

## **IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION**

**Date and Time:-** Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Membership:-** Councillors McKiernan (Chair), Tinsley (Vice-Chair), Adair, Ahmed, Baggaley, Beresford, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Cowen, Havard, Jackson, Jones, Mault, Rashid, Stables, Beck, Thorp and Williams.

**Co-opted Members:-** Mrs. K. Bacon and Mrs. M. Jacques.

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

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

### **AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

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

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2024 (Pages 3 - 13)**

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2024 as a true and correct record of the proceedings and to be signed by the Chair.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

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

**4. Questions from members of the public and the press**

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

**5. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

**6. Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy (Pages 15 - 16)**

To consider the overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.

**7. Long Term Plan for Towns - Update (Pages 17 - 61)**

To consider the presentation on the Long Term Plan for Towns.

**8. Improving Places Select Commission - Work Programme 2024 - 2025 (Pages 63 - 64)**

To consider and endorse the outline schedule of scrutiny work for the 2024-2025 municipal year.

**9. Urgent Business**

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

**The next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission  
will be held on Tuesday 22 October 2024  
commencing at 1.30 p.m.  
in Rotherham Town Hall.**



**SHARON KEMP OBE,  
Chief Executive.**

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday 9 July 2024**

Present:- Councillor McKiernan (in the Chair); Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Beck, Beresford, C. Carter, Cowen, Havard, Jackson, Jones, Rashid, Stables, Thorp, Tinsley and Williams.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baggaley and Castledine-Dack.

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

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

**9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2024**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 June 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

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

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

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

**13. OVERVIEW OF THE PORTFOLIO OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Housing provided an overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing and highlighted that housing wasn't just about houses or homes of any description. She emphasised it was very much about people first and foremost, and then it was about looking after the Council's assets and residents of private properties. She believed the reason she was at the meeting was that both of these aspects contribute to our sense of place and the development of places within the Borough, as listed in the document provided.

Further, the Cabinet Member for Housing focused on Housing – People,

Property, and Place by dividing it into seven sections.

Estate Management: It was informed that this section was led by Paul Walsh, Head of Housing and Estate Management which included the North, South, and Central locality-based housing teams. These teams consisted of housing officers who regularly interacted with residents within their wards. They conducted tenancy health checks and provided some estate caretaking services, while other services were managed by corporate asset management.

The borough had nearly 20,000 Council properties and was among the top 20 Council social landlords in the country. The ambition was to become the best among these 20. That morning, discussions were held with the other 19 councils as part of the "C20" initiative. This group aimed to lobby for necessary support from the new government for housing across the country.

Property services: It was informed that this section was led by Lyndsey Stevenson, Head of Housing Property Services who looked after the repairs and maintenance contracts. These contracts, which had been delivered by the Council, were recently renewed for two years. The Cabinet Member for Housing informed that in the coming year, everybody would have an opportunity to be involved in reviewing that contract.

She also informed that Mears and Equans, our partners in delivering housing services, handled over 90,000 repairs per annum. They were also responsible for compliance testing for lifts, and fire, gas, electric, and water asbestos, as well as managing the damp and mould service.

She highlighted that Awaab's Law brought about a review of how authorities deal with damp and mould, resulting in 29 points of action that we were now obliged to follow. The most significant point was the speed at which we handle damp and mould referrals. Given that referrals increased from tens to hundreds per year, this added considerable pressure in meeting the set timescales. Despite this, the service had significantly improved and would continue to do so.

Housing allocation: The Cabinet Member for Housing emphasised that a housing register wasn't a waiting list, and that terminology was not applicable. There were just over 7,200 people on the register in Rotherham. She mentioned that the Allocations Policy, in place since 2014, had undergone various changes over the decade, including legislative updates, resulting in a somewhat piecemeal policy. The ongoing review aimed to make the policy more coherent and up to date, ensuring compliance with current requirements.

The Allocations Policy was used to assess individual housing needs. When someone approached the authority to be accepted onto the housing register, they underwent a series of interviews to determine their housing needs. This assessment determined their level of priority. There

were four bands of priority, and individuals were placed into one of these bands based on their needs. Everyone on the register had an allocated place according to their priority. The review of the allocations policy focused on prioritising housing for those in greatest need.

**Tenant engagement:** The Cabinet Member for Housing informed that TPAS, known as tenant engagement experts, was an organisation we should all be proud of, reflecting positively on the entire authority. Much of our tenant engagement work was done in partnership with RotherFed, which had just successfully bid for a contract to continue working with us for the next three years. The Housing Involvement Panel, which Councillor Terry Adair participated in, brought together representatives and volunteers to discuss housing services. This panel was facilitated by RotherFed.

Efforts were made to make the panel more representative of the borough's residents through targeted work with various groups, especially those with protected characteristics. Urgently collected information about residents and their perceptions of our services led to new engagement methods. One such method was the "screen team," a group of nine people who met online to discuss various topics.

To engage younger residents, who made up 50% of our population under 40, they were invited to participate in an online forum. The response was phenomenal, resulting in a core group of younger people working with us. This group provided feedback on their experiences as council tenants, particularly those who had recently become tenants.

All these initiatives fell under the tenant satisfaction measures we were obliged to report on. The information collected was becoming increasingly significant due to the upcoming inspection by the social housing regulator.

**Homelessness:** The Cabinet Member for Housing highlighted the legal responsibility to house anyone who presented themselves as homeless. The increase in local homelessness cases was usually due to no-fault evictions, where landlords wanted to sell their properties or move into them, and family breakdowns where individuals could no longer stay with friends or family. It was informed that at the moment the meeting took place, the council had just over 500 open cases of homeless individuals and families we were working with on an individual basis.

She informed that homeless individuals could come to Riverside House and request immediate shelter, which we were obliged to provide. Our preference was to place them in council properties, but we also used hotels and B&Bs when necessary, although this was not the preferred option. Early engagement with those served notice helped us plan better and match their needs with available accommodation. All individuals and families underwent support assessments to determine their needs.

We currently had 113 units for homeless people and had recently secured

funding to provide an additional 60 units. However, this was still insufficient, and we were taking measures to provide more, including acquiring properties from the open market where available.

Social housing regulation inspection: The Cabinet Member for Housing informed that a new proactive inspection regime started in April this year. The Social Housing Regulator would inspect every authority in the country to assess the efficacy and efficiency of their housing services. Although they provided some guidance, the details were sparse, similar to an Ofsted inspection. They had only completed one inspection since April, which involved a 12-week assessment with only two days spent face-to-face. The rest was desk-based, involving the review of numerous documents.

The Council was systematically reviewing our current policies to ensure they were up to date. Compliance testing was a significant focus, with the regulator ensuring we met requirements for fire, asbestos, water, and more. Additionally, tenant satisfaction was crucial, with 12 perception measures created to gauge residents' views on our services.

We identified areas needing improvement and established a Housing Assurance Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, to address these gaps. An honest dialogue with the regulator led to a clear guide on what they would inspect, akin to a peer review. This process was expected to conclude within four years, though the exact timing was uncertain.

Finally, the Cabinet Member for Housing mentioned the professionalisation of housing employees, with an emphasis on obtaining professional housing qualifications through apprenticeships at various levels. This was in line with the regulator's expectations for authority employees.

In response to Councillor Beresford's question, it was explained that the current owner of a property acquired through the Right to Buy scheme must inform us if they wish to sell it. The Right to Buy scheme includes a clause giving the Council the first right of refusal on any Right to Buy property. This has recently caused issues for some individuals who, during the conveyancing process, did not realise that this clause existed. If a flat owner decides to sell their property, they must offer it to the Council first. If this occurs, we will consider buying the property back. Despite having a robust house-building programme, we currently receive more requests to buy properties than we can build, so we are indeed interested in purchasing these properties.

The Chair asked about reducing homelessness and rough sleeping, he enquired whether the council works with letting agencies to inform residents facing eviction. It was explained that this was indeed what council did. We had officers within the Homelessness Team who worked with the private letting sector. When a resident informed us that they would be evicted in six weeks, we engaged in a conversation to explore

all available options. We aimed to avoid making a council house the first and only option. Our approach involved understanding the resident's needs, preferences, and affordability. We then collaborated with letting agents to see what properties are available, essentially trying to match residents with suitable housing options.

Councillor Havard sought clarification in relation to tenancy health checks and the training of housing officers to understand residents' needs. It was explained that traditionally, our focus during tenancy health checks had been on the condition of the property and compliance with tenancy agreements. However, there had been a realisation that these checks provide a perfect opportunity to discuss residents' health, financial concerns, and other issues. We aimed to offer advice and support where needed, but this approach hadn't been systematic enough yet.

Regarding apprenticeship schemes, the Cabinet Member for Housing informed that she did not possess all the information but highlighted that apprentices were required to complete a project addressing current issues within the authority that matter most to tenants. These apprenticeships were designed to focus on practical application, aiming to produce qualified housing professionals who prioritised both property management and resident welfare.

Councillor Williams asked about the possibility of bringing services back in-house during the re-tendering process evaluation and it was responded affirmatively, stating that currently, 100% of services are delivered by external contractors or specialist providers. She emphasised openness to consider bringing some services back in-house as part of the evaluation process.

The Chair queried whether the two different companies involved in service delivery were performing similar or different tasks and it was responded that Mears and Equans performed similar tasks but with a focus on different localities within the borough. While each had its specialisation, they operated across the entire area as required.

The Chair asked if there was support for housing targets and specific locations for building houses. It was explained that a national target of constructing 1.5 million houses over the next five years had been set, which was considered ambitious. Locally, there are aspirations to build 1,000 houses by 2026. Historically, the maximum number of houses built annually has been around 500. Given the scale of the national target, additional funding would be necessary to achieve it effectively.

Discussions at a recent meeting with over 19 social landlords aimed to ensure the new government understands the challenges faced by social landlords and local authorities in meeting these targets and to seek necessary support. This concluded the discussion on housing targets and locations for new construction.

Councillor Tinsley sought clarification on whether green spaces or green fields could be used for building, considering the local plan nearing review. It was explained that areas designated as greenbelt are typically restricted from development, including old industrial sites or redundant car parks within these zones. Despite not being traditional green spaces, they fell under greenbelt regulations, preventing construction. There had been ongoing debate in planning circles over the past five to six years about potentially amending greenbelt definitions to allow development on such sites, although opinions on this varied.

Councillor Jones asked about working with developers on land identified in the Local Plan, highlighting large-scale schemes like Bassingthorpe that have seen no progress for years. It was explained that the Council regularly met with developers to gauge their interest in developing plots of land. This proactive approach aimed to encourage collaboration with developers. Regarding Bassingthorpe, it was clarified that no developer was currently involved. The delay was due to ongoing negotiations between RMBC and the Fitzwilliam Estate, not a lack of developer interest. The Council had been persistent in pushing for progress and hoped for funding from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to facilitate development. However, progress was stalled until these negotiations concluded.

Resolved: That the Improving Places Select Commission:

1. Noted the overview from the Cabinet Member for Housing.
2. Agreed that consideration of the review into the Repairs and Maintenance contract would be added to the work programme at the appropriate time.

**14. OVERVIEW OF THE PORTFOLIO OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION & NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working to the meeting.

Councillor Sheppard provided an overview on each of the section of his portfolio as detailed below:

Member Neighbourhood Working and the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy: The Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy was introduced to ensure each ward had its own priorities. Meetings would take place with Neighbourhood Co-ordinators to agree the ward proprieties. These meetings would include a lot of data about the ward, including its demographics and information on the local community groups. He explained that he would attend some of those meetings to provide support where needed.



Towns and Villages and Our Places Funds: The Towns and Villages Fund was being replaced by Our Places Fund, which was delivering investment into communities. Although the Our Places fund was in its infancy, it was noted that previous works had improve localities and it was hope that the communities had welcomed the improvements to their areas. A number of the schemes had elements that involved working with our partners, such as colleagues in highways to join up projects to minimise disruption to residents.

Parish Council Liaison: In the south and central areas of the borough there were a number of parish councils. Whilst the Council did not have any direct control over the workings of the parish councils, as they had their own budgets, aims for their parishes, it did have a role in terms of liaising with them. This was to ensure the parish councils were getting any support available from the Council and to ensure we worked in partnership to achieve the aims.

Member Development: He noted that for any member who wished to take advantage of training opportunities, for a specific role or to take up a specific role, there were lots of opportunities delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Democratic Services: This team worked behind the scenes, putting together all of the meetings, ensuring members had everything they needed to enable the Council and members were able to function effectively.

Community Cohesion (supporting the Leader): This sat behind and alongside a lot of the threads within his and the Leaders role. Ensuring that the communities were working together, celebrating each other and learning from each other. One of the successes was the Rotherham Show, which had become much more of an event where different communities came together, supporting each other's cultures.

Social Inclusion Cultural Services, including libraries, neighbourhood hubs, heritage, theatre and arts along with all matters relating to Leisure Services (including recreation, sport and the Leisure PFI): Rotherham had an incredibly vibrant cultural sector. The Council had a fantastic relationship with Arts Council England, which was important as it enabled funding opportunities to deliver great events. It was also valued for the support, the experience, the advice that was shared to assist with how the Council delivered events, how to ensure everyone was included within the cultural offer, where possible. The libraries were a vibrant community hub.

A lot of work was being undertaken around the borough's rich heritage offer in places such as Keppel's Column, Wentworth Woodhouse, and Waterloo Kiln.

The Council worked very closely with the 4 main leisure centres across the borough, sport was seen as being part of culture and want to

encourage as many people as possible to get involved as this promoted not only better physical health but better mental health as well.

Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison: The Council would not be able to achieve as much as it does without collaborating with partners. Working with the voluntary and community sector was a key element of this. The Council had a great relationship with Voluntary Action Rotherham, who worked, providing support with hundreds of groups, in terms of putting funding bids in.

Community Energy Scheme and tackling fuel poverty: As long as funding continues, this would provide support for the residents of Rotherham, who had seen unprecedented rises in the costs of fuel. Some of the Household Support Fund had been used to help tackle fuel poverty.

Development of an events programme in parks: The event at Clinton Park was incredible and positive feedback had been received. It was beneficial for local people to get involved in and it was great for the local economy. The Council would also continue working with partners to support the smaller local events.

Green Spaces and recreational facilities: A review of those spaces was being undertaken to understand them better, understand who used them and what could be done to improve that experience. Once the review was completed it could be presented to the Commission for consideration. Projects through the Levelling Up Fund for both Rother Valley and Thrybergh country parks were being progressed.

All matters relating to Allotments (including liaison with the Rotherham Allotment Alliance): The Rotherham Allotment Alliance was doing fantastic work in terms of managing the allotment sites. Some sites were at 100% occupancy with others above 80%. Through partnership work with Community Payback, the Rotherham Allotment Alliance had brought back decommissioned allotment sites into use. A lot of charities and other partner organisations used allotment sites to work with their clients.

The Food for People in Crisis Partnership, crisis loans schemes and development of the social supermarket and Advocacy and Appeals (and the Single Advice Model): Partnership in Place both with Voluntary Action Rotherham and with Citizens Advice Rotherham and Doncaster for providing extra help to people who were in crisis, particularly with food. The Council provided the top level for advocacy and appeals. He explained that Citizens Advice were moving back to a town centre location.

Regional Flood partnerships, Local Flood Authority duties, including town centre and other flood prevention investments and all matters relating to Highway Drainage (including septic tank and cesspool emptying): This was incredibly important and could be absolutely devastating if it happened. Flooding could be widespread or just affect a single home. A

detailed report would be conducted for each instance of flooding, as to how the flood had happened, what could be done to rectify it in the future and any mitigating actions to be put in place.

Cemeteries, crematorium and mortuary services, including the Dignity Contract and the Registrars Service: The crematorium and most of the cemeteries were under contract with Dignity and it was about halfway through the contract. He worked with officers to ensure the contract was being fulfilled. It was hoped that a position could be reached in the future whereby fines to Dignity were not being issued because the contact was being fulfilled as set out. The Registrar's Service was an inhouse operation, for births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships.

He highlighted that a Member Seminar on our Children's Capital of Culture would be scheduled, which would explain the journey so far, how the title Children's Capital of Culture was bestowed and what it would deliver not only in terms of events but also as a legacy moving forward.

The Chair informed the Commission that they would be receiving an update on Flood Alleviation at their September meeting.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working explained he was in the fortunate position that he was able to devote a lot of time to his portfolio and to offer assistance to other portfolios.

Councillor Jones felt the Council was reliant on third sector organisations and supplier to bring events into the town centre. He found it was strange that there was no direct budget for town centre events. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working noted that budgets had been reduced. Whilst the Council didn't have a zero budget, it worked creatively within the cultural budget it had and it worked with partners for external funding bids, for example with Arts Council England, with Heritage Lottery Fund to bring in events. The Council was attracting great events into the town centre, which were free events.

Councillor Jones sought clarification if there was a budget specifically for town centre events. He understood that match funding needed to be put in for some events. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working indicated that there was not a specific budget line for that however the Council explored ways of being able to provide that funding where possible from within the existing sport and culture budgets. Sometimes that is in the form of providing barriers for events rather than actual funding. This process was also used for events in other localities as it was understood that not everyone wanted to travel into the town centre but that they wanted events in their community.

Councillor Havard expressed concerns that whilst library staff were reporting crimes to the library manager, that these were not being

reported further. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working asked for details of the specific instance to be sent to him to be taken forward to ensure that all staff feel safe in their place of work.

Councillor Havard also mentioned that none of the ward information had been updated on the Citizens Advice Bureau website. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working indicated it would forward that information on.

Councillor Tinsley commented that Maltby was one of the biggest Town's and Villages schemes submitted however there had not been much movement with this project recently. He queried if any resources had been removed or other projects taking precedence to prohibit Maltby from progressing. He also asked if there was an option to combine funding from the Towns and Villages and Our Places fund to expand the project further. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working clarified that no resources had been diverted elsewhere. The Council was working to ensure the final schemes were completed as quickly as possible and as close to the original specifications as possible. He explained that the Our Places fund would work separately to the Towns and Villages fund.

The Chair queried if the cemeteries had enough space to meet the need going forward or was the Council looking to purchase additional space? The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working explained this was an area that the Council needed to ensure it was able to provide peace of mind for people and their relatives during that very emotive time. He attended a meeting recently that showed where the investments would be needed. He explained this would be one of his priorities to ensure that all localities had above a five-year minimum supply of spaces.

Councillor C Carter asked for further information about the Our Places fund and what the next steps would be and when consultation on this may begin. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working explained that this was very new, and it would expect it to be a few months away but when it was ready to be consulted upon, he offered to bring it back to the Improving Places Select Commission to be scrutinised.

Councillor Thorp indicated he had raised an issue through the members casework system regarding the planters and was told that it was the Parish who had responsibility for these rather than the Council through the Towns and Villages fund. The Stag where these were located did not have a Parish to run them so he queried how these would be maintained. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working believed that the planters would have been filled with low maintenance plants. He clarified that if the Council had placed the planter there, then it would be within the Council's remit to maintain it,

when needed.

Councillor Thorp asked if there was a regular schedule for highways drainage and gully cleaning on the housing estates? The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working explained the Council monitored when areas were last cleaned however the priority was to the main routes, but estate roads are included. Councillor Thorp noted that quite a few of the roads on the Grange estate have lots of trees, meaning these get clogged quicker than other areas. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working asked Councillor Thorp to let him know of any streets that needed to be cleaned and he would consult with the service to ensure they were cleaned.

The Chair noted he had recently had some casework regarding drainage and had found out that all sorts of things were being put down drains that should not be, such as two chairs. He asked if there was any form of training or leaflets that could be issued to households to aid their understanding of what was and was not suitable. He understood that there was a new IT system that had been put into the Highways team and drainage would be part of it. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working said he would need to seek further information regarding this system and if there was an issue in a particular area, the Council would look to provide information within that locality.

Resolved: That the Improving Places Select Commission:

1. Noted the overview of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working.
2. Agreed that consideration of the review into Green Spaces would be added to the work programme at the appropriate time.
3. Agreed that consideration of the Our Places Fund be added to the work programme at the appropriate time.
4. Agreed that information on the implementation of the new IT system in highways would be provided.

## **15. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring the Commission's consideration. He also advised Members that the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission would take place on the Tuesday 3 September 2024 commencing at 1.30pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

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### **Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy: Councillor Robert Taylor**

This portfolio has overall responsibility for securing jobs and investment in the local economy as well as strategic responsibility for Transportation and Planning.

| <b>Responsibility</b>   | <b>Previous portfolio holder prior to the election in May 2024</b>                             | <b>Current portfolio holder following the election in May 2024</b> |
|---|--|--|
| All matters relating to Planning (including the Local Plan) and Building Regulations  | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| Responsibility for Licensing Policy   | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy and Services   | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| Business centres  | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| The development and co-ordination of partnership strategies for Lifelong Learning, Skills and Employment                    | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| Member of the Rotherham Together Partnership Business Growth Board  | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| The development and Implementation of Economic Growth Regeneration projects including Inward Investment and Business Growth | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio                    | Councillor Taylor  |
| New - Net Zero & Biodiversity Planning requirements   | Councillor Lelliott had Climate Change under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio | Councillor Taylor  |

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Major town centre projects and development (including Town Centre Events)   | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio | Councillor Taylor |
| Asset Management  | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio | Councillor Taylor |
| Highways schemes, repairs and maintenance   | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| Active Travel, the Cycling Strategy, and issues relating to public transport  | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| Member of the Safer Roads Partnership   | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| Neighbourhood Road safety schemes and school safety schemes   | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy,  | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy and Implementation  | Councillor Beck under the previous Transport and Environment Portfolio      | Councillor Taylor |
| All matters relating to car parking (including enforcement, parking appeals, parking permits and Blue Badge Scheme) | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio | Councillor Taylor |
| Untaxed and Abandoned vehicle removal   | Councillor Lelliott under the previous Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio | Councillor Taylor |



# Long Term Plan for Towns

Improving Places Select Commission  
3 September 2024

# Background

- Launched Oct 23
- £20m 'endowment style' for 10 years
- 'in the hands of local people'
- Town Board
- Submission date unconfirmed

# Engagement

| Topic                          | Average rating |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Influence and sense of control | 2.74           |
| Feeling safe                   | 2.94           |
| Care and maintenance           | 3.14           |
| Traffic and parking            | 3.19           |
| Streets and spaces             | 3.23           |
| Identity and belonging         | 3.28           |
| Work and local economy         | 3.37           |
| Public transport               | 3.46           |
| Social interaction             | 3.63           |
| Facilities and services        | 3.66           |
| Housing and community          | 3.69           |
| Play and recreation            | 3.75           |
| Moving around                  | 3.98           |
| Natural space                  | 4.2            |

- Place Standard Tool
- 552 responses
- 29 hours of stakeholder engagement

# Investment Themes

## Safety & Security

- Feeling Safe

## High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration

- Social Interaction
- Tackling Vacancies
- Services & Facilities
- Public Space

## Transport & Connectivity

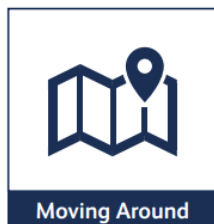
- Moving Around

# What's Next?

- Board Challenges
  - Champions
  - Expanding membership
  - Using networks
  - Re-running consultation

## SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

With the Long Term Plan themes of safety and security, high streets heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity at its core, the recent consultation exercise has strengthened the board's understanding of local priorities. A wide range of feedback has been analysed and the following topics promoted the most discussion and concern and therefore provide a focus for interventions:



Building on significant work to date to deliver regeneration in the town centre and with these local priorities in mind Rotherham's Long Term Plan aims to deliver the following ambitions through a clear set of cross-cutting objectives.

People will **feel safer** in the town centre, during the day time and the evenings through:

- Coordination of a town-wide approach to crime and anti-social behaviour, with emphasis on prevention where possible and enforcement where necessary, as well as providing links to services that tackle the root causes of crime.
- Boosting footfall and activity to generate increased natural surveillance.
- Promotional campaigns that encourage positive use of public spaces.

All people will **feel represented, welcomed and celebrated** in the town centre by way of:

- Promotion of the town centre as the heart of the borough – a place for all Rotherham residents to come together.
- The curation of more events, cultural activities and celebrations.
- Continuing the work of the LTPFT consultation to grow relationships with local communities and promote participation.

Residents will be able to access the key **services and facilities** they need in the town centre through:

- Promotion of the town centre as a convenient and accessible location for such provision.
- Investment in health on the high street.
- Supporting the growth of town centre living which will sustain services and facilities.

## SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

All people will feel able to **enjoy green and open spaces and connect with nature** through:

- Investment in safety and security that will make public spaces feel more inviting.
- More greening of the town centre to promote health, wellbeing and biodiversity.
- Investment in facilities to promote enjoyment of open spaces while reducing litter and taking care of the natural world.



The town centre will be **vibrant and resilient** by:

- Enlivening the town centre during the day and into the evening through tackling empty units and generating more day-to-day activity.
- Supporting established and new businesses in the town centre to fulfil their potential by understanding and addressing barriers.
- Defining Rotherham's offer and developing place marketing and events that will boost footfall in the town centre.

Visitors to the town will **feel welcome, be able to move around easily**, and find what they need by way of:

- Investment in key gateways and links to enhance the sense of arrival into the town centre
- Improved wayfinding and signage that will encourage people to walk and cycle to their destinations and explore what the town centre has to offer
- Exploring the use of digital infrastructure to increase connectivity.



# SECTION FIVE: AREAS OF INTERVENTION

There has been great success in recent years to attract public sector funding to Rotherham Town Centre, the detail of which is explored further in Section 6. The LTPT will build on the considerable work to date, providing complementary activity which supports the aims of the 2017 Town Centre Masterplan to diversify the town's offer, support businesses and create a safe and welcoming place which residents can be proud of.

Addressing the three themes of the LTPT and in consideration of the extensive engagement undertaken the Town Board have developed six areas for the investment of the £20m available, with the detail of this investment to be developed over the first year of the plan and reviewed regularly.



## Safety and Security

Improving feelings of safety and security, reducing crime and fear of crime is a key area of concern for the community. Negative perceptions of the town centre are seen to have a significant impact on people choosing to spend time in the town centre and further exacerbating a trend to visit other places for shopping, leisure and culture.

The first area of investment will therefore be **'Feeling Safe'**.

Investment will contribute to the establishment of a 'Rotherham Town Team' with dedicated, cross-organisation resources and powers to bolster enforcement, providing a welcoming and reassuring presence in the town centre. The town centre team will increase capacity for both preventative and responsive interventions such as building and coordinating local intelligence, dealing with street drinking, anti-social behaviour and signposting people to support and services.

With investment in a dedicated team speaking to the LTPT interventions S2 and S3 coupled with the powers already in place in Rotherham courtesy of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the aim is to reduce both actual and perceived crime.

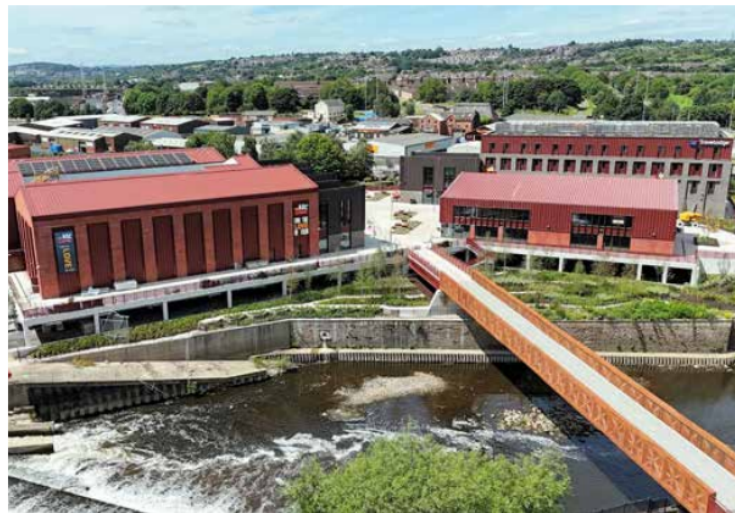
- ***S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places.***
- ***S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending.***



## SECTION FIVE: AREAS OF INTERVENTION

### High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration

Rotherham's town centre is reinventing itself as a place to live, visit and spend time, not only for shopping but for its bustling and vibrant markets; a town of stories, the world's first Children's Capital of Culture and a growing number of leisure attractions, including Forge Island. So strong is the town's ambition, that this theme cuts across all of our LTPT investments and is expected to take the majority of the capital funding available. Four areas of investment are identified within this theme.



The next area for investment is '**Social Interaction**'.

Attracting people and encouraging them to stay and come again is vital to sustain local businesses and build a resilient town centre. To ensure this we must create a place in which everyone feels welcome, there is a sense of belonging and community cohesion, a place where there are activities and things to do with no sense of exclusion or division.

Rotherham has a successful events programme and the Children's Capital of Culture 2025 will provide a year-long, daily programme of activity for young people across the Borough. The success of the annual Rotherham Show and events such as Wow Festival, the Women's Euros and UPLIFT, plus the weekly Rotherham Bazaar and street markets demonstrate how activities can change the landscape of a High Street. Using interventions H4, H5, H6 & H7, the LTPT will invest in creating more opportunities for daily activities in the town centre, promotion of the town centre and building capacity and networks within local community groups to ensure diversity is celebrated and welcomed, using cultural events and activities to smooth divisions and create a stronger Rotherham community through a shared love of the town centre.

- **H4: Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.**
- **H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.**
- **H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.**
- **H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.**

## SECTION FIVE: AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Our third area of investment ‘**Tackling Vacancies**’ will seek to support and attract private sector investment into the town centre by bringing long term empty properties back into use. Through LTPT interventions H1 and H11 Rotherham Council will support the Town Board through a series of acquisitions, grant schemes and managed refurbishment projects. The first year of the programme will undertake the feasibility of these projects; identifying properties and owners, setting out costs, governance and processes for grant administration. Moving into the next year there will be open calls for grants and the establishment of targeted intervention.

- **H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.**
- **H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.**



Our fourth area continues the diversification of the town centre by developing new ‘**Services and Facilities**’. The primary focus for this work will bring health to the High Street. Objectives will ensure the developing town centre community has access to good health facilities as well as giving those from around the Borough another reason to visit the town centre. Work is already underway with the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, and the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust to determine the feasibility of this project and which services would best serve the community and a preferred building has been identified. Long Term Plan could contribute the capital to de-risk the project and support the public sector in the provision of accessible health services.

The feasibility of the provision of other missing services which serve and attract the community will also be explored, services such as child-care and dentistry for example. LTPT intervention H1 and H11 will be employed to achieve this.

- **H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.**
- **H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.**

Significant investment in Rotherham’s public realm has taken place since the advent of the 2017 masterplan. Main pedestrian routes in the town centre have been repaved through Council investment and greenspace is being introduced through the creation of a new Riverside Garden and a pocket park at Snail Yard. The Town Board’s ambition is to continue this work with new and greater green spaces and intermittent greenery throughout the town’s streets.

## SECTION FIVE: AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Maintenance of this space is essential if quality is to be retained and whilst exploring opportunities for bringing new greenery into the town centre, consideration will also be given to how LTPT can contribute to its upkeep.

While our fifth investment in **'Public Space'** is considered here under the High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration theme it also speaks to the Safety & Security theme in that high quality, well maintained public spaces contribute to feelings of safety and crime. The interventions employed to bring about this investment are H3 and S1.

- **H3: Creation of, and improvement to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments. Improvements to the natural environment and the incorporation of more of these natural features into wider public spaces.**
- **S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.**

### Transport and connectivity

Rotherham has seen significant investment in public transport as well as active travel options through the introduction of cycling lanes and pedestrianised areas on key routes and within the town centre. Improving accessibility is important for the town with a focus on key journeys to explore how these could be made easier, safer, more legible and more attractive. Our final investment therefore will focus on "Moving Around". Utilising LTPT interventions T1 and S1 key gateways and routes to areas such as Clifton Park and the new mainline station zone will be explored for improvement options along with updating wayfinding and improving accessibility by removing clutter from the street scene.

- **T1: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.**
- **S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.**



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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

| Meeting Date | Agenda Item  |
|--------------|--|
| 04-Jun-24    | Housing Strategy Update<br>Nominate representative to the Health, Welfare and Safety Panel   |
| 09-Jul-24    | Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing<br>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<br>Overview of the draft Rotherham Town Centre 10 Year Plan  |
| 22-Oct-24    | Overview of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities<br>Sec19 Flood Report<br>Allotments Annual Update<br>Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Delayed from September)  |
| 10-Dec-24    | Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report<br>Bereavement Services Annual Report<br>Flooding Alleviation Update (Delayed from September)  |
| 11-Feb-25    | Road Maintenance - Impact of budget reduction compared to the previous year.<br>Consider the outline plan of the planned trainline extension to Waverley and Parkgate (Mainline station proposal, considering any potential impacts.<br>Nature Recovery Strategy |
| 18-Mar-25    | Housing Strategy - final progress report<br>Tenant Scrutiny report: How Rotherham Council supports new tenants   |

**Items for Scheduling**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| School Road safety motion - Scrutiny Review                                  | <a href="#">Poss Joint with ILSC - Agenda for Council Meeting on Wednesday 29 November 2023, 2.00 p.m. - Rotherham Council</a>   |
| TBC - to be suggested as a topic for the new municipal year                  | Anti-social behaviour workshop   |
| 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 |
| TBC  | Briefing Note followed by Spotlight Review if required - Rural Strategy  |

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