, with £421m of funding available in England. Consistent with previous awards, the Council had been awarded £2.489m for the Borough for this time period.

Given the need in communities to commence support for the most vulnerable residents and the timing of the grant award and receipt of the associated grant conditions, a delegated officer decision was taken to allocate this funding on 11 October 2024. The report provided a summary of the allocations of the £2.489m of funding made. Any variations arising through spend were proposed to be managed through adjusting the allocation made towards the Energy Crisis Support Scheme.

It was noted that the application process for the Energy Crisis Support Scheme was open and available to all households, including pensioners.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the provisional allocations of the Household Support Fund Grant of £2.489m have been made as follows:
  - a. £1.028m for food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays up to and including Easter 2025.
  - b. £1.156m to support applications from households for assistance with energy costs, through the Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme.
  - c. £150k towards the costs of the Council's Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme.
  - d. £45k to support care leavers, being young people leaving foster or local authority care and living independently in their own accommodation who are responsible for paying their own utility bills, providing additional financial support through the cost-of-living increases.
  - e. £60k to local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas/ New Year through a supplement to the Crisis Support service level agreement.
  - f. £50k to provide parcels of household items to be distributed through VCS community support including food banks, social supermarkets, and the Open Arms programme drop-in sessions.
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, to determine revised and final allocations for the Household Support Grant, to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of Household Support Fund should it not be possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the approved options.

**77. 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.

**78. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:-**

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on 16 December 2024, commencing at 10.00am.

**THE CABINET**  
**16th December, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Baker-Rogers, Cusworth, Sheppard and Taylor.

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

**79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Interest Type</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Councillor Dave Sheppard	Agenda Item 86 – New Applications for Business Rates Relief for Arc Church	Nonpecuniary	Volunteer at the Arc Church Foodbank

Councillor Sheppard did not take part in the discussion or vote on this item.

**80. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were three questions from members of the public:

1. Mr Marston stated that in 1928, the Rotherham Mayor signed an agreement with the National Playing Fields Association and Carnegie UK to accept a grant for the Herringthorpe Gardens and Playing Fields. The agreement was that the playing fields would be used in perpetuity for recreation. The Borough Engineer was instructed to produce detailed plans which had apparently been lost. Mr Marston stated that it was clear that the work had been undertaken to the satisfaction of National Playing Fields and Carnegie UK as the grants were paid out. By implication, the conditions of the grant became effective on the pertinent land areas. In the case of Herringthorpe, the then open land enclosed by Badsley Moor Lane, Middle Lane South and Broom Road, as shown in OS Maps from the 1930's, had uses related to recreation, such as greenhouses and changing rooms. Mr Marston stated that, if the Council wanted to change the use of some parts of Herringthorpe Playing Fields, it had to get the agreement of Fields in Trust, successor of National Playing Fields, possibly with mitigating conditions. Mr Marston asked if the Council had done so.

Councillor Allen explained that, in terms of Boswell Street, the Council had recently carried out investigations as to the legal position. In 1928, the Council had purchased the land and the guidance received in relation to the land and grants received was that there was nothing that required the Council to keep it for recreation and leisure in perpetuity. A meeting was being arranged with ward Councillors although a date had yet to be agreed. Following that, residents who had been engaged with the matter would be contacted.

Mr Marston reiterated that there was an agreement signed by the Rotherham Mayor with Fields in Trust and Carnegie in 1928. The Council had since paid for the demolition of the Leisure Centre, demolition of the Old Pavilion, demolition of the toilet block and removal of the children's play area. The only thing that had been put in was the paths with lighting and the fencing and this had been funded through grant funding. Mr Marston stated that the Council were using a policy of managed neglect to ruin the Playing Fields and ultimately take them over. He stated that a brown field site was not a description of the land, and it did not mean that it was automatically available for housing.

The Leader noted Mr Marston's comments but strongly refuted the suggestion that the Council wanted to ruin the Playing Fields. A significant amount of money had been spent on the running track and more trees had recently been planted. The Council did however have an obligation to ensure it provided enough housing to ensure needs were met across the borough. As such, some of the land which had been built on previously, had been allocated for housing over ten years ago. The legal arguments would continue to be worked through to ensure that everything was being done correctly. Once ward members had been met with, residents would be engaged with. The Leader reiterated that there was no plot to run down the playing fields.

2. Mr Hussain stated that at the last meeting he attended, Mr Horsfield (Assistant Director of Legal, Elections and Registration Services) had stated that, by December, there should have been a resolution to the ongoing negotiations with Dignity in reference to the development of burial space. The matter had been discussed at the Improving Places Select Commission meeting on 10 December and Dignity clearly stated that they had submitted their revised proposals for a contract that had been signed. The Council were now trying to renegotiate that contract. The proposals had been submitted in September. Mr Hussain asked if the discussions had been concluded and if the burial space was ready to be developed.

The Assistant Director of Legal, Elections and Registration Services stated that the discussions had not been concluded and nothing had been signed.

Mr Hussain stated that he was referring to the original contract with Dignity that had been signed a number of years ago. He felt that the group involved were not getting straight forward answers. He asked the Council to find the space or develop the space, otherwise there would be a crisis.

The Leader noted the point being made but confirmed that there had been no new agreements. The conversations with Dignity remained ongoing, precisely because the Council wanted to make sure they were delivering the services as agreed.

Mr Hussain stated that Dignity had stated that they had submitted proposals to the Council for the ongoing contractual agreement and part of that submitted to Cabinet in September. The fact it was being held back was why the space was not being developed. At the last Liaison meeting, assurances had been provided that the matter would be resolved in December, or the contract would be pulled.

The Leader explained that that was still fundamentally the position in that the contract had to be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties or it would come to an end. The submissions from Dignity did not go to the Cabinet for final sign off until they had been through the legal process first.

The Assistant Director explained that negotiations were ongoing, and the Council were still looking to conclude those in December. The aim was still to ensure the provision of services to meet the needs of the residents.

3. Mr Azam stated that he felt he was being gagged after only being allowed to ask one question at the Improving Places Scrutiny meeting the week prior. He stated that he had previously been allowed to ask multiple questions. However, without notice, he had been informed that he could now only ask one question and one follow up question. He did not feel that this was effective scrutiny as he could not ask all the pertinent questions. Mr Azam also stated that the Council had a contract with Dignity to provide services for 13 cemeteries. However, there were many other cemeteries and chapels outside of that that were not covered in that contract. A Councillor had raised a point regarding the health and safety of one of these chapels at the scrutiny meeting. Mr Azam asked if the Council had its own procedural document for those other chapels and sites and how was its performance against those.

Councillor Sheppard explained that Cabinet did not set the rules for Scrutiny meetings. The particular scrutiny meeting referred to was very busy; there had to be a limit on the number of questions from the public and sometimes, this had to be extended to elected Members. It certainly was not a gagging order as suggested. Councillor Sheppard was sure Mr Azam would provide answers to all of the questions he

wanted to ask. In terms of the health and safety issue, Councillor Sheppard confirmed that Councillor Jones had asked a question relating to the cemetery in his ward. Councillor Sheppard was waiting for further details from Councillor Jones and once those details had been provided, discussions would take place with officers regarding the work that needed doing to ensure the safety of residents.

The Leader confirmed that Mr Azam would get the information about the cemetery Councillor Jones had raised. In relation to Dignity, the Leader confirmed that they managed the cemeteries that were in use. There were other arrangements in place for closed cemeteries.

Mr Azam stated that it would be useful for communities to have an information sheet detailing what was going on with those sites. In his supplementary question, Mr Azam stated that the investment set out by Dignity in their proposals would cost around £5 million. Mr Azam asked for assurances that the Council would provide that investment if the contract with Dignity was terminated. This was vital for services to be delivered across the borough. It would not be right to say the investment was not forthcoming because the contract had been terminated.

Councillor Sheppard confirmed that the Council would ensure all cemeteries, graveyards etc received the level of investment required. Work was already ongoing to make sure buildings in those cemeteries were safe. As for the future of the buildings, Councillor Sheppard confirmed that work would need to be done with community groups to see if the buildings could be repurposed.

Mr Azam asked for confirmation that, whatever decision was made by the Council, the capital investment funding would be in place to provide the services.

The Leader stated that he did not have a list of the investments and the Council had not set a programme of specific investments to the Leader could not commit to that. However, in broad terms, where the works were required in order to keep the cemeteries fully operational, the Council would step in in one way or another. The responsibility currently, was still with Dignity to provide those services.

**81. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:-**

That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 November 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

**82. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

**83. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SUFFICIENCY PLANNING AT NEWMAN SCHOOL**

Consideration was given to report which provided an update on Children and Young People Services (CYPS) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency planning. The update related to the growth of special school places at Newman School. The report laid out proposals for Newman School following the school's academisation to Team Multi-Academy Trust.

In Rotherham 22.2% of pupils had either a statutory plan for Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), known as an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), or were receiving SEND support (previously known as school action and school action plus). This compared to an average of 18.4% across all England Authorities. In order that the educational needs of children and young people in the Borough with SEND could continue to be met, the Council had a responsibility to create a sufficiency of education provision to meet the needs of all pupils.

The sufficiency of places and capital development of Newman School was identified as part of sufficiency planning in the Phase Three update to Cabinet in November 2020. Improvements and investment on the site had included a new hydrotherapy pool, development of the Dinnington Campus and in September 2023, the opening of the new build Primary Block at the Whiston site.

Continued development of the Newman School site was a key feature of the current phase of SEND Sufficiency which was introduced to Cabinet in March 2024 and was part of the Local Authority's Safety Valve Capital Programme. In support of the latest phase, Schools' Capacity Assessments were completed by an external consultant commissioned by CYPS. This identified that existing special schools were full or were working at close to capacity.

The Council were responsible for funding school growth. The current sufficiency plan included increasing the capacity at the Newman Additional Resource (NAR) to meet the projection that the school would grow to support 195 pupils (the current number was 160). Capital investment was required for adaptations to meet the needs of the NAR cohort. £2.5 million capital investment at Newman School would create the additional 35 school places required and was already factored into the Safety Valve sufficiency plans that had previously been presented to Cabinet.

As of the 1 September 2024, Newman School transferred to TEAM Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Following academisation, the maintenance and condition of the Newman School estate was the responsibility of the Trust. As part of the academisation process, there was an opportunity for the incoming Trust, TEAM, to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for capital investment across the Newman Estate through the Strategic School Investment Bid (SSICB) Fund.

To support sufficiency (and increase the number of available school places from 160 to 195) some adaptations would also be made to the existing Dinnington Campus. £2.5 million of capital investment was proposed within the Council's Safety Valve Capital Programme to fund this school growth in line with SEND Sufficiency planning. This investment would supplement the SSICB funding to build a new secondary block on the main Whiston site and refurbishment of the Grade 2 listed building. The Council's capital investment would enable the new build and refurbishment to accommodate additional school places across the sites.

There had been various reports to Cabinet since February 2018 on the phases of the SEND sufficiency planning. It had also been a key area of focus for the Improving Lives Select Commission. Parents and Carers were regularly consulted on the various phases.

Cabinet Members welcomed the update and were excited for the developments.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the report and the capital plans brought forward for Newman School following academisation to TEAM Multi-Academy Trust.
2. Approve the decision for the proposed £2.5 million capital investment to create additional school places, as part of the latest round of SEND Sufficiency and in line with the Safety Valve Capital programme at Newman School.

**84. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD**

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

**85. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report which set out an update on the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2027/28. The update included the standard technical updates required, recognition of financial pressures impacting the delivery of services and the ongoing impact on the Council's base costs from the period of high



inflation. The technical adjustments also included the Council's assessment of the potential impact of the Autumn Statement and Autumn Policy update which had been a positive outcome for Council's, though it did not go far enough to resolve the pressures facing the sector.

The MTFS would be revised further in advance of the Council Budget setting meeting in March 2025, to take account of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26, when issued, along with budget policy proposals on levels of Council Tax, reserves, fees and charges and any budget savings or investments.

The Autumn Policy update announced on the 28 November gave the Council further details about the new funding announced in the Autumn Statement which had helped to shape the MTFS position. However, until the Provisional Financial Settlement was released in mid to late December 2024, the Council would not have specific allocations.

The MTFS review included the impact of the September Financial Monitoring 2024/25 report to Cabinet in November 2024, that projected a financial overspend of £5.3m that would require the use of the Council's reserves to achieve a balanced financial outturn position for 2024/25. However, Directorates were working on recovery plans to mitigate the financial overspend for 2024/25 as much as possible, to minimise the use of reserves. The impact of the budget recovery plans developed to date were factored into the MTFS position, though the Council's approach would be to continue to develop additional opportunities to reduce the current overspend further.

The Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25 reported that there was a budget gap for 2025/26 of £6.630m. Taking this with the further financial challenges the Council had faced during 2024/25, many of which would continue to present a challenge heading into 2025/26 onwards, meant the Council faced a complicated budget setting process. After taking account of the pressures and some mitigations against them, along with the estimated positive impact of the Autumn Statement, the Council would still face budget gaps for 2025/26 to 2027/28 (as set out in the table in the report summary). This was before budget policy proposals on levels of Council Tax, reserves, fees and charges and any budget savings or investments.

A key challenge for 2025/26 and the MTFS was that there remained significant uncertainty as to how Governments Financial Settlement for 2025/26 onwards would look. The Government had stated that they were only providing a single year Financial Settlement for 2025/26, although they had indicated that it would be followed by a 3 year spending period approach, which would be helpful for long term planning. There had been a significant change in approach towards the funding for Local Authorities and a clear acknowledgement in the Autumn Statement that Local Authorities needed more resources to support demand and cost pressures, which was positive for the sector.

During the meeting it was confirmed that the settlement was expected on Thursday 19 December, with the Council expecting more resources and funding. However, there would continue to be ongoing pressures. Officers had tried to be as accurate as possible when producing the report and the additional funding had been built in as well as possible. However, the final figures were required for the complete picture.

**Resolved:**

1. That the MTF5 2024/25 to 2027/28 update be noted.
2. That Cabinet note the potential requirement to use reserves in order to balance the Council's outturn position for 2024/25.

**86. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES RELIEF FOR ARC CHURCH**

Consideration was given to the report which presented the application for the award of Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Arc Church, Storage Container, Community Centre, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh, Rotherham. Arc Church was a registered charity who were active in the local community, mainly with their largest project Rawmarsh Foodbank. The foodbank was part of the Trussell Trust Network whose aim was to seek to end hunger and poverty in the UK. Foodbank vouchers were issued to local people in crisis after receiving referrals from areas including local community groups, schools, social workers, health visitors and housing and advice agencies.

The storage container, which had been brought on to the rating list and was the subject of this application, was situated in the grounds of the Drop-In Centre, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh. It was utilised to store food that had been donated by the public and by corporate partners prior to it being distributed to those that had been referred for emergency help. The foodbank opened inside the Drop-In Centre on one evening per week when food parcels were distributed to those who had a voucher.

Arc Church was applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2023/2024 and 2024/25 rates liability. The financial implication to the Council of awarding the relief was £43.52 for 2023/24 and £62.35 for 2024/25 as set out in section 6 of the report.

The organisation was inclusive to all and was considered to be in line with the criteria within the Council's policy.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet approve the application for Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Arc Church in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to the report for the 2023/2024 and 2024/25 financial years.

Councillor Sheppard declared a nonpecuniary interest in this item as he volunteered at the foodbank. He took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

## **87. WASTE COLLECTIONS POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Waste Collection Policies following a review. The changes sought to improve the accessibility of information by reducing a number of separate documents into one clear policy for Residential Kerbside Waste Collections (Appendix 1). In addition, the review had identified several legislative changes which had been updated within the document.

The current policies were out of date in relation to legislation and terminology and were not clearly structured or well formatted. As a result, the policies had been updated into a new format and brought up to date. This had involved updating web links and operational processes, to match how they functioned, tidying and removing unnecessary language, adding in new links and including references to the Rotherham bin app, and updating out of date information such as prices.

Alongside the technical changes, specific proposals were also made which sought to improve recycling and reduce contamination of recycling, supporting the Council's ambition to deliver a Cleaner and Greener Local Environment. The enhanced approach would seek to improve communication and engagement with residents whilst also identifying a clear approach to enforcement.

The current Contamination Policy needed updating as it had limited mechanisms to deal with repeat contamination. The extent of the current Policy consisted entirely of not collecting the bin and placing an easily removable tag. In order to improve the approach to managing contamination, it was proposed that a "traffic light" tag system be piloted, along with improving work to engage and educate residents, and a new enforcement process, that would begin with a warning and potentially escalating to a fixed penalty notice if there was no improvement over an appropriate period of time and following three occasions of contamination. It was proposed that this approach be piloted in two specific areas, yet to be identified, and the pilot would run concurrently with the public consultation. The result of both the pilot and the consultation would inform the final Policy and subsequent approach, which would be brought back to Cabinet in due course.

During the meeting, the Leader explained that significant contamination cost the Council, as subsequently, cost the taxpayer. By introducing a fixed penalty notice, it was hoped that the cost could be reduced. The fines would act as an incentive for residents to sort their waste appropriately and would be used as a very last resort after multiple warnings. The Council would not be spying on residents in order to issue

a large number of fines. The pilot would start in April and last for a period of at least 12 weeks in order to ensure the full length of the associated processes could be tested.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet approve the draft revised Kerbside Residential Waste Collection Policy for a public consultation.
2. That Cabinet agree to the commencement of two pilots to test the approach to contamination, with the specific areas to be determined.

**88. REFRESHING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the statutory requirement placed on the Council to ensure a Health and Safety Policy was in place that articulated the Council's approach to managing health and safety. The Policy was attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and recommended for approval (version 3.3) and was the result of extensive consultation across multiple stakeholder groups.

A summary of the changes and amendments made as a result of the review and consultation were set out in paragraph 2.2.1 of the report. Once agreed, the Policy would be communicated across the workforce, as set out in paragraph 2.3.1. Actions to ensure the successful delivery of the key objectives of the Policy were set out in paragraph 2.4.1.

The Health, Welfare and Safety Panel and the Corporate Resilience, Health, Safety and Welfare Governance Group would have oversight of the performance with quarterly reports produced. The Policy would be reviewed in no more than two years' time.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet endorse and approve the revised Health and Safety Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

**89. BOROUGH WIDE AND TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPO'S)**

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the responses to the consultation that sought the views of the public and partners in relation to the existing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) and the proposed conditions that would be considered as part of any new orders. Cabinet had authorised the public consultation at its meeting on 16 September 2024 following a review of the available evidence.

In summary, the responses had shown support for the PSPOs being in place, recognising they were an important tool in providing assurance

around community safety matters. As such, the report recommended the renewal of the two PSPOs in place for a period of 3 years from January 2025. The Consultation Response Data Summary was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

For both PSPOs, over half the respondents confirmed they had confidence in the effectiveness of future Orders, while providing some challenge around the ability of the Police and Council to enforce the Orders. As a result of this feedback, the report also outlined further steps to provide additional assurance and oversight on the application of the tools by both the Police and Council, subject to the renewal of the Orders. It was noted that the wording around the prohibition on consumption of alcohol had been altered based on legal advice in order to enhance the ability to enforce as opposed to material change regarding the intent. This was the only change from the previous version of the Order.

A formal letter of support and comment from South Yorkshire Police was attached at Appendix 2 with the Public Spaces Protection Orders Consultation Activity Tracker attached at Appendix 1. The draft orders for the PSPO's were attached at Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the renewal of the Town Centre and Clifton Park Public Spaces Protection Order (Appendix 4) for a period of three years upon expiry of the current Order in January 2025.
2. Approve the renewal of the Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order (Appendix 5), specifically dealing with dog fouling, for a period of three years upon expiry of the current Order in January 2025.

**90. HRA BUSINESS PLAN, RENT SETTING AND SERVICE CHARGES 2025-26**

Consideration was given to the report which presented the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, Rent Setting proposals and Service Charge proposals for 2025-26.

The proposed 2025/26 HRA Business Plan incorporated the Council's commitments to continue and extend the Council's Housing Delivery Programme, alongside significant new investment to support decency and thermal efficiency in existing council homes. The Plan included provision for £979m investment in the housing stock over 30 years, including approximately £35m additional investment over the next five years compared to last year's position. This was alongside continuing to fund day-to-day housing management and repairs and maintenance costs. At the same time the Housing Delivery Programme would continue beyond

1,000 homes. The existing funding provision of £113m for hundreds more Council homes by 2027 would be supplemented with an additional £37m to begin to build the pipeline of schemes beyond 2027.

There had been a number of government policy changes in 2024/25 that would impact on the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan. These were set out in paragraph 1.6 of the report and included:

Plans to revise the current rent policy to give local authorities longer term stability to support borrowing and investment in new and existing homes. From the 21 November 2024 the maximum discount allowed through Right to Buy was reduced. In the Yorkshire and Humber region the maximum allowed discount was now £24,000 and the level of discount would not increase by CPI. There continued to be a strong focus on regulation of the social housing sector with the first rounds of proactive inspections under consumer regulations taking place during 2024/25. During 2025/26 it was anticipated that the Government would confirm its plans for Awaab's Law, 'Decent Homes 2', the Conduct and Competence Standard, and requirements to achieve EPC C by 2030. New regulations for District Heating were also due to come into effect.

The Government target to achieve 1.5 million new homes over five years had been backed by an initial £500m investment to continue the national Affordable Homes Programme. However, this would lead to less receipt income for the Council to fund its Housing Delivery Programme.

Alongside providing the draft HRA budget for 2025/26, the report recommended increases in housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating charges and other service charges for 2025/26. It was recommended that Council dwelling rents were increased by 2.7%, equivalent to CPI+1%, in line with Government policy, as set out in the table at paragraph 2.6.2. There were 12,668 tenancies in receipt of full Housing Benefit or full Universal Credit (UC) who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent. 2,276 tenancies received part Housing Benefit and any increase in rent would be part covered by benefit payments.

The District Heating pricing options were set out in Table 3 at paragraph 2.6.16. Given the volatility of energy prices, the Council took the decision in July 2023 to match the average District Heating bill to the Ofgem price cap for July – September 2023. This approach continued in 2024/25. It was proposed to continue this approach into 2025/26 and match the forecast average District Heating bill to the forecast Ofgem price cap for April – June 2025 meaning an average bill would be £828 per year assuming the price cap remained unchanged. This would mean that the HRA would be paying c£206k in 2025/26 towards the cost of District Heating. The forecast Ofgem price cap had been calculated using market data and was subject to change. As in 2024/25, it was recommended that authority be delegated in 2025/26 to the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Assistant Director for

Finance to amend District heating pricing should there be a significant movement in the Ofgem price cap.

Details of other fees and service charges were set out in paragraphs 2.6.12 to 2.6.22 of the report and included furnished tenancy charges and garage rents. Appendix 5 to the report included information on a number of leasehold management charges that were based on the full recovery of actual costs.

The Cabinet Member explained that a key priority was the ongoing work to mitigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. The support offered to residents was outlined in Appendix 8.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. A number of concerns had been raised in the meeting, but these had been adequately addressed by the Cabinet Members and Officers. A number of additional recommendations had been made, relating to the provision of information for elected Members.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approve the proposed 2025/26 Base Case Option 2 for the HRA Business Plan.
2. Note that the Business Plan will be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.
3. Agree that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7% in 2025/26 (Option 2).
4. Agree that the Council should retain the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent to the formula rent level when the property is re-let to a new tenant.
5. Agree that shared ownership rents are increased by 3.2% in 2025/26.
6. Agree that charges for communal facilities, parking spaces, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities are increased by 2% in 2025/26.
7. Agree that charges for garages are increased by 10% in 2025/26.
8. Agree that the District Heating unit charge per Kwh is set at 13.09 pence per kwh.
9. Agree that the decision to reduce the price of District Heating

Charges further during 2025/26 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.

10. Approve the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 as shown in Appendix 6.

That Cabinet note the following requests:

11. That members of OSMB are provided with the 'Securing the future of Council Housing' Document for their information.
12. That a link to the Acquisitions Policy be shared with Members of OSMB.
13. That the information contained within Appendix 8 of the report titled 'Support For Tenants with Financial Pressures' be circulated to all members of the Council for their information.
14. That a breakdown of the items listed under the category of Supervision and Management in the HRA budget be provided to members of OSMB.

## **91. COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND**

Consideration was given to the report which set out the proposed indicative programme and allocations for the Community Recovery Fund (CRF.) Rotherham had been allocated £600,000 from the Fund to support the communities impacted by the significant violence and vandalism that took place at the Holiday Inn Express at Manvers on 4 August 2024.

Eligible expenditure for the use of this fund included:

- Immediate action to safeguard life or property.
- To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience.
- To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.
- To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.

Following the release of national guidance for the CRF, the priorities from the Council's initial action plan had been integrated into four key focus areas for Rotherham's funding allocation:

- Projects or initiatives that seek to restore civic pride in the Manvers area.
- Projects that support or promote intracommunity relations in priority areas.



- Educational initiatives and youth outreach with children, young people and schools.
- Community safety related projects and investments

The table in Appendix 1 summarised the indicative programme and provisional allocations that would be undertaken under each of the four focus areas. The indicative programme would be delivered by a range of organisations including direct delivery by Rotherham Council services, direct delivery by the voluntary sector, and a grants budget which would allow for further solutions to be co-created and co-designed with community groups and prioritised as part of an overall coordinated approach. This could also include commissioning of projects through the grants budget to address any gaps or emerging issues. A voluntary sector managed grants budget would provide further flexibility within the government guidelines to deliver a programme of activities that could adapt to changing needs and to extend the delivery phase through to March 2026.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the indicative programme and provisional allocations of the Community Recovery Fund Grant of £600,000 as follows:
  - a. £62,975 to cover the costs incurred by the Council in responding to the events on the 4 August.
  - b. £15,000 towards the delivery of a restorative justice project.
  - c. £10,000 to provide resources to support Manvers Community Recovery.
  - d. £10,000 to provide a community cohesion workforce development programme.
  - e. £180,000 to establish a community cohesion 'Rotherham Together' fund.
  - f. £57,000 to appoint a strategic cohesion co-ordinator for the borough.
  - g. £25,831 to put in place lived experience educators.
  - h. £30,000 to provide a community events programme.
  - i. £62,358 to provide activities for children and young people.
  - j. £25,800 for Together for Tomorrow, providing educational initiatives to support schools.
  - k. £30,000 to deliver a series of Challenge events aimed at uniting young people from diverse backgrounds through positive activities.
  - l. £45,000 to improve the safety of town centre events by investing in hostile vehicle mitigation.
  - m. £20,000 to invest in improving street lighting through a pilot initiative.
  - n. £10,000 to develop a system for recruiting, facilitating and mobilising volunteers to respond to crisis situations and

contribute to public events.

2. Agree to enter into supplementary provisions to the Infrastructure Support Services 2024 – 2027 Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the provision of the relevant elements set out in recommendation 1.
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine revised and final allocations for the Community Recovery Fund Grant.

## **92. OUR PLACES FUND**

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to develop various thematic interventions into detailed deliverable projects through the £2 million allocation named the Our Places Fund (OPF). In addition, the report recommended that an additional £2million of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Mayor's Sustainability Fund be allocated to this project. This fund could be used to enhance the existing OPF scheme which in turn would create more impact and contribute to the Council's priority to make 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving'.

Following analysis of borough-wide consultation, a range of emerging areas for investment had been identified:

- Civic Centre Improvements as set out in paragraphs 2.1.2-2.1.3 of the report. The indicative allocation was £1.5m.
- Cenotaphs, Memorial and Monuments as set out in paragraph 2.1.4 of the report. The indicative allocation was £300k.
- Pedestrian Movement as set out in paragraph 2.1.5 of the report. The indicative allocation was £1.4m.

In addition to the OPF consultation and continuing the theme of investment in local centres, there was existing evidence of demand for further intervention from communities where development work was already underway, areas such as Wath, Dinnington, Maltby and Swinton. In Maltby, as part of the Towns & Villages Fund, an extensive scheme of public realm improvements would be undertaken. In response to consultation on the proposed scheme, an additional allocation (£500k) would be made from OPF to enable the works to extend along the full length of the High Street. In Swinton, a redevelopment of the town centre was underway and had to date provided a refurbished library and Civic Hall. Works due to be extended included public realm upgrades. In response to previous community comments throughout the lifespan of this project, additional funding from OPF (£300k) would enable additional public realm works to be undertaken.

Cabinet Members noted that this was very welcome and exciting.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the inclusion of the additional £2million from the Mayor's Sustainability Fund which was allocated through SYMCA, so that the allocated funds for the OPF total £4million.
2. Approve the development of thematic interventions described at Section 2 and delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Council's Section 151 Officer to add, amend or replace a scheme should it become unfeasible or undeliverable.

**93. INDICATIVE HIGHWAY REPAIR PROGRAMME 2024/25 - ADDITIONAL SCHEMES**

Consideration was given to the report which described how Rotherham's highways were strategically managed and maintained, in accordance with the agreed Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP.) The report also provided a review of the current Strategy for the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways and the impact the recent Council funding had had on the highway network. Current performance, both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's highways and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services was outlined.

The additional investment over a number of years in Rotherham's roads was making a real improvement to the highway network. This was evidenced by the improvement in the condition of the estate roads and classified network and a continued reduction in the number of potholes reported and highway claims received against the Council.

The report provided further detail on the Highways Maintenance Programme on the basis of the additional funding approved at Council in February 2024. The schemes were set out in the last two pages of Appendix 1 and were recommended for approval. The name for the 4-year programme was the 'Rotherham Roads Programme'.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the strategic approach to the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways.
2. Approve the indicative Highway Repair Programme for 2024/2025 as set out in Appendix 1 which includes the additional Councillor suggestions.

3. Note that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment may utilise any additional in year funding to deliver highways repairs in accordance with the strategic approach to the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways as laid out in this report.

#### **94. BUILDING COMPLIANCE POLICIES**

Consideration was given to the report which presented a suite of new policies which had been developed in relation to building compliance. The Property and Facilities Services Legionella Policy was attached at Appendix 1; the Property and Facilities Services Fire Policy at Appendix 2; and the Property and Facilities Services Asbestos Policy at Appendix 3.

The Legionella Policy set out the legal and regulatory framework for managing water safety. It covered assets within the responsibility of the Council's housing and corporate service, including residential properties, neighbourhood centres, as well as safety within schools, care homes, offices, or commercial properties.

The Fire Policy set out the regulatory framework for managing Fire Safety and strategies for both Housing and Corporate property. The provision of a coherent Policy ensured that buildings met a criterion of 100% compliance, with the policy supporting a range of compliance procedures, such as risk based Fire Risk Assessment's, regular dynamic inspections and competent persons to carry the inspection, testing and review.

The key objective of the Asbestos Policy was to describe how the Council would manage Asbestos Safety Risk so far as was reasonably practicable. It was considered that delivery of the commitments within this Policy would ensure that the requirements of other legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Landlord Tenant Act 1985 would also be met.

#### **Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Legionella Policy (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Fire Policy (Appendix 2).
3. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Asbestos Policy (Appendix 3).
4. Delegate any further changes to building compliance policies, in line with service needs and the evolving regulatory and legislative context to the Duty Holder (Head of FM and Compliance), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the

Local Economy.

**95. 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.

**96. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 20 January 2025, commencing at 10.00am in Rotherham Town Hall.

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Council – 15 January 2025

**Report Title**

Recommendation from Cabinet - HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26

**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 for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

**Report Author(s)**

Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager  
Paul Elliott, Head of Housing Income and Support Services  
Kath Andrews, Finance Manager

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide – all wards

**Report Summary**

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records all expenditure and income relating to the provision of Council housing and related services, and the Council is required to produce an HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a 30-year period.

The proposed 2025/26 HRA Business Plan incorporates the Council's commitments to continue and extend the Council's Housing Delivery Programme, alongside significant new investment to support decency and thermal efficiency in existing council homes. The Plan includes provision for £979m investment in the housing stock over 30 years, including approximately £35m additional investment over the next five years compared to last year's position. This is alongside continuing to fund day-to-day housing management and repairs and maintenance costs. At the same time the Housing Delivery Programme will continue beyond 1,000 homes. The existing funding provision of £113m for hundreds more Council homes by 2027 will be supplemented with an additional £37m to begin to build the pipeline of schemes beyond 2027.

Borrowing is required in years 3 to 6 in order to support necessary investment and provision for servicing this level of debt is built into the 30 year Plan. The Business Plan has been modelled to ensure healthy balances are maintained in all years.

Alongside providing the draft HRA budget for 2025/26, the report recommends increases in housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating charges and other service charges for 2025/26. It is recommended that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7%, equivalent to CPI+1%, in line with Government policy. There are 12,668 tenancies in receipt of full Housing Benefit or full Universal Credit (UC) who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent, 2,276 tenancies receive part Housing Benefit and any increase in rent would be part covered by benefit payments.

### **Recommendations**

That Council: -

1. Approve the proposed 2025/26 Base Case Option 2 for the HRA Business Plan.
2. Note that the Business Plan will be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.
3. Agree that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7% in 2025/26 (Option 2).
4. Agree that the Council should retain the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent to the formula rent level when the property is re-let to a new tenant.
5. Agree that shared ownership rents are increased by 3.2% in 2025/26.
6. Agree that charges for communal facilities, parking spaces, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities are increased by 2% in 2025/26.
7. Agree that charges for garages are increased by 10% in 2025/26.
8. Agree that the District Heating unit charge per Kwh is set at 13.09 pence per kwh.
9. Agree that the decision to reduce the price of District Heating Charges further during 2025/26 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.
10. Approve the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 as shown in Appendix 6.

### **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 0 – 16 December 2024 Cabinet Report - HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26
- Appendix 1 HRA Operating Statement
- Appendix 2 Social Rent payable by number of bedrooms
- Appendix 3 HRA Business Planning assumptions
- Appendix 4 Percentage of Rent Income Used to Fund Interest



- Appendix 5 Non-dwelling rent, service charges and Furnished Homes Charges 2025/26
- Appendix 6 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2025/26
- Appendix 7 Affordability Analysis
- Appendix 8 Support for Tenants with Financial Pressures
- Appendix 9 Equalities Assessment
- Appendix 10 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

- HRA Business Plan 2024/25
- Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024/25
- DCLG Guidance on Rents for Social Housing
- Annual Housing Delivery Report to Cabinet

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) – 11 December 2024
- Cabinet 16 December 2024

**Council Approval Required**

Yes

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 16 December 2024

**Report Title**

HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26

**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 for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

**Report Author(s)**

Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager

Paul Elliott, Head of Housing Income and Support Services

Kath Andrews, Finance Manager

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide – all wards

**Report Summary**

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records all expenditure and income relating to the provision of Council housing and related services, and the Council is required to produce an HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a 30-year period.

The proposed 2025/26 HRA Business Plan incorporates the Council's commitments to continue and extend the Council's Housing Delivery Programme, alongside significant new investment to support decency and thermal efficiency in existing council homes. The Plan includes provision for £979m investment in the housing stock over 30 years, including approximately £35m additional investment over the next five years compared to last year's position. This is alongside continuing to fund day-to-day housing management and repairs and maintenance costs. At the same time the Housing Delivery Programme will continue beyond 1,000 homes. The existing funding provision of £113m for hundreds more Council homes by 2027 will be supplemented with an additional £37m to begin to build the pipeline of schemes beyond 2027.

Borrowing is required in years 3 to 6 in order to support necessary investment and provision for servicing this level of debt is built into the 30 year Plan. The Business Plan has been modelled to ensure healthy balances are maintained in all years.

Alongside providing the draft HRA budget for 2025/26, the report recommends increases in housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating charges and other service charges for 2025/26. It is recommended that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7%, equivalent to CPI+1%, in line with Government policy. There are 12,668 tenancies in receipt of full Housing Benefit or full Universal Credit (UC) who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent. 2,276 tenancies receive part Housing Benefit and any increase in rent would be part covered by benefit payments.

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet recommends to Council to: -

1. Approve the proposed 2025/26 Base Case Option 2 for the HRA Business Plan.
2. Note that the Business Plan will be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.
3. Agree that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7% in 2025/26 (Option 2).
4. Agree that the Council should retain the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent to the formula rent level when the property is re-let to a new tenant.
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7. Agree that charges for garages are increased by 10% in 2025/26.
8. Agree that the District Heating unit charge per Kwh is set at 13.09 pence per kwh.
9. Agree that the decision to reduce the price of District Heating Charges further during 2025/26 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.
10. Approve the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 as shown in Appendix 6.

**List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 HRA Operating Statement
- Appendix 2 Social Rent payable by number of bedrooms
- Appendix 3 HRA Business Planning assumptions
- Appendix 4 Percentage of Rent Income Used to Fund Interest
- Appendix 5 Non-dwelling rent, service charges and Furnished Homes Charges 2025/26
- Appendix 6 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2025/26
- Appendix 7 Affordability Analysis
- Appendix 8 Support for Tenants with Financial Pressures
- Appendix 9 Equalities Assessment
- Appendix 10 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

- HRA Business Plan 2024/25
- Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024/25
- DCLG Guidance on Rents for Social Housing
- Annual Housing Delivery Report to Cabinet

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

**Council Approval Required**

Yes

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26

### 1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals for the HRA Business Plan alongside proposed rents, service charges and fees for 2025/26 and presents the draft HRA budget for 2025/26. The HRA is a self-financing, ring-fenced account which retains and uses housing rental income to fund landlord services, deliver the capital programme and invest in new housing.
- 1.2 The HRA Business Plan is updated annually to ensure it reflects the current operating environment. This year's Business Plan prioritises investment in three core areas:
- Ensuring tenant's homes are safe, decent and thermally efficient.
  - Extending the benefits of council housing to more residents by expanding the Housing Delivery Programme.
  - Modernising the housing service to enhance customer experience, improve productivity and achieve full regulatory compliance.
- 1.3 This year the HRA Business Plan incorporates emerging proposals to direct additional investment into the Council's existing homes, while continuing to deliver hundreds of new homes. Stock condition data will begin to be refreshed during 2025/26 which will clarify the full investment needs, and the Council is committed to ensuring all council homes achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030. The Council has submitted a grant funding bid to the Warm Homes scheme, which is the Government's main funding for supporting retrofit of social housing. If successful, the Council will be required to provide 50 per cent match funding, taken from existing capital investment earmarked in the Business Plan. The outcome of bids will be confirmed during 2025.
- 1.4 The Plan continues to ensure Council homes are safe, good quality and well-managed, while protecting surpluses to ensure the HRA is well-placed to respond to ongoing inflationary and future cost pressures as they arise.
- 1.5 Alongside these priority areas, the Business Plan protects day to day expenditure on front line services, includes provision to respond to growing demand in areas like damp and mould and planned repairs, and protects minimum balances and the reserves position so the HRA can respond to future changes.
- 1.6 There have been a number of government policy changes in 2024/25 that will impact on the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan. These include:
- Plans to revise the current **rent policy** to give local authorities longer term stability to support borrowing and investment in new and existing homes. The Government is consulting on a five-year rent settlement (2026/27 to 2030/31) that would give local authorities certainty of a maximum rent increase of Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1% each year. The Government

is considering extending rent certainty for a further five years beyond 2030/31.

- From the 21st November 2024 the maximum discount allowed through **Right to Buy** was reduced. In the Yorkshire and Humber region the maximum allowed discount is now £24,000 and the level of discount will not increase by CPI. This policy change led to a significant increase in applications up to 21st November but it is anticipated that over the longer term, sales will be significantly lower than in recent years. This will result in increased rental income over the life of the Plan, offset by a reduction in income from sales. Alongside this change, the retention of 100% of Right to Buy receipts by local authorities has been extended indefinitely.
- There continues to be a strong focus on **regulation of the social housing sector** with the first rounds of proactive inspections under consumer regulations taking place during 2024/25. During 2025/26 it is anticipated that the Government will confirm its plans for Awaab's Law, 'Decent Homes 2', the Conduct and Competence Standard, and requirements to achieve EPC C by 2030. New regulations for District Heating are also due to come into effect. Taken together, these add significant burdens to the HRA across both day-to-day expenditure and capital investment requirements.
- The Government target to achieve **1.5 million new homes** over five years has been backed by an initial £500m investment to continue the national Affordable Homes Programme. However, changes to Right to Buy, while welcome overall, will mean less Right to Buy applications and therefore less receipt income for the Council to fund its Housing Delivery Programme, and there is currently no confirmed national funding for affordable housing beyond 2025/26. This has led the Council to assume it will need to contribute more of its own resources to the Housing Delivery Programme in the short term.

1.7 Capital expenditure on existing homes has doubled over the last 5 years and the greater share of this increase can be characterised as reactive, rather than planned, expenditure. Drivers include increased damp and mould works, more responsive repairs that require major works, and higher costs associated with properties becoming vacant. The commitment to carry out a comprehensive stock condition survey and increased planned capital expenditure will support the Council to shift the focus towards a more proactive capital programme in future.

1.8 Day to day financial performance remains strong in key areas of the business, resulting in high income collection rates and value for money services for Council tenants. This is supported by positive benchmarking data from Housemark and Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) survey results. Tenancy sustainment outcomes remain extremely positive, with very few evictions. This performance allows the Council to invest HRA resources in maintaining existing housing stock and in housing growth so that more residents can enjoy the benefits of a well-managed, affordable, good quality home.

## 2. Key Issues

2.1 As at 31 March 2024 the Council owned 19,879 homes, 617 leasehold homes, 123 shared ownership homes and 3,385 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £96m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties).

2.2 A full review of the HRA Business Plan took place during 2024/25. The review confirmed that while the current plan is viable and underpinned by robust assumptions, there needs to be provision for higher rates of investment in existing council homes to reflect growing demands, cost inflation, improvements in stock condition and likely new regulatory requirements. Alongside this, the Plan needs to incorporate provision for extending the Housing Delivery Programme to ensure new homes continue to be added to the stock, mitigating some of the impact of Right to Buy and generating additional rental income.

2.3 The review also identified the need for additional borrowing over the short term to fund this investment. Further work will take place during 2025/26 to develop operating principles for additional HRA debt and to strengthen the Council's risk-based approach to reserves to ensure future unforeseen cost pressures can be managed effectively.

### 2.4 Capital Investment

2.4.1 A three-year Housing Capital Programme will be taken to Cabinet in March 2025. To support the Programme, the 2025/26 Business Plan makes provision in the following areas.

#### Improving homes and estates

2.4.2 Investing in existing homes and estates means that the repairs and maintenance service can remain affordable and focused on day-to-day minor repairs and cyclical servicing. It is also required to ensure the Council's housing stock is decent, energy efficient and safe to live in.

2.4.3 Capital expenditure on existing homes has doubled over the last 5 years and more recently reactive capital expenditure has been higher than planned capital expenditure. This appears to be driven by increased volumes of major repairs and high-cost voids which have required increased damp and mould works and kitchen replacements. The Council currently plans to spend approximately £43k per home over the 30-year plan period. Benchmarking with other landlords suggests this may need to rise to as much as £60k per home, requiring an additional £340m over the life of the plan.

2.4.4 Stock condition surveys will enable the Council to clarify the total amount and how it needs to be profiled across 30 years. Within the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan, an initial four-year tranche of additional investment worth approximately £33.5m has been earmarked to begin from 2026/27. The additional funding will be used to maintain decency, improve thermal comfort and deliver works identified through the stock condition data.



- 2.4.5 In addition, the Plan includes investment of £650k in 2025/26 to complete a major electrical scheme at Wharncliffe, and £8m across 2025/26 and 2026/27 following capitalisation of major repairs such as ventilation works.
- 2.4.6 Additional funding has also been allocated to fund aids and adaptations within Council housing stock. The budget will increase by £1m per year in 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- 2.4.7 Total capital expenditure on existing council homes in 2025/26 is planned to be £36.3m. Across the 30 year Business Plan, £979m capital investment has been allocated to ensure the Councils housing stock is well maintained, an increase of £121m compared with the 2024/25 Business Plan.

#### Housing Delivery Programme

- 2.4.8 The Council has been very successful in using HRA land and finances to build and acquire new Council homes. The Council has recently added its 620<sup>th</sup> affordable home to the housing stock since 2018 and the Business Plan includes provision for £151m investment to deliver the existing pipeline of projects and to ensure the continuation of the Housing Delivery Programme into 2027/28 and 2028/29. This includes a commitment to continue the successful acquisitions programme for at least a further two years. Rising costs and uncertain grant funding remain major risks to the Programme and further work will take place during 2025/26 to model the most appropriate mix of acquisitions and new build homes to ensure continued affordability of the programme.
- 2.4.9 The precise mix of schemes, number and types of homes and levels of investments are all subject to separate Cabinet approvals or officer delegations where these are in place. For the purposes of the Business Plan, investment is assumed to support delivery of an additional 576 new homes from 2025/26 onwards.
- 2.4.10 The modelling makes assumptions about the level of grant income available from Homes England and other agencies, which in practice must be negotiated scheme by scheme. While it makes an allowance for the cost pressures facing the housing development industry, all costs remain projections as actual costs will be highly dependent on the nature of the sites, the construction method, specifications, and property types. Options to reduce costs may need to be explored and this could include switching tenure or rent type, delivering more smaller properties and amending specifications.

#### Digital transformation

- 2.4.11 An additional £2m has been allocated in 2026/27 and 2027/28 to support the digital transformation of the housing service to improve the customer experience and streamline back-office functions.
- 2.4.12 Improvements for tenants will include enhancements to Housing Online so more transactions can be done digitally and the roll out of an app. A review

of back-office functions will also take place to ensure that wherever a transaction can be completed digitally this will be the default position. Examples of this will include the roll out of mobile working across the housing service which will reduce double keying and free up significant officer time to focus on customer priorities.

## 2.5 Revenue Account

### Repairs and maintenance

2.5.1 Ensuring adequate investment in the repair and maintenance of the housing stock is essential to keep tenants safe, provide good quality homes, and mitigate against more substantial costs later. The Housing Property Service and its contractors complete approximately 90,000 repairs and servicing visits every year.

2.5.2 To reflect the importance of this service and increased demands, the Business Plan proposes an increase in spending by £3m to £27.6m in 2025/26. This reflects levels of demand in 2024/25 and includes an increase in the damp and mould revenue budget of £800k to £2.5m in total.

2.5.3 In 2025/26, the budget includes:

- £5m for day-to-day responsive repairs
- £4.8m for planned repairs, like replacements of doors and windows or kitchen and bathroom repairs
- £2.6m for minor works to properties that have become vacant
- £2.5m for damp and mould works
- £4.9m for gas servicing and other cyclical maintenance.

### Supervision and management

2.5.4 A supervision and management budget of £34.9m is proposed for 2025/26. This is an increase of £2.972m from last year. £1.7m of this reflects accounting changes in the salaries budget and Furnished Homes service and is offset by additional rental income into the HRA.

2.5.5 Increased costs also reflect additional staffing requirements arising from increased focus on compliance and regulation. Costs include a new compliance team established during 2024/25, and ongoing recruitment for a new Housing Improvement and Governance service to support regulatory assurance, tenant engagement and business improvement. An assumed increase for employers national insurance contributions by 1.2% as per the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 Budget announcement has also been included. £250k has been earmarked in 2025/26 to support unforeseen regulatory costs.

2.5.6 Key areas of expenditure in 2025/26 include:

- £15.1m for contributions to other Council services required to operate the HRA, including central services like finance and HR; and services

delivered by other directorates like grass cutting, the contact centre and community protection.

- £13m for staff salaries
- £1.7m for gas and electricity costs.

Estate caretaking

2.5.7 Estate caretaking is a service provided by the Council’s repairs and maintenance contract partners. The service is delivered on a planned basis, to an agreed service standard and cyclical programme, across neighbourhoods. The service also responds reactively to issues as they arise, such as fly tipping, to maintain a safe and attractive estate environment. Additional resources of £135k is provided for from 2025/26 to support investment in this service following a review that took place in 2024/25.

2.6 **Rents, Fees and Charges**

2.6.1 There are three rent types within the HRA – Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership Rent.

Social Rent

2.6.2 The amount the Council can increase rents by is governed by the Rent Standard which is published by Government to ensure all social housing is affordable and follows the same rules and regulations. This formula allows social housing rent to be increased by a maximum of CPI (1.7% as at September 2024) plus 1% each year. Two rent increase options have been modelled for business planning purposes and are detailed below. A 2% increase in service charges is assumed. For the purposes of comparison, the proposed capital investments outlined in this report are consistent across all rent setting options.

**Table 1 – Options for Social Rent increase**

<b>Social Rent Option 1 - 1.7% rent increase (CPI)</b>	<b>Social Rent Option 2 – 2.7% rent increase (CPI+1%) - Recommended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average rent increase of £1.56 per week from £92.01 to £93.57 per week (further details in Appendix 2).</li> <li>• This option is 1% lower than maximum allowable under the Government’s rent policy.</li> <li>• It would generate £1.6m additional income in 2025/26 when compared to 2024/25.</li> <li>• This option would not cover the pressures identified in section</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option would result in an average rent increase of £2.48 per week from £92.01 to £94.49 per week (further details in Appendix 2).</li> <li>• This increase is in line with the maximum allowed under the Government’s rent policy.</li> <li>• It would generate £2.5m of additional income in 2025/26 when compared to 2024/25.</li> <li>• Assuming a rent increase of CPI +1% for 6 years in line with the</li> </ul>

<p>2.4 and the plan becomes unviable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any lowering of the base rent will have a permanent effect on the money available to support the HRA as future increases will be from the lower rent level.</li> </ul>	<p>proposed Government Policy generates an additional £337m of rental income over the life of the Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This additional income is critical to enabling the Council to meet its priorities and 30-year HRA Business Plan requirements</li> </ul>
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Affordable Rent

- 2.6.3 Where the Council has been successful in securing grant income from Homes England to deliver Affordable Rent properties, the new properties will be managed in line with existing policies, for example mutual exchange, succession, subletting etc. The key difference for grant funded properties, compared to Social Rent properties, is the method of managing the rent values is prescribed by the Government. These are contained within the Capital Funding Guide for Homes England grant and the Rent Standard.
- 2.6.4 The Council is required to rebase (revalue) the Affordable Rent value on each occasion that a new Affordable Rent tenancy is issued (or renewed) for a particular property; and ensure that the rent remains at no more than 80% of gross market rent (inclusive of service charges) as of the date the property is re-let.
- 2.6.5 All Affordable Rent properties are revalued in October and March each year to provide a valid rent value for when Affordable Rent properties are re-let. The rebased Affordable Rent will only apply to new tenants or tenancies.
- 2.6.6 The actual rents for existing tenants in Affordable Rent properties will only be adjusted in April each year as per the existing annual rent and charges review process.
- 2.6.7 It is proposed that affordable rents increase in line with social rents. Two rent increase options have been modelled for business planning purposes and are detailed below.

**Table 2 – Options for Affordable Rent increase**

<b>Affordable Rent Option 1 - 1.7% rent increase (CPI)</b>	<b>Affordable Rent Option 2 – 2.7% rent increase (CPI+1%) - Recommended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The average Affordable Rent in 2024/25 is £117.73 when aggregated over 52 weeks. The 2025/26 average weekly rent based on an increase of 1.7% would be £119.73, an average increase of £2.00 per week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The average Affordable Rent in 2024/25 is £117.73 when aggregated over 52 weeks. The 2025/26 average weekly rent based on an increase of 2.7% would be £121.50, an average increase of £3.77 per week.</li> </ul>

### Formula Rent

2.6.8 Since 2015 the Council's policy has been when a property is re-let, or first let in the case of an acquisition or new build, rent is set at the formula rent. It is proposed this policy continues for 2025/26 given the additional income this generates over the life of the Business Plan. The amount raised through this policy depends on which rent increase option is selected:

- If rents for sitting tenants were increased by 1.7% in 2025/26 (Option 1 in 2.5.2), then continuing the policy to re-let at formula rent would generate £97m over 30 years
- If, as recommended, rents were increased by 2.7% in 2025/26 (Option 2 in 2.5.2), then the policy to re-let at formula rent would generate £82m over 30 years.

2.6.9 The average weekly rent for new lets at formula will be £100.06 per week.

2.6.10 It is proposed that guidance is prepared and issued for officers to ensure discretion is applied in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where a tenant is forced to move due to domestic abuse.

### Shared Ownership Rent

2.6.11 The Council is the landlord for 115 Shared Ownership properties. Rent increases for shared ownership properties are subject to a different formula than Social Rents or Affordable Rents. The formula is Retail Price Index (RPI) (as at September 2024 = 2.7%) plus 0.5%, an increase of 3.2%. Applying this formula means rents would increase on average by £8.09 per month from £252.66 to £260.75. This is the recommended approach for Shared Ownership rents.

### Furnished Tenancy Charges

2.6.12 The recommended option for dwelling rents will also apply to tenants with a Furnished Tenancy. As such, Furnished Homes charges are subject to the same inflationary increase as standard rents. If Option 2 in paragraph 2.6.2 is approved these charges will increase by 2.7%. This would generate additional income of £829k in 2025/26. A full list of Furnished Homes charges and proposed values for 2025/26 is included in Appendix 5.

### District Heating

2.6.13 There are currently 18 different schemes and approximately 1,260 properties which receive heat through the Council's District Heating service.

2.6.14 Given the volatility of energy prices the Council took the decision in July 2023 to match the average District Heating bill to the Ofgem price cap for July – September 2023. This approach continued in 2024/25.

2.6.15 It is proposed to continue this approach into 2025/26 and match the forecast average District Heating bill to the forecast Ofgem price cap for April - June 2025 meaning an average bill will be £828 per year assuming the price cap

remained unchanged. This will mean the HRA will be paying c£206k in 2025/26 towards the cost of District Heating. The forecast Ofgem price cap has been calculated using market data and is subject to change.

2.6.16 The annual cost to customers will depend on their actual usage, therefore the annual cost could be higher or lower than the Ofgem price cap. Customers will be advised of their usual annual usage so that they can consider their payment options. A series of options for District Heating pricing have been modelled in the tables below. The first table summarises the options. The second table summarises unit rates and Business Plan impacts.

**Table 3 – District Heating pricing options**

<b>District Heating Option 1 – Existing unit rate based on Jul-Sep 2024 Ofgem Cap</b>	<b>District Heating Option 2 – Unit rate based on forecast Apr-Jun 2025 Ofgem Cap</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option would see the unit rate remain unchanged at 12 pence per kwh and would mean an average annual cost per user of £759. There would be an average deficit of £230 per user as full cost recovery would not be achieved. This would result in a potential pressure on District Heating budgets of £291k.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option would see an increase in the unit rate to 13.09 pence per kwh and would mean an average annual cost per user of £828. There would be an average deficit of £164 per user as full cost recovery would not be achieved. This will mean the HRA will be paying c£206k in 2025/26 towards the cost of District Heating. This is c£11k lower than the contribution in 2024/25 (after the pricing was adjusted in line with the Ofgem price cap).</li> <li>The proposed option maintains the link to the Ofgem price cap and means the average District Heating bill will be equivalent to that of a resident on mains gas.</li> </ul>

**Table 4 – District Heating pricing option 2025/26 – unit rates and impact on the Business Plan**

			Budget 2025/26		Breakeven
	Original 2024/25 Budget	May 2024 Review	Option 1	Option 2 (Recommended)	
<b>District Heating Options 2025/26</b>	Ofgem Cap (Jan-Mar24)	Ofgem Cap (Jul-Sep 24)	Existing unit rate Ofgem Cap (Jul-Sep 24)	Forecast Ofgem Cap (Apr-Jun 25)	Full cost recovery (utilities only)
Unit rate (inc VAT)	0.1527	0.1200	0.1200	0.1309	0.1576
Expenditure (Fuel only except full cost recovery)	1,701,105	1,293,531	1,355,073	1,355,073	1,355,073
Net Income	-1,348,466	-1,076,206	-1,064,403	-1,148,754	-1,355,073
Deficit	352,639	217,325	290,670	206,319	0
<b>Pooled Schemes Weekly Prepayment Charge (inc VAT)</b>					
Bedsit	9.50	7.00	7.00	8.50	10.00
1 Bed	16.50	12.00	12.00	13.50	17.00
2 Bed	20.50	16.00	16.00	17.50	21.00
3/4 Bed	26.50	20.00	20.00	21.50	27.00
<b>Annual pre-payment charge (inc VAT)</b>					
Bedsit	503.50	384.00	364.00	442.00	530.00
1 Bed	874.50	649.00	624.00	702.00	901.00
2 Bed	1,086.50	861.00	832.00	910.00	1,113.00
3/4 Bed	1,404.50	1,073.00	1,040.00	1,118.00	1,431.00
<b>Annual average bill (inc VAT)</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>997</b>

2.6.17 The prepayment charge is the amount a customer would pay to their rent account on an annual basis. Customers will be advised of their average annual usage. Customers who require assistance can access the Council's Energy Crisis scheme to seek further cash support and are able to access ongoing support through the financial inclusion team.

2.6.18 As in 2024/25 it is recommended that authority be delegated in 2025/26 to the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Assistant Director for Finance to amend District heating pricing should there be a significant movement in the Ofgem price cap.

### Garage Rents

2.6.19 A 10% increase of garage rents is proposed and has been modelled within the HRA Business Plan with the aim of creating additional revenue to eventually facilitate more investment in the garage estate. Previously garage charges have been increased in line with service charges (proposed at 2% for 2025/26). A 2% increase is forecast to generate an additional income of £14,260 compared to 2024/25 charges. A 10% increase is forecast to generate £71,330, an increase of £57,070. The impact of a 10% increase and benchmarking data are detailed in the table below. The difference in pricing between tenants and non-tenants is due to VAT being payable by non-tenants.

**Table 5 – Impact of Garage Rent Increase**

	2024/25	2025/26 Proposed	Increase
RMBC average garage rent for tenants	£ 5.96	£ 6.56	£ 0.60
RMBC average garage rent for non-tenants	£ 7.15	£ 7.87	£ 0.72
		vs RMBC (Based on current rent level)	Difference with 10% increase
<b>South Yorkshire Benchmarked Average Garage Rent</b>	<b>2024/25</b>		
Tenants	£ 7.09	-£ 1.13	-£ 0.53
Non-tenants	£ 8.51	-£ 1.36	-£ 0.64

Other Fees and Service Charges

- 2.6.20 This report also considers the potential increase in HRA non dwelling rent fees and charges for 2025/26 and proposes a 2% increase. A full list of Fees and Service charges for the HRA for 2025/26 is included at Appendix 5.
- 2.6.21 The proposed increase of 2% would generate additional income of approximately £11.4k in 2025/26 compared with current charges.
- 2.6.22 There are a number of leasehold management charges that are based on the full recovery of actual costs. These are excluded from this report as they are not standard charges that are subject to an inflationary increase. These are included for information in Appendix 5.

**2.7 Impact on tenants**

2.7.1 There are 14,944 tenancies in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (UC) who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent and approximately 4,712 tenancies that would be directly affected by a rent increase, as they would pay themselves from their household income. The tenants in receipt of benefits (Housing Benefit or UC) who would see their benefit entitlement adjusted to meet an increase in rent are:

- 8,961 households who are on Universal Credit
- 3,707 households who are on full Housing Benefit entitlement
- 2,276 households who are on part Housing Benefit entitlement

Affordability

2.7.2 An affordability analysis shows that based on a 1.7% or 2.7% rent increase, those aged under 25 and on benefits would struggle to meet housing affordability tests given working age benefits are lower for this age group. The affordability challenges are the same irrespective of the rent increase adopted. This is an issue which has existed for a number of years. Other age groups would meet affordability tests assuming they only spent on essential items.



2.7.3 Tenants in part time work (assumed 20 hours for modelling purposes) and in receipt of the National Living Wage would still be in receipt of Universal credit and so in all scenarios their rent would be covered in full by an increase in Universal Credit.

2.7.4 Affordability modelling has been undertaken using Policy in Practice software. This software is used to assess all new tenants' ability to afford properties they have been offered, prior to signing a tenancy agreement. A detailed analysis of affordability is attached at Appendix 7.

Supporting tenants with financial pressures

2.7.5 A key priority is the ongoing work to mitigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. The Council is committed to supporting tenants and will do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention. Work will continue to support tenants to pay their rent, including offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice.

2.7.6 The Council and its partners provide a comprehensive package of support to tenants and residents facing crisis. Current support offered in Rotherham is outlined in Appendix 8.

Private Sector Rents

2.7.7 With the proposed rent increase of 2.7% Council rents will still offer far better value than those in the private sector. The table below illustrates the average Council rent compared to the average private sector rent in Rotherham.

**Table 6 – Average Council rent vs private rent by bedroom size**

	<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed</b>
<b>Average weekly Council rent £ (assuming 2.7% increase)</b>	85.57	93.32	100.77	112.16
<b>Average weekly private sector rent £</b>	126	160	196	276

**3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 The options considered as part of scenario modelling are detailed at Appendix 3 of the report. Options for rent increases are outlined in the main body of the report.

3.2 The recommended option results in an Operating Surplus at Year 30 of £9.6m and ensures expenditure is affordable throughout the life of the Business Plan.

3.3 The recommended option increases investment in existing stock and enables delivery of an on-going Housing Delivery programme, ensures all statutory compliance functions are met alongside resources to meet requirements of the new social housing regulations.

4. **Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The Council has an active tenant engagement service supported by a Tenant Engagement Framework and a commissioned Tenant Federation contract. Consultation on housing services provided by the Council is undertaken throughout the year via the Housing Involvement Panel. The draft 2025/26 HRA Business Plan was tabled at the Panel on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The Housing Service also hold numerous tenant consultation events throughout the year, for instance the Annual Tenants Conference. These provide an insight into tenant priorities and inform development of the Business Plan.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The table below shows the approval timeline:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
16/12/24	Cabinet decision making meeting
15/01/25	Council
7/03/25	Rent and service charge letters posted
7/04/25	New charges take effect

6. **Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 In developing the HRA Business Plan the CIPFA / CIH code of practice for a self-financed housing revenue account; the Financial Viability principle has been considered which states that: -

- The housing authority has arrangements in place to monitor the viability of the housing business and take appropriate actions to maintain viability

6.2 The HRA Business Plan is reviewed and updated annually to take account of changes to all income streams and the revenue and capital costs of managing and maintaining HRA properties and tenancies. It also considers Capital investment in new build and housing acquisitions for affordability.

Financial Position of the Housing Revenue Account

6.3 The table below demonstrates the current financial position with a general revenue reserve balance forecast to be £19.381m, a forecast major repair reserve of £8.5m and a forecast 'One for One' Right to Buy receipt balance of £1.2m as at 1 April 2025. A summary of the proposed income and expenditure for 2025/26 is below:

- 6.4 Based on the recommended 2.7% increase in dwelling rent income and an increase in service charges of 2%, budgeted income of £107.2m is anticipated to be collected in 2025/26 and this is reduced by £104.6m of budgeted expenditure, which represents the net cost of delivering the service.
- 6.5 As budgeted income is greater than the net cost of delivering the service, there is an overall net income of £2.6m to the service after interest received. This will be used to part-fund the Housing Delivery Programme. A capital contribution of £9.7m is also required to fund the Housing Delivery Programme, so a transfer from the HRA Revenue reserve of £7m is required to balance the HRA.

Housing Revenue Account	Current Budget 2024/25 £'000	Proposed Budget 2025/26 £'000	Difference
Expenditure	97,265	104,634	7,369
Income (including service charges)	-104,344	-107,163	-2,819
Net Cost of Service	-7,079	-2,529	4,550
Interest Received	-350	-105	245
Net Operating Expenditure	-7,429	-2,634	4,795
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	6,000	9,658	3,658
Transfer to (+) or from (-) Reserves	1,429	-7,024	-8,453
Surplus/Deficit for the Year	0	0	0
HRA Reserve Balance	19,831	12,807	-7,024

- 6.6 A copy of the proposed draft detailed HRA budget 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 6.
- 6.7 The HRA operating balance is forecast to be at a fairly low level for Years 4-7 in the Business Plan and at the minimum sustainable level from year 29 onwards. The minimum balance is £5.3m in Year 1 and uplifted by CPI annually and is the minimum level required to manage financial risk.
- 6.8 To maintain adequate operating balance levels Housing Delivery projects will need to breakeven. This will support the overarching strategy for the Business Plan to promote growth rather than manage decline. This will be managed via existing capital governance routes.

#### Capital Borrowing Requirement

- 6.9 The plan makes provision for additional borrowing of approximately £100m in years 3 to 6 of the plan period to fund the additional investment in existing stock and the on-going Housing Delivery Programme. The graph at Appendix 4 shows the interest ratio cover over the life of the plan. This ratio looks at the cost of servicing any debt (interest payments) over the life of the plan as a percentage of forecast rental income. The additional borrowing requirement increases the interest payable to a high of 15.5% of forecast rental income in year 2 of the Plan. This is within viable limits.

- 6.10 The BP model assumes funding will be available from existing capital receipts and from new capital grants, Right-to-Buy (RTB) one-for-one receipts and existing RTB Receipts.
- 6.11 The income available from RTB one-for-one receipts is subject to change following recent Government changes to the Right-to-Buy scheme which significantly limits the discounts that tenants receive under the new scheme. The new scheme also allows the Council to retain the “Treasury share” of the RTB receipts. It is too early to accurately assess the impact on one-for-one receipts but may result in lower one-for-one income to the Council over the long term if the number of RTB sales falls.
- 6.12 The HRA BP model has been balanced by the inclusion of borrowing of £5m in year 30, which could alternatively be mitigated by potential savings.
- 6.13 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report. All procurement activity to support the delivery of the HRA Business Plan must be conducted in compliance with relevant procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act, whichever is applicable) and the Council’s own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 It is vital that the Council has and maintains a robust HRA Business Plan, which is subject to regular review and scrutiny to enable the Council to comply with the duties placed upon it. The HRA provisions are contained within the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and include the duty in January or February each year to formulate proposals relating to HRA income and expenditure which satisfy the requirements set out within s.76(3) of the Act. Those proposals are contained in this report.
- 7.2 The HRA specifically accounts for revenue expenditure and income relating to the Council’s own housing stock and is ring-fenced from the Council’s General Fund as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which specifies the items that can be charged and credited to it. The account must include all costs and income relating to the Council’s landlord role. The Council has a legal duty to budget to ensure the account remains solvent and to review the account throughout the year.
- 7.3 Under Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) the Council has a broad discretion in setting such reasonable rents and other charges as it may determine, and the Council must from time-to-time review rents and make such changes as circumstances may require.
- 7.4 The duty to review rents and make changes is itself subject to the requirements for a notice of variation and the prescribed process as set out in Section 103 of the 1985 Act. This will follow any Council decision following a recommendation from Cabinet.

7.5 Local authorities must set rents from 1 April 2020 in accordance with the Governance Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2019. For rents set from 1 April 2024 onwards the 2020 Rent Standard applies in full and it sets out requirements around the increase of rents in line with the Government Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing. The Council must comply with all of the requirements and expectations set out in the Rent Standard and the Government's Rent Policy Statement. A failure to do so will leave the Council open to legal challenge from both the Regulator and tenants.

8. **Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no immediate human resource implications.

9. **Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 There are no implications for CYPS or Vulnerable Adults.

10. **Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 The Council is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality, diversity, cohesion and integration and has ensured that the HRA Business Plan is compliant with that duty. An initial equalities screening has been carried out to assess the impact of these proposals and due to the scale of investment and nature of households affected the Council has completed an Equality Impact Assessment for this plan. This will ensure the Council continues to promote positive impact and reduce or remove negative impact as a result of the proposed investments. An Equalities Analysis is attached at Appendix 9.

11. **Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 The HRA Business Plan sets out the proposed value of investment in the housing service for the next 30 years. Given the Government's commitment for the UK to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 and the Council's target for Net Zero greenhouse gas emission in the Borough of Rotherham is 2040, 10 years sooner than the UK target, this will require substantial investment in the Council's housing stock over the life of the Business Plan. Initial estimates put the cost of this at circa £600m which represents a formidable challenge to the HRA. As a result, this means that drawing in external funding to progress net zero commitments becomes even more significant. Participation in national grant funding schemes will be prioritised.

11.2 A copy of Carbon impact assessment is attached at Appendix 10.

12. **Implications for Partners**

12.1 This proposal is about making effective use of Council assets and managing them to best effect. It contributes to the sustainable neighbourhoods agenda by addressing future investment needs and will help deliver a better quality of affordable housing to the community.

### 13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Self-financing involved a significant transfer of risk from Government to the Council. Variables such as interest rates, cost inflation, number of homes owned etc. are all risks managed by the Council.
- 13.2 Any adverse changes in rental income (for example as a result of welfare reform or changes in the number of Right to Buy sales) must be managed locally.
- 13.3 The risk management plan follows the Council's risk management methodology and approach. It includes a clear description of the risk, an assessment of probability and impact of the risk, a summary of controls and information on when the risk will be reviewed.
- 13.4 Significant risks will be placed on the Corporate Risk Register and risk issues will be escalated as necessary.
- 13.5 The Council has risk-based reserves to ensure that HRA reserves are maintained at the appropriate level. Work will be done during 2025/26 to further develop the risk-based reserves strategy within the HRA. Stress testing of the business plan will also be embedded and reviewed regularly to ensure the HRA Business Plan can adapt to future cost pressures and issues. The reserves will be maintained at the appropriate level to fund potential future financial pressures from risks such as welfare reform and investment requirements.

### 14. Accountable Officers

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

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	02/12/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	28/11/24
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	27/11/24

*Report Authors:*

*Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager 07342718601*

*Paul Elliott, Head of Housing Income and Support Services*

*Kath Andrews, Finance Manager (Housing)*

*01709 255987*

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

**Rotherham MBC**  
**HRA Business Plan**  
**Operating Account**  
(expressed in money terms)

**Appendix 1 - HRA Business Plan Operating Account**

		Income				Expenditure																
Year	Year	Net rent Income	Other income	Misc Income	Total Income	Managt.	Depreciation	Responsiv e & Cyclical	Other Revenue spend	Misc expenses	Total expenses	Capital Charges	Net Operating (Expenditure)	Repayment of loans	Transfer to MRR	Transfer from / (to) Revenue Reserve	Revenue Contribution to Capital	Surplus (Deficit) for the Year	Surplus (Deficit) b/fwd	Interest	Surplus (Deficit) c/fwd	
		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
1	2024.25	95,056	8,494	840	104,390	(32,147)	(25,548)	(24,601)	(568)	0	(82,864)	(13,973)	<b>7,552</b>	0	0	0	(6,000)	<b>1,552</b>	<b>18,403</b>	240	<b>20,195</b>	
2	2025.26	96,289	9,161	824	106,273	(34,875)	(25,880)	(27,601)	(458)	(250)	(89,064)	(14,670)	<b>2,539</b>	0	0	0	(9,658)	<b>(7,119)</b>	<b>20,195</b>	107	<b>13,182</b>	
3	2026.27	100,013	9,491	1,508	111,012	(36,109)	(26,606)	(28,697)	(474)	0	(91,887)	(14,518)	<b>4,607</b>	0	0	0	(8,000)	<b>(3,393)</b>	<b>13,182</b>	86	<b>9,875</b>	
4	2027.28	104,005	9,804	1,775	115,584	(37,284)	(27,803)	(30,275)	(490)	0	(95,853)	(14,945)	<b>4,786</b>	0	0	0	(6,000)	<b>(1,214)</b>	<b>9,875</b>	70	<b>8,731</b>	
5	2028.29	107,275	10,098	2,029	119,402	(38,390)	(28,669)	(31,194)	(505)	0	(98,757)	(15,890)	<b>4,754</b>	0	0	0	(6,000)	<b>(1,246)</b>	<b>8,731</b>	61	<b>7,546</b>	
6	2029.30	110,654	10,340	2,260	123,254	(39,312)	(29,398)	(31,970)	(517)	0	(101,197)	(16,023)	<b>6,034</b>	0	0	0	(5,000)	<b>1,034</b>	<b>7,546</b>	60	<b>8,640</b>	
7	2030.31	116,175	10,589	2,474	129,237	(40,231)	(30,143)	(32,710)	(529)	0	(103,614)	(15,942)	<b>9,681</b>	0	0	0	(6,232)	<b>3,449</b>	<b>8,640</b>	78	<b>12,167</b>	
8	2031.32	116,164	10,843	2,672	129,678	(41,173)	(30,828)	(33,468)	(542)	0	(106,011)	(15,854)	<b>7,814</b>	0	0	0	(6,484)	<b>1,330</b>	<b>12,167</b>	96	<b>13,593</b>	
9	2032.33	118,387	11,103	2,855	132,344	(42,136)	(31,528)	(34,243)	(555)	0	(108,462)	(15,854)	<b>8,028</b>	0	0	0	(6,740)	<b>1,289</b>	<b>13,593</b>	107	<b>14,989</b>	
10	2033.34	120,653	11,369	3,024	135,046	(43,122)	(32,245)	(35,036)	(568)	0	(110,971)	(15,925)	<b>8,150</b>	0	0	0	(6,999)	<b>1,151</b>	<b>14,989</b>	117	<b>16,256</b>	
11	2034.35	122,962	11,642	3,180	137,784	(44,130)	(32,977)	(35,847)	(582)	0	(113,537)	(15,831)	<b>8,416</b>	0	0	0	(7,262)	<b>1,154</b>	<b>16,256</b>	126	<b>17,536</b>	
12	2035.36	127,681	11,922	3,324	142,927	(45,163)	(33,726)	(36,677)	(596)	0	(116,162)	(15,831)	<b>10,933</b>	0	0	0	(7,530)	<b>3,403</b>	<b>17,536</b>	144	<b>21,084</b>	
13	2036.37	127,625	12,208	3,458	143,291	(46,219)	(34,492)	(37,527)	(610)	0	(118,849)	(15,905)	<b>8,537</b>	0	0	0	(7,802)	<b>735</b>	<b>21,084</b>	161	<b>21,980</b>	
14	2037.38	130,022	12,501	3,581	146,104	(47,301)	(35,276)	(38,396)	(625)	0	(121,597)	(15,584)	<b>8,923</b>	0	0	0	(8,078)	<b>845</b>	<b>21,980</b>	168	<b>22,993</b>	
15	2038.39	132,464	12,801	3,694	148,959	(48,407)	(36,077)	(39,285)	(640)	0	(124,409)	(15,264)	<b>9,286</b>	0	0	0	(8,358)	<b>927</b>	<b>22,993</b>	176	<b>24,097</b>	
16	2039.40	134,952	13,108	3,798	151,858	(49,539)	(36,896)	(40,195)	(655)	0	(127,286)	(15,313)	<b>9,260</b>	0	0	0	(8,643)	<b>616</b>	<b>24,097</b>	183	<b>24,896</b>	
17	2040.41	137,486	13,423	3,893	154,802	(50,698)	(37,734)	(41,126)	(671)	0	(130,229)	(15,313)	<b>9,261</b>	0	0	0	(8,933)	<b>328</b>	<b>24,896</b>	188	<b>25,412</b>	
18	2041.42	142,762	13,745	3,980	160,487	(51,884)	(38,591)	(42,078)	(687)	0	(133,240)	(15,313)	<b>11,934</b>	0	0	0	(9,227)	<b>2,707</b>	<b>25,412</b>	201	<b>28,320</b>	
19	2042.43	142,699	14,075	4,059	160,833	(53,097)	(39,467)	(43,052)	(704)	0	(136,321)	(15,313)	<b>9,199</b>	0	0	0	(9,527)	<b>(327)</b>	<b>28,320</b>	211	<b>28,204</b>	
20	2043.44	145,378	14,412	4,135	163,926	(54,339)	(40,363)	(44,050)	(721)	0	(139,472)	(15,292)	<b>9,161</b>	0	0	0	(9,831)	<b>(670)</b>	<b>28,204</b>	209	<b>27,743</b>	
21	2044.45	148,108	14,758	4,212	167,078	(55,610)	(41,279)	(45,070)	(738)	0	(142,697)	(15,266)	<b>9,115</b>	0	0	0	(10,140)	<b>(1,025)</b>	<b>27,743</b>	204	<b>26,922</b>	
22	2045.46	150,889	15,112	4,285	170,286	(56,911)	(42,216)	(46,113)	(756)	0	(145,996)	(15,266)	<b>9,024</b>	0	0	0	(10,455)	<b>(1,431)</b>	<b>26,922</b>	197	<b>25,688</b>	
23	2046.47	153,722	15,475	4,355	173,552	(58,242)	(43,175)	(47,181)	(774)	0	(149,372)	(15,266)	<b>8,914</b>	0	0	0	(10,775)	<b>(1,860)</b>	<b>25,688</b>	186	<b>24,014</b>	
24	2047.48	159,619	15,847	4,426	179,892	(59,604)	(44,154)	(48,274)	(792)	0	(152,825)	(15,266)	<b>11,801</b>	0	0	0	(11,101)	<b>701</b>	<b>24,014</b>	183	<b>24,897</b>	
25	2048.49	159,548	16,227	4,498	180,273	(60,998)	(45,157)	(49,392)	(811)	0	(156,358)	(15,266)	<b>8,649</b>	0	0	0	(11,432)	<b>(2,783)</b>	<b>24,897</b>	176	<b>22,291</b>	
26	2049.50	162,543	16,616	4,567	183,726	(62,425)	(46,181)	(50,536)	(831)	0	(159,973)	(15,266)	<b>8,488</b>	0	0	0	(11,769)	<b>(3,281)</b>	<b>22,291</b>	155	<b>19,165</b>	
27	2050.51	165,594	17,015	4,633	187,242	(63,884)	(47,229)	(51,707)	(851)	0	(163,671)	(15,266)	<b>8,305</b>	0	0	0	(12,112)	<b>(3,806)</b>	<b>19,165</b>	129	<b>15,488</b>	
28	2051.52	168,702	17,423	4,700	190,826	(65,378)	(48,301)	(52,904)	(871)	0	(167,454)	(15,226)	<b>8,145</b>	0	0	0	(12,461)	<b>(4,316)</b>	<b>15,488</b>	100	<b>11,272</b>	
29	2052.53	175,174	17,842	4,768	197,783	(66,907)	(49,397)	(54,129)	(892)	0	(171,325)	(15,224)	<b>11,234</b>	0	0	0	(12,816)	<b>(1,582)</b>	<b>11,272</b>	79	<b>9,769</b>	
30	2053.54	175,094	18,270	4,837	198,201	(68,472)	(50,517)	(55,383)	(913)	0	(175,286)	(15,180)	<b>7,736</b>	0	0	0	(7,975)	<b>(240)</b>	<b>9,769</b>	72	<b>9,602</b>	

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## Appendix 2

### Weekly social rent payable by number of bedrooms and % increase

Bedroom Numbers	Current Rent			Option 2 - 2.7% (CPI + 1%)			Option 1 - 1.7% (CPI only)		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum
0	62.81	60.52	68.64	64.51	62.15	70.49	63.88	61.55	69.81
1	83.32	68.37	99.48	85.57	70.22	102.17	84.73	69.53	101.17
2	90.86	79.58	125.04	93.32	81.73	128.42	92.41	80.93	127.17
3	98.12	84.24	138.05	100.77	86.51	141.78	99.79	85.67	140.40
4	109.21	95.98	147.90	112.16	98.57	151.89	111.07	97.61	150.41
5	111.22	94.92	151.52	114.22	97.48	155.61	113.11	96.53	154.10
6	107.90	107.90	107.90	110.81	110.81	110.81	109.73	109.73	109.73
All	<b>92.01</b>			<b>94.49</b>			<b>93.57</b>		
Increase				<b>2.48</b>			<b>1.56</b>		

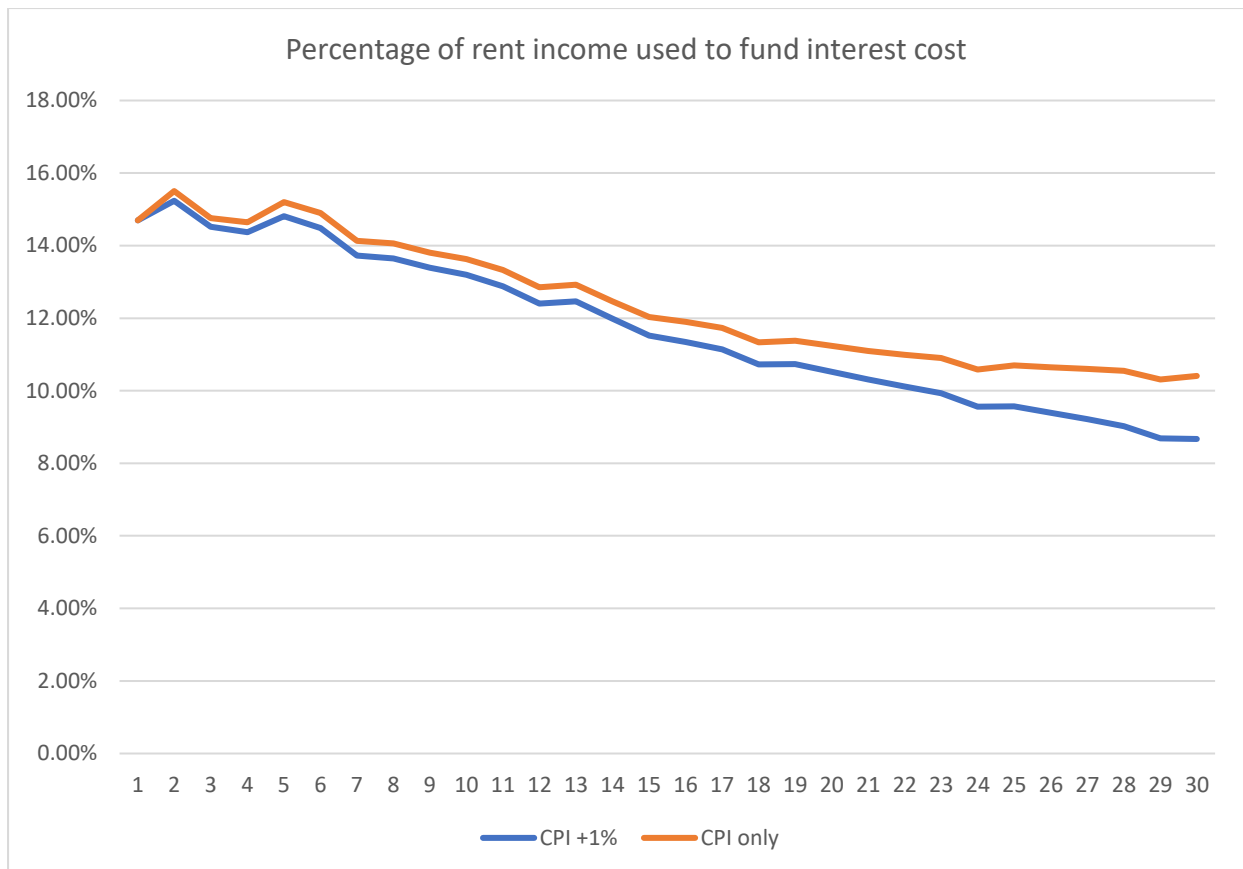
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## Appendix 3 - HRA Business Planning Assumptions

HRA Business Plan 2025/26 - Assumptions	Option 1	Option 2
Rent Increase	1.7%	2.7%
Service charge increase	2.0%	2.0%
DH Unit rate options Increase/(Decrease) vs current charge	0.0%	9.10%
New Borrowing requirement	£197.3m	£105.3m
Total Debt	£531.0m	£438.9m
Council homes to be delivered	693	693
Inflation - CPI:		
Year 2	1.70%	1.70%
Year 3	2.60%	2.60%
Year 4	2.30%	2.30%
Year 5	2.00%	2.00%
Year 6	2.00%	2.00%
Inflation - RPI:		
Year 2	2.70%	2.70%
Year 3	3.60%	3.60%
Year 4	3.30%	3.30%
Year 5	3.00%	3.00%
Year 6	2.40%	2.40%
Interest rates on external borrowing		
	3.50%	3.50%
RTB projections:		
Year 1	120	120
Year 2	266	266
Year 3	50	50
Year 4	50	50
Year 5	25	25
Assumed S&M unit cost reduction linked to RTB		
	50%	50%
Assumed R&M unit cost reduction linked to RTB		
	75%	75%
Repairs & Maintenance - 30 year cost	£819.2m	£819.2m
Capital Repairs & Maintenance Investment Base values	£978.9m	£978.9m
Capital Housing Growth Investment	£150.8m	£150.8m
Bad debt - percentage of rental income	0.89%	0.89%
Void loss - percentage of rental income	1.30%	1.30%
Reserves		
	£'000	£'000
Year 1	20,195	20,195
Year 2	11,513	13,182
Year 3	5,631	9,875
Year 4	5,737	8,731
Year 5	5,852	7,546
Year 30	9,601	9,602

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Appendix 4 – Percentage of rent used to fund interest costs



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**Housing Revenue Account  
Non Dwelling Rents, Service Charges and Furnished Homes Charges**

APPENDIX 5

Description of Fee or Charge	Basis of Charge	Fixed Charge 2024/25 £	Proposed Fixed Charge 2025/26 £	Increase / Reduction
Furnished Homes: Carpets only	Per Week	11.57	11.88	0.31
Furnished Homes: Washer only	Per Week	3.30	3.39	0.09
Furnished Homes: Dryer only	Per Week	2.43	2.50	0.07
Furnished Homes: Washer and Dryer	Per Week	5.73	5.88	0.15
Furnished Homes: Combi Washer/Dryer	Per Week	6.53	6.71	0.18
Furnished Homes: Bronze only	Per Week	10.73	11.02	0.29
Furnished Homes: Bronze + carpets	Per Week	22.30	22.90	0.60
Furnished Homes: Silver only	Per Week	16.95	17.41	0.46
Furnished Homes: Silver + carpets	Per Week	28.53	29.30	0.77
Furnished Homes: Gold only	Per Week	27.43	28.17	0.74
Furnished Homes: Gold + carpets	Per Week	39.00	40.05	1.05
Furnished Homes: Platinum only	Per Week	38.71	39.76	1.05
Furnished Homes: Platinum + carpets	Per Week	50.29	51.65	1.36
Garage Rent/Car Park space - Council tenant	Per Week	5.96	6.56	0.60
Garage Rent/Car Park space - Non Council tenant or council Tenants with more than one garage	Per Week	7.16	7.88	0.72
Surface Garage plot	Per annum	71.86	79.05	7.19
Non-surface Garage plot	Per annum	64.67	71.14	6.47
Warncliffe Flats car park space	Per Week	7.82	7.98	0.16
Hot Water charge	Per Week	2.32	2.37	0.05
Cooking Gas	Per Week	1.07	1.09	0.02
Community Facility	Per Week	5.67	5.78	0.11
Communal Block - additional bedroom charge	Per week	24.76	25.26	0.50
Laundry Facility	Per Week	1.90	1.94	0.04
District Heating Unit Charge	Per unit of heat	0.15	0.1309	-0.02
District Heating - Bedsit	Per Week	9.50	8.50	-1.00
District Heating - 1 bed	Per Week	16.50	13.50	-3.00
District Heating - 2 bed	Per Week	20.50	17.50	-3.00
District Heating - 3-4 bed	Per Week	26.50	21.50	-5.00
Contents Insurance	Per Week	Full Cost Recovery		
Acquired Ground Rent	Per Week	6.91	7.60	0.69
Acquired Estate Fee	Per Week	3.81	3.91	0.10
Commercial hire of Neighbourhood Centre	Per Hour	11.24	11.46	0.22
Community or Voluntary hire of Neighbourhood Centre	Per Hour	7.53	7.68	0.15
Non resident charge to attend activity at Neighbourhood Centre	Per Session	0.56	0.57	0.01
Estate Service Charge Eligible	Per month	Full Cost Recovery		
Block Service Charge Eligible	Per month	Full Cost Recovery		
Property Service Charge Eligible	Per month	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Mgmt	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Admin Fee	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Mgmt Fee VPC	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Mgmt Fee LTA	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Court Costs	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Capital	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Grd Rent	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Bldg Ins	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Cleaning	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold Admin	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Leasehold R&M	Per annum	Full Cost Recovery		
Sales/Resales - Landlords Enquiries (Flats)	AD-HOC	159.00	159.00	0.00
Sales/Resales - Landlords Enquiries (houses with services)	AD-HOC	159.00	159.00	0.00
Sales/Resales - Landlords Enquiries (houses no services)	AD-HOC	159.00	159.00	0.00
Processing resales - shared ownership	AD-HOC	212.00	212.00	0.00
Staircasing fees	AD-HOC	212.00	212.00	0.00
Remortgage Applications	AD-HOC	79.50	80.00	0.50
Further advance applications	AD-HOC	79.50	80.00	0.50
Notice of transfer	AD-HOC	79.50	80.00	0.50
Notice of charge	AD-HOC	63.60	60.00	-3.60
Deed of covenant	AD-HOC	79.50	80.00	0.50
Copy lease (from Land Registry)	AD-HOC	31.80	30.00	-1.80
Copy of lease if held on file	AD-HOC	26.50	20.00	-6.50
Insurance policy document	AD-HOC	26.50	20.00	-6.50
Standard valuation fee (basic market valuation)	AD-HOC	212.00	216.00	4.00
Lease extension/enfranchisement valuations	AD-HOC	424.00	430.00	6.00
Lease extension admin fee	AD-HOC	212.00	216.00	4.00
Enfranchisement admin fee (per unit)	AD-HOC	159.00	160.00	1.00
Home improvements / alterations (permission request - basic)	AD-HOC	63.60	60.00	-3.60
Home improvements / alterations (permission request - complex)	AD-HOC	127.20	120.00	-7.20
Home improvements (Surveyor report)	AD-HOC	127.20	130.00	2.80
Retrospective consent for alterations	AD-HOC	159.00	160.00	1.00
Deed of postponement	AD-HOC	63.60	60.00	-3.60
Deed of variation/rectification administration fee	AD-HOC	127.20	125.00	-2.20
Equity loan transfers, licence to assign and lease extensions	AD-HOC	212.00	216.00	4.00
Certificate of compliance	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Copy of Service Charge account	AD-HOC	26.50	20.00	-6.50
Additional copies of correspondence	AD-HOC	26.50	20.00	-6.50
Issue of Notice of Forfeiture	AD-HOC	127.20	125.00	-2.20
Landlords Notice for Mortgage Application	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Landlords Approval for new mortgage	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Supply of Fire Risk Assessment	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00

Landlords Reference	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Surrender & Regrant of Lease	AD-HOC	371.00	375.00	4.00
Copy Fire Risk Assessment	AD-HOC	26.50	20.00	-6.50
Right of First Refusal Discharge Certificate	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Change of Name - fee plus legal fees	AD-HOC	53.00	20.00	-33.00
Notice Seeking Possession	AD-HOC	53.00	50.00	-3.00
Breach of lease	AD-HOC	26.50	25.00	-1.50
Letter 3 on arrears/approaching lender	AD-HOC	26.50	25.00	-1.50
Temporary accommodation	Per night	32.89	33.55	0.66
Replacement Alleygate Keys - Council Tenant	AD-HOC	10.60	14.00	3.40
Replacement Alleygate Keys - Non Council Tenant	AD-HOC	12.72	16.80	4.08
Replacement Key Fobs	AD-HOC		15.00	
Additional key fobs - if on same request	AD-HOC		5.00	



## Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget Operating Statement 2025/26

### Option 2: Rents increased by 2.7% (CPI+1%)

Narrative	Full-year Budget 2024/25	Full-year Budget 2025/26	Year on Year Change
	£	£	£
Contributions to Housing Repairs Account	24,501,580	27,601,970	3,100,390
Supervision and Management	32,146,910	35,119,060	2,972,150
Rents, Rates, Taxes etc.	567,900	458,000	-109,900
Provision for Bad Debts	950,100	874,370	-75,730
Cost of capital Charge	13,350,000	14,500,000	1,150,000
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	25,547,940	25,880,700	332,760
Debt Management Costs	200,000	200,000	0
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>97,264,430</b>	<b>104,634,100</b>	<b>7,369,670</b>
Dwelling Rents	-95,009,745	-97,151,680	-2,141,935
Non-dwelling Rents	-772,330	-852,680	-80,350
Charges for Services and facilities	-7,774,610	-8,351,900	-577,290
Other fees and charges	-498,830	-509,440	-10,610
Leaseholder Income	-288,180	-297,330	-9,150
<b>Income</b>	<b>-104,343,695</b>	<b>-107,163,030</b>	<b>-2,819,335</b>
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>-7,079,265</b>	<b>-2,528,930</b>	<b>4,550,335</b>
Interest received	-350,000	-105,000	245,000
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>-7,429,265</b>	<b>-2,633,930</b>	<b>4,795,335</b>
<b>Appropriations:</b>			
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay	6,000,000	9,658,150	3,658,150
Transfer to Reserves	1,429,265	0	-1,429,265
Transfer from Reserves	0	-7,024,220	-7,024,220
<b>Surplus/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
HRA Balance carried forward	19,831,789	12,807,569	-7,024,220

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Appendix 7 - Affordability Analysis

AFFORDABILITY RATES FOR PROPOSED INCREASES AGAINST CURRENT AFFORDABILITY

Household make-up	Bedrooms	Full UC			Working Full time (40hrs)			Working Part Time (20hrs)		
		Current Affordability	With 1.7% Increase	With 2.7% Increase	Current Affordability	With 1.7% Increase	With 2.7% Increase	Current Affordability	With 1.7% Increase	With 2.7% Increase
Single Under 21	1	£6.65	£6.65	£6.65	£791.02	£784.87	£781.27	£318.65	£318.65	£318.65
Single Under 25	1	£6.65	£6.65	£6.65	£1,066.83	£1,060.67	£1,057.08	£397.24	£397.25	£397.24
Single Over 25	1	£88.42	£88.42	£88.42	£1,066.83	£1,060.67	£1,057.08	£479.01	£479.02	£479.01
Single Parent under 25 + Child	2	£366.02	£366.02	£366.02	£1,321.67	£1,321.67	£1,321.67	£978.82	£978.81	£978.81
	3	£306.49	£305.48	£304.89	£1,262.14	£1,261.13	£1,260.54	£919.29	£918.27	£917.68
Single Parent over 25 + Child	2	£447.79	£447.79	£447.79	£1,403.44	£1,403.44	£1,403.44	£1,060.59	£1,060.58	£1,060.58
	3	£388.26	£387.25	£386.66	£1,343.91	£1,342.90	£1,342.31	£1,001.06	£1,000.04	£999.45
Couple Under 25 + Child	2	£399.49	£399.49	£399.49	£2,705.22	£2,698.54	£2,694.60	£1,459.07	£1,459.07	£1,459.06
	3	£339.96	£338.95	£338.36	£2,673.76	£2,666.52	£2,662.27	£1,399.54	£1,398.52	£1,397.94
Couple Over 25 + Child	2	£527.86	£527.86	£527.86	£2,705.22	£2,698.54	£2,694.60	£1,587.44	£1,587.44	£1,587.43
	3	£468.33	£467.32	£466.73	£2,673.76	£2,666.52	£2,662.27	£1,527.91	£1,526.89	£1,526.31
Amount of household disposable income after Rent, Council Tax, TV Licence, Utilities including Gas, Electricity and water ONLY, Food, Mobile Phone and public transport costs deducted. Average costs used are provided by Policy in Practice are taken from the ONS family spending workbook. Last updated in April 2024, with Energy costs adjusted with the implementation of the energy price cap.								Living Wage updated for April 2025 Over 21 £12.21/hr; 18-20 £10.00/hr; under 18 £7.55/hr.		

**Assumptions**

- Where the adult of the family is under 25 and working that they are over 21 and getting the highest rate of National Living Wage as at April 2024.
- The age of the child for the purposes of statistics is aged under 14 years old as the average living costs increase from this age upwards according to policy in practice.
- All those entitled to UC uplifts and Child related benefits are claiming their full entitlement.
- Where the example contains a couple, that both are working the benchmarked hours and each receive the National Living Wage

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## Appendix 8 – Support For Tenants with Financial Pressures

Support Service	Description
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
Inclusive Employment and Individual Placement Support 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
RMBC Household Support Fund and energy crisis support	Supporting vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, one-off grants of £250 to help with energy costs.
RMBC Money and Benefits Advice Service	Providing people with practical support to challenge refusal of benefits. The Team assist with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/ tribunals. Money Advice Workers who works with residents to provide affordable debt solutions and budgeting advice. Macmillan benefit service provide access to benefits and grants for residents with cancer, their families and carers.
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.
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.

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## Appendix 9.

### 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	
<b>Title: HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26</b>	
<b>Directorate: ACH &amp; PH</b>	<b>Service area: Housing</b>
<b>Lead person: Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager</b>	<b>Contact number: 07342718601</b>
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>
<b>If other, please specify</b>	
2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening	
<p>The annual HRA Business Plan rent setting, fees and charges report sets out all proposed income and expenditure for the HRA for the next 30 years as required by HRA self financing.</p> <p>Strategic allocation of resources within the HRA for period of 30 years.</p> <p>Specifically responding to changes in government policy, macro-economic environment, shifting the focus of the plan towards investment in existing stock while ensuring the continuation of housing growth.</p> <p>HRA Business Plan, rent setting, fees and charges 2025-26 provides information on the</p>	

positioning of the HRA Business Plan to deliver large scale planned investment to existing stock, deliver 1,000 new Council homes by 2027 and deliver against the Council Plan.

The overall financial strategy for the proposed HRA Business Plan is focused on:

- Improving tenant's homes and addressing non-decency
- Improving thermal comfort and bringing energy costs down
- Continuing the housing growth programme
- Modernising the housing service to improve customer experience

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

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

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



<p>Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?  <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i></p>		x
<p>If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason</p>		

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

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

**4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity**

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

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

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

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

The HRA Business plan, rent setting, fees and charges report reviews the proposed income and expenditure for the HRA over the next 30 years it therefore indirectly influences what services can be delivered for Council tenants.

The HRA Business Plan responds to some of the above concerns by maintaining investment in Tenant Involvement Services and the housing management teams to deal with issues of ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.

The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which allows investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackle the fuel poverty agenda and the need for tenants with disabilities to have their homes heated to a warmer temperature than non-disabled tenants.

The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building 1000 new Council homes by 2027. The tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.

The plan continues to invest over £1m in additional resources per year into front line housing services to support the most vulnerable tenants. These tenants will have protected characteristics.

The proposed rent policy of increase rents by 2.7% may adversely affect U25's on benefit as this group is paid a lower rate of benefits. It may also affect those on low incomes. An affordability analysis of such groups has been undertaken and relevant support packages identified for such groups.

The Business plan itself does not commission services but details how the Housing Service will be funded and each service area has policies and strategies detailing how service will be delivered which will each have an Equality analysis.

**• Key findings**

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 617 leasehold homes and 3,385 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £104m per annum.

The HRA Business Plans purpose is to outline how resources will be spent over the next 30 years ensuring we have a viable Housing Service that meets the needs and tenants and citizens of Rotherham.

The HRA Business Plan and through the application of housing policies (such as the allocation policy) will have a positive impact by breaking down some of the barriers that people face in accessing housing specific to their needs; whatever their specialist needs may be. The analysis of housing need by different need groups will help ensure that the strategy has a positive impact across all protected characteristics.

The strategy will align with other key strategies and frameworks across the Council as part of the "One Council" approach. Links to other key documents;

- Council Plan and Year Ahead Plan
- Housing Service Plan
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy
- Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Tenant Engagement Framework
- Housing Strategy

**• Actions**

Monitor the demographics of tenants being evicted  
 Monitor the impact of the new build houses by analysis the number of lettings according to the tenants protected characteristic.  
 Monitor attendance of tenant engagement events.  
 Respond to consultation feedback through Planning Applications.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	19/11/24
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	19/11/24
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Paul Elliott Head of Housing Income and Support Services

5. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:		
Name	Job title	Date
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	25/11/24
<p>This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.</p> <p>If this screening relates to a <b>Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision</b> a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.</p> <p>A copy of <b>all</b> screenings should also be sent to <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a> For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.</p>		
<b>Date screening completed</b>		18 November 2024
<b>Report title and date</b>		HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>		16 December 2024
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>		21 November 2024

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## Appendix 9.

### 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	
<b>Equality Analysis title: HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26</b>	
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 19/11/24</b>	
<b>Directorate: ACH &amp; PH</b>	<b>Service area: Housing Services</b>
<b>Lead Manager: Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager</b>	<b>Contact number: 07342718601</b>
<b>Is this a:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <b>If other, please specify</b>	

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

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Lindsay Wynn	RMBC	HRA Business Planning Manager
Kath Andrews	RMBC	Finance Manager
Mark Edmondson	RMBC	Housing Income 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 annual HRA Business Plan, Rent setting and service charges report sets out all proposed income and expenditure for the HRA for the next 30 years as required by HRA Self-financing.

Strategic allocation of resources within the HRA for period of 30 years.

Specifically responding to changes in government policy, macro-economic environment and gearing towards housing growth.

HRA Business Plan, rent setting, fees and charges 2025-26 provides information on the positioning of the HRA Business Plan to deliver large scale planned investment to existing stock, deliver 1,000 new Council homes by 2027 and deliver against the Council Plan.

The overall financial strategy for the proposed HRA Business Plan is focused on:

- Improving tenant's homes and addressing non-decency
- Improving thermal comfort and bringing energy costs down
- Continuing the housing growth programme
- Modernising the housing service to improve customer experience

### **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 £104m per annum.

#### Demographic information

- 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 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.

45,259 children attend 117 Rotherham schools.

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.

One in six homes is rented from the council and although house prices have risen over the years, they are about half the national average.

Rotherham Borough has 63 councillors representing 21 wards. 43% of councillors are women and 5% are BME.

There are 30 parish councils in Rotherham covering half the population.

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, Thurcroft, 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.

Adult qualification levels in Rotherham are below average, including the proportion of the population with higher qualifications which reflects Rotherham's industrial legacy. However, most pupils attending Rotherham's schools have attainment slightly above the national average. Rotherham colleges provide good quality further education and the new University Centre offer higher education courses

The HRA Business plan will fund key activities such as the housing development programme. The plan is underpinned by analysis of housing need and demographic data which has been gained from a variety of sources including:

- Profile of applicants on Council's Housing Register (numbers of households eligible for age restricted accommodation etc). The Housing Occupational Health Team assesses households to determine their need which leads to a priority of allocation under the Housing Allocations Policy. A regular review of the profile of people on the housing register takes place to help plan for the types of new homes needed.
- Local population demographic data (Census 2021 emerging)
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation
- Profile of existing Council tenants (including protected characteristics)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Intelligence from Strategic Housing Forum which is attended by partners that represent different interests and groups eg, homelessness and young people etc
- Ward members will receive specific briefings on potential sites in their wards and their feedback will be considered and included in individual scheme EAs
- Ward profiles contain detailed, localised information both profiling housing stock in the ward and demand
- The Strategic Housing and Development service has worked with the Neighbourhood Service to assist with consultation and dissemination of information about development in localities, identifying alignment with ward priorities. Again, any feedback will be included in individual scheme EAs.
- Housing Involvement Panel which includes Council tenant volunteers.
- Data from new rented, shared ownership and open market sales is analysed to understand the equality impact of each development. The profiling of tenants/ owners is also reflected in completions report and any lessons learnt are applied when developing new projects.

Members have been consulted on various aspects of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Seminars and Workshops have been held on Housing Growth, Repairs and Maintenance, Cost of Living and Housing Policy updates. This has helped inform the proposed Business Plan.

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

From January 2024 it has been mandatory to collect protected characteristics for new records as per the equalities and monitoring standard data collection and monitoring form. From November 2024 the system has been updated to ensure any missing fields are captured for existing records. There are gaps in historic data but this should reduce over time.



<p><b>What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>Individual services within the HRA ensure relevant monitoring arrangements are in place.</p>	
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Consultation on services provided by Housing are undertaken throughout the year via the Housing Involvement Panel. This panel meets bi monthly. A tenant open day is also held annually, the last one being held on 14th November 2024.</p>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Meeting with Housing Managers and email seeking feedback into the business plan throughout August to November 2024.</p> <p>The plan has been developed with support from Council Officers and input from the Strategic Leadership Team and Members.</p> <p>Councillors, staff and partners play a vital role in the review of the business plan.</p> <p>Following approval the will be effectively communicated to staff and members and training will be undertaken in-house.</p>

**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 HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by earmarking investment in Supervision and management to increase capacity in the housing management teams to deal with the issue of complex tenancies including ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.

The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which ensures investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackles fuel poverty agenda.

The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building circa 1000 new Council Homes by 2027. The tenure, size

and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.

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

The proposed rent increase of 2.7% may affect low income groups out of work and under 25 as benefits are capped at a lower rate than those above the age of 25. This group will therefore struggle to meet affordability tests for housing.

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

Customers are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community. 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
- Inclusive 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
- RMBC Household Support Fund – Supporting vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, one-off grants of £250 to help with energy costs.
- RMBC Money and Benefits Advice Service – Providing people with practical support to challenge refusal of benefits. The Team assist with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/ tribunals. Money Advice Workers who works with residents to provide affordable debt solutions and budgeting advice. Macmillan benefit service provide access to benefits and grants for residents with cancer, their families and carers.

- 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.
- 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.

The funding for new build housing will assist vulnerable groups on the housing register as it will increase the supply of new Council housing so reducing the use of temporary accommodation for such groups when they are homeless. It will also increase the number of Disabled person units so meeting the needs of disabled tenants.

**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 HRA Business Plan, rent setting and service charges report will negatively impact on community relations.

The Council will closely monitor the viability of the HRA Business Plan; current measures monitored across the Housing service include:

- Number of homes built against the Council’s 1000 target
- Rental income
- Rent arrears and bad debts
- Voids and void rent loss
- Debt levels and repayment
- Reserve levels, and
- Maintenance backlog

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

<b>Title of analysis: HRA Business Plan, rent setting and service charges 2025-26</b>
<b>Directorate and service area: ACH &amp; PH – Housing Services</b>
<b>Lead Manager: Lindsay Wynn – HRA Business Planning Manager</b>
<b>Summary of findings:</b>
<p>The HRA Business Plan responds to some of the above concerns by increasing investment in Supervision and management allowing the service to increase capacity in the housing allocations teams to reduce use of temporary accommodation and re-house people quicker. Management teams to deal with issues of ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.</p> <p>The Business plan, rent setting and service charges report maintains investment in housing stock which ensures investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackle the fuel poverty agenda. The Business Plan also continues subsidies of District Heating to minimise fuel poverty to those households on District Heating.</p> <p>The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building circa 500 more new Council homes over the next 2 years (1,000 overall). The tenure, size and type of accommodation (including Disabled person units) has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market assessment.</p> <p>The proposed rent increase of 2.7% may affect low income groups in or out of work on benefits and under 25 as both benefits for this group are capped at a lower rate than those over 25.</p>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Data is now collected on protected characteristics at tenancy sign up and updates are mandatory for existing records when they are edited. Monitor new data for any adverse impacts.	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	31.03.25

\*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	25/11/24

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 <b>Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision</b> 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 <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a> For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.	
<b>Date Equality Analysis completed</b>	19/11/24
<b>Report title and date</b>	HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26
<b>Date report sent for publication</b>	
<b>Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	21/11/24

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Appendix 10 – 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
<b>Emissions from non-domestic buildings?</b>	Impact unknown	Schemes to upgrade District Heating boiler houses will be funded through the HRA Business Plan, with a view to replace existing gas boilers with low or zero carbon alternatives in the long term.	<p>Recommendations with respect to District Heating charges are benchmarked to the Ofgem energy price cap, so that households with a heat network connection are not penalised compared to those with central heating and a gas boiler. This may become relevant to carbon emissions in the longer term, since low or zero carbon heat networks offer an alternative technology to decarbonise domestic heating, in dwellings where an air source heat pump might be unviable.</p> <p>Homes which are connected to the Council's existing district heat networks comprise ca. 1% of all domestic properties in Rotherham.</p>		Supply of gas and biomass (wood pellets) to District Heating boiler houses is monitored through the Council's energy procurement portfolio. Greenhouse gas emissions from District Heating are outside the scope of the Council's NZ30 target, however they will be included as scope 3 emissions in the 2025 Climate Change Annual Report.

<b>Emissions from transport?</b>	Impact unknown	For new residential developments and works to existing council stock vehicle movements to and from the site will be generated during demolition and construction.	While it is possible that new households will increase vehicle movements, they may also reduce them, depending on the location of new developments with respect to residents' places of work and access to services.	It is recommended that new housing development should account for access to public transport and active travel, in its location and design.	
<b>Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?</b>	Increase	Construction and works to existing Council stock will generate waste materials through demolition, exporting of materials from groundworks and waste construction materials.	Albeit new homes might not mean more people living in the Borough, there may be a small increase in the amount of waste collected from households and distance travelled by waste collection vehicles.	Prospective contractors will be required to demonstrate how they will mitigate waste in their tenders, to include re-using/recycling materials on site where possible.	
<b>Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?</b>	Decrease		It is a principal focus of the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan to improve the thermal comfort of existing Council homes and to save Council tenants' spending on energy bills, which should have the additional benefit of cutting emissions from domestic heating. In 2022, domestic gas heating accounted for ca. 16.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough of Rotherham;		EPC ratings are recorded for all the Council's housing stock. These data will be supplemented by stock condition surveys, to commence in January 2025.  New buildings are monitored once they are occupied, to ensure their stated energy performance standards are met in practice.



			<p>at the 2021 Census, 16.7% of households rented from the Council.</p> <p>£13 million is allocated in the HRA business plan to increase all Council homes' energy performance to EPC band C by 2030: the Council will seek to leverage further investment from external sources, including the Warm Homes: Local Grant.</p> <p>New build homes will be designed to Future Homes Standard, to be introduced in 2025. All options set out in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on the Future Homes Standard exclude the use of fossil fuel boilers in new dwellings.</p>		
<p><b>Emissions from construction and/or development?</b></p>	<p>Increase</p>	<p>There will be emissions from the construction of new and refurbishment of existing housing. In the HRA business plan, 150 dwellings are to be added to the Council's housing stock between</p>		<p>For new build schemes, there may be a smaller carbon impact per dwelling, where modern methods of construction are used.</p>	<p>It is recommended that a RICS 'whole life carbon assessment' or suitable alternative should be completed for at least one housing development, to provide evidence which can</p>

		<p>2026/27 and 2028/29, by a combination of acquisition and new development.</p> <p>Some new properties in the programme i.e., homes purchased by the Council as strategic acquisitions, will have a carbon impact regardless of the Council's purchase.</p> <p>It is possible that mature trees will be removed as part of the development of some new sites.</p>		<p>For refurbishment schemes, emissions from retrofitting properties to a higher energy performance standard will be partially offset by increased energy efficiency.</p> <p>If trees are present on the site of a proposed development, they will be retained wherever possible. Planning consent for the removal of mature trees will depend on their equivalent replacement, plus 10%.</p>	<p>inform the design of future schemes and increase understanding of their respective carbon impacts.</p>
<p><b>Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?</b></p>	<p>Decrease</p>	<p>The HRA Business plan identifies funding for environmental schemes, which may include tree planting: an additional £1.2 million is to be invested in the Environmental Programme between 2026/27 and 2029/30.</p>			
<p><b>Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:</b></p> <p>N/A</p>					

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

The HRA Business Plan sets out the proposed value of investment in the housing service for the next 30 years. Given the Council's commitment for carbon emissions in Rotherham to be Net Zero by 2040, this will require substantial investment in the Council's housing stock over the life of the Business Plan. Initial estimates put the cost of this at circa £600m which represents a formidable challenge to the HRA. As a result, this means that drawing in external funding to progress net zero commitments becomes even more significant. Participation in national grant funding schemes will be prioritised.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager.
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	N/A
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	N/A
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Tracking reference: CIA 366 Arthur King, Principal Climate Change Officer, Finance and Customer Services

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Council – 15 January 2025

**Report Title**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Update – January 2025

**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)**

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager  
01709 807665 or [barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk)

Natasha Aucott, Governance Advisor  
01709 255601 or [natasha.aucott@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.aucott@rotherham.gov.uk)

Kerry Grinsill-Clinton, Governance Advisor  
01709 807267 [kerry.grinsill-clinton@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.grinsill-clinton@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, this report provides an update to Council of the activities and outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny activity at the Council.

It summarises the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and the Select Commissions - Health (HSC), Improving Lives (ILSC) and Improving Places (IPSC).

**Recommendations**

That Council receive the report and note the updates.

**List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 OSMB Work Programme
- Appendix 2 HSC Work Programme
- Appendix 3 ILSC Work Programme
- Appendix 4 IPSC Work Programme

**Background Papers**

Constitution of the Council, Appendix 9 – Responsibility for Functions, Section 5 –  
Terms of Reference for Committees, Boards and Panels

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None.

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Update – January 2025

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules require a regular update to Council on the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny function.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Annual report was presented to Council in September 2024 and provided an overview of the operation of the overview and scrutiny select commissions.

### 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 This report is intended as a summary of highlights and outcomes and is an indicative rather than definitive account of recent scrutiny work, which aims to hold the Council and key partners to account for decision-making, policy development, and performance. The report summarises information that is already in the public domain regarding progress, changes, or improvements resulting from recommendations and feedback provided by councillors on scrutiny committees. These include Health Select Commission, Improving Lives Select Commission, Improving Places Select Commission, and Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.
- 2.2 Although this report emphasises outcomes, it should be noted that scrutiny is chiefly a discursive process rather than a product. For further insight into the process of overview and scrutiny, the archive of public meetings webcasts, reports submitted for scrutiny, and minutes of discussions leading to recommendations are available on the Council's website.
- 2.3 The following principles were endorsed by OSMB at its meeting of 5 July 2023, as criteria to support the long/short listing of each of the commission's respective priorities:

#### **Establish as a starting point:**

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

#### **Agree principles for longlisting:**

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

#### **Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.**

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

**3. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Update on activity:**

**3.1 Pre-decision Scrutiny:**

3.1.1 Since May 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in its pre-decision scrutiny work, has examined the following reports and made recommendations in advance of them being considered by Cabinet:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy
- Finance Update
- Financial Outturn 2023-24
- Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update
- Dinnington Projects (Levelling Up Fund) Update Report
- July 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report
- Boroughwide and Town Centre/Clifton Park Public Space Protection Orders
- Future Rothercare Model
- Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update)
- Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Temporary Accommodation Policy
- HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26

**3.2 Other Scrutiny work:**

3.2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has also carried out other scrutiny work based on its Work Programme for 2024/25, which is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2.2 The Work Programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, as always, covers a diverse range of topics within its remit.

3.2.3 In the current municipal year, the Overview and Scrutiny Management board has scrutinised reports and made recommendations on:

- Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region".
- Scrutiny Review - Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24
- Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing
- Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2023-24
- The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Annual Report 2023-24
- Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"



3.3 Sub and Project Group work:

3.3.1 In addition to the scrutiny activity carried out in the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings, members either have carried out or are in the process of carrying out work on:

- Planning Enforcement: A meeting was held on 4 November 2024, with the Chair of OSMB, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, the Chair of Planning Board, and the Development Manager - South Team & Enforcement, where they discussed the strategy for planning enforcement, specifically the measurements for success and current statistics.

The Chair of OSMB was assured that the correct planning enforcement process was followed. The service provided statistics to the Planning Board on a six-monthly basis, it was agreed that the statistics would be provided to all elected members, to ensure an awareness and understanding of the planning enforcement process.

- Agency Staff: A briefing note has been provided and sent, on 20 December 2024, to members of OSMB to determine any additional aspects to be incorporated within the scope of the review. Members will then be contacted to progress this review forward.
- Spotlight Review - Grass Cutting / Ground Maintenance: A briefing note has been provided and sent, on 10 December 2024, to members of OSMB and Improving Places Select Commission to determine any additional aspects to be incorporated within the scope of the review. Members will then be contacted to progress this review forward.
- OSMB - Spotlight review into life-saving equipment: A request for members' expressions of interest to take part in this review has been sent and will be progressed as soon as possible.

4. **Health Select Commission – Update on activity:**

4.1 Scrutiny work:

4.1.1 Since May 2024, the Health Select Commission (HSC) has scrutinised the following reports and made recommendations in line with its Work Programme for 2024/25 which is attached at Appendix 2:

- South Yorkshire ICB (Integrated Care Board) Introduction and Overview
- TRFT (The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust) Introduction and Overview
- Oral Health Review Report
- LGA Adult Care Peer Review
- TRFT Annual Report

- Healthwatch Rotherham Introduction and Overview
- Place Partners Winter Planning Annual Update
- Public Health Peer Review

4.1.2 The Work Programme for the Health Select Commission, as always covers a diverse range of topics within its remit. It also draws on items referred to it for attention by the South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC), where the Health Select Commission is represented by its Chair.

#### 4.2 Sub and Project Group work:

4.2.1 In addition to the scrutiny activity carried out in the Health Select Commission meetings, members either have carried out or are in the process of carrying out work on:

- Work Programme Scrutiny Methodologies, Scoping, Scoring and Prioritisation: A briefing paper was circulated to assist members in developing their thoughts in respect of the Commission's Work Programme, the options available for conducting scrutiny activities and to prioritise items for scrutiny.

A topic scoping, scoring and prioritisation meeting was subsequently held in November 2024, which identified two review priorities for the municipal year and determined the need to progress a member awareness workshop, for one topic.

- Quality Accounts: A briefing paper was circulated to ensure that members were fully informed about Quality Accounts, the Health Select Commission's role in responding to them and the associated time constraints.
- Review – Access To Contraception: Work is ongoing to prepare relevant background information and data, in conjunction with relevant services, health partners and the voluntary and community sector, to allow informed session planning. A request for members' expressions of interest to take part in this review has been sent and will be progressed as soon as possible. The potential for joint scrutiny with the Improving Lives Select Commission, is being explored.
- Member Awareness Session/Workshop – Social Prescribing: Work is ongoing to prepare relevant background information and data in conjunction with relevant services, health partners and the voluntary and community sector to allow informed session planning. The intention is that once developed the session will be opened to all Councillors.
- Menopause Workshop: Work will begin on this in the new year.

**5. Improving Lives Select Commission – Update on activity:**

**5.1 Scrutiny work:**

5.1.1 Since May 2024, the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) has scrutinised the following reports and made recommendations in line with its Work Programme for 2024/25, which is attached at Appendix 3:

- An Introduction for the new commission on the key areas of Performance, Early Help, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and SEND Sufficiency.
- Children’s and Young People’s Performance Report 2023-2024.
- The outcomes of the Local Government Association’s Care Leavers Peer Review.
- The outcomes of the Ofsted Focused Visit.
- Scrutiny Review Recommendations Report on Preparation for Adulthood.
- The Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Annual Report 2023-2024.
- The Rotherham Safeguarding Adult’s Board Annual Report 2023-2024.
- Absences from education, including elective home education, children missing education, education other than at school, persistent and severe absences, and exclusions.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy Development update, including amendments following the consultation period.

**5.2 Sub and Project Group work:**

5.2.1 In addition to the scrutiny activity carried out in the Improving Lives Select Commission meetings, members either have carried out or are in the process of carrying out work on:

- A spotlight review relating to preparation for adulthood for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The associated Scrutiny Review Recommendations Report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 10 September 2024 and to Cabinet on 14 October 2024.
- A consultation workshop which was held with members of the Commission, to capture members’ feedback on the draft SEND Strategy, as part of the consultation phase of the strategy development.
- A briefing paper was circulated to members detailing the work the Commission has completed to date on elective home education, ahead of the next update at the December meeting, to assist members to identify any potential areas relating to elective home education, or absences from education that may require further focus, via a review or workshop.

- A workshop will be held in the new year for members to contribute to the consultation for the Elective Home Education Strategy's development.

## **6. Improving Places Select Commission – Update on activity:**

### **6.1 Scrutiny work:**

6.1.1 The Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) has carried out the following scrutiny work based on its Work Programme for 2024/25, which is attached as Appendix 4.

6.1.2 In the current municipal year, the IPSC has scrutinised reports and made recommendations on:

- Housing Strategy 2022-25 Progress Report Year 2 (2023-24)
- Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing
- Overview of the portfolio of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working
- Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy
- Long Term Plan for Towns - Update
- Allotments Self-Management Update 2024
- Section 19 Report for Storm Babet
- Draft Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, November 2024

### **6.2 Sub and Project Group work:**

6.2.1 In addition to the scrutiny activity carried out in the IPSC meetings, members are in the process of carrying out the following work:

- Spotlight Review - School Road Safety and Street Motion: Members availability is being sought to begin this review.
- Housing Strategy 2025-28 Workshop: Members availability is being sought to conduct this workshop.
- Housing Allocations Policy Workshop: Work will begin on this in the new year.

## **7. Options considered and recommended proposal**

7.1 The report is submitted for information.

## **8. Consultation on proposal**

8.1 The report is submitted for information.

**9. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

9.1 The report is submitted for information.

**10. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

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

**11. Legal Advice and Implications**

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

**12. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

12.1 There are no Human Resource implications directly arising from this report.

**13. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

13.1 There are no implications for Children, Young People, or Vulnerable Adults directly arising from this report.

**14. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

14.1 There are no equalities or human rights implications directly arising from this report.

**15. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

15.1 There are no climate or emissions implications directly arising from this report.

**16. Implications for Partners**

16.1 There are no implications for partners directly arising from this report.

**17. Risks and Mitigation**

17.1 There are no risks directly arising from this report.

**Accountable Officer(s)**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	06/01/25
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	03/01/25
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	02/01/25
The Strategic Director with responsibility for this report	Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive	17/12/24

Report Authors:

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager  
01709 807665 or [barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk)

Natasha Aucott, Governance Advisor  
01709 255601 or [natasha.aucott@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.aucott@rotherham.gov.uk)

Kerry Grinsill-Clinton, Governance Advisor  
01709 807267 [kerry.grinsill-clinton@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.grinsill-clinton@rotherham.gov.uk)

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

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme 2024-25****Chair: Councillor Brian Steele****Vice-Chair: Councillor Joshua Bacon****Governance Manager: Barbel Gale****Link Officer: Jo Brown**

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

**Establish as a starting point:**

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

**Agree principles for longlisting:**

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

**Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.**

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

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
05-Jun-24	Pre-decision items
24-Jul-24	Referral from Council to OSMB - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region" Council Plan & Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update - Pre-decision Scrutiny Financial Outturn 2023-2024 - Pre-decision Scrutiny Dinnington Leveling up Progress Report - Pre-decision Scrutiny
10-Sep-24	Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Preparation for Adulthood July 2024-25 Financial Monitoring - Poss. Pre-decision Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 Boroughwide & Town Centre/Clifton Park Public Space Protection Order - Poss. Pre-decision
09-Oct-24	Future Rothercare Model - Pre-decision scrutiny Work Programme Work in progress from Select Commissions Forward Plan of Key Decisions

<p>17-Oct-24</p> <p>Additional Meeting (5pm - 7pm)</p>	<p>Children's Takeover Challenge - Children's Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><b>(single item agenda)</b></p>
<p>Monday 4 November 2024</p>	<p>Planning Enforcement: A meeting with Chair of OSMB, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, Chair of Planning Board, and Development Manager - South Team &amp; Enforcement to discuss the strategy for planning enforcement, specifically the measurements for success and current statistics.</p>
<p>13-Nov-24</p>	<p>Complaints Annual Report (including Housing Process) Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report</p> <p>Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"</p> <p>Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update) - Pre-decision Temporary Accommodation Policy - Pre-decision Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy - Pre-decision</p>
<p>11-Dec-24</p>	<p>Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25 - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
<p>14-Jan-25</p>	<p>Mid Year Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Report - Poss. Pre-decision November 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report MTFS Presentation Home to School Transport Budget pressures / mitigations Update (Moved from December) Leader Q&amp;A - to be scheduled after Council plan on the agenda. Call-in - Waste Collections Policy</p>
<p>05-Feb-25</p>	<p>Agreement of a new Council Plan – March 2025 Poss. Pre-decision Budget and Council Tax Report</p>
<p>12-Mar-25</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Annual Report Council Plan 2025 - 2028 &amp; New Year Ahead Delivery Plan Transport Capital Programme 2025/2026 - Poss. Pre-decision Modern Slavery Transparency Statement - annual Refresh - Poss. Pre-decision</p>



08-Apr-25	Social Value Annual Report - Poss. Pre-decision
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07-May-25	
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**Items for  
Scheduling**

Jan-25	A spotlight review into life-saving equipment and related byelaws - as agreed by OSMB at it's meeting on 10 May 2023 ( <a href="https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&amp;MID=15772#AI96184">https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&amp;MID=15772#AI96184</a> ) linked to the Byelaws/Life Saving Equipment motion (Council 30/11/22 <a href="https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=95268">https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=95268</a> )
In progress	Spotlight Review - Agency Staff
In progress	Spotlight Review - Grass Cutting / Ground Maintenance
TBC	Community Infastructure Levy
TBC	Major Capital Projects (delays, project scaling back)
Apr-26	Future Rothercare Model

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**Health Select Commission – Work Programme 2024-2025**

**Chair: Cllr Keenan**

**Vice-Chair: Cllr Yasseen**

**Governance Advisor: Kerry Grinsill-Clinton**

**Link Officer: Ben Anderson**

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

**Establish as a starting point:**

- What are the key issues?
- What is the desired outcome?

**Agree principles for longlisting:**

- Can scrutiny add value or influence?
- Is this being looked at elsewhere?
- Is this a priority for the council or community?

**Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.**

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

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
20-Jun-24	Introduction and overview from Ben Anderson, Director of Public Health, RMBC Nominate representative to the Health, Welfare and Safety Panel
25-Jul-24	Introduction and overview from Claire Smith, Director of Partnerships/Deputy Director of Place (Rotherham), South Yorkshire ICB Introduction and overview from Michael Wright, Managing Director/Deputy Chief Executive, TRFT Oral Health Review Report LGA Adult Care peer review
03-Oct-24	TRFT Annual Report Introduction and overview from Kym Gleeson, Manager, Healthwatch Rotherham
21-Nov-24	Place Partners Winter Planning - Annual Update Public Health Peer Review
23-Jan-25	Adult Social Care Domiciliary Care Sleep Pathways
27-Mar-25	Item TBC - Possibly Single Point of Access (Referral process) Adult Social Care Item TBC - Possibly Physical Activity for Health (Sport England)
01-May-25	Item TBC - Update regarding relocation of Lung Clinic to Rotherham Hospital (SY ICB) Item TBC - Possibly RDaSH, YAS and TRFT Quality Accounts

**Items for  
Scheduling**

TBC	Menopause - Date TBC Possible workshop involving place, health and community partners, e.g. RUCT, TRFT, RDaSH, Mind etc.
TBC	Access to NHS Dentistry (Re-scoping of Review undertaken in 2023) Review agreed, 2nd priority - Date TBC
TBC - Tentative March 2025	Single Point of Access (Referral process) Adult Social Care Report/presentation from the service outlining process and performance.
TBC	Social Prescribing Member Awareness Session - Date TBC During scoping, members agreed that a member awareness session (open to all members not just HSC members was necessary, to create a consistent knowledge base. Following on from this, future scrutiny activities can then be considered.
TBC	Sleep Pathways (Referred in by OSMB) - Jan 2025 Report/presentation from the service outlining position, plans and performance.
TBC - Tentative March 2025	Physical Activity for Health (Sport England) Possibly a report and presentation from the service and/or relevant partner organisations outlining position, plans/initiatives and performance.
TBC	Adult Mental Health - Date TBC Report/presentation from service to provide an update and overview of changes implemented and outline the current position or workshop in conjunction with delivery partners.
TBC - Tentative May 2025	Update regarding relocation of Lung Clinic to Rotherham Hospital (SY ICB) Update/presentation from the ICB regarding the progress of the relocation of the Lung Clinics for Barnsley and Rotherham to Rotherham Hospital as part of the Oncology Transformation Programme's Stabilisation Phase. Referred in by JHOSC.
TBC	Access to Contraception (Review agreed, 1st priority) - Date TBC
TBC - Tentative May 2025	RDaSH, YAS and TRFT Quality Accounts Presentation of quality accounts from place health partners. Commission to consider formal response.

## Improving Lives Select Commission –Summary Work Programme 2024/25

**Chair: Cllr Lyndsay Pitchley**

**Vice- Chair: Cllr Stuart Knight**

**Governance Advisor: Natasha Aucott**

**Link Officer: Kelly White**

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

### Establish as a starting point:

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

### Agree principles for longlisting:

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

### Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.

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

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
18-Jun-24	Introduction to the Improving Lives Select Commission, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•An introduction to CYPS performance</li> <li>•An introduction to the Early Help Strategy</li> <li>•An introduction to SEND/ SEND Sufficiency</li> </ul>
30-Jul-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CYPS Performance Report 2023 - 2024</li> <li>• The Local Government Association Care Leavers Peer Review Outcomes</li> <li>• The Spotlight Review Recommendations Report on Preparation for Adulthood</li> </ul>
17-Sep-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ofsted Focused Visit Outcomes</li> </ul>
21st October 24	SEND Strategy Consultation Workshop with ILSC members
29-Oct-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023 - 2024</li> <li>•The Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023 - 2024</li> </ul>
03-Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absences From Education (Elective home education, children missing education, children missing out on education, education other than at school, persistent and severe absence and exclusions)</li> <li>• SEND Strategy Update (including a summary of the consultation and proposed Strategy with consultation amendments)</li> </ul>

28-Jan-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Update following changes presented to Cabinet in November (via an off-agenda briefing report)</li> <li>• Family Help proposal update</li> <li>• SEND Ofsted Inspection update</li> </ul>
04-Mar-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kinship Care Offer: looking at the new procedures, policies and local offer, and if we meeting the expectations of Government.</li> </ul> <p>YSJ Update- Overview &amp; update on new inspection framework</p>
22-Apr-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Abuse Strategy Update</li> <li>• Radicalisation in Schools/ Prevent Update (including protest recovery response)</li> </ul>
<b>Items for Scheduling</b>	
PAUSE Update	awaiting date from service (off-agenda briefing)
Early Help Strategy Update	Year 1 Update- date tbc with service
EHE Policy Review	Consultation session with ILSC members- Date to be arranged for the New Year
Corporate Parenting Partnership Board Annual Report	Date tbc with service
EHE Policy	Revised Elective Home Education Policy- scheduled for Cabinet in July 25.

**Improving Places Select Commission – Work Programme 2024-25 – presented in December 2024**

**Chair: Cllr Cameron McKiernan**  
**Governance Manager: Barbel Gale**

**Vice-Chair: Cllr Adam Tinsley**  
**Link Officer: Andrew Bramidge**

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

**Establish as a starting point:**

- What are the key issues?
- What is the desired outcome?

**Agree principles for longlisting:**

- Can scrutiny add value or influence?
- Is this being looked at elsewhere?
- Is this a priority for the council or community?

**Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria, e.g.**

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

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
04-Jun-24	Housing Strategy Update Nominate representative to the Health, Welfare and Safety Panel
09-Jul-24	Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing Overview of the portfolio of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working
03-Sep-24	Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy Overview of the draft Rotherham Town Centre 10 Year Plan
22-Oct-24	Sec19 Flood Report Allotments Annual Update Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Delayed from September) Work Programme 2024-2025
10-Dec-24	Bereavement Services Annual Report Flooding Alleviation Update (Delayed from September) Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report
Workshop - 12 December 2024	Consideration of the 2025-28 Housing Strategy
11-Feb-25	Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities Consider the outline plan of the planned trainline extension to Waverley and Parkgate (Mainline station proposal, considering any potential impacts.

18-Mar-25	Housing Strategy - final progress report on 2022-25 Tenant Scrutiny report: How Rotherham Council supports new tenants Nature Recovery Strategy - South Yorkshire Mayor Combined Authority
<b>Items for Scheduling</b>	
In Progress - Due to start in Jan/Feb 2025	<a href="#">Poss Joint with ILSC - Agenda for Council Meeting on Wednesday 29 November 2023, 2.00 p.m. - Rotherham Council - School Road safety motion - Scrutiny Review</a>
TBC - Further discussions to take place between the Chair and Cabinet Member	Community Living Fund
TBC	Update on the impact of 'Awaab's Law'
TBC	Off Road Bikes - Consideration is to be given as to how this topic could be scrutinised. - Suggest a meeting with Cabinet Member/Officers/Wentworth Woodhouse Reps + briefing note - Involve Cllr Jackson to this.
TBC	Briefing Note followed by Spotlight Review if required - Rural Strategy
Poss Dec	Review of Town Centre Events Programme
TBC	Consideration of the Our Places Fund
TBC	Review of Rothercard - specifically looking at the changes to the criteria and how it can be made available to a wider cohort of residents again.
Workshop January 2025 - TBC	Housing Allocations Policy



<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b>	<b>Date of Council Meeting:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
	<b>Mover:</b> Cllr Ball
	<b>Seconder:</b> Cllr Thorp
	<b>Title of Motion:</b>  Protecting our farmland and countryside by prioritising solar panel installations on roofs and car parks

**Council Notes:**

1. An increased use of renewable energy sources, such as solar power, is critical in meeting the UK's net-zero commitments and tackling climate change.
2. Agricultural land is a finite and invaluable resource for food security, biodiversity, and the rural economy. Open, unspoilt countryside is important for conservation, health and wellbeing and public amenity.
3. Rooftops and car parks represent underutilised spaces that are highly suitable for solar panel installations, without reducing the many benefits of greenfield land, in particular its potential for food production and agriculture.
4. Several successful initiatives, including solar canopies over car parks (as seen in parts of the UK and Europe), demonstrate that solar power can be integrated into urban and suburban spaces effectively, generating significant energy and providing dual use, without the societal costs of losing large areas of greenfield land.

**Council Believes:**

1. Preserving greenfield land and farmland is essential for ensuring local and national food security, especially in the face of global climate pressures and rising population demands.
2. Solar energy development must be balanced with the need to protect greenfield land for other purposes, including agriculture, and the need to maintain the harmony of our countryside.
3. Encouraging rooftop and car park solar installations will promote sustainable energy generation, while safeguarding land for farming and environmental conservation.

**Council Resolves:**

1. To adopt a political stance in favour of small, discrete, solar panel installations, supporting their installation on:
  - Rooftops of commercial, residential, and public buildings.
  - Car parks through the development of solar canopies.
2. To encourage the use of brown field land for large-scale solar farms.
3. To actively encourage partnerships with private and public sector organisations to maximise the use of existing infrastructure for renewable energy projects.
4. To campaign at a regional and national level for policies that align with these priorities and provide financial incentives for rooftop and car park solar projects.

<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b>	<b>Date of Council Meeting:</b> 15 January 2025
	<b>Mover:</b> Councillor Tinsley
	<b>Seconder:</b> Councillor Stables
	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Proactive action at the Maltby Colliery site

### Background:

The former Maltby Colliery site, a location with a long history of coal mining, is currently undergoing a reclamation scheme. This site has sparked significant health and safety concerns among local residents, including risks of land contamination and public injury within the area.

Compost-like output (CLO), a processed waste product derived from organic waste materials, is commonly used in land reclamation projects due to its ability to improve soil quality and support plant growth.

However, while CLO offers benefits in enhancing soil structure and fertility, it also poses potential risks to both public health and the environment. The composition of CLO is often not fully transparent, raising concerns that it may contain toxic elements such as heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and other hazardous substances. Over time, these harmful substances could leach into surrounding soil, water systems, and air, threatening local ecosystems, public health, and the long-term safety of the land.

CLO has been identified at the Maltby site, containing visible contaminants such as glass and plastic. Additionally, water leaching into the soil has been reported. Both issues have previously been raised with the Environment Agency (EA), which is responsible for permitting and enforcement at the site. However, the EA has yet to conduct an investigation.

In addition to concerns surrounding CLO, the site's coal mining history adds further complications. Coal mining operations often leave behind a legacy of pollution, including heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and other contaminants. These pollutants, which may have remained in the soil for decades, continue to pose risks to both the environment and human health. In 2014, the Council resolved to carry out Planning enforcement action on the owner of the site for the importation of MRF fines, stating that "The importation of material to the site represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt". So similar action could be considered by the council regarding the importation of CLO.

The Maltby Colliery site is openly accessible by foot and frequently visited by individuals on off-road bikes and quads. A large lagoon on the site also shows signs of bank instability, raising concerns about public safety.

Recent testing on adjacent land designated for the Highfield Park housing development has confirmed the presence of land contaminants, raising serious questions about the safety of this area for residential use. While remediation of this land for housing is the responsibility of the developer as a planning condition, a proposed allotment site within the same area has not been included in soil testing. Growing food in potentially contaminated soil presents a direct public health risk to residents and highlights the broader dangers if no action is taken.

As these concerns continue to mount, local residents are calling for greater transparency, comprehensive testing, and stronger regulatory oversight of the reclamation process and the materials used in land restoration.

### **The Council Notes:**

1. CLO (Compost-like Output) is classed as a waste product with no set standard to regulate it. CLO is not permitted to be used on Agricultural land.
2. The testing carried out by the developer at the adjacent Highfield Park housing site has highlighted contamination in the soil, indicative of what may exist across the wider area.
3. Testing of the soil at the part of the adjacent Highfield Park housing site intended for use as allotments has not as yet been carried out.
4. The importation of MRF fines from Hatfield Colliery to the Maltby Restoration site back in 2016 resulted in Planning Enforcement action by RMBC to prohibit further deposits. "The importation of material to the site represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt"
5. The Council holds powers under the Environmental 1990 Act Part 2 to create a strategy on Contaminated land and the investigation of contaminated land.

### **This Council resolves to:**

1. Review/update the Council's Land Contamination Strategy:
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of the Council's current land contamination strategy, to ensure that it is up to date with the latest environmental legislation and guidance.
  - Ensure that the strategy incorporates best practices for managing legacy contamination and preventing future pollution risks to residential, agricultural, and recreational areas.
  - Engage with external environmental experts to ensure that the strategy is up-to-date and aligns with the latest regulatory and environmental standards.

### 2. Call upon the Environment Agency to:

- Carry out investigative testing on the Maltby Colliery site to ascertain what contamination is present and what actions should be taken to reduce the risks, including to human health.
- Request that the Environment Agency carry out a legislative review on CLO, with a view to further regulation of this waste material.

### 3. RMBC's Planning / Community Protection

- Review the use of CLO at the Maltby Colliery site and determine if the importation of that material could contravene current and any future planning permissions at the site.
- To review public access and security measures to the Maltby Colliery site under restoration. Review the stability of the lagoon banking, referring local concerns about the dangers posed to the public to the HSE if appropriate.
- Review the current plan for allotments on Highfield Park, taking appropriate actions to investigate and remediate the land via Planning or via responsibilities under the Environmental protection 1990 act part 2a.

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<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b>	<b>Date of Council Meeting:</b> 15/01/25
	<b>Mover:</b> Councillor Tarmey
	<b>Seconder:</b> Councillor A Carter
	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Kier Starmer's Labour Government have failed WASPI women

### Summary/Background:

The ruling by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) in March 2024 was a vindication of the WASPI movement's efforts and it underscores the government's responsibility to address the injustices faced by these women. It also highlighted longstanding failures in government communication. This meant that affected women were not fully aware of the changes and exactly what it meant for them.

This injustice, perpetrated by successive Governments, has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in Rotherham and on local government, not least because:

This Council believes:

- Some women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care.
- Some women who would have otherwise retired and chosen to care for their grandchildren, are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally.
- Some women have been left in poverty, and are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock.
- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned.
- Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes have brought about among women born in the 1950s.
- It is wrong for the government to have taken the decision not to promise compensation for women affected by changes in state pension age. The council recognises that Local MPs Sarah Champion and John Heeley have campaigned in support of WASPI women, but they have been badly let down by the new U.K. government.
- The cut to the Winter Fuel Allowance will only amplify problems for many of these women.

**This Council supports:**

- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- The conclusion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- The calls for compensation for WASPI women who were adversely affected by the changes and inadequate communication around them.

**Therefore, this Council resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to write to:**

1. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to reconsider their decision not to compensate WASPI women.
2. Local MPs to express the council's regret that they have failed in their duty to convince their own Government to compensate WASPI women.



<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b>	<b>Date of Council Meeting: 15/01/25</b>
	<b>Mover:</b> Councillor C Carter
	<b>Seconder:</b> Councillor Tarmey
	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Save Rotherham Post Office

### Summary/Background:

Council is shocked to learn that Rotherham Post Office is at risk of closure – alongside 115 other branches across the UK.

Rotherham Post Office is a vital community hub. Hundreds of residents rely on its services. For Post Office Ltd to announce that it is threatened with closure, with no consultation with local people, is extremely concerning.

Council firmly opposes any proposal to shut local Post Offices in Rotherham.

### Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd expressing Council's deep opposition to Rotherham Post Office being closed and asking for assurances that it will not be shut.
2. Request the Chief Executive write to the Government's Business Minister, Justin Madders, to request the Government immediately intervene and protect our local Post Office from closure.

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**AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**26th November, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Baggaley (in the Chair); Councillors Blackham, Elliott and McKiernan, Alison Hutchinson and Michael Olugbenga-Bababola (Independent Persons).

Michael Green, Key Audit Partner and Engagement Lead, and Thilina de Zoysa, Engagement Senior Manager, Grant Thornton, were also in attendance.

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Marshall.

**42. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OR THE PRESS**

No questions had been received in advance of the meeting and no members of the public or press were present at the meeting.

**43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**44. 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. 47 (Regeneration and Environment Directorate Risk Register Appendix 1) and Minute No. 49 (Asset Management Estimates and Capital Programme Audit Update Appendix) as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**45. GRANT THORNTON, EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

Reference was made to a question asked at the 6<sup>th</sup> November Council meeting (Minute No. 88(1) refers) with regard to the errors in the South Yorkshire Police accounts/forecasts and the role of Grant Thornton as External Auditor. Given that Grant Thornton was also the Council's External Auditor, it was suggested that the Committee ascertain whether the Council still had confidence in the company's ability to conduct a thorough audit of the Council's finances.

Resolved:- That Grant Thornton, External Auditor, submit a report to the January meeting of the Audit Committee setting out their audit compliance as required by International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the quality assurance arrangements in place.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE - 26/11/24**

**46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2024**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.

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

**47. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE RISK REGISTER**

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, presented a report providing details of the Risk Register and risk management activity within the Regeneration and Environment Directorate.

The Committee was advised that the risk register currently had 18 risks listed, 3 of which were also included on the Strategic Risk Register.

A regular scheduled programme of reviewing and updating Service area and Directorate level risk registers had been implemented across the Directorate. Risks were regularly discussed and reviewed at Senior Management Team and Directorate Leadership Team meetings and, where necessary, risks were escalated to the next strategic level for inclusion on the risk register.

As part of the programme to embed risk management into the culture of the Council, managers from Regeneration and Environment had attended the mandatory Risk Management Training for Managers workshops as well Risk Champions attending individual service area Senior Management Teams to provide an overview to support and advise managers in relation to risk register development and maintenance.

The report also included an update on the implementation of the Household Support Fund (Minute No. 27 of the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 refers) which had been extended by Government to cover the period from October 2024 to March 2025. A report had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2024 (Minute No. 76 refers).

Resolved:- That the progress and current position in relation to risk management activity in the Regeneration and Environment Directorate be noted.

(Appendix 1 was Exempt under Paragraph 3 (information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A))

**48. TRADING STANDARDS UPDATE**

In accordance with Minute No. 35(3), Sam Barstow, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene, presented an overview of the audit activity conducted within the Trading Standards Service as well as an overview of the actions taken in order to improve service delivery in line with the requirement of the audit report.

The Trading Standards function was audited between September and December 2023 with a draft report released on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2024. It had made 13 recommendations with a number of sub-clauses relating largely to evidence storage and procedure with a completion timeline of up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. It was anticipated that all actions would be completed 3 months ahead of schedule.

Resolved:- That the progress in completing the actions of the audit be noted.

**49. ASSET MANAGEMENT ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME AUDIT UPDATE**

Kevin Fisher, Assistant Director Property and Facilities Services, presented a report setting out the actions taken and implementation of the Audit recommendations made with regard to the Partial Assurance Internal Audit report on Asset Management Estimates and Capital Programme.

The audit had included an indepth review of process, procedures, resource and training within the Building Design Team. The aim was to review the management and delivery arrangements for capital projects to ensure they were robust and to provide assurance that projects were delivered on time and within budgets. Arising from the audit and identification of issues, 7 recommendations were made and 7 key actions identified to be completed with an overall end date for closure of all actions by April 2025.

6 of the 7 actions were focused on the need to improve process and documentation through the life of the project ensuring both the Business Development Team and their clients were clear on roles and responsibilities, consultation and communication.

Work was underway to improve process and documentation with good progress being made. Once in place it would be a further requirement to embed them fully within the Service and the Council.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

**AUDIT COMMITTEE - 26/11/24**

- The issue had come to light through a number of project overspends. On investigation it revealed that when an “estimate” had been requested, full details of the projects had not been provided resulting in the “estimate” not being for the complete project. There had to be a very clear specification at the outset to enable the correct costings to be provided
- The Building Design Service had new staff members coming into the Service. Work was taking place on the induction into the Service

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

(The Appendix was Exempt under Paragraph 3 (information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A))

**50. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

Paul Vessey, Head of Information Management, presented the annual report on the Council’s compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

Appendix 1 of the report provided Freedom of Information and Right of Access Requests performance for the last 4 financial years.

90% of Freedom of Information requests were responded to within the statutory time limits with the number of requests received during 2023/24 increasing to 1,307 compared to 1,145 in 2022/23.

Despite a 2% drop in performance compared to 2022/23, there had been a numerical increase in the number of requests responded to within the statutory time to 1,177. This was more than in each of the previous 3 years.

No Freedom of Information requests had been formally refused as invalid. There was one individual who was vexatious on a specific line of enquiry. However, should a vexatious request be received it still received a formal response under the Act.

Overall 41% of Right of Access requests (RoARS) were completed within the statutory time limits. The number of requests received during 2023/24 remained the same at 214. Performance fell by 15% compared with 2022/23 and this was reflected by a numerical decrease in the number of requests responded to within the statutory time to 87.

Performance was affected by a smaller proportion of the RoARS received that were classed as ‘simple requests’ which were easier and quicker to process. However, the number of large and complex RoARS had increased and now made up the majority received by the Council. These were resource intensive as they involved reviewing large volumes of historical data, specialists within Children’s Services and were often linked

to CSE. Additional resources had been added to the team's capacity to improve performance.

Appendix 2 provided a breakdown of the number and classification of Information Security Incident for 2023/24.

The Council actively encouraged services to report any suspected data incidents and all reported cases were investigated. Monitoring information security incidents enabled the Council to proactively improve the Council's risk profile by learning lessons from an incident and reducing the likelihood of it happening again.

One data breach was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the 2023/24 financial year. This was a cyber security related incident and reported as a precaution. Following an internal investigation, it was ascertained that no data was lost or exposed and no action was taken by the Information Commissioner.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- It would be useful to have a similar breakdown to that which the Fire Authority provided i.e. summary of the FOI data received, the number of questions received/refused, number of hours spent collating the information, details of the individual data protection breaches
- The counting of Fols was in accordance with the ICO reporting requirements i.e. one FOI request with 3 questions was counted as one request
- Rotherham's performance rate compared favourably with that of most local public services
- The 2 additional posts were making inroads into the RoAR response waiting times
- The more complex requests took time due to the historical nature of the documentation and the manual finding of the information
- A number of the low risk breaches were down to user error
- Currently there was no information held as to how long staff spent on a FOI and on the costs involved. However, there was a cost threshold of £50

**Resolved:-** (1) That the Data Protection/FOI Annual Report 2023/24 be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the requirement of the Council to continue its maintenance of its Information Governance policies and processes in compliance with legislation be noted.

**51. AUDITED FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Further to Minute Nos. 7 and 32 of 25<sup>th</sup> June and 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024, respectively, Natalia Govorukhina, Head of Corporate Finance, and Michael Green, on behalf of Grant Thornton, presented the Audited Final Statement of Accounts and the ISA 260 report.

The Committee noted that under the Accounts and Audit (amendment) Regulations 2022, local authorities were required to publish their unaudited accounts no later than 31st May 2024, for the financial year 2023/24, accompanied by a Narrative Report and draft Annual Governance Statement.

At present, as part of the draft ISA 260, the following changes have been recommended by Grant Thornton and accepted by the Council, with adjustments made to the Council's accounts:-

- A balance of £5.991M was held as Assets Under Construction in the Note 19 (PPE) for Century Business Park Phase 2. As this asset was an investment property, this balance should have been included in Note 20 (Investment Property). Opening balances for 2022/23 and additions in 2022/23 had been amended so that this balance was shown under investment properties in Note 20 rather than Note 19 (PPE) in the 2023/24 opening balance;
- An overstatement of £3.18M had been corrected on the land and buildings revaluations. This related to the valuations of Riverside House £2M and Bramley Sunnyside Primary School £1.18M. The balance of Other Land and Buildings in the Note 19 and the Revaluation reserve had been corrected. Other notes in the accounts had been amended as appropriate;
- S75 funding (population health funding) of £13.905M had been misclassified as Grants Received in advance. This has been reclassified as creditors under receipts in advance. The change did not impact the Council's financial position or balance sheet as both fell under creditors. It was a categorisation issue.

Grant Thornton intended to issue an unqualified opinion on the Statement of Accounts subject to formal completion of their audit. The Value for Money work had not concluded as yet and as such was not able to confirm an unqualified opinion in respect of the Council's Value for Money arrangements.

Michael Green stated that the work was substantially complete and Grant Thornton expected to issue an unqualified opinion on the financial statements before Christmas. Once again, Rotherham would join a small number of authorities to receive an opinion in 2024 which reflected the hard work of Rotherham's Finance Team and the engagement with Grant Thornton.



A number of small of disclosure/classification adjustments had been recommended and accepted by the Council with adjustments made to the Council's accounts but had no impact on the Council's available useable resources.

Work was taking place on finalising the findings of the Value for Money work. It was expected to identify 2 significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. These were in relation to arrangements around health and safety and compliance relating to the Housing Revenue Account and wider asset management and compliance arrangements. These were issues that were not unknown to the Council.

Thilina de Zoysa, Grant Thornton, presented the ISA 260 report setting out the overall conclusions from the 2023/24 audit, key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit and preparation of the Council's financial.

The key points were set out in detail as part of Appendix 4 with attention drawn to the following:-

- Materiality was reconsidered on receipt and review of the 2023/24 draft accounts. It had been included that the most appropriate benchmark/criteria was gross expenditure in surplus/deficit on the provision of services rather than gross expenditure on the cost of services. This resulted in a minor change to the set materiality figures
- The 3 significant risks identified had not changed i.e. management override of controls, value of land and buildings and valuation of defined benefit pension scheme
- IFRS16 implementation. A recommendation had been made that the Council should accelerate the progress of identifying such assets as a priority and ensure full impact was determined well before the 2024-25 closedown. This had no impact on the 2023-24 audit
- Non-significant deficiencies identified during the Information Technology assessment but would further strengthen the Council's IT control environment when implemented
- Sufficient appropriate audit evidence to enable conclusion that a material uncertainty related to going concern had not been identified and that management's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements was appropriate

Resolved:- That, having taken due regard of the external audit findings detailed within the ISA 260 report, the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, attached as Appendix 1, be approved for publication as final along with the 2023/24 Narrative Report attached as Appendix 2.

**52. FINAL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24**

Further to Minute No. 8 of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Simon Dennis, Policy Improvement and Risk Manager, presented the Council's draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the 2023/24 financial year. The draft AGS was published alongside the Council's draft financial statements.

This was further reviewed on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 ready to be published alongside the Council's financial statements. Each Directorate had returned the required Statements of Assurance and supporting documents with the Corporate Governance Group having reviewed the evidence contained therein. The Group had also considered which issues were of sufficient significance to require reports in the AGS. The document presented to the Committee had been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services,

The AGS outlined the governance arrangements in place throughout the year and how their effectiveness was monitored recognising the improvements made in the Council throughout the financial year. It also highlighted areas for further developments in 2024/25.

The full Annual Governance Statement was attached as Appendix A of the report submitted.

Resolved:- That the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement be approved.

**53. MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS MONITORING REPORT - 2024/25**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Natalia Govorukhina, Head of Corporate Finance, which detailed how the regulatory framework of treasury management required the Council to produce a mid-year treasury review, in addition to the forward looking annual treasury strategy and backward looking annual treasury outturn report. It was also now a requirement that the prudential indicators as at the end of June 2024/25 were reported.

This mid-year review for 2024/25 incorporated the needs of the Prudential Code to ensure adequate monitoring of the capital expenditure plans and the Council's prudential indicators (PIs).

It was also a requirement that any proposed changes to the 2024/25 prudential indicators were approved by Council.

The monitoring as set out in the Appendix to the report was structured to highlight the key changes to the Council's capital activity (the PIs) and the actual and proposed treasury management activity (borrowing and investment).

Reference was made to the key messages for investments, borrowing and governance.

Whilst the Council's approach to Treasury Management in recent years, utilising short term borrowing in particular, had generated significant savings for the Council, essential to achieving balanced budgets, the future outlook was more challenging. The current strategy was to delay all new borrowing as late as possible and to only enter into short term borrowing in order to minimise the interest cost to the Council. There was a discounted rate with the PWLB for borrowing long term funds specifically for HRA purposes which was available until March 2026. The borrowing position would remain under review and an update of the strategy would be presented to Members within the budget and Council Tax 2025/26 report to Council in March 2025.

The underlying economic and financial environment remained difficult for the Council; on investment the main challenge related to concerns over investment counterparty risk. This background encouraged the Council to continue maintaining investments short term and with low risk counterparties. The Bank of England base rate dropped from 5.25% to 5% during the first half of 2024/25 and was cut to 4.75% on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2024.

The Council's use of long term PWLB borrowing during 2021/22 resulted in the level of short term borrowing gradually falling as short term borrowing matured. The proceeds of this borrowing had since been fully utilised and further financing has been required. With interest rates expected to be cut in the coming months, the Council has delayed as much borrowing as possible and only committed to short term borrowing.

The continuing approach to treasury management had been discussed with the Council's external Treasury Management Advisers, Link Asset Services, who had confirmed this was a prudent approach given current market conditions. Link Asset Services would continue to monitor borrowing rates and inform the Council if there were opportunities to borrow at advantageous rates.

It was noted that information with regard to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was part of the Treasury Management Strategy which was considered by Council when setting the Budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year. Discussion would take place as to what could be presented to the Audit Committee and the timing thereof due to the linkage with Capital Programme investments and the associated commercial/confidentiality issues.

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Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the Minimum Revenue Provision.

**54. CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Simon Dennis, Corporate Improvement and Risk Manager, which detailed how in April 2016 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives published revised guidance on delivering good governance in Local Government. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was refreshed at the time to comply with this guidance and attached as appendices were the tracked change and clean documents.

It was good practice to review and revise the Council's Code on an annual basis and in Rotherham monitored quarterly. Although there had been no subsequent changes to the guidance, an annual review of the Code had been completed to ensure it remained up-to-date and relevant to the Council. The changes this year were very minor in nature and could be seen on Appendix 1.

Resolved:- That the refreshed version of the Code of Corporate Governance be approved.

**55. ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY REVIEW**

Consideration was given presented by Louise Ivens, Head of Internal Audit, proposing an update to the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy to ensure that it was in line with current best practice and took into account any changes to the Council's organisational structure. It was last updated in 2017.

The amendments to the Policy have been made in accordance with the updated legislation and the CIPFA publication "Combatting Financial Crime, Practical Advice for the Public Sector" (2020). The amendments did not change any of the underlying responsibilities or requirements of staff.

Alongside the Policy review, Internal Audit were examining controls within higher risk areas within the Council and would assess whether there were appropriate and proportionate anti-money laundering arrangements in place. This included staff awareness of the risks, customer due diligence, record keeping, monitoring, reporting lines and general awareness and training. The outcomes of the reviews would be included in the Internal Audit progress report once the final reports were issued.

Discussion ensued on the £10,000 cash payment limit and whether or not this needed to be revised due to the reduced amount of cash payments. It was anticipated that a better understanding of the amount of cash payments that took place would be gained during the Internal Audit review.

Resolved:- That the revised Anti-Money Laundering Policy be noted together with the actions being undertaken to review the Council's anti-money laundering arrangements.

**56. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST AUGUST TO 31ST OCTOBER 2024**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Louise Ivens, Head of Internal Audit, which provided a summary of Internal Audit work completed during 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024, and the key issues that had arisen.

The plan attached as part of the report showed the position up to the end of October 2024, the progress of the 2024/25 audit plan, the reports finalised between August and October 2024 and performance indicators for the team. Since the last report there had been 5 audits deferred, one removed and one addition to the plan.

Internal Audit provided an opinion on the control environment for all systems or services which were subject to audit review. The report detailed the audit opinions and a summary of all audit work concluded in the last quarter. 8 audits had been finalised since the last Audit Committee, 4 of which had received Reasonable Assurance and 4 received Partial Assurance opinion.

A review of the current performance indicators was detailed in Appendix D and client satisfaction survey responses attached at Appendix E.

Historically, progress against the Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan had been reported on an annual basis. This would form part of the quarterly Internal Audit progress report and was attached at Appendix F of the report.

The new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) were issued on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2024, and would become globally effective from 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. They would then replace the International Professional Practice Framework the mandatory elements of which were the basis for the current UK Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS). The Relevant Internal Audit Standard Setters (RIASS) has agreed to use the new GIAS as the basis for internal auditing for the UK Public Sector and asked the UK Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards Advisory Board (IASAB) to carry out a review of the new standards with a view to identifying and producing any sector specific interpretations or other material needed to make them suitable for UK public sector use. The

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IASAB had determined that if GIAS was applicable to the internal audit of UK public sector bodies, subject to a small number of additional requirements and interpretation. The IASAB had developed the "Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK public sector".

CIPFA was consulting on a Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit from the perspective of the organisation i.e. local government responsible for internal audit. The Code complemented the standards which applied to the practice of internal audit from the perspective of the Head of Internal Audit.

The effective date of the new material developed by IASAB was 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to align with requirements for annual opinions and other relevant aspects of UK public sector governance which lined up with the financial year. Until then, the existing PSIAS based on the old Internal Professional Practices Framework would continue to apply.

Resolved:- (1) That the Internal Audit work undertaken since the last Audit Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024, and the key issues that have arisen from it be noted.

(2) That the performance objectives of Internal Audit and the actions being taken by audit management in respect of meeting the performance objectives be noted.

**57. AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN**

Consideration was given to the proposed forward work plan for the Audit Committee for January to November 2025. The plan showed how the agenda items related to the objectives of the Committee. It was presented for review and amendment as necessary.

It was noted that the External Audit Value for Money opinion was listed for the March 2025 meeting when in fact it should be January.

Resolved: That the Audit Committee forward work plan, as amended, be approved.

**58. ITEMS FOR REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY**

There were no items for referral.

**59. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business for consideration.

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**  
**11th December, 2024**

**Present:**

Councillor Baker-Rogers	Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care and Health
	<b>In the Chair</b>
Ben Anderson	Director of Public Health
Andrew Bramidge	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment
Jo Brown	Assistant Chief Executive
Nicola Curley	Strategic Director, Children and Young Peoples Services
Chris Edwards	Executive Place Director, NHS SYICB
Kym Gleeson	Healthwatch Rotherham
Shafiq Hussain	Voluntary Action Rotherham
Jason Page	Medical Director, Rotherham Place Board
Ian Spicer	Executive Director, Adults, Housing and Public Health
Andy Wright	Chief Superintendent, South Yorkshire Police
Michael Wright	Deputy Chief Executive, Rotherham Foundation Trust (representing Richard Jenkins)

**Report Presenters:-**

Fran Costello	NHS SYICB
Alex Hawley	Public Health Consultant, RMBC
Kaylynn Nogowczyk	Public Health Intelligence Analyst, RMBC
Lorna Quinn	Public Health Intelligence Principal, RMBC
Amanda Raven	Community Safety Unit, RMBC
Andrew Turvey	Public Health Consultant, RMBC

**Also Present:-**

Sunday Alonge	Policy Officer, RMBC
Lydia George	NHS SYICB
Dawn Mitchell	Governance Advisor, RMBC

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cusworth, Toby Lewis (RDaSH) and Claire Smith (NHS SYICB).

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present.

It was noted that 2 questions had been received in relation to the School Survey for which responses were being prepared.

**Resolved:-** That the questions and responses be submitted to the next Board meeting for information.

**36. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications to report.

**37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2024, be approved as a true record.

**38. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT**

Ben Anderson, Director of Public Health, presented the Public Health annual report which focussed on General Practice. The headlines of the report were highlighted in the following powerpoint presentation:-

Why General Practice

“Health inequalities mean that the Rotherham population experiences more ill health earlier in life and that too many of our population are suffering multi-morbidity, or the impact of more than one health condition at once. This is bad for Rotherham’s people, bad for Rotherham families and bad for Rotherham’s economy.

General Practices are uniquely placed within the health system to impact these inequalities in health. Through their mix of (..) health professionals, and their position within the heart of communities, General Practices are able to support people to stay healthy, to identify risk factors and conditions early when they can be reversed or controlled, and to support the good management of ill-health reducing the impacts this can have on people’s quality of life and their ability to contribute to their communities.

To achieve all of these goals however General Practice has to maintain a strong focus on quality, and on the outcomes that matter to the communities they serve, and has to be funded sufficiently to meet those needs, both now and in the future as our local population continues to age”

Report Structure

- Historical long-term condition prevalence (10-years)
- Future projections in line with a changing population
- Quality outcome analysis (condition achievement, and achievement range by GP practice)
- Condition contact and the impact on appointment sufficiency
- Finance
- Recommendations

Background and Methodology

- The Rotherham population has increased by about 1,000 people per year from an estimated 259,400 in 2013 to 268,400 in 2022 (+3.5%). The oldest age groups are the fastest growing mainly those aged 75+



- All data is extracted from NHS Digital and 20 conditions have been reviewed across 5 groups
- Trend data has been used to forecast what prevalence may look like over the next 10 years for Rotherham
- Trend data on a PCN and general practice level is used to show how current prevalence and trends vary across Rotherham
- Data for quality outcomes (met need, unmet need and not eligible) have been reviewed to determine opportunities for impact

#### Current Demand

- Data for 2022/23 suggest there are 200,000 diagnosed conditions across the 20 QOF conditions for patients registered to a Rotherham General Practice
- Top 5 prevalence are:-
  - Depression (17.9%)
  - Hypertension (16.6%)
  - Diabetes (8.5%)
  - Asthma (7.8%)
  - Non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (6.6%)
- All other conditions have a prevalence less than 5%

#### Projections

- This is a combination of the projections of the prevalence of conditions and the projected populations for Rotherham
- Overall 36,900 more people are projected to be living with at least one of the 19 conditions in 2032/33 than they were in 2022/23 (this excludes NDH due to uncertainty in projection estimates)
- Projections suggest that 16 of the 20 conditions will increase in prevalence by 2033. The exceptions are:-
  - Coronary heart disease and peripheral arterial disease which have been positively impacted by falling smoking rates and changing prescription patterns
  - Chronic kidney disease which has been shown to be impacted by recording issues and not a disease in number of people living with the condition; and rheumatoid arthritis which remains similar in projections
- The 5 more prevalent conditions now – depression, hypertension, diabetes, asthma and non-diabetic hyperglycaemia will remain the most prevalent conditions with depression projected to reach a prevalence of 26.7%, non-diabetic hyperglycaemia 18.3%, hypertension 16.9%, diabetes 10.8% and asthma 9.7%
- The conditions with the largest percentage point increase are non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (11.7%), depression (9.4%), diabetes (2.3%) and asthma (1.9%)

#### Quality Analysis (1)

- Aligned to the 5 clinical conditions in the 'Core20Plus5'
- Based on one or 2 selected measures in line with the NICE guidance

Quality Analysis – Largest Range

- At a practice level, conditions that have the greatest range within the proportion of patients achieving the quality outcome are for heart failure, depression, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and cancer

Quality Analysis – Lowest Achievement

- The conditions that have the lowest quality achievement based on the Rotherham average were diabetes (58.5%), depression (59.4%), asthma (62.3%), hypertension <79 (67.2%) and mental health (70.4%)

Additional Assessments

- Across 17 indicators, if every general practice in Rotherham achieved the same value as for the highest practice for that condition in Rotherham, there would be an additional 19,750 people having their condition assessed or additional guidance given. Please note that this is 17 conditions - 3 conditions are excluded as all practices are at 100%
- The conditions which could have the greatest additional numbers if the Rotherham highest was met was for asthma, hypertension, diabetes, COPD and non-diabetic hyperglycaemia

Appointment Sufficiency

- We have reviewed available information on diagnostic period, estimated contact if a condition is stable, estimated contact if a condition is poorly controlled, exacerbated or deterioration and best practice management to determine appointment sufficiency in line with the projected prevalence of individual conditions
- Based on 2022/23 QOF prevalence data, it is estimated that stable management of a condition could result in 377,000 fewer appointments than if poorly managed

Is there an association with patient population and health quality outcomes

- To determine if it is due to difference in patient population that results in changes in outcomes, we have reviewed the relationship between deprivation and quality achievement
- As deprivation adjusts for income deprivation, employment deprivation, education, skills and training deprivation, crime deprivation, health and disability deprivation, barriers to housing and services, and living environment deprivation, we may expect any additional differences to be as a result of practice variation
- As there appears to be weak or no association between quality outcome and deprivation, it is suggested there are individual practice differences that may be influencing the quality outcomes

## Finance

- In 2015/16 total spend across contractual payments, additional and enhanced services and quality and outcomes framework was £36,036,006 (excluding ARRS and DES)
- In 2024/25, the spend across all areas above (including PCN DES and ARRS) is £57,246,561 a 58.9% increase from 2015/16
- Inflation over this time was 33.8%

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The current model was not going to meet the future need
- Non-diabetic hyperglycaemia was a growing area
- There was a difference in the ease of diagnosis of conditions to meet the criteria. For example arterial fibrillation was very easy to diagnose and could be done via a telephone appointment whereas, for diabetes, there were 8 core processes and every one had to be met with some not up to the Doctor to sort out. Some of that variance needed to be included
- GPs were underfunded. Although the core contract had increased slightly (57%) it was below inflation. There had been 12M appointments in Primary Care last year and 1.8M this year (50% increase) wiping out in the increase in funding received
- There were additional roles that went into Primary Care. When seeing a patient for a review, the GP would look at several conditions at the same time. If a review with a nurse, it would be an appointment for a specific condition such as diabetes, asthma etc. and was, therefore, less efficient
- The ICB had selected diabetes and respiratory as 2 of its 3 core issues of focus this year
- Primary Care contracts meant GP services and did not include dentists or pharmacies. NHS England commissioned GPs but delegated the responsibility to the ICB but there were no additional resources. It was a national mandated contract with no flexibility within it. There were 28 practices in Rotherham across 70 sites all of which had slightly different ways of working. The Quality Outcomes Framework was suspended last year and mandated to use all the money for access and appointments
- Every practice was visited at least every 3 years
- Concern that some of the conditions were “medicalised” when in fact it was more than a tablet but a wider system approach that the person

needed. Some of the conditions were not necessarily GP-led

- Top Tips was a portal that could be accessed by GP practices which covered all conditions and provided resources. However, it was noted that every time you took some out for development opportunities that meant less appointments available for the general public

**Resolved:-** (1) That the rising trend and future projections for demand on General Practice from the long-term conditions analysed in the report and the future models of community long term condition management that will be required to meet need over the coming decade be noted.

(2) That the preventative actions required to stem the rising prevalence of these long-term conditions and avoid unsustainable increases in demand across the health and care system, with a focus on the common risk factors of smoking, diet, obesity, high blood glucose and alcohol consumption, and the networks and partnerships required within neighbourhoods to maximise the role of non-clinical intervention, be noted.

(3) That the level of variation observed between General Practices in terms of QOF outcome achievement and exception reporting rates relating to both the delivery of care processes and the achievement of treatment targets and consider the opportunities for quality improvement to support improved outcomes for Rotherham be noted.

(4) That the emerging data and digital capabilities to identify the key areas for performance improvement at practice, PCH and Place level and develop approaches to drive quality, aiming to reduce variation and improve outcomes to that achieved by the top 10% of performers for the chosen indicators be used.

(5) That the above inflation overall increase in the funding to General Practices and how this related to the changing demands and the need for a model of care to develop that will meet future needs, making use of the wider set of Primary Care roles, such as additional roles, to ensure they are having the best effect, target local needs, and tackle inequalities through community management of long-term conditions, be noted.

(6) That the method of measuring and reporting General Practice performance, using local data to move beyond monitoring appointment numbers and QOF outcomes to identify measures that drive quality based on local need and priority outcomes, be noted.

(7) That the roles of the South Yorkshire Primary Care Alliance and Primary Care Networks in developing and monitoring locally relevant quality outcomes in General Practice, targeting resources to tackle inequalities and driving quality improvement be noted.

**39. WINTER PLAN 2024-25**

Chris Edwards, Executive Place Director NHS SYICB, introduced the 2024-25 Winter Plan in the absence of Claire Smith. Fran Costello, Emergency Care Programmer, presented the following powerpoint presentation:-

**What worked well last winter**

- Better Care Fund discharged monies including £500k investment schemes plus organisational investments
- 2,407 additional appointments in Primary Care including ARI hub. 1,856 attendees/77%
- Positive working with Yorkshire Ambulance Service including community in-reach and 3 PUSH pathways and on scene referral to the Community Respiratory Exacerbation Service
- Acute front door, extended SDEC hours, flexible shifts to support cover, overnight portering
- B5 converted to nurse-led discharge ward
- Community read unit with dedicated support for TTOs
- Introduction of Therapy Discharge to Assess model with 403 patients supported October-April
- Closer working between IDT and community teams through the Transfer of Care Hub for admission avoidance and discharge
- Virtual ward frailty/respiratory step up and step down pathways for those who would otherwise be in an acute bed. Aligned with urgent community response for greater flexibility of resource
- Additional community resource Home from Hospital 20 hours per day 7 a.m.-11 p.m. 7 days a week November-March. 259 shifts/1,810 hours enablement resource released through service improvement. Additional therapy locum/community nurse resource
- Cohorted community beds onspot purchase basis with improved bed management
- 3 voluntary community sector pathways with 88% and 72% patient wellbeing ratings for social prescribing and personal health budgets respectively
- Reduced mental health out of area placement (0 at start of the year)

**Challenges**

- High incidences of acute respiratory infections/flu peaked in January, alongside diarrhoea and vomiting (impacting on acute beds and care home closures). Covid not a significant factor last year (end of testing)
- Increased demand for Primary Care appointments
- Unprecedented growth in attendances at UECC (reflecting national trend)
- Additional escalation beds opened resulted in SDEC/B5 being bedded creating pressure on ED plus increased demand on discharge team and community discharge pathways

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- Increased complexity, acuity, end of life and out of area placements
- Workforce challenges across health, social care and independent providers
- Impact of workforce/cost of living pressures in care homes, reducing the options for managing surge
- Placement of mental health patients out of area

## External Challenges

- Industrial action impacting on planning time/staffing and recovery lag with over 20 incidences in 2023-24
- Potential impact of GP collective action 2024-25
- Re-introduction of 4 hour standard – significant change to working practice
- Increased admissions to Rotherham hospital from out of area residents

## Summary of Key Plans 2024-25

Area	Impact
Investment Better Care Fund to support Acute Respiratory Infection hub for more Primary Care appointments, additional support to care for people at home, additional winter beds with therapy support, social care resource to support discharge and extended hours for discharge transport and community ready lounge plus an increase in voluntary service bursaries to support discharge	Targeted additional support to known system pressure points to reduce discharge delays and improve flow through the system
Primary Care Enhanced access to Primary Care Vaccination Programme	Improve access to treatment, support for vulnerable patients, reduce avoidable attendances at ED
Alternative Pathways to Ed Introduce heart failure virtual ward pathway and remote tech  Support for care homes through re-launch of falls and deterioration pathway, pilot smart lights for falls detection and trusted assessor roles	Supporting more people at home to reduce admissions promote early discharge  Reduced avoidable conveyances, less risk to residents, reduced demand

<p>Acute Care</p> <p>Six transformation workstreams including working with Yorkshire Ambulance Service to reduce avoidable conveyances/access to SDEC; ambulatory care, internal pathways; patient flow; workforce and digital</p> <p>Increased medical cover in ED and use of SDECs</p> <p>Additional escalation beds.</p> <p>Increased portering at peak times</p>	<p>Improve patient experience and patient flow enabling those requiring acute care to be seen in a timely way</p>
<p>Discharge</p> <p>Develop and embed Transfer of Care Hub/Discharge to Assess Model. Increase enablement capacity</p> <p>Spot purchase additional community winter bed capacity according to demand</p> <p>Increase patient transport</p>	<p>More accurate assessment of need as people are assessed in own home, reduced risk to patient through more timely discharge</p> <p>Increase resource in discharge pathways to manage peaks in demand</p>
<p>Children's Services</p> <p>Vulnerable children and family oversight and assurance including fortnightly place meetings. Transformation and business continuity plans for all portfolios. Identified resource to be re-allocated to manage peaks</p>	<p>Improve support for individuals and families. Re-allocation of resource to manage peaks</p>
<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Additional roles to support high intensity needs and housing officer, short stay crisis beds and on-line support for advice and information</p> <p>Relaunch of safe space</p>	<p>Improve in-patient experience and patient flow. Improved patient experience and reduced length of stay.</p> <p>Support for most vulnerable</p>

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Winter Vaccinations

- Why is it important to vaccinate
  - During winter high number of patients attend ED and Primary Care for general coughs and colds and vulnerable groups are at high risk of admission for flu/Covid placing additional pressure on the system
  - It is essential that we provide the opportunity for patients to be vaccinated to ensure patients are protected and prevent avoidable hospital admissions and additional demands on the system
  - In addition, front line health and social care staff are at risk of catching flu and Covid with the risk of staff shortages due to high sickness rates and the impact on service provision
  - The ICB has responsibility for overseeing the vaccination programme and at a Place level need to be assured that provider organisations had plans in place to deliver flu and Covid vaccine programmes for eligible patients and staff
- What is the Rotherham Plan
  - All PCNs and Practices signed up to the Covid and Flu Programme
  - Working closely with ICB Communications Team to promote vaccinations
  - Proposed pop-ups at Breathing Space to increase respiratory patient uptake and Riverside House for RMBC front line health and care staff
  - Discussions taking place across the Rotherham system to address other at risk groups
- Risks
  - Last year there was a reduction in patient uptake nationally
  - Work to do to raise the importance of vaccinations across all cohorts with particular emphasis on respiratory patients, MI, Immunosuppressed and LD and eligible staff across health and care

Winter Vaccination Programme

- Covid/Flu (annual vaccine)
  - You can get both the NHS flu and Covid-19 vaccines if you are aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025)
    - Have certain health conditions
    - Are pregnant
    - Live in a care home for older adult
- Flu only (annual vaccine)
  - Children aged 2 or 3 years
  - School-aged children (Reception to Year 11)
  - Children aged 6 months to 17 years with certain long-term health conditions
- Pneumococcal (one-off vaccine not administered annually)
  - If you are aged 65 or over
  - Babies at 12 weeks and a booster at 1 year



- RSV (currently a one-off vaccine not administered annually but this was being reviewed)
  - If you are pregnant or aged 75-79. If you turned 80 on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 you were also eligible for the vaccine until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025
- Pertussis (one-off vaccine not administered annually)
  - Administered all year round but GPs have been asked to invite all pregnant women who have not had a vaccine due to recent outbreaks and decline in uptake nationally

#### Cost of Living Support

- Warm Welcome Campaign
  - RMBC works together with partner organisations across Rotherham to ensure a Warm Welcome for residents across a range of spaces across the Borough. Warm Welcome spaces provide an opportunity for people to come together, share and use resources, with many spaces, such as the libraries, putting on additional activity sessions through the winter. A list of warm spaces was available at Warm Welcome Campaign
- Money Matters
  - There was a range of local help and national support available which was accessible by the RMBC website Money matters- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Open Arms – Community Support Hubs
  - In February 2023 the delivery of a new community-based support project – Open Arms – began
  - RotherFed, Citizens Advice, Laser Credit Union and Voluntary Action Rotherham have partnered to develop and deliver a co-ordinated response to support communities most affected by the cost of living crisis
  - This project would deploy the Community Engagement Team and advisers to deliver information, advice and guidance ‘one stop shops’ across 10 areas
  - The support delivered would have a strong focus on financial and social inclusion, empower communities with a foundation of support and make better use of community assets
  - Each hub has a drop-in session in each location throughout the day every fortnight and would be there for local people when they needed it. Open Arms – Community Support Hubs – Rotherham Federation

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- There was a massive amount of work behind the Winter Plan which should not be underestimated
- Things would happen every year that were not in the Plan but the escalation process across organisations had been tightened up

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- Even if the Plan was working smoothly, if there were issues in Barnsley, Doncaster or Sheffield, Rotherham would have to offer mutual aid where appropriate which could then result in knock-on effects
- Learning from previous Plans had resulted in work on the transfer from hospital into the community, targeted work with care homes and offering specific support/different options to minimise the impact on the person and wraparound services

Chris was thanked for his presentation.

**Resolved:-** That the presentation be noted.

**40. ROTHERHAM SCHOOL STUDENTS SURVEY 2024**

Lorna Quinn, Public Health Intelligence Principal, and Kaylynn Nogowczyk, Public Health Intelligence Analyst, presented the 2024 Rotherham School Student Survey drawing attention to the following:-

Background

- Full review of questions and partner consultation
- Aligned to HBSC where possible (academic year and age)
- Health and Wellbeing Board ask last year
- Respondents and optional questions
- Survey monkey issue
- Dissemination and further ad hoc/detailed reports

2024 Areas for Consideration

- Follow up to areas from last year
- Belonging and Safety
- Substance use
- Protected characteristics

2023 Follow-up

- Food and Drink Consumption
  - Last year 1,195 students (26.4%) did not have breakfast. This year 17.6% of students reported never eating breakfast during the week
  - There was no significant difference in the amount of young people reporting drinking regular sugary, fizzy drinks at least once a day in Rotherham or nationally, 12.8% and 12% respectively
  - Compared to 2023 when 60.3% reported never drinking high energy drinks, 7.5% more students now report drinking high energy drinks

- Physical Health
  - There have been no significant changes in how students rate their physical health since 2017. This year 27.3% of respondents rated their physical health as 'excellent', 52.4% rated their physical health as 'good'
  - Last year 21% reported a long-term illness. This year it was 29.5% (nationally this was 25%)
- Mental Health
  - Last year 57.2% of respondents rated their mental health as good or excellent and this year 59.7% rated their mental health as good/excellent

#### 2024 Results

##### Participation and Demographic

- All 16 schools participated and 3 Pupil Referral Units
- 4,641 students in total (4,919 last year)
- 263 children stated they live in a Children's Residential Home or with Foster Carers (5.7%, last year was 3.9%)
- 72% White British, 6% Pakistani, 3% 'Other White Background'
- 2021 Census population data reports Rotherham as 91% White British and 9% Other Ethnic Groups
- For dependent children, Census data reports 81.4% White British and 18.6% All Other Ethnic Groups
- Young person shows 15% from ethnic minority

##### Belonging and Safety – Community and School

###### Overall Community Belonging

- 59.6% of students feel safe in the area where they live
- 44.8% of students can trust the people in the area where they live
- 61.7% of students could ask for help from neighbours
- Year 7 views were more positive overall and a higher proportion of Year 7 students stated they felt safe during the day and after dark
- Since 2022, question introduction, there has been no significant change to how safe students feel during the day or after dark

###### Belonging and Safety – Bullying

- 1,415 students (42.6%) reported they have been bullied in the last 6 months. Nationally this was 35%
- Girls in Year 7 had the highest reports of bullying
- The number has seen an overall increase since 2017

###### Substance Use – Alcohol

- 38.6% (1,307) respondents stated they had had an alcoholic drink before (21.4% Year 7/58.9% Year 10). Overall this number has been increasing (1,259 last year)
- Similar to the national survey, prevalence was more common among Year 10 students particularly among girls

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- Alcohol was reported to be obtained from home with family/carers aware of the consumption in 59.7% of responses (a similar pattern 2019-2023)

Substance Use – Drugs

- 10.6% (357) reported trying a drug/substance before 90 in Year 7 (49%) and 267 in Year 10 (17.3%)  
Compared with 12.9% in 2023
- The most common substances tried were:  
Solvents (83 respondents vs 24 in 2023 and 17 in 2022)  
Cocaine (74 respondents vs 30 in 2023 and 12 in 2022)
- 186 students knew where to buy drugs locally with 191 responding to say it is easy to obtain drugs locally
- 77 had been asked to store or sell drugs for someone
- Views on drug use (whether they are OK to use) have remained similar from 2017 with 10% or less stating they think it is not OK to use drugs

Ethnicity

- No significant differences between ethnicity and how you would describe physical health
- Mental health is mixed across ethnicities
- Loneliness in the last 6 months was highest in the Mixed ethnicity group and lowest in the Asian ethnicity group
- For bullying, this was lowest (good) for Asian and highest (bad) for Mixed and White British ethnicity

Sexuality

- Results for Year 7 (2,554 students) show that  
83% (2,108) participants described themselves as heterosexual  
11% preferred not to answer (122) or did not yet know (161)  
5% (116) described themselves as bisexual  
2% (47) described themselves as lesbian or gay
- Results for Year 10 (2,042 students) show that  
83% (1,680) participants described themselves as heterosexual  
8.3% preferred not to answer (90) or did not yet know  
6% (119) described themselves as bisexual  
4% (74) described themselves as lesbian or gay
- Fair or poor mental health was highest (bad) in those that were bisexual or lesbian/gay
- Hate crime was highest in people who were bisexual or lesbian/gay

Next Steps

- Report to schools
- Findings shared with key consultees and professionals
- Ad hoc reports developed

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The Authority used an academic year whereas the HSBC used a calendar year
- Different consultation software would be sought for the next survey
- The number of “Looked After Children” was probably inflated as some young people had clicked “yes” as they were looked after by their parents
- It was unfortunate that surveys such as this did not give the context to the question

Lorna and Kaylynn were thanked for their presentation.

**Resolved:-** That the outcome of the 2024 Rotherham School Student Survey be noted.

#### **41. CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR ROTHERHAM’S CHILD DEATH OVERVIEW PANEL**

Alex Hawley, Consultant in Public Health, presented a report on the proposed changes to arrangements for the Rotherham Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

A local review of the governance arrangements for the Rotherham CDOP had concluded that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (RSCP) was no longer the most appropriate place for CDOP to be reporting and had recommended that it sit under the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The decision to move away from the Safeguarding Partnership in favour of the Health and Wellbeing Board was consistent with the 2018 legislation which left it as a decision of the local child death review partners (the ICB and Local Authority) to determine what worked best locally.

In parallel, at South Yorkshire level, that had been a re-evaluation of the South Yorkshire CDOP and a decision taken to discontinue its operation under the guise of an overview panel but to continue as a less formally constituted network for information and best practice sharing and some continued combined reporting. This would require stronger local reporting arrangements particularly with regard to the annual report.

As from 2024-25, Rotherham CDOP would produce its own annual report and submitted to the Board for sign-off and publication.

Most of the cases considered by CDOP were neonatal deaths. The ICB and Local Authority jointly had governance for the whole child death process. The CDOP felt that very few cases had direct safeguarding links and that it was not the appropriate body. When considering all the partnership boards with ICB/Council leads the Health and Wellbeing

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Board was felt to be the most appropriate one to report to. The Board would receive the annual report and any learning that partners needed to be aware of.

Discussion ensued on the proposal and concern that the Board had been established to bring partners together to discuss strategy; if it was to become a governing body it was suggested that a change to the Board's Terms of Reference was required.

**Resolved:-** (1) That Ben Anderson, Jo Brown and Chris Edwards discuss the Board's Terms of Reference and any adjustments necessary to accommodate the proposed governance responsibility of the CDOP.

(2) That the changes in local and regional arrangements for administration of child death review and CDOP functions and for related networking/information and best practice sharing be noted.

(3) That the general principle of self-sufficiency of CDOP for the majority of the actions it commissions and carries out be noted and that the CDOP would exceptionally seek approval from the Board where this was deemed necessary and helpful.

(4) That the proposed action of CDOP in writing to the Housing Minister (or similar) be deferred for further consideration.

**42. HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY REFRESH**

Andrew Turvey, Consultant in Public Health, presented an update on the work taking place to produce a refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2025.

The Strategy Steering Group was meeting on a monthly basis to shape the 4 current workstreams ensuring that the relevant priorities and focus would be embedded in the new Strategy. These were:-

- A review of prior consultation and engagement exercises and existing reports pertaining to the health, wellbeing and care needs of the Rotherham communities drawing out recommendations and identified gaps in delivery
- A review of the evidence and opportunities for developing the strategic response to population health and wellbeing needs arising from the evidence collated in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Stakeholder engagement. A stakeholder survey for commissioner and provider organisations across Rotherham would close in mid-December. There were also cross-agency workstream events taking place
- A programme of citizen engagement activity

The evidence generated would be used to pull together a high level draft of the Strategy in early January.

A Board development session was to be convened in January, 2025 with the final draft submitted to the Board for approval in March.

Andrew reported that not many responses had been received from the survey but had had separate written responses. It was hoped that there would be capacity to hold a workshop for the voluntary sector when a document had been pulled together.

Shafiq Hussain, VAR, confirmed that VAR had been involved in the consultation process and had signposted/referred organisations. However, in terms of wider consultation, there had been limited response.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2025, Health and Wellbeing Board meeting be extended to incorporate a development session.

#### **43. AIM 2 - PRESENTATION BY BOARD SPONSORS**

Chris Edwards, Executive Place Director NHS SYICB, in the absence of Claire Smith, SYICB, gave the following powerpoint presentation on Aim 2 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:-

Aim 2: All Rotherham people enjoy the best possible mental health and wellbeing and have a good quality of life

- Promote better mental health and wellbeing for all Rotherham people
- Take action to prevent suicide and self-harm
- Promote positive workplace wellbeing for staff across the partnership
- Enhance access to mental health services

The Context

- In Primary Care the recorded prevalence of depression in Rotherham (aged 18+) was 17.29%. This was higher than the England value of 13.25%
- The suicide rate for all person in Rotherham for 2021-2023 was 12.6 per 100,000 which was statistically similar to the national average for England at 10.7. However, there had been a slight increase in male deaths in Rotherham in this same period
- The overall rate of self-harm amongst 10-24 year olds in Rotherham in 2021 was 226 per 100,000 compared with the all England rate of 319 per 100,000. By age group, the rates of self-harm for 2022 were 147.75 per 100,000 for 10-14 year olds, 302.2 per 100,000 for 15-19 year olds and 253.2 per 100,000 for 20-24 year olds. In Rotherham the 15-19 year olds were more likely to self-harm than 10-14 and 20-24 year olds

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Strategic Priority 1 – Promote Better Mental Health and Wellbeing for all Rotherham People – progress being made

- Social media messages promoting RotherHive and Five Ways to Wellbeing and regular messaging via neighbourhoods e-bulletins were ongoing. This included the voice of Rotherham people from focus group discussions
- Good progress was being made within one year from the Board being approved as a signatory for the Mental Health Prevention Concordat. An update was given to the Board in September

Strategic Priority 2 – Take action to prevent Suicide and Self-Harm – progress being made

- Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) Training has been promoted across the Partnership including the Autism and Suicide Module
- Suicide Prevention and Safeguarding session delivered at Primary Care's Protected Learning Time Event on 14<sup>th</sup> November
- Activity to address themes and at risk groups identified through real time data
- Social media used to promote ZSA training and stories from people with lived experience on World Suicide Prevention Day
- A Task and finish Group was currently looking at suicide prevention communications and engagement work to reach out to neurodivergent communities
- Amparo promoted their service at Primary Care's Protected Learning Time event in July and its training sessions also promoted to staff across Place

Strategic Priority 3 – Promote Positive Workplace Wellbeing for Staff across the Partnership – progress being made

- Rotherham has launched employment for everyone
- Working with employers willing to offer employment or internship
- Worked with local businesses across South Yorkshire to co-design 'employability days'

Strategic Priority 4 – Enhance Access to Mental health Services – progress being made

- Set National Milestones were being reached
- The Mental Health Peer Support Service and The Mental Health Community Connectors Service were now fully available and mobilised to support people with mental health issues
- Process to lead to the contract award for the pilot service for those who had attempted suicide was ongoing
- Rotherham Safe Space was now offering an alternative to Crisis Service 4 nights a week
- The Rotherham Crisis Pathway Specification had now been agreed at Place Leadership Team and internally by RDaSH and RMBC



Areas to address and next steps

- No action under Aim 2 was off track
- The social media messages and the regular messaging going out via neighbourhoods e-bulletins in creating awareness on mental health issues should be strengthened
- The progress being made with the implementation of Mental Health Prevention Concordat should be sustained
- There was the need for more regular sessions of suicide and self-harm awareness and targeted training that included themes from real time data
- It was of utmost importance that the Task and Finish Group currently looking at suicide prevention communication and engagement complete their work and reach out to neurodivergent communities on time
- Continue to engage partners in the development and mobilisation of the integrated primary/secondary care mental health transformation
- A Suicide Prevention Symposium was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December to develop the 2025-2027 Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Action Plan
- What should be the focus for the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Issues in terms of mental health and the prevalence of depression were recognised
- Be the One Campaign had been a massive hit with over 1M hits
- Over £300K support grants for communities which had really worked well
- Why was Safe Space not open 7 days a week  
*(Chris Edwards provided the following information after the meeting:-  
"The resources available covered 4 days week so we have worked to ensure it is open on the days of the week where demand is highest and when other services are reduced)"*

Chris was thanked for the presentation.

**Resolved:-** That the presentation be noted.

**44. HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Ben Anderson, Director of Public Health, presented the update on the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy Action Plan as at December, 2024.

The current Health and Wellbeing Strategy would end in 2025. All projects were on track with the majority of the action plan "green". Work would now move to development of the new Strategy.

Discussion ensued on 1.2 (Develop our approach to give every child the best start in life) and the impact of the new 3-4 months universal visit to identify opportunities to develop the healthy child programme. Currently there was a big gap in terms of communication with the Health Visitor between 6-8 weeks of a baby's life and 6-9 months. It was a good opportunity for early identification of any issues there may be but its success would not be known until there had been an evaluation (September 2025).

**Resolved:** (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That the evaluation of the 3-4 months universal visit be submitted to the Board when completed.

#### 45. **CONSULTATION FOR THE SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2025-28**

Amanda Raven, lead on Domestic Homicide Reviews, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

##### Safer Rotherham Partnership

- Brings together partner organisations to tackle crime and community safety threats across the Borough so that people are safe and feel safe
- Organisations represented included RMBC, South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Probation Service, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Voluntary Action Rotherham, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit and Victim Support

##### SRP Priorities 2022-25

- Protecting Vulnerable Adults
  - Substance Misuse
  - Mental Health
  - Modern Slavery
- Protecting Vulnerable Children
  - Child Exploitation
  - Child Abuse
- Safer Stronger Communities
  - Making communities safe
  - Preventing hate crime
  - Online crime
- Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime
  - Domestic Abuse
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Male violence against women and girls
  - Serious violence
  - Organised crime
  - Counter terrorism

## What informs the SRP Priority Review

- Comprehensive review and analysis of crime and community safety data and information (Police and partner sources)
- Consultation with
  - Public and communities via online survey, events, focus groups
  - Target groups include voluntary and community sector representatives, communities of interest, geographic communities, general public
  - Ward Councillors and Parish Councils
  - Partner organisations
- Outcomes
  - Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment (JSIA)

## Analysis will cover

Adult Re-offending	Cyber Crime	Rape and Sexual Offences
Alcohol and Substance Misuse	Dangerous Dogs	Road Safety
Anti-Social Behaviour	Domestic Abuse	Robbery/Theft (from a person)
Arson and Fires	Drug Offences	Shoplifting and Business Robbery
Fraud and Scams	Environmental Crime	Stalking and Harassment
Burglary (Residential)	Hate Crime	Vehicle Crime
Child Abuse	Homicides	Violence
Child Criminal Exploitation	Knife Crime/Possession of Weapons	Violence against Women and girls
Child Sexual Exploitation	Mental Health	Youth Offending
Community Tensions	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	
County Lines	Organised Crime	
Criminal Damages	Terrorism and Violent Extremism	
Cuckooing		

## Next Steps

- Stakeholder consultation and engagement (September 2024 to December 2024)
- SRP Board decision making on priorities (December 2024 to February 2025)
- Final Strategy agreed April 2025
- Delivery plans agreed June 2025

Consultation Questions

- What, in your view, are the top crime and community safety risks and threats for Rotherham?
- What type of partnership responses do you think are most important to tackle these issues?

**Resolved:-** (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That the Board consider the consultation questions and feedback any responses to [community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk) by the end of December 2024.

**46. ITEMS ESCALATED FROM PLACE BOARD**

Jason Page, Rotherham Place Board, reported that there was very limited movement so far in terms of the collective action. However, discussions were taking place with regard to GPs taking industrial action.

There were no signs of resolution at the present time.

**47. ROTHERHAM COMBATTING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP REPORT 2024**

The Board, noted for information, the 2024 Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership report.

**48. SMALL GRANTS FOR CARERS WELLBEING**

The Board, noted for information, the report submitted detailing the outputs and outcomes achieved from the small grants programme.

**49. BETTER CARE FUND**

The Board noted the Better Care Fund (BCF) Quarter 2 Template 2024/25.

The report had been submitted to NHS England with regard to performance, capacity and demand and actual activity of Rotherham's Better Care Fund Plan for 2024/25.

The overall delivery of the Better Care Fund continued to have a positive impact and improves joint working between health and social care in Rotherham.

The BCF Quarter 2 template covered reporting on national conditions, metrics, actual activity in relation to hospital discharges and the community, expenditure and outputs.

**Resolved: -** (1) That the documentation for submission to NHS England (NHSE) on 31st October 2024 be noted.

(2) That a presentation on the Better Care Fund to a future Board meeting.

**50. ROTHERHAM PUBLIC PLACE BOARD PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS**

The minutes of the Rotherham Place Board (Partnership Business) held on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September and 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, were submitted for information and noted.

**51. ROTHERHAM PLACE BOARD ICB BUSINESS**

The minutes of the meeting of the Rotherham Place Board ICB Business held on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September and 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, were submitted for information and noted.

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**LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**28th October, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Beresford, Bower, Garnett and Steele.

**25.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**26.       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 the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Police Act 1997 and Paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (business affairs and prevention of crime).

**27.       APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT/RENEWAL/REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Licensing Manager relating to two applications for the grant and a review of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences in respect of Messrs. M.H. and S.B.

Mr. M.H. was in attendance at the hearing together with his representatives. Mr. S.B. was also in attendance.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the application for a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence in respect of Mr. M.H. be refused.

(2) That the hackney carriage/private hire driver licence in respect of Mr. S.B. be suspended pending the successful completion of a speed awareness driving course with suitable evidence of completion of the course provided to the Licensing Service.

**28.       HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION PERMIT APPLICATION**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Licensing Manager concerning the following applications for the grant of a promoter's permit to carry out house-to-house collections:-

## LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE - 28/10/24

Organisation	Area	Date
Bramley and Wickersley Lions Club	Bramley, Wickersley, Ravenfield, Flanderwell, Sunnyside, Woodlathes	December 2024

Resolved:- That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the application submitted by Bramley and Wickersley Lions Club be granted.



**LICENSING BOARD-SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**11th November, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Ball, Beresford, Harper and Sutton.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**30. 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 the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Police Act 1997 and Paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (business affairs and prevention of crime).

**31. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT/RENEWAL/REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Licensing Manager relating to three applications for the grant of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences in respect of Messrs. S.I., M.U. and D.S.

Messrs. S.I., M.U. (and his supporter) and D.S. were in attendance at the hearing.

**Resolved:-** That the applications for the grant of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences for Messrs. S.I., M.U. and D.S. be refused.

**32. DETERMINATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION PERMITS**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Licensing Manager concerning the following applications for the grant of a promoter's permit to carry out house-to-house collections:-

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>
Giving Support Ltd.	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2024 - 30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025	Whole of Rotherham
Recycling Solutions (North West) Ltd.	9 <sup>th</sup> December, 2024 - 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	Whole of Rotherham

Collection 4 Clothes	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2024 - 30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025	Whole of Rotherham
Recycle Proline Ltd.	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2024 - 30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025	Whole of Rotherham

**Resolved:-** (1) That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the application submitted by Giving Support Ltd. be granted.

(2) That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the application submitted by Recycling Solutions (North West) Ltd. be granted.

(3) That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the application submitted by Collection 4 Clothes be granted.

(4) That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the application submitted by Recycle Proline Ltd. be granted.

**LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE  
21st November, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Bennett-Sylvester and Beresford.

**LICENSING ACT 2003 - APPLICATION (MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH S.17 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003) FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE IN RESPECT OF THE PREMISES KNOWN AS THE LONGBAR, UNIT 2 BRAITHWELL ROAD, RAVENFIELD, ROTHERHAM**

Consideration was given to an application (made in accordance with Section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003) for the grant of a Premises Licence in respect of premises known as The Longbar, Unit 2, Braithwell Road, Ravenfield, Rotherham.

The applicant, Mr. D. Marshall, himself to be the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS), was seeking authorisation to allow the:-

- Sale of alcohol, for consumption on and off the premises, commencing at 12:00 hours (12 Noon) until:-
  - 22:30 hours (10.30 p.m.) on Monday to Friday;
  - 23:30 (11.30 p.m.) on Saturday;
  - 17:30 hours (5.30 p.m.) on Sunday; and
  - 01:30 hours (1.30 a.m.) on the day following New Year's Eve.
  
- Provision of late-night refreshment, for consumption on the premises, commencing at 23:00 hours (11.00 p.m.) until:-
  - 23:30 (11.30 p.m.) on Saturday; and
  - 01:30 hours (1.30 a.m.) on the day following New Year's Eve.

The proposed operation of the premises, as provided in the application, was as a café/coffee shop and deli during the daytime and a small wine bar in the evening, with seating for thirty-eight persons.

The applicant had engaged with the Licensing Service and had agreed a number of conditions that were considered appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives:-

- a) A Challenge 25 Policy shall be in operated. This Policy shall require that any person who appears to be under the age of 25 must provide ID prior to being served alcohol. Acceptable forms of ID are:

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE – 21/11/24

- a passport;
  - a UK photo driving licence; or
  - a military ID card.
- b) All refusals made under the Challenge 25 Policy shall be logged in a bound book. This log must show:
- date of refusal made;
  - member of staff who made the refusal; and
  - if refused, whether fake ID was seized.
- c) Signs shall be displayed inside the premises that advertise that the premises operates “Challenge 25”.
- d) A bound incident book shall be maintained, in which the following shall be recorded:
- All incidents of crime and disorder occurring at the premises; and
  - Details of when the Police are called.
- e) The Challenge 25 log and the incident book shall be kept on the premises and shall be available for inspection upon request by the Police or an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority.
- f) The DPS, or their nominated deputy, shall check the Challenge 25 log and the incident book at least once a week, and sign and date each check.
- g) The DPS shall routinely attend meetings of the local Pubwatch.
- h) The premises shall operate in accordance with the “ask Angela scheme” and notices to this effect shall be displayed.
- i) The CCTV system installed at the premises, shall:-
- be maintained fully at all times;
  - make and retain clear images; and
  - show an accurate date and time that the images were made.
  - be both internal and external.
- j) All CCTV images shall be retained for a period of not less than 31 days.
- k) CCTV images shall be immediately made available for review upon request of the Police or an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority.

- l) A copy of a CCTV image shall be provided within 24 hours upon request of the Police or an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority.
- m) A record of each member of staff who is authorised to sell alcohol shall be kept on the premises. This record shall include the staff members full name, address, and date of birth.
- n) There shall be a zero-drug tolerance policy in operation at the premises, which shall include the requirement that regular checks are carried out by management to prevent the use of drugs by patrons; and that such checks are recorded. A copy of the premises drugs policy, and associated records, shall be kept at the premises and made available to the Police or an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority upon request.
- o) No adult entertainment or services shall be provided at the premises.
- p) Children must be accompanied by an adult(s) at all times.
- q) Children will not be permitted on the premises after 21.00 hours.
- r) There shall be no outdoor consumption of alcohol. Alcohol shall only be permitted to be taken off the premises in sealed containers.
- s) All staff shall receive training on induction and year thereafter, on:
  - operation of 'Challenge 25';
  - types of acceptable ID;
  - method of recording refusals;
  - refusing sales of alcohol to persons who appear to be drunk;
  - preventing proxy sales;
  - incident recording and when to call the Police;
  - operation of the “ask Angela Scheme” ; and
  - how to review the CCTV system if requested.
- t) Staff training shall be recorded, records shall be kept of the premises and shall, on request, be made available for inspection by the Police or an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority.

Mr. Marshall and his supporter were in attendance at the hearing, along with a local resident objecting to the application.

Consultation on the application had been carried out in accordance with all statutory requirements and the Council procedure. There was a prescribed period of twenty-eight days following the submission of an application during which time representations in relation to the application may be submitted.

At the end of the consultation period representations, opposed to the grant of the application, were received from five (5) "Other Persons", four of which were from local residents, with the remaining representation being submitted on behalf of Ravenfield Parish Council.

No representation to the application has been received from the Responsible Authorities.

The applicant was provided with the detail of the representations and responded by way of a letter, providing more information on the proposed operation of the premises. The information provided by the applicant led to the withdrawal of one of the representations made by a local resident.

Two of the remaining three local residents who made representations to the application had confirmed that they wished to continue with their representations. The third did not respond to the applicant's letter, so it was assumed that they were continuing with their representations. Concerns related to the premises being some fifty paces away from a resident's property and whilst acknowledging New Year's Eve was a special event, opening until 2.00 a.m. was excessive.

At the time of writing the representation made on behalf of Ravenfield Parish Council remained in place. However, a meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and an invitation had been extended to the applicant to attend this meeting. The applicant did attend, but no satisfactory conclusion was achieved.

The applicant addressed the meeting and provided details of his intention to run the premises as a café/coffee shop and deli during the daytime and a small more upmarket wine bar for couples in the evening. The premises were intended to provide a community hub with food and drink with special rates for older people. On an evening the premises would provide a relaxing atmosphere with background music and allow local people to walk to the premises. A two-door entrance was in operation and only two people smoking would be encouraged at any one time.

In response to questions, the applicant provided the following information:-

- Details of where he had managed licensed premises previously; none of which had ever been subject to revocation or concern.
- Applicant's intention to be a responsible landlord.
- The intention for the wine bar to be seated room only.
- Confidence in staff training.
- Enquiries received for day time clientele including being dog friendly.
- Intention for the food options to be very limited on an evening.
- Limited demand for parking due to the applicant and staff living locally.
- Location of neighbouring premises and their hours of opening.

A local resident objecting to the proposals addressed her concerns and in answering questions highlighted:-

- Car parking and overspill into residential areas.
- Night time noise disturbance from cars and people leaving the premises.
- Location of the premises to her own bungalow/bedroom.
- Mixed use of café/deli to wine bar and how this could be achieved.

**Resolved:-** That the application for the grant of a Premises Licence in respect of premises to be known as The Longbar, Unit 2, Braithwell Road, Ravenfield, Rotherham be approved.

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**LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE  
2nd December, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Beresford, Z. Collingham, Jones and Monk.

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**34. 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 the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Police Act 1997 and Paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (business affairs and prevention of crime).

**35. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT/RENEWAL/REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Licensing Manager relating to three applications for the grant/review of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences in respect of Messrs. J.S., K.U. and J.S.M.

Messrs. J.S., K.U. and J.S.M. (and his supporter) were in attendance at the hearing.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the applications for the grant of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences for Messrs. J.S. and K.U. be refused.

(2) That the hackney carriage/private hire driver licence in respect of Mr. J.S.M. be suspended pending the successful completion of the safeguarding course with suitable evidence of completion of the course provided to the Licensing Service.

**36. DETERMINATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION PERMITS**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Licensing Manager concerning the following applications for the grant of a promoter's permit to carry out house-to-house collections:-

Organisation	Area	Date
Child and Teenage Cancer and Leukaemia Foundation	Whole of the Borough	1 <sup>st</sup> January-31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2025
Prostate Cancer Support	Whole of the Borough	1 <sup>st</sup> January-31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2025
Rotherham Sitwell Rotary Club	Brinsworth, Stag, Bramley, Brecks, Wickersley, Waverley, Canklow, Whiston and Moorgate	14 <sup>th</sup> December-24 <sup>th</sup> December, 2024
Yorkshire Children's Trust	Whole of the Borough	1 <sup>st</sup> January-31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2025

Resolved:- That, in accordance with the provisions of the House to House Collections Act 1939, the four applications submitted as above be granted.

**LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE  
16th December, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Bennett-Sylvester, Beresford, Stables and Sutton.

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**38. 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 the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Police Act 1997 and Paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (business affairs and prevention of crime).

**39. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT/RENEWAL/REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Licensing Manager relating to three applications for the grant of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences in respect of Messrs. Y.H., M.B. and A.H.

Messrs. Y.H., M.B. (and his supporter) and A.H. were in attendance at the hearing.

**Resolved:-** That the applications for the grant of hackney carriage/private hire drivers' licences for Messrs. Y.H., M.B. and A.H. be refused.

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**PLANNING BOARD**  
**31st October, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Mault, Adair, Baker-Rogers, Fisher, Tarmey and Thorp.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Ahmed, Cowen, Currie, Elliott, Hussain, Keenan and Knight.

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

**36. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items on the agenda to warrant exclusion of the press and public.

**37. MATTERS OF URGENCY**

There were no matters of urgency for consideration.

**38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

**39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER, 2024**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Regulatory Board held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**40. DEFERMENTS/SITE VISITS**

There were no site visits or deferments recommended/requested.

**41. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

**Resolved:-** (1) That, on the development proposals now considered, the requisite notices be issued and be made available on the Council's website and that the time limits specified in Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 apply.

In accordance with the right to speak procedure the following people attended the meeting and spoke about the application below:-

Erection of six dwellinghouses and associate works at land at Clement Street, Kimberworth for Allert Building and Construction Ltd.  
(RB2024/0513)

Mrs. C. Sanders (Objector)

Ms. T. Hogton (Objector)

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr. A. Sanders (Objector)

(2) That with regards to application RB2024/0513:-

(a) The Council enter into a satisfactory Legal Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the purposes of securing a commuted sum of £13,200 to provide compensatory offsite biodiversity provision to bring the development site up to no net loss in biodiversity terms.

(b) subject to the satisfactory signing of the legal agreement application RB2024/0513 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report.

**42. UPDATES**

There were no updates to report.

**PLANNING BOARD  
21st November, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Mault, Adair, Ahmed, Baker-Rogers, Castledine-Dack, Currie, Elliott, Fisher, Hussain, Keenan, Knight, Tarmey and Thorp.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cowen.

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

**43. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items on the agenda to warrant exclusion of the press and public.

**44. MATTERS OF URGENCY**

There were no matters of urgency for consideration.

**45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in application RB2023/1686 (change of use of residential (use class C3) to residential children's home (use class C2) at 124 Broom Road, Broom for Homes 4 Young People Ltd. on the grounds of his own personal experiences as a young person.

Councillor Fisher declared a personal interest in application RB2024/0063 (erection of 100 mw battery storage facility and associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Max Design Consultancy Ltd. on the grounds that he held shares in another energy company.

Councillor Fisher declared a personal interest in application RB2024/0321 (erection of 100 mw battery storage facility, creation of bund and associated earthworks and other associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Harmony TC Limited on the grounds that he held shares in another energy company.

**46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER, 2024**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Regulatory Board held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024, be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**47. DEFERMENTS/SITE VISITS**

There were no site visits or deferments recommended/requested.

**48. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

**Resolved:-** (1) That, on the development proposals now considered, the requisite notices be issued and be made available on the Council's website and that the time limits specified in Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 apply.

In accordance with the right to speak procedure the following people attended the meeting and spoke about the applications below:-

- Change of use from residential (use class C3) to residential children's home (use class C2) at 124 Broom Road Broom for Homes 4 Young People Ltd. (RB2023/1686)

Mr. Z. Ali (Supporter)  
Mr. R. Green (Objector)  
Mrs. T. Moran (Objector)  
Councillor T. Yasseen (Objector)

- Erection of 100 mw battery storage facility and associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Max Design Consultancy Ltd. (RB2024/0063)

Mr. M. Jones (Applicant)  
Ms. V. Bryan (Objector)  
Mr. A. Frost (Objector)  
Mrs. M. Godfrey, Wickersley Parish Council (Objector)  
Mrs. L. Howard (Objector)

- Erection of 100 mw battery storage facility, creation of bund and associated earthworks and other associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Harmony TC Limited (RB2024/0321)

Ms. F. Nicholson (Applicant)  
Ms. V. Bryan (Objector)  
Mr. A. Frost (Objector)  
Mrs. M. Godfrey, Wickersley Parish Council (Objector)

- Reserved matters application (details of access, external appearance, landscaping, layout & scale) for the erection of 177 dwellinghouses (reserved by outline RB2022/1076) at land south off Highfield Spring Waverley for Harworth Estates Residential Development (RB2024/0344)

Ms. J. Beckett (Applicant)

- Removal of rear conservatory and canopy to side, single storey front, side and rear extension, two storey side extension, new roof over flat roof two storey rear extension and render the whole existing



property and proposed extensions at 368 Bawtry Road Hellaby for Mr. Ball (RB2024/1025)

Mr. J. Hopewell (Objector)

Ms. D. Mallinder (Objector)

An email was read out on behalf of Councillor Ball (Objector)

(2) That the Planning Board declare that it was not favourably disposed towards application RB2023/1686 and that it be refused on the grounds that the proposals would be detrimental to the amenities of local residents by way of noise and disturbance and on the possible lack of privacy for potential occupants with the detail of the reasons for refusal being agreed by officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Board.

(3) That the Planning Board declare that it was not favourably disposed towards application RB2024/0063 and that it be refused on the grounds that very special circumstances for development in the Green Belt had not been demonstrated and that access to the site from Green Lane, due to its width, would have an adverse impact on pedestrians and other road users with the detail of the reasons for refusal being agreed by officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Board.

(4) That the Planning Board declare that it was not favourably disposed towards application RB2024/0321 and that it be refused on the grounds that very special circumstances for development in the Green Belt had not been demonstrated and that access to the site from Green Lane, due to its width, would have an adverse impact on pedestrians and other road users with the detail of the reasons for refusal being agreed by officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Board.

(5) That with regards to application RB2024/0344:-

(a) The Council enter into a satisfactory Legal Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the purposes of securing:-

- 113 Affordable Housing Units on site (63.8%).
- The development to the north of the site being considered in Planning Application Reference RB2024/1435 being constructed prior to construction of Plots 4-11 as that development provides the car parking for those plots, the access road, private drives and associated highway work, landscaping and bund.

(b) subject to the satisfactory signing of the legal agreement application RB2024/0344 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report with minor amendments to Conditions 7, 29 and 31.

(6) That application RB2024/1025 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report.

(Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in application RB2023/1686 (change of use of residential (use class C3) to residential children's home (use class C2) at 124 Broom Road, Broom for Homes 4 Young People Ltd. on the grounds of his own personal experiences as a young person)

(Councillor Fisher declared a personal interest in application RB2024/0063 (erection of 100 mw battery storage facility and associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Max Design Consultancy Ltd. and application RB2024/0321 (erection of 100 mw battery storage facility, creation of bund and associated earthworks and other associated works at land off Moat Lane, Wickersley for Harmony TC Limited on the grounds that he held shares in another energy company)

**49. UPDATES**

There were no updates to report.

**PLANNING BOARD  
12th December, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Mault, Adair, Ahmed, Castledine-Dack, Currie, Elliott, Tarmey and Thorp.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Cowen) and Councillors Baker-Rogers, Fisher and Keenan.

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

**50. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items on the agenda to warrant exclusion of the press and public.

**51. MATTERS OF URGENCY**

There were no matters of urgency for consideration.

**52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

**53. DEFERMENTS/SITE VISITS**

There were no site visits or deferments recommended.

**54. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2024**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Regulatory Board held on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2024, be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**55. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

**Resolved:-** (1) That, on the development proposals now considered, the requisite notices be issued and be made available on the Council's website and that the time limits specified in Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 apply.

In accordance with the right to speak procedure the following people attended the meeting and spoke about the applications below:-

- Demolition of existing dwellinghouse and erection of 2 No. dwellinghouses at 792 Upper Wortley Road Kimberworth for Mr. Hussain (RB2022/1144)

PLANNING BOARD - 12/12/24

Mr. Hussain (Applicant)

Ms. N. Hatswell (Objector)

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. T. Gardiner (Objectors)

- Erection of 6 residential dwellings at Land off London Way Thorpe Hesley for Jones Homes (Yorkshire) Limited (RB2024/0466)

Councillor C. Foster (Objector)

Mr. B. Whitaker (Objector)

- Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new detached dwelling at 6 St James View Ravenfield for Mrs. L. Smith (RB2024/1511)

Mrs. L. Smith (Applicant)

Mr. P. Strange (Objector)

Mr. I. Edwards (Objector)

Mr. P. Middleton (Objector)

- Application to vary condition 7 (now condition 6) (revision of operating hours – to allow 24hr use) imposed by RB2023/1471 at MTL Advanced Grange Lane Brinsworth for MTL Advanced Ltd. (RB2024/1514)

Mr. K. Stewart (Applicant)

Ms. L. Allott (Objector)

Anonymous Speaker (Objector)

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr. R. Smith (Objector)

A statement was read out on behalf of Mrs. C. Batchford (Objector)

(2) That application RB2022/1144 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report and also subject to two additional conditions relating to obscure glazing to the side elevation windows of Plot 2 and specific boundary treatment/wall along the school access road and in consultation with Thorpe Hesley Primary School.

(3) That application RB2024/0466 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report.

(4) That application RB2024/1511 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report.

(5) That application RB2024/1514 be granted for the reasons adopted by Members at the meeting and subject to the relevant conditions listed in the submitted report.

**56. UPDATES**

The following update information was provided:-

(a) National Planning Policy Framework

The Head of Planning confirmed the imminent update to the National Planning Policy Framework which had been revised in response to the proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system. The update would set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these were expected to be applied.

The Government had committed to delivering 1.5 million new homes along with the critical infrastructure that underpinned economic growth over the next five years. This would also consider how the Council looked at affordability and how Local Government was affected with the increase in indicative housing need targets.

It was suggested that once the detail within the Framework had been received and absorbed an all Member Seminar be arranged to share the detail.

(b) Planning Reform Working Paper – Modernising Planning Committees

The Head of Planning also referred to the Government's Planning Reform Working Paper – Modernising Planning Committees. This working paper detailed how the Government was committed to supporting better decision making in the planning system and greater standardisation over the operation of committees.

Details of the Working Paper would be circulated to the Planning Board for information and a training session on the fundamental changes and democratic oversight arranged on the detail in the new year.

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STAFFING COMMITTEE - 16/12/24

**STAFFING COMMITTEE**  
**16th December, 2024**

Present:- Councillor Alam (in the Chair); Councillors Read and Jones.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Z. Collingham.

**6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2024**

**Resolved:-**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

**9. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SENIOR MANAGEMENT - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY HELP**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the proposed amendment to the Assistant Director for Early Help and Business Support post in Children and Young People's Services. The role would be amended to an Assistant Director Family Help role with a resultant change in salary level.

At present, there was an Assistant Director for Early Help and Business Support based within the Children and Young People's Services' Directorate. The proposal was to amend that role to take on additional responsibilities in relation to new expectations around Early Help, including a change of job title and required social work qualification. The proposed changes had arisen further to a review of new statutory expectations outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Government policy document, Stable Homes Built on Love and enabled the fulfilment of Council plans set out in the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029.

The proposal was to reshape the Social Care and Early Help directorates, to enable a more seamless experience for children and families across the border into statutory child in need intervention, when this was required, to ensure children's needs were met effectively. There was also the intention to enhance the delivery of services at a community level to include statutory partners, the faith, community and voluntary sector and

**STAFFING COMMITTEE - 16/12/24**

communities themselves. The new role would oversee all of these changes.

As part of the change, the Assistant Director of Social Care Job Profile would also need to be slightly amended, to reflect the balance of responsibilities and ensure sufficient focus on the provider fostering and residential portfolio. Those changes were minor, and HR had already established that it would not necessitate any salary change.

The salary for the Assistant Director, Family Help was proposed as £108,258. This aligned with the responsibility and salary of the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care. The estimated staffing cost for the new Assistant Director post for Family Help was £108,258 (£139,038 inclusive of on-costs). This represented an increase of £13,252 compared to the current budgeted staffing cost for the AD Early Help post. However, this would be managed within the overall staffing budget and no further funding was required.

The Committee noted the importance of the post and discussed whether there would be any issues with recruitment.

**Resolved:**

That Staffing Committee approve the creation of an amended Assistant Director post in Children and Young People's Service and the associated salary level, subject to agreement by Council, and to refer the process to the Senior Appointments Panel to make the appointment.

**10. URGENT BUSINESS**

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