

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

**Date and Time:-** Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

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

**Membership:-** Councillors Steele (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, Keenan, Knight, Marshall, McKiernan, Pitchley, Tinsley and Yasseen.

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

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

### AGENDA

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

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

#### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2024 (Pages 5 - 23)**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 13 March 2024 and to approve them 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.

## **Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review in 2016, the following items are submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 10 June 2024. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

### **6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (Pages 25 - 77)**

To consider a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Service to refresh the Rotherham SEND Strategy, vision and future priorities.

#### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve consultation on the refreshed Rotherham SEND Strategy that has been co-produced with partners across the Borough.
2. Agree to the refreshed SEND Strategy being presented back to Cabinet in late 2024 for formal approval prior to implementation.

### **7. Finance Update (Pages 79 - 101)**

To receive a report of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services that provides an update to Cabinet on a number of financial matters.

#### **Recommendations**

1. That the update on the revenue budget financial outturn 2023/24 be noted.
2. That the Councils progress on the delivery of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment 2024/25 be noted.
3. That the Councils delivery of the Household Support Fund 2023/24 be noted.
4. That provisional allocations of the Household Support Fund Grant 2024/25 of £2.489m be agreed as detailed in Section 2.5 of this report.
5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, 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 provisional allocations.

6. That Cabinet approve the capital budget variations as detailed in Section 2.6 of the report.


**8. Call-in Issues**

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

**9. Urgent Business**

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

**The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board  
will be held on Wednesday 24 July 2024 commencing at 10.00 a.m.  
in Rotherham Town Hall.**



SHARON KEMP,  
Chief Executive.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 13 March 2024**

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

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baker-Rogers, Ball and Wyatt.

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

**110. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2024**

**Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 7 February 2024 be approved as a true record.

**111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no members of the public and press present.

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

There were no exempt items.

**114. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, MAYOR COPPARD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE COMBINED MAYORAL AUTHORITY.**

The Chair welcomed Mayor Coppard, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to the meeting and invited him to give an overview of his work priorities, prior to him taking questions.

The Mayor thanked the Chair for her invitation to the meeting. He outlined that his attendance reflected his commitment to doing politics differently and being the most transparent and accountable mayor in the country. He listed examples including taking part in monthly phone-ins on BBC Radio Sheffield; holding a series of Mayor's question time across South Yorkshire and attending over 30 public meetings to talk about buses and the challenges faced in South Yorkshire. He had also committed to attend each of the overview and scrutiny committees across South Yorkshire.

It was anticipated that there would be an election held on May 2, 2024 for the Mayor of South Yorkshire, integrating the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions. This had come about because the

Government was satisfied that devolution was working well in South Yorkshire and the partnership was sufficiently mature to combine the PCC role into the office of the Mayor.

A key priority was growing the local economy; the Mayor outlined flagship investments such as Boeing and securing the U.K.'s first investment zone as being major achievements. Other examples included a 10-year £160 million investment in the advanced manufacturing sector, a growth corridor between Rotherham and Sheffield as well as opportunity sites in Barnsley and Doncaster. The South Yorkshire Pension Authority had made significant investment which would benefit communities long-term. In addition, a strategic partnership with Homes England meant investment in local housebuilding.

The Mayor gave details of his plans to improve public transport systems, including bringing the tram and bus network under public control. It was noted that legislation in the 1980s removed democratic control of public transport from local authorities. However, it was noted that the financial picture was challenging.

The Mayor also outlined his ambition for South Yorkshire to be the healthiest region in the country. He noted that a baby born in Rotherham today was likely to die five years younger than a baby born in a more affluent part of the country. It was important to turn this around and that was why SYMCA agreed to provide £2.2 million funding for the "Beds for Babies" scheme, to make sure every child under five across South Yorkshire was guaranteed a safe place to sleep. He expressed support for the Rotherham council's "Baby Pack" initiative to provide all newborn babies within the Rotherham area with essentials.

The Mayor highlighted the work of the Citizens Assembly, which comprised of over 100 demographically representative people across South Yorkshire. The assembly's contributions informed the decisions made on achieving net zero targets. This demonstrated how communities were being brought into conversations about decisions.

He gave assurance that the governance of SYMCA was effective and accountable. He concluded by reiterating his commitment to making devolution work and also gaining additional powers and more control for South Yorkshire.

The Chair invited questions from Board members, taking those which had been submitted in advance first.

Councillor Robert Elliott cited a recent article which reported that Alexander Stafford MP (Rother Valley) had claimed that there were plans submitted to the Mayor for an "Active Travel Neighbourhood in Sitwell and Herringthorpe. More bus and cycle lanes with ULEZ (being) the likely outcome". Was this true?

In response, the Mayor outlined that there were a number of proposals across the Borough for area wide schemes to improve bus journey times and conditions for bus passengers, make public transport work more effectively, and make improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. These were being developed as part of the Government-led regional City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme. He confirmed that there was a budget allocation in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme to look at such works in residential parts of Sitwell and Herringthorpe. He stated that it was important to ensure that measures were taken to improve air quality, as required by Government. However, he categorically rejected that this would lead to an expansion of the clean-air zone in Sheffield across South Yorkshire or the introduction of an ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ). He asked that the misleading comments be withdrawn.

Councillor Adam Tinsley asked if the Mayor could detail what the plan for a low traffic neighbourhood in Maltby would entail and what consultation had been carried out with residents and councillors.

The Mayor referred to his previous answer, confirming that there was a programme of work outlined with the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, with the objective to improve conditions for those traveling by bus, as pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. He reiterated that the scheme had been designed in partnership with Government and funding had been released only when the Government was satisfied with the plans outlined. He confirmed that there was budget allocation in the CRSTS programme to look at work in residential parts of Maltby. This was the lowest priority scheme in the programme and its inclusion arose from negotiation with the Department for Transport.

The scheme was not yet designed and would be subject to public engagement consultation from the early stages to ensure it met the needs of local communities, including residents and businesses.

In asking a supplementary question, Councillor Tinsley sought clarification if public consultation would take place locally. He felt it was crucial to seek local views as the areas identified were residential and did not suffer high volumes of traffic. In response, the Mayor indicated that should he be returned to office in May 2024, he was willing to look at how the public can be engaged.

Councillor Taiba Yasseen noted that the Mayor held significant power in making decisions that impact South Yorkshire residents and the allocation of public funds. Given the importance of ensuring these decisions reflected the needs and priorities of diverse communities, how did the Mayor balance decision-making whilst ensuring robust and meaningful community consultation, particularly when considering projects with significant impact on local communities and potentially high costs.

Mayor Coppard thanked Councillor Yasseen for her question. He stated

that democratic control was fundamental to how he wanted to work. If devolution was going to work, people needed to feel that that decisions were taken close to the communities that the Mayor represented. One of the brilliant things he was able to do through his role was to engage through councillors with communities. If confidence with politicians was to increase, there was a need to be clear with people about what was being done and learn and listen throughout the process. The way in which consultation sometimes happened was that a decision was made and then people were asked if the decision was right. It was his view that the process should be reversed. He gave an example of the Citizen's Assembly about how listening to communities could happen in practice.

Councillor Yasseen appreciated his aspiration for doing politics differently. She cited an example of a recent experience with the Mayor's office in respect of cycling routes within the Boston Castle ward. She felt that the community consultation had been poor and had written to the Mayor but had not received a response. In her view there was a disconnect and it worried her that there was a failure to respond when people had reached out to his office.

Mayor Coppard offered a further conversation with Councillor Yasseen to establish what had happened. He accepted that as a relatively new organisation, there were gaps in their systems and committed to learning and understanding where they had got things wrong.

Councillor Miro asked if there was a potential conflict of interest when leaders of the district councils chaired boards and committees within South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, particularly when making decisions that directly impact their own areas?

The Mayor stated that the authority strove for high standards for transparency, openness and accountability about the money it received and how this was invested. Each member of the Combined Authority submitted a register of interests which was published on the website. In addition, members were asked to declare any interest on specific agenda items. Where there was a conflict, the member would not take part in that particular discussion, or the Monitoring Officer would determine the most appropriate course of action. He explained that under the previous governance model, thematic boards were chaired by local authority leaders. However, following the governance decisions taken last year this was no longer the case. Decisions were now taken by the Combined Authority Board, comprising of the leaders of the local authorities and chaired by the Mayor. The Mayor indicated that he was happy to have a further conversation should the Councillor have specific examples.

Councillor Lyndsey Pitchley cited a recent scrutiny review looking at preparation for adulthood for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and the lack of opportunities for many young people with additional needs to access meaningful employment, training or placements. She asked the Mayor to outline how his work addresses this



issue and any future plans to increase opportunities. She also thanked the Mayor for his work around “Beds for Babies” and noted his reference to Rotherham’s “Baby Packs”.

Citing his previous work with the ‘BookTrust’ charity, he noted the commitment of partners in Rotherham to work with families to make a difference. He reiterated that every person needs support to be able to “stay near and go far” in South Yorkshire. The Skills programmes underpinned this. Programmes such as UKSPF, Community Learning and Working Win were supporting individuals to develop the skills and capabilities they needed to access meaningful employment, training or placements. He noted that a skills strategy was to be launched and welcomed views on how this could be implemented to be more inclusive. He noted that South Yorkshire was home to the world’s leading advanced manufacturing sector and there was a training centre which provided opportunities for young people to get world-leading skills on their ‘doorstep’. However, if a young person found it difficult to access training or opportunities on public transport or lacked confidence, its proximity to Rotherham was irrelevant. He outlined that 16% of people across South Yorkshire had no formal qualifications; 43% of the working age population are qualified at level 2 and below; only 51% are qualified to Level 3 and above, compared to a national average of 57%.

Councillor Clark welcomed plans for bus franchising and active travel and their contribution towards net zero. She asked how else was the Mayor was integrating affordability, environmental sustainability and resilience into transport plans – particularly in respect of rail networks? How did plans to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport sit alongside net zero targets?

In response, the Mayor outlined that transport was fundamental to the work of the MCA because a bigger and better economy depended upon effective public transport. He referred to evidence that showed that places that thrive had a mass transit network, however South Yorkshire did not have this at the moment. He argued that this was arisen because of the privatisation of the bus market in the 1980s and the failure of the Government to give South Yorkshire fair funding. He highlighted that that residents in the West Midlands Combined Authority received £30 more per person in Government funding compared with people living in South Yorkshire.

Whilst there had been investment in the public transport network, progress had been limited by lack of funding. It was noted that passenger numbers had not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Consequently, profits for private operators had reduced which had led to greater demand on tendered services. This had risen some 300% from £7 million to over £21 million in four years. The intention was to change how the system worked with the franchising assessment processes to use money from profitable routes to invest in less profitable services. This would mean a different model using bus services as an investment in local communities.

The Mayor referenced the extension of the tram train network and the opening of a station at Magna. It was noted that mass transit networks were an important part of net zero solutions. Because of the pioneering tram train technology, there were opportunities to integrate with the rail network across South Yorkshire.

In respect of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, the Mayor accepted that it would be a challenge to achieve Net Zero by 2040, however the plans had huge economic benefits to the region and he supported the airport's reopening. He expressed a view that it was possible to 'fly less, fly better' and still have a thriving regional airport. The advanced manufacturing section was at the forefront of building a sustainable aviation hub. A facility with Boeing was being built at AMRC that would be in the vanguard of designing the future of sustainable aviation. Hybrid Air Vehicles were being developed by Sheffield University that would deliver new aircraft powered by clean energy.

Councillor Elliott noted that plans were being developed for a new mainline railway station in Parkgate. He asked if the plans would include schemes to alleviate the already heavy traffic (sometimes gridlocked) on the roads in the surrounding area, including the Broad Street and Mushroom roundabouts.

The Mayor stated that the new mainline station was a fantastic opportunity for the town and region to re-establish direct rail services to Rotherham and other key destinations across country. The station would contribute to reducing the large productivity gap between Rotherham and the rest of South Yorkshire. He noted that the productivity gap between South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester had widened from 99% to 90% in the last twenty years, which in his view, was partly as a result of poor transport connectivity. As part of the work on the station, there were proposals for a new adjacent tram train stop as well as improvements to bus, walking and cycling infrastructure to ensure that there was a sustainable infrastructure around the Parkgate station. There also plans for a transport assessment which would look at highways infrastructure in order to make sure that local access improved and congestion was not increased. There would be conversations with Council colleagues about these issues.

Councillor Miro referred to questions asked of him as the councillor for Catcliffe, Treeton and Waverley about the poor bus services and different bus routes, and how the provision of appropriate bus stops can be enhanced. Did the Mayor have anything to say to his residents about this? And would he come with me to meet my residents and explain the issues to them in person?

The Mayor would be happy to attend a public meeting on buses. He outlined that there were over 7600 bus stops across South Yorkshire and approximately half of them have got shelters. The infrastructure around public transport in South Yorkshire required a huge amount of investment,

unfortunately the Government did not allocate any funds for this from the recent round of bids. He stated that he was trying to find additional money to be able to invest in the infrastructure to develop better bus stops. He noted that to get people to use buses, a reliable service was needed with stops equipped with adequate shelters, up-to-date electric fleet and real-time data. He committed to having a further conversation with the Councillor about specific concerns.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

Councillor Joshua Bacon asked about the time taken to respond to correspondence and what action he had taken to improve this since the Mayor had taken office? He also asked if the citizens assembly provided best value for money and if it duplicated the role of elected representatives.

The Mayor reiterated the importance of engaging with communities and putting their voices at the heart of everything the Combined Authority did. He noted that the Councillor was entitled to say that as a direct representative, he had the answers to everything that his residents wanted, however, the Mayor disagreed with this view. He stated that he did not know what everyone across South Yorkshire wanted which was why he chose to engage with councils, community groups, businesses and institutions, and the wider public.

In response to the question about delays in response from his office, the Mayor repeated his offer to hold a meeting. He outlined that whilst the capacity of the MCA had increased, in his view this was still not sufficient. As with all public bodies as a result of 14 years of austerity, there was not enough money to do everything he would like to do. However, were things fell through the gaps he was happy to try and resolve the problem.

Councillor Wendy Cooksey welcomed the £2 cap on bus fares, however tram fares were more expensive. Were there any plans to bring tram fares in line with buses as it was a really nice way to travel?

The Mayor agreed that the aim was to get fares lower and more equitable across the whole system. However, whilst buses remained privately operated, it was difficult to mandate lower fares. It was noted that the tram network would come back under public control later in the month and there was some discretion about fare levels. However, there were still limits on what could be achieved because of financial pressures and the lack of Government funding. The challenge was to increase patronage, thus generating more income which could be reinvested across the network. It was noted that unlike buses, the Government did not offer fare subsidies to tram networks.

Councillor Yasseen made a recommendation that a member seminar is organised in the new municipal year, aimed at understanding the authority's role and its decision-making structures. The seminar would

provide insight into how decisions were made on behalf of the people of South Yorkshire, particularly given the expanding remit of the authority including the Police and Crime Commissioner functions.

Councillor Pitchley asked that future consultation also included young people. The Mayor reiterated his commitment to this engagement, citing examples of how he had worked with young people from Rotherham.

The Chair thanked Mayor Coppard for his attendance at the meeting and hoped that this was the first of many sessions to come. She invited him to return on an annual basis.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the South Yorkshire Mayor be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on an annual basis.
- 2) That a member seminar be organised in the new municipal year on the role of the combined authority and its decision-making structures.

**115. EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2024-2029**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Victoria Cusworth, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and invited her to introduce the report. Nicola Curley, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services was also in attendance.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to bring the strategy prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 18 March 2024, noting that scrutiny members had a long interest in the service. She outlined that the Council had continued to invest in early help services and the offer from the wider partnership, whilst many other councils had struggled financially to maintain services. The Cabinet Member highlighted that early help remained a key priority for elected members and officers. Its refresh also included reference to changes in legislation and guidance, namely the McAllister Review, the "Stable Homes, Built on Love" recommendations and the new guide "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2023).

She reiterated that early help was a partnership offer, rather than a sole council function. It looked at providing universal and community family help at the earliest opportunity for all children and young people; family support workers to work with families under pressure; and then specialist help to prevent children coming into care. She hoped that the Improving Lives Select Commission would monitor the outcomes of the new Early Help Strategy and hold the Cabinet Member and service to account for its delivery.

The Strategic Director noted that the strategy ran from 2024-2029. Phase 1 would involve detailed consultation with elected members, staff,

partners and children and families to ensure co-design and co-production from the start. New guidance would be considered along with a number of reviews.

The Chair welcomed the development of the strategy and invited questions from Board Members. A discussion on the following issues ensued:

- Clarification was sought on how multi-agency work would be strengthened and how this activity would be monitored. In response, the Strategic Director stated that there were existing, strong partnership arrangements. The next step was how to support communities to work more effectively and help themselves. She referred to improvements in the Youth Justice Service; work in schools; mental health support and improving school attendance.
- In the section “What we know about families in Rotherham”, clarification was sought on the number of households with dependent children and if this was known and how many families had been reached. In the equality impact assessment, it referred to the number of early help episodes but did not directly cite the number of children or families receiving services. The Strategic Director clarified the difference between an early help episode and supporting the widest possible community. She gave an example that 73% of children aged 0-5 years, accessed children centre activities. The universal offer was available to all families and often provided by the voluntary sector. This activity would not be recorded as an early help episode. However, for those requiring additional support or a focused intervention this would be provided depending on need. The fewer early help episodes recorded was seen as evidence that the support provided at a community level was effective. Further work would be undertaken during the first year with partners to establish ‘who does what’ to ensure that interventions were not duplicated across different agencies and clarify definitions and language.
- The development of a SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) hub in the town centre was welcomed. What were the timescales for this project? It was outlined that plans were at an early stage. The building would require remedial work to make it accessible. Existing staff would also need to be relocated. The Strategic Director would provide a written update once plans were clarified.
- It was noted that Rotherham was a signatory to the “Breastfeeding-Friendly Borough” declaration. What action was being taken to make this meaningful? It was outlined that there was more to be done in this area. However, as part of the Family Hubs programme, more staff were being trained to support breastfeeding and each of the children centres were breastfeeding-friendly. Written

information would be provided on breastfeeding-friendly public spaces. The Cabinet Member added that she had been working with the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health in respect of the public health focus. She referred to the question at the Council meeting about parents struggling to afford formula milk so it was important to ensure that children were properly nourished.

- Further detail was sought on how information about services were disseminated and families were engaged. Examples were given of innovative outreach initiatives to engage families.

### **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet be informed that the following recommendations be supported:
  - 1) Endorse the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029.
  - 2) Approves the Local Authority involvement in the development and implementation of the Strategy Delivery Plan with the oversight and delivery of progress by the Early Help Partnership Group (EHPG) and the Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC).
2. That consideration be given to the inclusion of data relating to the number households with children in a revised version of the strategy.

## **116. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024**

The Chair invited Councillor Denise Lelliott, the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy to the meeting. Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and Louise Preston, the Climate Change Manager, were also in attendance.

The report referred to activity undertaken in the period 2023-24. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the progress made since the Council declared a climate emergency in 201. She thanked the Strategic Director and Climate Change Manager for their work and progress made.

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

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

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

A Climate Emergency Action Plan was established, and the report outlined its progress towards the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan reported for the 2023/2024 period.

The Strategic Director outlined that the report was a summary of activity and also detailed an action plan for 2024-25. The report detailed activities around key themes, with the main contributors to carbon emissions for the Council being buildings (including housing stock) and transport. It was noted that a new theme of 'adaptations' had been added this year, examples of which were the decarbonisations of 55 Council office buildings and the ongoing success of the ECO4-flex scheme was cited, through which people living in fuel poverty may access energy performance upgrades to their homes. The report had been submitted to a previous meeting of Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for his work with the Council over many years and wished him well for the future. The Cabinet Member joined the Chair, in thanking Paul for his leadership, guidance and achievements.

The Chair invited questions from the Board and a discussion on the following issues ensued.

- The role of local government in reaching net zero targets was noted and initiatives such as the installation of more energy efficient boilers were welcomed. However, why had the Council adopted the target of 2030 to reduce its carbon emission to net zero which was 20 years before the Government's 2050 target? By doing this, was the Council investing in non-tangible projects which may not provide value for money rather than taking longer? Clarification was sought if these efforts would make difference to climate change.
- The Cabinet Member asked which projects the Member was referring to in order that a response could be given. She referred to the phrase "think local, act global"; as it was in everyone's interest to work towards a sustainable environment for future generation and action was needed to address climate emergencies now. It would be a dereliction of duty to "kick this into the long grass". She commented on those countries in the developing world which were suffering from the impact of climate change; be it plastic pollution or wildlife and habitat depletion, and the need for all countries to act.
- Further clarification was sought on what evidence was there that the Council's 2030 target would benefit climate change compared to 2040 or 2050. The Member also referred to climate team staff providing training on single-use plastics and if this should be delivered by managers. He asked for the number of staff in the team.

- In respect of the question about the evidential base that 2030 target would reduce the Council's carbon impact, the Strategic Director referred to the Cabinet Member's earlier response, by controlling things locally the Council could exercise its influence. It was noted that partners from both the public and private sectors had pledge to work towards reducing carbon emissions. The Climate Change Manager noted that the Council contributed 2% of total emissions in the Borough. However, the work to get to net zero was substantial, including decarbonisation of buildings and improvements to transportation system and how local people adapt to these changes.
- It was clarified that the climate team was a small team of three staff. The work of its manager was detailed in the report and action plan, including work with children and young people and the provision of training on carbon literacy. The Cabinet Member reiterated that the carbon literacy training was a specialist subject matter, requiring expert input. She clarified that it was not just focussed on single-use plastic but rather the impact of climate change and what mitigations should be made. She challenged the Member to undergo the training. She also referred to the Council's target to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 resulted from a motion to Council which was democratically agreed.
- The work with children and young people was welcomed, including the Youth Cabinet and projects linked to the Children's Capital of Culture. It was noted that there was an ongoing commitment to engage with children and young people.
- The importance of councils acting early to address the climate emergency was supported. A view was expressed that there should be greater investment in this area with additional staffing resources. The strategy was welcomed as comprehensive; however, it was suggested that it was more 'output-based' rather than focusing on outcomes. The Member was supportive of the actions taken but wanted to know if and how these were making a difference.
- The Climate Change Manager clarified that whilst she led a small team, there was a wider network of colleagues across each of the directorates who championed specific areas relevant to their area of work. She said that this activity would be captured in future reports. The Cabinet Member added that comparative work with other agencies had been undertaken to demonstrate outcomes, however, acknowledged that this was at an early stage of development.
- Further clarification was sought on the link between the targets in the action plan and priorities articulated in the Council Plan.



Specific reference was made to the reduction in emissions from the Council fleet which had not been achieved which was not reflected in the annual report. In response, it was noted that the introduction of an electric vehicles had taken longer than anticipated, including issues around infrastructure and supply. However, other steps to reduce the carbon footprint had been adopted to mitigate this.

- Councillor Bacon repeated his question about how the adoption of the 2030 would contribute to long term change compared with a later target. Also, he sought clarification how the impact of climate literacy training would be evaluated.
- It was outlined that many local authorities had adopted the 2030 target to articulate their ambition to tackle climate change and 'lead by example'. By doing this in Rotherham, work had been undertaken to understand specific challenges (for example building decarbonisation) and what resources were needed to work towards the target. In respect of the training, it was highlighted that each course was full, showing that it is wanted by staff to support their understanding of their role in meeting the Council's climate change targets. As the training had only been delivered recently, it was difficult to measure its impact. However, it was noted that staff had been delivering on actions such as sharing communications or working on specific initiatives.
- The Cabinet Member repeated that the Council adopted 2030 as its target, following the debate of a motion to Council in October 2019. It was important that action was taken to reduce emissions and invited the Climate Change Manager to clarify what the Council's 2% contribution to carbon emissions equated to. This was outlined that this equated to approximately 7800 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year; this had an impact of the atmosphere, the health of children and young people and the wider population. It was important that action was taken now for future generations.
- In respect of the earlier question about outputs, clarification was sought how the cycle lane scheme (particularly in the Broom Road area and on Sheffield Road) contributed to reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Examples were given of additional congestion as a result of building work which would lead to further pollution. How would these emissions be offset? Additionally, how would the modal shift from car to cycle be evaluated? The Member expressed doubt that passive exposure to cycling infrastructure would lessen car use. In her view, she felt frustrated that residents had not been consulted sufficiently on the route. She felt that the contribution of cycle routes to reductions in carbon emissions was misrepresented in the annual report as it did not provide sufficient evidence of how this would happen. She also asked if investment would be better spent on improving pedestrian routes to encourage more people to walk.

- In response, the Cabinet Member reiterated the need to reduce car use in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. She acknowledged that the modal shift to encourage more cycle or pedestrian journeys may take time, however, she supported this if it led to less pollution and improving health outcomes for children and adults with chronic respiratory conditions. She noted that as part of an earlier agenda item the South Yorkshire Mayor referenced that improvements to the public transport network would take time in order to introduce the necessary infrastructure. Likewise, she asserted that the benefits of cycle routes made not be realised immediately. The Cabinet Member firmly rejected that the information on cycle routes had been misrepresented in the report.

The Chair invited the Cabinet Member and officer to have further discussions outside of the meeting with Cllr Yasseen on the issues raised.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lelliott for her attendance at OSMB over the previous years.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Cabinet's approval of the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2 and the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report be noted.
2. That details of the carbon literacy training be circulated to Members in the new municipal year.
3. That consideration be given to how a greater emphasis can be placed on reflecting outcomes (rather than outputs) in future iterations of the Climate Emergency Annual Report.
4. That consideration be given to how relevant targets outlined in the Council Plan and those articulated in future Climate Emergency Annual Reports can be explicitly linked and referenced.

**117. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - NATURE RECOVERY**

The Chair invited Councillor Adam Tinsley, Vice-Chair of Improving Place Select Commission to introduce the Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Nature Recovery.

The Member outlined that Nature Recovery motion (agreed at the Council Meeting of 25 May 2022) committed the Council to a range of activities, including ensuring its response to tackling climate change was extended to compliment the aligned cause of nature crisis. It also committed the Council to continue its work to enhance biodiversity by adopting innovative approaches to support wild flowered areas and ecological approaches to grounds maintenance.

The review was undertaken by members of the Improving Places Select Commission following its referral from Council. It started its work in March 2023, concluding later in the year.

It was a wide-ranging piece of work which included visits to nature sites, discussions with groups and expert witnesses as well as presentations and discussions with officers to understand the challenges of nature recovery. The review also looked closely at the Environment Act and the enhanced duties for local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and report on their actions. Alongside this, it examined measures to address the impact of climate change and promote and protect biodiversity.

Councillor Tinsley put on record his thanks to everyone who shared their expert testimony. This included Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, members of the Rotherham Local Wildlife Sites Panel, South Yorkshire Police as well as RMBC's Green Spaces Team, Ecology and Climate Change staff.

He also thanked Katherine Harclerode for her work in supporting this review and wish her well in her future work since she left the Council.

The report detailed its finding in section 2.3 of the report. As part of its evidence gathering, Members were able to establish what action was being taken by the Council, community organisations and partners to achieve targets and uphold duties under the Environment Act 2021, as well as future challenges.

There were 12 recommendations in total which were outlined in the report. These included:

- That consideration to be given to what resources are required to coordinate the Council's response to the Environment Act 2021, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain, and other statutory reporting.
- Expanding the Councillor's role as nature champion
- How the RMBC 'estate' can contribute to the Council's obligations for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty
- Continue the positive work underway including tree planting, meadow management, changes in verge management, community engagement etc

The Chair invited comments and questions from Board Members and the following points were made:

Councillor Browne, who was part of the review group, asked that an additional recommendation be considered. He outlined that the timescales and process for setting up a community wildlife site was difficult. He asked

that consideration be given to how the process could be streamlined.

Reference was made to local residents supporting biodiversity in their local area and the hard work to safeguard these “little nuggets”. The additional recommendation was welcomed if it made it easier and more accessible for local communities to work with their elected members to secure sites.

The Chair thanked all members who took part in the review. She noted that because of the shortened year, the review would be submitted to the first meeting of the Cabinet scheduled for June 2024. It would be submitted to Improving Places Select Commission at its next meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That the report and the following recommendations be received with the addition of the recommendation 13):
  - 1) Consider what resources are required to enable RMBC to lead on the Nature Emergency and co-ordinate its response to the Environment Act 2021, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain, and other statutory reporting.
  - 2) In line with the RMBC Nature Crisis Motion (and the mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty), consider how RMBC’s response to the nature crisis can be implemented, reported, and resourced (taking note of the response to climate action).
  - 3) Consideration be given to the expansion of the Councillor’s role as nature champions. This to include:
    - a. How member stewardship of natural assets and geodiversity and be enhanced.
    - b. How nature recovery and climate action can be built into ward plans.
    - c. The involvement in overview and scrutiny in future monitoring and steering of this work.
    - d. Support through the Member Development Programme to ensure Members are equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake this activity.
  - 4) Contribute to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (including appropriate resourcing) detailing Rotherham’s involvement in meeting South Yorkshire national and global targets of “30 x 30” as required by the Environment Act 2021.
  - 5) Consider and plan for how the RMBC estate including all green and blue infrastructure such as allotments, cemeteries, parks and sports fields, amenity spaces, communal gardens, railway and highway verges, field margins and hedgerows, rights of

way and access routes, woodlands and nature reserves canals, rivers and other water dependent habitats; can contribute to biodiversity strategies and targets; demonstrating compliance with the Councils obligations for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (taking external advice where necessary).

- 6) Prioritise Local Wildlife Sites and Woodlands - especially those in RMBC ownership- to contribute to these targets, with a coordinated 'one council' programme to increase their positive conservation management with resourced management, monitoring and reporting.
  - 7) Continue and expand the positive work already underway including tree planting, meadow management, changes in verge management, community engagement etc (as stated in the RMBC Nature Crisis motion)
  - 8) Utilise appropriate evidence and information from the forthcoming Rotherham State of Nature report, alongside the forthcoming SYLNRS, and the agreed priority species lists, to set local species recovery targets and work plans, and ensure sufficient resources are secured to embed this approach in long term management opportunities.
  - 9) Continue to apply robust planning policies and other policy tools to contribute to nature's recovery across the Borough, noting that Local Planning Authorities must have regard to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published.
  - 10) Plan to work towards zero non-essential use of pesticides and zero glyphosate by the Council;
  - 11) Work with communities to support expansion of household composting, and supporting the development of nature rich gardens, including through awareness raising of the waste hierarchy and minimising the use of new and scarce resources and the associated impacts on the natural environment that these issues have; substantive resourcing and engagement plans will be essential.
  - 12) Work with partners, stakeholders, Parish Councils, communities, schools and residents on the above where appropriate.
  - 13) That consideration be given to how the process for the adoption of community wildlife sites be streamlined.
2. That the report, as approved, be forwarded to Cabinet for its consideration.
  3. That Cabinet is asked to formally consider its response to the above recommendations within two months of its receipt, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**118. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered its Work Programme. The Senior Governance Advisor outlined items to be referred to the work programme for the next municipal year.

- Bye-laws and life saving equipment
- Flooding (possibly with Improving Places Select Commission)

Consideration on the actions arising from the petition considered by Council on 28 February would be concluded prior to the end of the municipal year.

**Resolved:** - That the Work Programme be approved.

**119. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS**

The Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission made reference to the spotlight review on Preparation for Adulthood. Its recommendation would be submitted in due course.

The Chair of Health Select Commission thanked the Chair for holding the session on consultation. It was useful to hear a diversity of experiences and highlight good practice.

**120. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 MARCH 2024 TO 31 MAY 2024**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024. It was noted that the Cabinet Meeting scheduled for April and May 2024 had been cancelled.

**Resolved:** - That the Forward Plan be noted.

**121. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**122. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items, however as it was the Chair's final meeting, Councillor Pitchley put on record her thanks to Councillor Clark. She noted that she had led the committee through some challenging work and had been an exceptional chair.

Councillor Yasseen echoed this and thanked Councillor Clark for her hard work. She had really represented Rotherham's communities and had been at the heart of delivering to local people. The Chair had enhanced and embodied scrutiny values. Councillor Yasseen went on to thank officers and the Democratic Services team for their support.

Councillor Clark thanked each of the OSMB Members over her three-year tenure as Chair. She thanked Cabinet Members and officers for their attendance. She also thanked the Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Democratic Services, Governance Manager and Senior Governance Advisor for all their support. She felt that she was leaving scrutiny in a good place for the 2024 intake of elected members.

She wished everyone who was observing, a Ramadan Mubarak.

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

**Resolved:** - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10am on Wednesday 5 June 2024 at Rotherham Town Hall.

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 10 June 2024

**Report Title**

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy

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

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Nicola Curley – Strategic Director, Children & Young Peoples Service

**Report Author(s)**

Cary-Anne Sykes – Head of SEND, Children and Young People's Services

**Ward(s) Affected.**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

To support the future delivery of SEND services in Rotherham the report proposes to refresh the Rotherham SEND Strategy, vision and future priorities.

The report describes the changing regulatory expectations and current service position since the implementation of the previous SEND Strategy in 2019 and the conclusion of the Written Statement of Action following SEND Local Area Inspection in 2021. The report articulates a clear rationale for developing a new strategy.

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve consultation on the refreshed Rotherham SEND Strategy that has been co-produced with partners across the Borough.
2. Agree to the refreshed SEND Strategy being presented back to Cabinet in late 2024 for formal approval prior to implementation.

### **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Draft Rotherham SEND Strategy 2024 to 2028
- Appendix 2 Part A - Equality Analysis Screening
- Appendix 3 Part B – Equality Analysis Form
- Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

### **Background Papers**

- 1. Rotherham SEND Strategy [Rotherham-send-strategy](#)
- 2. Rotherham SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy 2020-2022  
[Rotherham Joint Commissioning Strategy 202022.pdf](#)  
[\(rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org.uk\)](#)
- 3. Rotherham All Age Autism Strategy.
- 4. Rotherham Early Help Strategy

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

**Council Approval Required**  
No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**  
No

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Following the joint local area SEND inspection in July 2021 partners in Rotherham have worked to deliver the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice. The Written Statement identified four key areas of development for the Borough:
- Quality of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
  - Communication of Local Offer
  - Preparation for Adulthood
  - Graduated Response
- 1.2 In September 2023 the Improving Lives Select Commission noted the feedback from advisors (DfE & NHSE) and successful achievement of the required improvements in the WSOA & successful discharge of priority actions.
- 1.3 The Department For Education White Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan published in March 2023 outlines the government's determination to level up opportunities for all children and young people – without exception. Rotherham is just as ambitious for children and young people with SEND as for every other child.
- 1.4 The National SEND review sets out government proposals for a system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy, and productive adult lives.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The White Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan published in March 2023 has identified the key pressures on the SEND System nationally. The system is dealing with a level of volume for which it was not designed. The volume challenge is compounded by a lack of mechanisms in the system that would enable need to be met and demand to be managed more effectively. Local government has the responsibility to commission and shape local provision yet lack the powers to develop and change systems, this has led to an increasing reactive use of the independent sector. The independent market is poorly regulated and is a "seller's market", with increasing placement and provision costs.
- 2.2 Rising costs and cumulative deficit continue to place pressure on Council budgets with a risk of increasing numbers of councils becoming insolvent. Some families' experiences of the system are negative and some young people's needs are not being met with life opportunities being damaged.

- 2.3 It is important that a refreshed vision and co-produced strategy for SEND services in the Borough is developed to reflect the changing environment and the current priorities for children, young people, parent/ carers and families in Rotherham. A period of consultation and further engagement will support this.
- 2.4 Co-production workshops and engagement with young people has highlighted the need for the new Rotherham SEND Strategy to be written in a format that enables the children and young people to see how it will impact their lives. The outcome of the co-produced development is reflected in the language used to in the 7 outcome statements:
1. I have a voice, and this is listened to and respected.
  2. I am as healthy as possible.
  3. I feel safe.
  4. I have help and support in a way that suits me.
  5. I have adults in my life who are supported to help me.
  6. I am supported to be as independent as possible and have a purposeful life.
  7. I belong and feel valued.
- 2.5 Measuring the impact of the Outcomes and the subsequent action plan will rely on services from health, social care, education and children, young people, and their families. The key performance indicators have been developed to ensure all key partners are active participants in the delivery of the SEND Strategy. The Strategy key performance indicators ensure the participation and engagement of the key partners are measured and evaluated and used to develop Service and practise across the Rotherham Borough.
- 2.6 Evidence from Rotherham Borough data has identified three areas that continue to have a significant impact on the health, well-being and educational access for Rotherham children and young people. It is proposed they will become the focus of priorities within the SEND Strategy and will be referred to as **commitments**.

The following 3 commitments have been identified as priority areas of practice development and monitoring:

1. Reducing the number of permanent exclusions and part time timetables for children and young people with special educational needs.
2. Reducing the number of disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs missing school due to health concerns, including mental health.
3. Having a clear process for engagement with children and young people, by promoting the engagement through Young Peoples Voice and participation Groups. Development of an engagement process with mainstream and special schools is currently underway, this will include the use multimedia platforms as well as in person sessions.

- 2.7 The refreshed vision and Strategy (appendix 1) will also complement and support delivery of both Council and partner strategic priorities including the Council Plan, Year Ahead Delivery Plan, and the Rotherham Place Plan.

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

#### **3.1 Option One – Retain the existing SEND Strategy:**

Extending the current strategy is not perceived to be viable as the current Strategy does not reflect the current regulatory and legislative landscape, nor the transformed Place partnership arrangements as part of the Integrated Care System.

Furthermore, this option does not reflect the current voice of children, young people, parents/ carers, and families.

#### **3.2.1 Option Two - Develop a Rotherham SEND Strategy (2024-2028)**

Option 2 is the preferred option as it would seek to develop a refreshed vision and strategy for SEND services. The Strategy would cover a 4-year term from late 2024. The Strategy would provide clarity about the co-produced vision and future priorities for SEND services, including the 'commitments' for practice development. The co-produced outcomes framework will enable children, young people, and families to understand the proposed impact of our actions and how this will be measured.

- 3.2.2 The Council develops its strategies and delivery plans in partnership with local people and ensures that they reflect the voices of our residents. This is integral to the expectations set by the regulatory framework.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The SEND Strategy has been co-produced with key stakeholders including children and young people and parents/ carers. Plans are in place to start a conversation with the wider population, this will include further conversation with parents, carers, children, and young people about how best they can be supported to achieve the co-produced vision and outcomes.

Consultation Events delivered with the Young Voices Group and Rotherham, Parent Carer Forum will enable young people, parent carers, leaders and front-line practitioners from health, education and care services including the private and voluntary sector, schools, and settings, to come together. The events will provide an opportunity to identify areas of strength when it comes to experience of SEND and co-production, as well as suggestions for further development of the Strategy.

- 4.2 The consultation process will use a combination of;

1. Electronic and Online Consultation
2. Paper Consultation made available in Schools, RMBC Buildings

3. Engagement Events, online and in person
  4. Consideration needs to be given to accessibility versions of the consultation documents, this will include language translation, Braille, and audio description.
- 4.3 Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) will be invited to scrutinise the summary of the consultation and any amendments proposed to the final draft strategy prior to Cabinet approval in December.

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

- 5.1
- Development of consultation and events – June 2024
  - Consultation Activity June 2024 – September 2024
  - Consultation Events September 2024
  - September 2024 Strategy Workstream develop Priority Action Plans
  - October 2024 work stream action plans shared with SEND Partnership Board
  - November 2024 Summary of Consultation to SEND Partnership Board
  - November 2024 Summary of Consultation and proposed Strategy with consultation amendments presented to ILSC
  - December 2024 Return to Cabinet with consultation amendments

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

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.
- 6.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from approving the link headings, outcomes, and indicators (as outlined in appendix 1) to enable the development of the SEND Strategy 2024 to 2028 that would be subject to an 8-week consultation.
- 6.3 A financial assessment of the priorities for supporting children and young people with SEND and expected outcomes within the SEND Strategy would be undertaken once the Strategy is developed. However, it is envisaged that any financial implications would be contained within available SEND resources across health, social care, and education (in the Council and ICB). It should be noted that the development of the SEND Strategy is against a backdrop of key financial and demand pressures facing the SEND system both locally and nationally such as: rising number of children and young people with SEND; increasing number requiring specialist support and provision; insufficient local provision to meet needs; cost of living and inflationary pressures; rising number of permanent exclusions in schools; etc.

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

- 7.1 The provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014 together with the guidelines set out in the SEN Code of Practice issued alongside the 2014 Act include the duty on the Council to keep under review the educational provision and the social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability; and outside

its area for such children and young people for which the Council has responsibility; and to consider the sufficiency of such provision. (Section 27 Children and Families Act 2014).

- 7.2 The Council is under a duty to set out a “Local Offer” indicating the range of educational health and care provision available in its area for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability and outside its area for such children and young people for whom the Council has responsibility where this may be needed. (Section 30 Children and Families Act 2014).
- 7.3 The 2014 Act requires the Council to make special educational provision for children and young people whose needs cannot be reasonably met from the resources normally available to schools and post-16 institutions.
- 7.4 Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to arrange suitable (normally) full-time education for children of compulsory school age who because of exclusion, illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made. Section 19 protected children often have special educational needs and disabilities, but the protection extends to any child of compulsory school age who is unable to attend school for any reason. Section 19 provision ends when a young person reaches school leaving age, but special educational provision and associated health and social care may continue until the young person reaches the age of 25 where the young person has special educational needs or a disability, under the 2014 Act, as detailed in the young person’s Educational Health and Care Plan maintained by the Council.
- 7.5 The adoption of a revised SEND Strategy is a fundamental contribution to the achievement by the Council of its complex shared duties to children and young people with special education needs and disabilities up to the age of 25 years, as well as other educationally vulnerable children of compulsory school age. Approval in accordance with option 1 will ensure that the development of the SEND Strategy is reviewed and maintained in accordance with statute and will ensure that the Council is able to remain compliant with the legal duties imposed upon it.
- 7.6 Maintaining the current SEND strategy will leave the Council open to legal challenger, in particular judicial review.
- 7.7 The proposed consultation of 8 weeks is sufficient. Section 27 Children and Families Act 2014 sets out full details as to who must be consulted when exercising the duty to keep education and care provision under review. The Council must comply with this to ensure that consultation has been properly carried out, a failure to do so will leave the Council open to legal challenge in terms of the consultation process.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct HR implications.

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

- 9.1 It is important that a refreshed vision and co- produced strategy for SEND services in the Borough is developed to ensure that services reflect the changing environment and the current priorities for children, young people, parent/ carers and families in Rotherham. Implications are considered throughout the report.
- 9.2 The strategy sets our ambition for services to ensure that more children and young people have the opportunity to access high quality provision and support from Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision within the Borough.
- 9.3 Approval of the consultation will provide children, young people and young adults with an opportunity to share their experience of SEND and co-production, giving them a key role in the further development of the Strategy.

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

- 10.1 Children and Young People with SEND are disproportionately represented across a range of education and inclusion measures. The SEND Strategy aims to ensure we have Ambition, Inclusion and Equity for the children, young people, and their families.

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

- 11.1 Implications have been outlined in Appendix 4.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1. The SEND Strategy development has been co-produced with all the relevant partners and voluntary sectors;
- Rotherham Parent Carer Forum
  - SENDIAS
  - Genuine partnerships
  - Special School representatives
  - Designated Medical Officer.
  - Social care and early help representatives
  - Mainstream School representatives.
  - Commissioners

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Lack on response to the engagement and consultation activity.
- 13.2 Relevant stakeholders do not support or engage in the action plan development and implementation.



**14. Accountable Officers**

Cary-Anne Sykes – Head of Inclusion

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	24/05/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	16/05/24
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	16/05/24

*Report Author: Cary-Anne Sykes, Head of Service, SEND*

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

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# Rotherham SEND Strategy: My Life, My Rights

## 2024-2028



## Contents

- 1. My Life, My Rights**
- 2. Working Together**
- 3. Rotherham Focus**
- 4. Voice of Children, Young People and Families**
- 5. What young People told us they want!**
- 6. Shared Outcomes Framework**
- 7. Useful Contacts**

DRAFT

## 1. My Life, My Rights

This Strategy, “My Life, My Rights”, sets our vision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Rotherham; It will drive forward the improvements that have already started across the local area and help all services in education, health, and social care to work together to make the required changes so that children and young people in Rotherham achieve the very best outcomes.

All children and young people in Rotherham deserve a high-quality education, with the health, care, and educational support that they need to flourish. The Rotherham local area is a complex system, but our collective workforce and the partnerships we hold with our children, young people and parent representatives are our strengths.

We have been listening to children, young people and their families and finding out what needs to change. Some parts of the system in Rotherham are working well and the experience of families is good. However, this is not the same for all children, young people and families, and there are a number of areas that we would like to improve.

We know that we can change and improve, and we are committed to deliver our vision for children and young people with SEND in Rotherham; the pledge and plans set out within this strategy will enable us to do that. We would like to recognise and personally thank all the young people pictured and featured throughout this strategy.

Councillor Victoria  
Cusworth

Cabinet Member for  
Children and Young  
People

Nicola Curley  
Director of  
Children’s Services

Jayne Fitzgerald  
Rotherham Parent  
Carer Forum

Claire Smith  
SY Integrated Care  
Board, Rotherham  
Place

**Rotherham is just as ambitious for children and young people with SEND as for every other child.**

### **Equity**

- We will ensure children and young people can access the high-quality support, services, and provision that they need to live a good life.
- We will raise the bar and raise standards so that everyone receives the very highest quality support and care.
- We will ensure there is good and outstanding provision for all children and young people, within or close to their local community.

### **Ambition**

- We will have high ambitions for every child and young person to develop to the full, starting in the earliest years and continuing throughout their life.
- We will provide choice and opportunity throughout every stage of life, but most notably at the end of formal education so that there are meaningful choices for living and employment for every young person.
- We will view education as an important pathway and part of a young person's journey, not the end destination.

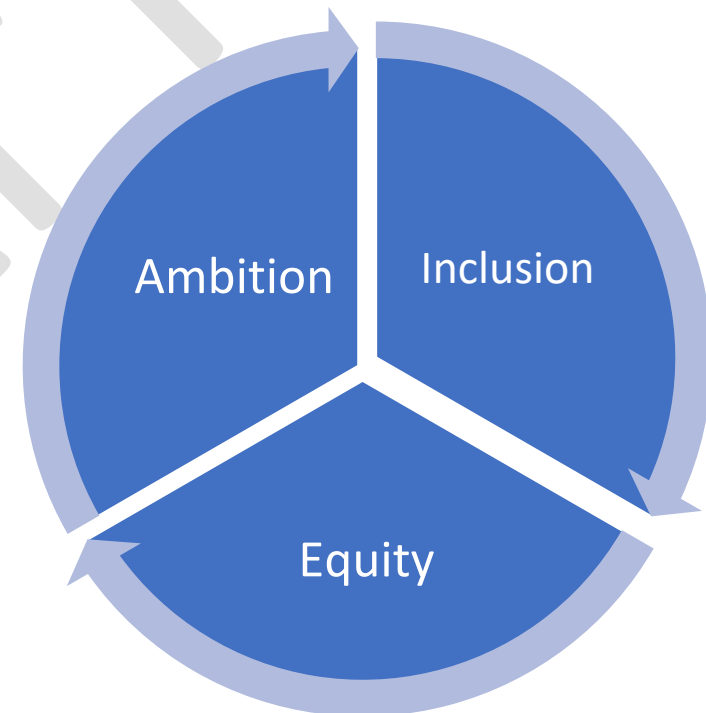
### **Inclusion**

- We will challenge non-inclusive practice, policy or behaviour and remove barriers so that opportunities are equally accessible to all children, young people and their families.
- We will position SEND at the heart of leadership so that education, health, and care meet the ever-changing needs of local communities.
- We will improve the Early Help offer so that families are aware of an access the universal and targeted support available

**Ambition:** Is this the best we can do?

**Inclusion:** Will this decision help to make things more inclusive?

**Equity:** Will this decision make things more equal?



## 2. Working Together

This strategy is a partnership strategy because in Rotherham we recognise that for children and young people to achieve their potential then all services need to work together with parents, carers, children, and young people being equal partners and their voices heard at all levels when planning and developing a SEND Strategy.

We will deliver this strategy using a workstream approach involving all key partners. The workstreams will report directly to the SEND Partnership Board on a termly basis. The SEND Partnership Board will collectively monitor and measure the impact of this strategy and actions using a qualitative and quantitative data dashboard developed around the Outcomes Framework. These plans will be made clear to children, young people, and their families with SEND in Rotherham through regular communication.

In Rotherham we have developed Four Cornerstones which we believe are essential for ensuring that good practice in working with children, young people, parents and carers is achieved these are:



We recognise that when these values are integrated into practice then trust is developed and progress in achieving outcomes for children and young people is made; without trust systems, partnerships, organisations and families cannot working together effectively and meaningful partnership work cannot be achieved. This strategy was developed following engagement facilitated by the Council for Disabled Children and is informed by the voices of children, young people and families, summarised by Rotherham Parent Carer Forum in section 6.

### 3. Rotherham Focus

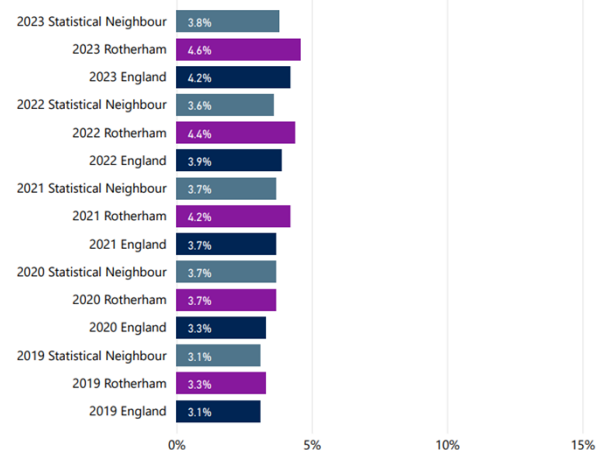
Rotherham has 57,453 children aged under 18 representing 21.7% of the local population (ONS, mid 2020), 23% of children live in low-income families (England 18%). There are 45,763 children and young people attending Rotherham's schools as at January 2024 School Census. 465 children in a maintained nursery school, 24,661 pupils in primary schools, 19,303 pupils in secondary schools, 1,194 pupils in special schools and 140 pupils in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

#### Increasing demand for specialist provision

There are a growing number of requests for Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment each year. Half of the special schools in Rotherham are regularly full or over their commissioned number and the alternative provision places at the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are close to capacity (January 2024).

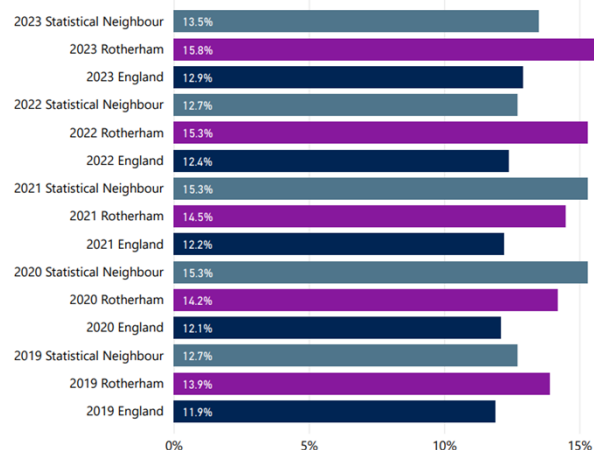
**EDUCATION EHCP Data** -The percentage of Rotherham school pupils with a reported EHCP compared to Rotherham's statistical neighbours and National averages.

EHCP Rotherham Pupil Comparison



**EDUCATION SEND Data** -The percentage of Rotherham school pupils with reported SEND support compared to Rotherham's statistical neighbours and national averages.

SEND Support Rotherham Pupil Comparison





## Education SEND Data - % Rotherham School Phase Pupils with SEN's by Primary Need.

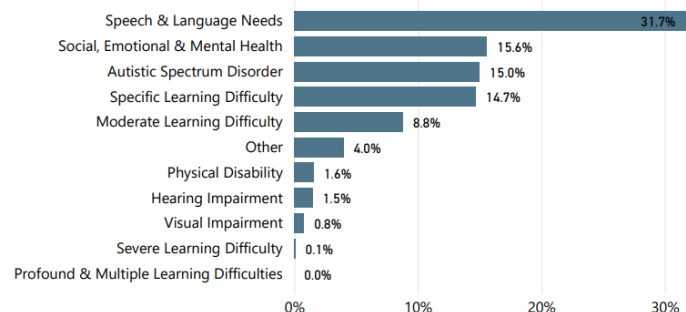
The graph reports the percentage of Rotherham school pupils in 2024 with SEND by their identified Primary Need.

Source Data: Spring School Census 2024

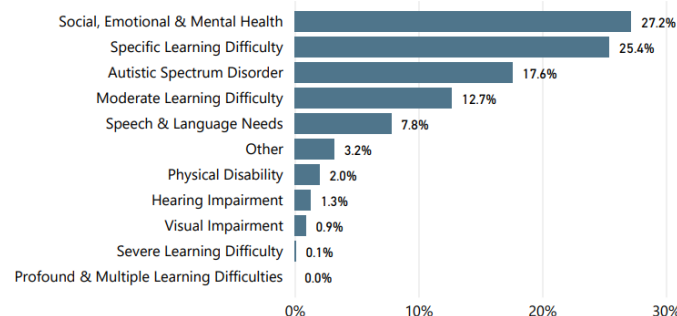
Time Period

2024

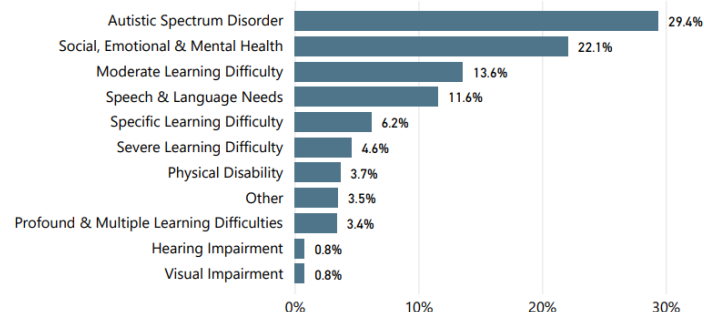
### Primary School - % Primary Need



### Secondary School - % Primary Need



### Special School & Pupil Referral Unit - % Primary Need



## Gaps in specialist education provision

Council investment in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) capital programme and resources (approved by Cabinet in 2015), supplemented by the Safety Valve Sufficiency programme (approved by Cabinet in 2021) is nearing completion. There has been a significant and incremental growth in Rotherham's special schools over the last seven years.

Despite this investment, there are still gaps in specialist education provision in Rotherham. Coupled with the number of schools at capacity, and those that have significantly more children and young people than their buildings can adequately accommodate, school places remain a challenge. The Council are working on a SEND Sufficiency Strategy to inform our future planning both in special schools and via specialist provision in mainstream schools.

More people are seeking assessment, diagnosis, and support for children's mental health, learning and developmental needs. 89% of Children and Young People in Rotherham wait longer than 18 weeks to access neurodevelopmental assessment (Q2 2023). Timely diagnosis of Autism is a high priority nationally and a key strand within The NHS Long-term plan, Rotherham's Autism Strategy and Rotherham Partnership's special educational needs and disabilities strategy. 69.5% of Young People aged 14+ are offered an enhanced GP health check (2022/2023).

Sleep issues are a common phenomenon in children and young people. It has been reported that 40% of all children and young people will experience sleep disorders at some time in their early lives. This percentage rises in children with Special needs particularly children on the autism spectrum and in Looked after Children. 80% of children in the Portage service have sleep disorders of some sort (Q2 2023).

The percentage of pupils with a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) in Rotherham has decreased from 2022 and stands at 2.0% for 2023 (1.8% below national average). The percentage of pupils identified with SEN support and achieving a GLD is at 28.3% (4% above the national average).

The percentage of pupils in Rotherham with SEND support meeting the required standard in the phonics screening check in 2023 stands at 50.9% which is 2.4% above the national average and is a 4.9% improvement from 2022 position.

The percentage of pupils in Rotherham with a EHCP meeting the required standard in the 2023 phonics screening check is at 21.1%, (1.3% above the national average) a 5.2% improvement in performance from 2022.

The percentage of Key Stage 1 Pupils identified with SEND support achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (EXS+ in R,W&M) combined is at 19.9% (0.8% below national average) 2.7% higher than 2022. The percentage of pupils in Rotherham with a EHC plan achieving the EXS+ in R, W&M combined has increased by 3.1% from 2022 with achievements at 6.5% (in line with the national average).

The percentage of Key Stage 2 Pupils in Rotherham with SEND support who have met the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (EXS+ in R, W & M) improved in 2023 by 1.1% to stand at 19.7% (3.9% below national average). The percentage of pupils in Rotherham with a EHC plan achieving the EXS+ in R, W&M increased by 0.7% in 2023 - now at 5.7% (2.7% below national average).

The overall Progress 8 measure has declined in 2023 and is below the national average for the fourth year. Progress of SEND support pupils in 2023 has improved from 2022 but is -0.01 below the national average for that group of children. However, progress of children with a EHCP has slightly decreased by 0.01 to stand at -0.99 but this is 0.14 above their national average counterparts.

The number of 16–24-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training is 56.3% (2022/2023).

#### **4. Voice of Children, Young People and Families**

Children, young people and their families in Rotherham do not experience equal access to a consistent, high-quality range of educational support, health services and specialist provision. Access varies too much depending on where families live, and the schools' children attend. Families tell us about the 'postcode lottery'.

We know that outcomes for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are not yet good enough.

Children wait too long to access health services for example therapy services and neurodevelopmental assessment.

Children, young people and their families have told us that they don't always feel included in their local communities and that they do not always have the same opportunities. This includes within the community, in some education establishments, for training and in the workplace.

Children, young people and families are not always confident that mainstream schools can meet their SEND needs. There are a growing number of requests for Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment each year. Half of the special schools in Rotherham are regularly full or over their commissioned number and the alternative provision places at the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are close to capacity (January 2024).

Preparation for adulthood does not always work well. Lots of young people and families do not feel well prepared to transition to adulthood.

## 5. What young People told us they want?



Evidence from Rotherham Borough data has identified three areas that continue to have a significant impact on the health, well-being and educational access for Rotherham children and young people. Our local area will be better if we address these three areas. It is proposed they will become the focus of priorities within the SEND Strategy and will be referred to as 'commitments'.

The following three commitments have been identified as priority areas of development and monitoring.

1. **Reducing number of permanent exclusions and part time timetables for children and young people with special educational needs.**
2. **Reducing number of disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs missing school due to health concerns, including mental health.**
3. **Having a clear process for engagement with children and young people.**

## I have a voice, and this is listened to and respected.

### All planning is person centred.

- Support is planned and delivered in a way that works for the child or young person. It is balanced to include what is important to the individual.
- Children, young people, and their families are involved in decision making in all matters that concern them and have greater choice and control over their support.

### Information is available and accessible.

- Children, young people, and their families can find the information they need, are able to make informed choices and navigate the system easily from the earliest years to early adulthood.

### Co-production with children, young people, and families.

- A wider and greater representation of children, young people and families are involved in strategic decision making and the coproduction of services, so that there is better fit between what children, young people and their families need and what is available.

## I have adults in my life who are supported to help me.

Parent carers, siblings, family, and others who support children and young people with SEND are well supported.

They can easily access support for themselves and for the child they care for, and do not need to repeat their story to get support.

## I am supported to be as independent as possible and have a purposeful life.

### Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years.

- Children and young people are supported and encouraged to build on their strengths and be ambitious for their next steps and their future. Those who support, teach and care for children and young people maintain focus on life skills, experience, and independence so that children and young people have a direction and purpose beyond formal education.

### High quality transitions.

- There is high quality, planned transitions between services, settings, and phases. Children and young people continue to progress at every move and are supported seamlessly by well thought out transitions, whether this is between services, settings, or phases.

### Preparation for employment.

- Young people are well prepared for their next steps and education, training and opportunities leads to employability for more young people with SEND.

### Meaningful opportunities beyond age 16.

Education settings, training providers, and employers demonstrate their commitment to equality and inclusion and offer positive opportunities to more young people, valuing and appreciating individual's differences and contributions. This means there are more (both amount and variation) of opportunities available to young people and there is something purposeful for everyone. For many this will mean employment; but for others this will look different. The aim must remain that there is a meaningful option for everyone.

## I belong and feel valued.

### Inclusive Education.

- All children have access to quality inclusive childcare to make an excellent start to their early education, development, and learning. All Rotherham education settings have an inclusive culture and children and young people receive the same high quality of offer, regardless of which school, college or setting they attend, regardless of where they live.

### Accurate identification of needs and intervention in schools, colleges, and Early Years settings.

- Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and there is early, evidence-based intervention to support them. Children, young people, and their families can access support and intervention without the need to wait for a formal diagnosis and without unnecessary delay.

### Effective SEN support

- SEN support is of an equal high standard across all education settings. Children and young people can attend their local education setting and feel confident that they will be fully included and have their needs met effectively. Children and young people's talents and strengths are at the forefront of all discussions. All planning and support think about the future of the whole person, and positively builds upon the unique strengths, talents, and personality of the individual.

### Joined up planning and support across education, health, and social care.

Every service plays their part and children young people, and their families experience high quality planning and provision from the most appropriate teams and services.

## I have help and support in a way that suits me.

### Inclusive Communities

- Children, young people, and their families can access the places they want to go and the things they want to do, alongside their friends and families in their local community. Children and young people will be made welcome, staff will be able to meet their needs and physical accessibility improves.

### Excellent Universal and Targeted Services

- Children, young people, and their families can find and access support that meets their individual needs without needing a referral or diagnosis and without being dependent on others.

### Specialist excellence in Rotherham

- The needs of all children and young people, including the most complex, can be met close to home from the earliest years, throughout the whole of their education and into employment. The local area will be able to offer sufficient school places for every Rotherham child.

### I am as healthy as possible.

#### Early identification and early support.

- Children, young people, and their families understand how to access support, receive good communication and have a positive experience from all services.

#### Clear pathways to access support and services.

- Children and young people's health needs, and importantly their mental health, are identified early and support is put in place at the earliest opportunity. Children and young people do not need to be in crisis before support is offered.

#### The right support, from the right people, at the right time

- Children and young people get the support that makes a difference and helps them make progress towards the outcomes that matter to them. There is good support available from universal, targeted and specialist services that meet the needs of families at the right time.

#### Support for wellbeing in all Rotherham educational settings

- The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is part of the life and work of schools and colleges and there is mental health expertise in every school and setting.

### Next Steps

- Develop focused SEND Strategy Working Groups with multi-agency membership.
- We will deliver our strategy using a workstream approach involving all key partners.
- Each workstream will have named co-leads from Education, Social Care and Health and the Parent and Carer Council. The workstreams will meet bi-monthly.
- They will report directly to the SEND Partnership Board on a termly basis.
- The SEND Partnership Board will review its terms of reference and identify the steps that we will take to collectively monitor and measure the impact of this strategy and actions using a qualitative and quantitative data dashboard.
- These plans will be made clear to children, young people, and their families with SEND in Rotherham through regular communication.

Existing Subgroup in place to deliver Written Statement of Action	Proposed SEND Strategy Working Group
1. EHCP Subgroup	1. Inclusion
2. Graduated Response Subgroup	2. Health and wellbeing
3. Preparation for Adulthood Subgroup	3. Independence
4. The Local Offer Subgroup	4. Voice and Participation

## 6. Shared Outcomes Framework

### How will we know if we're making a difference?

All Children and Young People in Rotherham with SEND and their families have their voices heard and this makes a difference to their experiences and outcomes.

A shared outcomes framework, developed across education, health and care services will help us to measure the difference we are making. It will set out 'indicators' of success for this strategy: improved learning, health, wellbeing, and participation outcomes for our children and young people. This will need to be flexible and potentially change, as new national standards for monitoring and inspecting SEND services are proposed. However, our preferred approach locally, mirrors the national proposals: we aim to focus on some key data, while also doing more to recognise the voices of children and families in evaluating our progress.

Outcomes	What this means	Key Performance Indicators	Target
<b>I have a voice, and this is listened to and respected.</b>	<b>All planning is person centred.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support is planned and delivered in a way that works for the child or young person. It is balanced to include what is important to the individual.</li> <li>- Children, young people, and their families are involved in decision making in all matters that concern them and have greater choice and control over their support.</li> </ul> <b>Information is available and accessible.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children, young people, and their families can find the information they need, are able to make informed choices and navigate the system easily from the earliest years to early adulthood.</li> </ul>	Numbers of children and young people with SEND attending groups that have a Voice and Influence remit (Genuine Partnerships data).	
		Number and % of EHCP audits that Incorporate the view of children and young people, parents, and carers (EHC Audit-Section A)	
		To increase the number of schools, services and settings who are engaging or have engaged with the Genuine Partnerships Four Cornerstones Approach.	
		To increase the number of Schools, settings and services who have been awarded the Charter Gold Accreditation.	
		Number of POET surveys completed annually and responses – <i>will be restarted from September 2024.</i>	

I am as healthy as possible	<b>Co-production with children, young people, and families.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A wider and greater representation of children, young people and families are involved in strategic decision making and the coproduction of services, so that there is better fit between what children, young people and their families need and what is available.</li> </ul>	Numbers of families accessing Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (RPCF dataset)	
		Number of overall visits to our Local Offer Site - new users to the site, number of engagement sessions on the site.	
		Child survey responses – <i>new indicator this will be introduced for 24/25 academic year.</i>	
	<b>Early identification and early support.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children, young people, and their families understand how to access support, receive good communication and have a positive experience from all services.</li> </ul> <b>Clear pathways to access support and services.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and young people's health needs, and importantly their mental health, are identified early and support is put in place at the earliest opportunity. Children and young people do not need to be in crisis before support is offered.</li> </ul> <b>The right support, from the right people, at the right time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and young people get the support that makes a difference and helps them make progress towards the outcomes that matter to them. There is good support available from universal, targeted and specialist services that meet the needs of families at the right time.</li> </ul> <b>Support for wellbeing in all Rotherham educational settings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is part of the life and work of schools and colleges and there is mental health expertise in every school and setting.</li> </ul>	% of services are delivered in the required time period (18 weeks) (SALT (Speech and Language Therapy), OT (Occupational Therapy), PT (physio Therapists) CDC (Child Development Centre)	18 weeks target
		Number of children with a Personal Health Budget	
		% of Education, Health, and Care Plans with written advice from a health professional within 6-week timescale	6 weeks target
		% of children receiving the 2-year-old health check	
		% of children and young people assessed in 2 weeks for a wheelchair	
		Increase % of young people aged 14 or over with learning disabilities offered enhanced GP Annual Health Checks (this info runs over a Financial Year - April to March and is cumulative over this time)	In line with National average



I have help and support in a way that suits me	<p><b>Inclusive Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children, young people, and their families can access the places they want to go and the things they want to do, alongside their friends and families in their local community. Children and young people will be made welcome, staff will be able to meet their needs and physical accessibility improves.</li> </ul> <p><b>Excellent Universal and Targeted Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children, young people and their families can find and access support that meets their individual needs without needing a referral or diagnosis and without being dependent on others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specialist excellence in Rotherham</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The needs of all children and young people, including the most complex, can be met close to home from the earliest years, throughout the whole of their education and into employment. The local area will be able to offer sufficient school places for every Rotherham child.</li> </ul>	% of young people with SEND who are EET -Education, Employment and Training (16 - 24 In learning and 20-24 in learning)	In line with National average
		Reduce the number of children and young people with EHCP's that are considered NEET.	
		Reduce the number and % of Fixed Term suspensions and Permanent Exclusions for SEN Support/EHCP children and young people.	In line with National averages
		Number / % of children and young people with EHCP's that are Elective Home Educated	
		Number / % of children and young people accessing Home to School transport.	
		Reduce the number of children and young people with SEND in Youth custody.	
		Absence and Persistent absence for children and young people with SEND (SEN Support and EHCP)	In line with National averages
		Monitoring of children and young people with SEND who are on Part-time timetabling and accessing AP provision- <i>new indicators for academic year 24/25.</i>	
		Number and % of children and young people with a EHCP who are attending: Mainstream Provision (this includes Post 16/ FE provision), Resource Provision and Specialist Provision – (Special Schools, PRU and ISP)	

		% of sections within the EHC Plans that have been audited as Compliant	
		<i>We will also monitor attainment outcomes for SEND children and young people which will be shared across all working groups</i>	<i>In line to National averages</i>
<b>I have adults in my life who are supported to help me</b>	Parent carers, siblings, family, and others who support children and young people with SEND are well supported.  They can easily access support for themselves and for the child they care for, and do not need to repeat their story to get support.	Number of children and young people with a Personal Budget in place	
		Increase the number of children and young people with SEND accessing more community activities.	
		Number of parents attending training via Rotherham Parent Carers Forum	
		% of parents and carers of disabled children and young people accessing carers assessments	
		% of cases from panel where graduated response evidence is rated as 'good '	
		% of Social Care advice received into the EHCP process within the required timescales (6 weeks' timescale)	6 weeks target
		% of EPS advice received into the EHCP process within the required timescales (6 weeks timescales)	6 weeks target
		Number of Quality Assurance visits completed– <i>this is for out of Borough provisions and in Borough provisions – new measure from September 24</i>	
<b>I am supported to</b>	<b>Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years.</b>	Number of young people referred into Adult Transitions Team.	

<p><b>be as independent as possible and have a purposeful life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and young people are supported and encouraged to build on their strengths and be ambitious for their next steps and their future. Those who support, teach and care for children and young people maintain focus on life skills, experience, and independence so that children and young people have a direction and purpose beyond formal education.</li> </ul>	% of SEND young people who are EET - Education, Employment and Training (16 - 24 In learning and 20-24 in learning)	In line with National average
	<p><b>High quality transitions.</b></p>	Increase the number of young people in Supported Internships across the borough	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is high quality, planned transitions between services, settings, and phases. Children and young people continue to progress at every move and are supported seamlessly by well thought out transitions, whether this is between services, settings, or phases.</li> </ul>	Number of Supported Internships that led to paid employment- <i>new measure from September.</i>	
	<p><b>Preparation for employment.</b></p>	To increase the % of Adults Transitions cases aged 17 and a half and over, who were referred to transitions prior to turning 18, who have a Care Act Assessment in place.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young people are well prepared for their next steps and education, training and opportunities leads to employability for more young people with SEND.</li> </ul>	To increase the % of Current Adults Transitions cases where the young person is aged between 16 yrs. 6 months and 17 yrs. 5 months (i.e. up to 1 year from turning 17 and a half), who have a care act assessment in place or a worker allocated	
	<p><b>Meaningful opportunities beyond age 16.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education settings, training providers, and employers demonstrate their commitment to equality and inclusion and offer positive opportunities to more young people, valuing and appreciating individual's differences and contributions. This means there are more (both amount and variation) of opportunities available to young people and there is something purposeful for everyone. For many this will mean employment; but for others this will look different. The aim must remain that there is a meaningful option for everyone</li> </ul>	Number of EHCP's that have been ceased through employment reason.	

<b>I belong and feel valued</b>	<b>Inclusive Education.</b>  All children have access to quality inclusive childcare to make an excellent start to their early education, development, and learning. All Rotherham education settings have an inclusive culture and children and young people receive the same high quality of offer, regardless of which school, college or setting they attend, regardless of where they live.	Numbers of children and young people with SEND attending groups that have a Voice and Influence remit (Genuine Partnerships data)	
		Number and % of EHCP audits that Incorporate the view of children and young people, parents, and carers (EHC Audits)	
		To increase the number of schools, services and settings who are engaging or have engaged with the Genuine Partnerships Four Cornerstones Approach.	
		To increase the number of Schools, settings and services who have been awarded the Charter Gold Accreditation.	
	<b>Accurate identification of needs and intervention in schools, colleges, and Early Years settings.</b>  - Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and there is early, evidence-based intervention to support them. Children, young people, and their families can access support and intervention without the need to wait for a formal diagnosis and without unnecessary delay.	Number of POET surveys completed annually and responses. – <i>will be restarted from September 2024.</i>	
	<b>Effective SEN support</b>  - SEN support is of an equal high standard across all education settings. Children and young people can attend their local education setting and feel confident that they will be fully included and have their needs met effectively. Children and young people's talents and strengths are at the forefront of all discussions. All planning and support think about the future of the whole person, and positively builds upon the unique strengths, talents, and personality of the individual.	Numbers of families accessing Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (RPCF dataset)	
	<b>Joined up planning and support across education, health, and social care.</b>  - Every service plays their part and children young people, and their families experience high quality	Number of overall visits to our Local Offer Site - new users to the site and numb of engagement sessions on the site	
		Child level survey responses – <i>new indicator this will be introduced for 24/25 academic year.</i>	

	planning and provision from the most appropriate teams and services.		
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6. Useful Contacts

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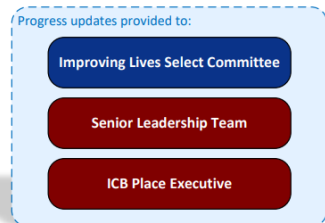
## **Appendices**

### Appendix 1: Links to other strategies

- All Age Autism Strategy
- Commissioning Strategy

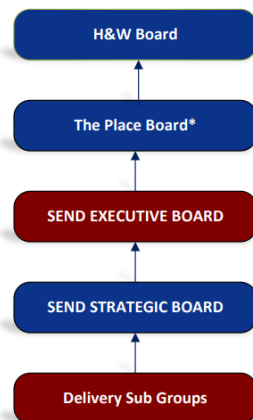
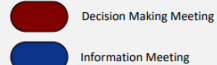
### Appendix 2: SEND Governance

## SEND Action Plan Reporting and Governance April 2024



\*Note: The Place Board and Improving Lives Select Committee will have a role in monitoring the progress of the implementation

### Key – Decision Making



### Appendix 3: Adult Learning Disability Partnership Board Members

- This needs a diagram.

### Appendix 4 – Funding and Risk Assessment

### Glossary of terms

SEND Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities

LA Local Authority

ICB Integrated Care Board

RFCF Rotherham Parent Carer Forum

SENDIASS Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information

Advice and Support Service

RHFT Rotherham Health Foundation Trust

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

BAME Black Asian Minority Ethnic

EAL English as an additional language

LD Learning Disability

ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASC Autistic Spectrum Condition

GP General Practitioner

EHC Education, Health, and Care

SEMH Social Emotional Mental Health

NHS National Health Service

### **Accessible information**

If you would like this document in an alternative format, please let us know. We can offer you large print or easy read, for example.

### **Logos**



RMBC

NHS Rotherham

Rotherham Parent carer Forum

Genuine Partnerships

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## PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

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

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

### 1. Title

**Title: SEND Strategy 2024 to 2028**

**Directorate:**

**Service area:**

**Lead person:**  
Cary-Anne Sykes

**Contact:**

Is this a:

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

**If other, please specify**

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

Our Rotherham SEND Strategy 2024-2028 development is being supported by the Children for Disabled Council (CDC). This strategy is being co-produced with children and their families, involves all partner agencies in Rotherham who have responsibilities for commissioning and providing services for children and young people with SEND including local authority services, education settings, health providers and the voluntary and community sector. The Strategy will set out our local area vision and priorities for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, and how we will work together to deliver these over the next four years.

The strategy will apply to all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or receive SEND Support. It is set within the challenging context outlined in the Department for Education's (DfE) SEND Green Paper: Right Support; Right Place; Right Time, published in March 2022 following a national SEND Review.

We are committed to supporting all our children and young people to have the best possible outcomes so that they go on to have fulfilling lives, living healthily and as independently as possible. This strategy will sit alongside our Early Help Strategy and SEND Sufficiency Plan and will align with other strategies as they are refreshed and developed including our Joint Commissioning, Co-production, and Autism strategies.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

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

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

*(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)*

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

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

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

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

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




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

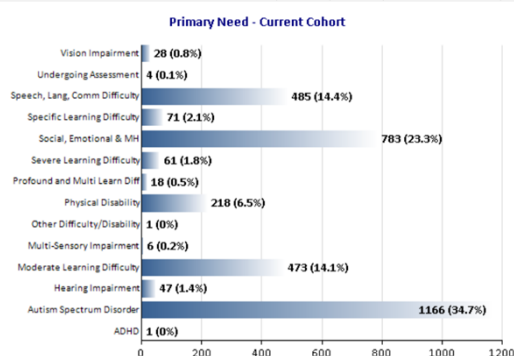
Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

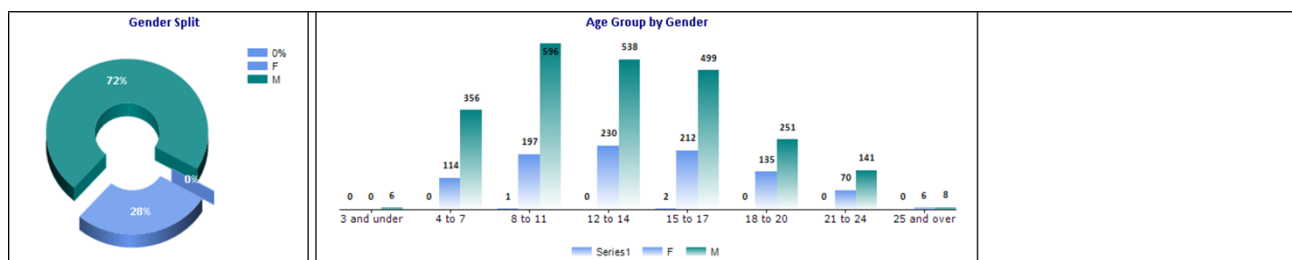
- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

To inform the SEND Strategy, engagement activity with partners was undertaken. The development of the revised Strategy has involved collaborative working across Rotherham's key stakeholders.

The Insight data dashboard breaks down equality and diversity information, gender, age, ethnicity, and primary need and this has help develop the outcomes and indicators for the Strategy.

Ethnicity Profile	No.	
 BME	497	14.8%
 White British	2772	82.5%
 Not yet obtained	93	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3362</b>	<b>100%</b>





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

### • Key findings

Rotherham's SEND Strategy supports some of the most vulnerable children, young people, and families in Rotherham.

The draft four-year SEND Strategy 2024-2028 is a partnership approach to early identification, and support in Rotherham. It will aim to deliver better outcomes for children, young people, and families across Rotherham by ensuring that support is provided to all children and young people and their families, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of help and support.

The outcomes and indicators will aim to improve how services will work together.

1. Consideration needs to be given to whether the indicator is telling us anything about the experience of children and young people and/or parents and carers – is the measure an indication of the outcomes the local area are looking to achieve?
2. Following the development of the new outcomes for Rotherham, it's important to know which direction is positive or negative for those indicators aligned to each outcome – this will then give confidence to the system that when the numbers change, it is known if the work happening is having a positive or negative impact on children and young people.
3. Ensuring there is a focus on making the important measurable, not the other way around.

### • Actions

Further Equality Impact Analysis will be completed as required as part of the development, consultation process and action planning associated with the Strategy. A range of approaches will be used to ensure that children, young people, and families play a key part in the evaluation of the strategy. Service users have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery as well as frontline staff, partner agencies.

Continued engagement with the RPCF

- Continue to ensure that consultation and engagement with the service users is embedded in all SEND action plans.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

April 2024

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:

23/04/2024

Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Cary-Anne Sykes Head of Service SEND
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### 5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Nicola Curley	Director of Children's Services	

### 6. Publishing

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

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

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

Date screening completed	23/04/2024
Report title and date	
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	

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## PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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

This form:

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

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

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

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: SEND Strategy 2024-2028	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 23/04/2024	
Directorate: CYPS	Service area: SEND
Lead Manager:	Contact number:
Is this a: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other  If other, please specify	

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

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Helen Sweaton	RMBC	Assistant Director
Cary-Anne Sykes	RMBC	Head of Service
Julien Kramer	RMBC	Interim Assistant Director

**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 SEND Service is an essential component of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) delivery model for Children's Services.

The strategy will apply to all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or receive SEND Support. It is set within the challenging context outlined in the Department for Education's (DfE) SEND Green Paper: Right Support; Right Place; Right Time, published in March 2022 following a national SEND Review.

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

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

Equality information is available through the following sources:

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

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

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

- The population of Rotherham is 265,800 (Census data, 2021)
- There are 125 schools in Rotherham.
- The percentage of children and young people who are eligible for free school meals is 11,621 — or 68% (Data as of July 2022)
- Rotherham ranks as the 35th most deprived upper tier local authority in England out of a total of 151 upper-tier local authorities (Index of multiple deprivation 2019 by LSOA)
- 20.4% of pupils in Rotherham (9,325) have identified SEND needs compared to 17.1% nationally (Spring School Census 2023)

### **11926 (as of 23/04/2024) Children and Young People with SEND in Rotherham**

- **3367 have an open ECHP**
- **8560 receive SEN support**

Of the children open to the service 7572 are male or identify as male, and 4417 are female or identify as female

Ethnicity	Count
A1 - White British	9789
C2 - Pakistani	566
A3 - Any other White background	300
A5 - Gypsy / Roma	297
B2 – White and Black African	230
B3 - White and Asian	148
White and Black Caribbean	127
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	116
B4 - Any other mixed background	91
E4 - Information not yet obtained	87
C4 - Any other Asian background	78
E2 - Any other ethnic group	75
C1 - Indian	40
E3 - Refused	36
E1 - Chinese	25
D3 - Any other Black background	23
A2 - White Irish	16
Bangladeshi	6

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

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

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

**No**

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

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

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

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

- Continue engagement with the Parent Carer Forum
- Continue to ensure that consultation and engagement with the service users is embedded in all aspects of the Strategy and to engage with service users regarding their ECHP's.

<p><b>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p> <p><i>7<sup>TH</sup> December 2023. 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024</i></p>	<p>To inform the SEND Strategy a consultation and engagement activity through co-production workshops was undertaken. The core aim of this was to consult on the outcomes of this strategy to give children and young people the opportunity to feedback to make sure the outcomes are right for them.</p> <p>Leading on from this, a comprehensive and engagement activity will be undertaken. The development of the revised Strategy will involve collaborative working across Rotherham's key stakeholders.</p> <p>Following approval of the outcomes and key performance indicators the draft SEND Strategy will be completed with the support from the CDC. This will be followed by a 12-week consultation process.</p> <p><b>FINDINGS:</b></p> <p>Feedback from the young people we have engaged with (Guiding Voices and School Engagement), identifies this does not always happen and when it does, they do not always feel their thoughts and feelings are included in their aspirational outcomes.</p> <p>The co-production workshops and engagement with young people highlighted the need for the New Rotherham SEND Strategy to be written in a format that enables the children and young people to see how it will impact their lives. The outcome of the co-produced development is reflected in the language used to in the 7 outcome statements.</p> <p><b>FUTURE:</b></p> <p>Following approval of the outcomes and key performance indicators the draft SEND Strategy will be completed with the support from the CDC. This will be followed by a 12-week consultation process.</p>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s)consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Rotherham Strategy Development Workshop in Developing the SEND Outcomes Framework and SEND Strategy. <i>(7<sup>TH</sup> December 2023. 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024)</i></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 SEND Service covers a wide range of need and includes working directly with different communities and groups. However, some need is universal and not unique to protected characteristics (e.g., parenting). Delivery of the proposed Strategy will support the service to take account of cultural differences and strengths, and the unique circumstances of some young people and families in Rotherham.

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

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

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

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

Children and young people of Rotherham will be provided with a clear engagement process. As such, access to several engagement forums, through their schools, Voluntary organisations, school, and the Guiding Voices group will give children the opportunity to feedback into the service so that service provision can be effectively tailored to their needs.

Children and young people have already provided valuable feedback on the outcomes and the key performance indicators so that they can be easily understood by children and their families.

**What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?** (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

The SEND Strategy 2024-2028 will ensure that the service continues to work with the specific specified groups identified through the Protected Characteristics and does not differentiate between different groups.

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: SEND Strategy 2024-25</b>
<b>Directorate and service area: Childrens – Education and Inclusion</b>
<b>Lead Manager: Cary-Anne Sykes</b>
<b>Summary of findings:</b>
The SEND Strategy 2024-2028 will ensure that the service continues to work with the specific specified groups identified through the Protected Characteristics. Anticipated Impact will be low.
SEND services in Rotherham will continue to develop through the delivery of this strategy which will improve the accessibility SEND provision, the way the system works together, and workforce.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Complete and submit SEND Strategy	A, D, S, RE, RoB, PM, C, O	
Cabinet Paper Approval	As Above	
Implementation of the 4 Year Delivery Plan	As Above	

Approval for the identified outcomes and key performance indicators to inform the action plan and move forward to a period of Borough wide 12-week consultation period on completion of the SEND Strategy draft document	As Above	
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**\*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups**

## 6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Nicola Curley	Strategic Director Children and Young People's Services	May 2024
Julien Kramer	Assistant Director Education and Inclusion	May 2024
Helen Sweaton	Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Quality	May 2024
Cllr Victoria Cusworth	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	May 2024

## 7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

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

A copy should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.



<b>Date Equality Analysis completed</b>	May 2024
<b>Report title and date</b>	SEND Strategy May 2024
<b>Date report sent for publication</b>	May 2024
<b>Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	May 2024

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# Appendix 4

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>	Increase in emissions	There may be a small increase in emissions where school extensions are built. The proposed new SEND resources will be a mixture of repurposed existing space in existing school buildings and small extensions to existing buildings.		<p>Adaptations to existing buildings / extensions to existing buildings to create the additional SEND capacity across the borough will be completed to current building code and overseen by asset management service.</p> <p>Emissions from non-domestic buildings could be mitigated by repurposing existing school buildings where possible.</p>	<p>Monitoring of transitions of pupils will be facilitated and monitored via EHCP process / SEND protocols. The local governing bodies will also hold oversight of the establishment and running of the new provisions.</p> <p>The council has the ability to monitor the energy use of the majority of the schools included in the scheme – these can be monitored as scope 3 emissions.</p>
<b>Emissions from transport?</b>	Impact unknown	There may be some variations to journey travel for children with SEND to enable them to attend the new provisions. Some journey's may increase and others decrease. Transport journeys will be evaluated by	<p>Pupils travel to school in line with their EHCP / travel to school plan.</p> <p>Any changes to school placement are determined via the EHCP process / placement in a SEND resource and</p>	Mitigating measures are considered via the individual pupil's travel to school plan and monitored by the Transport team.	<p>Transport to school arrangements are kept under review by the Corporate Transport Unit.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring / assessment by Transport Unit.</p>

		<p>RMBC Corporate Transport Unit and EHCP team.</p> <p>There will be a short-term increase in emissions from staff travel conducting consultation activities.</p>	transport implications considered at that point.	<p>The impact on emissions from consultation activities could be minimised by staff travelling to consultation activities via walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing.</p>	<p>Emissions from staff travel are monitored by the Council's Climate Change Team.</p>
<b>Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?</b>	No change	<p>There will be no change in the overall amount of waste generated by schools overall compared to present.</p> <p>There may be some construction waste generated during refurbishment or construction works.</p>	Waste levels across the borough will remain at similar levels to present.	<p>Schools have a waste management process</p> <p>Construction waste to be minimised and appropriately segregated for recycling.</p>	<p>Impact will be monitored by the school governing body and LA.</p>
<b>Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Emissions from construction and/or development?</b>	Increase in emissions	<p>The proposed new SEND resources will be a combination of refurbished existing school space and small school expansions and designed to existing building code.</p> <p>There will be some short term impact during development phase. This will be overseen by Asset Management Service.</p>		<p>Construction emissions will be minimised by making adaptations to existing buildings, where possible.</p> <p>Work will be planned and overseen by Asset Management Service.</p>	<p>Monitoring will be coordinated by Asset Management Service and Governing Bodies.</p>

<b>Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?</b>	No change	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:</b>					
None					

<p><b>Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:</b></p> <p>There will likely be some changes to emissions as a result of the strategy which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase to emissions from non-domestic buildings are likely as new extensions are constructed to support SEND provision. This could be mitigated by opting to repurpose existing buildings where possible.</li> </ul> <p>Changes to transport emissions are not known at this time, as some pupils' journeys may increase while others decrease. Transport implications of school transport arrangements are kept under review by Corporate Transport Unit. There may be a small increase to staff transport emissions from travelling to consultation events, which could be mitigated by staff using lower carbon transport options. There may be some short-term increases in waste during construction works which could be mitigated by waste minimisation and segregation.</p> <p>There will also be some short term increases in construction emissions which again could be mitigated by repurposing existing buildings where possible.</p>
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<b>Supporting information:</b>	
<b>Completed by:</b> (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Cary-Anne Sykes Head of Service SEND
<b>Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].</b>	
<b>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.</b>	
<b>Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]</b>	CIA267 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 10 June 2024

**Report Title**

Finance Update

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

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

**Report Author(s)**

Rob Mahon – Assistant Director Financial Services

Rob.Mahon@rotherham.gov.uk

Natalia Govorukhina – Head of Corporate Finance

Natalia.Govorukhina@rotherham.gov.uk

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This report provides an update to Cabinet on a number of financial matters. The report is provided as an interim update for Cabinet, following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 report at Council on 28 February 2024 and in advance of the Financial Outturn 2023/24 report and May Financial Monitoring 2024/25 report to be submitted to Cabinet in July 2024.

This report also provides an update on the Council's administration of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payments, Household Support Fund 2023/24 and proposals for 2024/25 along with several Capital Programme variations.

**Recommendations**

1. That the update on the revenue budget financial outturn 2023/24 be noted.
2. That the Councils progress on the delivery of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment 2024/25 be noted.
3. That the Councils delivery of the Household Support Fund 2023/24 be noted.

4. That provisional allocations of the Household Support Fund Grant 2024/25 of £2.489m be agreed as detailed in Section 2.5 of this report.
5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, 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 provisional allocations.
6. That Cabinet approve the capital budget variations as detailed in Section 2.6 of the report.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1: Equality Screening

Appendix 2: Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 to Council on 2 March 2023

December Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet 12 February 2024

Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 to Council on 28 February 2024

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

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No



## **Finance Update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report is provided to update Cabinet on a number of financial and budget matters following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 report at Cabinet on 12 February 2024 and at Council on 28 February 2024.
- 1.2 The report is an interim update to Cabinet in advance of the more detailed Financial Outturn 2023/24 and Financial Monitoring 2024/25 reports which will be submitted to Cabinet on 8 July 2024.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Revenue Budget Financial Outturn 2023/24**

- 2.1.1 The Financial Outturn 2023/24 report to Cabinet in July 2024 will set out the full details of expenditure against budget for 2023/24, revenue and capital, along with an updated analysis of revenue reserves and an updated position of the Capital Programme.
- 2.1.2 The Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24 submitted to Cabinet on 12 February 2024 was based on the financial monitoring position as at December 2023, which outlined that the Council anticipated an overspend of £1.2m. This forecast position was also outlined in the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 report which was submitted to the same Cabinet meeting and also to Council on 28 February 2024. The overspend was to be funded from Reserves as approved at Council as part of the Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 report though the report noted the Council's intention was to further improve that outturn position, if possible, which would see a lower value call on Reserves.
- 2.1.3 The financial monitoring final outturn position reflects an overspend of £0.1m for the financial year 2023/24. The core directorates services had a final overspend of £8.8m. The directorate overspend was partially offset by the £5m corporate budget risk contingency held within Central Services approved within the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24. Taken with savings delivered from the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the final underspend in Central Services was £8.7m, which reduced the Council's overall outturn to a £0.1m overspend. This was an improvement of £1.1m from the December Financial Monitoring reported to February Cabinet as service areas delivered savings ahead of year-end, improvements in income were recognised and the Council generated further savings in Treasury Management.

2.1.4 The main reasons for the improvement in the Directorate outturn position are as follows, though more detailed narratives will follow in the Financial Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2024:

- Children & Young People Services' overspend for the year of £4.6m is consistent with the position reported at December 2023. The main pressures are LAC placement costs and home to school transport. Work to reduce placement pressures is ongoing. The reported position is inclusive of recovery plan savings implemented since Autumn 2023 totalling £1.7m and achieved without adverse impact on services.
- Adult Care, Housing & Public Health overspend has reduced by £0.1m, as additional grant income was received in respect of homelessness prevention.
- Regeneration and Environment Services final outturn overspend has decreased, with a final outturn of £4m, £0.5m lower than December's forecast. The main improvement was delivery of additional income within the asset management service through capital recharges on significant capital schemes ahead of forecast. There were also directorate wide improvements across staffing budgets through vacancies and additional PFI income.
- Assistant Chief Executive underspend increased by £0.2m due to vacancy control and maximisation of grant usage to support the overall Council position without adversely impacting service delivery.

2.1.5 Central Services delivered an underspend of £8.7m consisting of the £5m corporate budget risk contingency approved within the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24, along with savings made in year from the Treasury Management function. These savings have arisen as a result of continuing high interest levels and the Councils Treasury Management Strategy, which has been to reduce cash balances across 2023/24 to prevent any need to borrow whilst rates are high and investing surplus cash in the current high interest market.

2.1.6 The improvement in the treasury outturn position is linked to:

- Slippage on the Capital Programme that has reduced the need to borrow during 2023/24.
- The PWLB borrowing of £227m in 2021/22 meant that the Council did not need to borrow until December 2023 and up to this point had more liquid cash available for investments.
- The Council carrying cash balances due to above, has been able to invest them in a higher interest return market, increasing interest on investments.

2.1.7 The improvements in the Directorate forecast outturns represent a positive direction of travel for the Council's finances and a significant improvement

from the £1.2m forecast overspend reported in the December Financial Monitoring to Cabinet in February. This prudent financial management will be important in managing future budget pressures given the known volatility in external factors and key financial challenges that were highlighted in the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25. This improved position means the Council's Reserve balances also remain stronger than had been projected when setting the 2023/24 and 2024/25 revenue budgets, this helps to ensure the Council has a robust financial position.

- 2.1.8 In addition, the Council is able to report secured delivery of planned savings for 2023/24. The table below provides an update on the total amount of savings that were delivered during 2023/24. As can be seen the overall delivery is £54k more than planned due to over delivery in F&CS.

Table 1: Delivery of Savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 Budget and MTFs

Directorate	2023/24 Plan (Total Permanent and Temporary)	2024/25 & Total delivered	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
ACHPH	1,224	1,224	-
CYPS	1,348	1,348	-
R&E	1,161	1,161	-
FCS & ACX	611	665	54
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>4,344</b>	<b>4,398</b>	<b>54</b>

- 2.1.9 The table below shows the ongoing delivery of savings that were approved in previous updates to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy but have been re-profiled for delivery in 2023/24 onwards. These have also been RAG rated to reflect their deliverability and the achievability of generated required value of saving.

Saving	Plan		Delivered		Variance	
	2023/24	2024/25 & FYE	2023/24	2024/25 & FYE	2023/24	2024/25 & FYE
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Customer & Digital Efficiencies	300	300	300	300	0	0
Restructure of CYPS Management	94	94	94	94	0	0
CYPS Placements savings/cost reductions	3,619	6,291	1,500	1,500	-2,119	-4,791
Waleswood - increased income and efficiencies	59	81	-	-	-59	-81
<b>Property Services:</b>						
Review of shared occupation with partners	30	30	-	-	-30	-30
Post Covid Operational Property Review - savings from disposal options	221	221	24	-	-197	-221
Balance to be identified	78	78	-	-	-78	-78
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>4,401</b>	<b>7,095</b>	<b>1,918</b>	<b>1,894</b>	<b>-2,483</b>	<b>-5,201</b>

- 2.1.10 Customer and Digital savings have now been secured and allocated to services. The CYPS management restructure savings proposal of £94k has been delivered.

LAC placement savings within CYPS have not been delivered due to the following factors:

- Increase in external residential care placements, with planned step downs not being achieved and 12 additional residential placement admissions over the budget profile;
- In-house residential programme is 9 months behind planned schedule due to issues with the purchase and adaptation of appropriate properties;
- Reductions in IFA placements above planned level due to insufficient IFA carers available in the marketplace and consequently, children are being placed in costly residential placements.

LAC placement projections for 2024/25 are currently being reviewed with operational leads which would give a clearer position on the timeframe for delivering this saving in full.

- 2.1.11 The Waleswood additional income savings were not delivered following assessment of the income forecasts once the main summer season had concluded. The operational buildings savings programme is progressing well with a number of opportunities identified. However, full delivery of these savings was not achieved in 2023/24 but should be secured in 2024/25 and the programme of reviews will continue so it is expected the saving will be overachieved.
- 2.1.12 The economic climate during 2023/24 has been turbulent. Inflation has reduced significantly since March 2023, falling from 10.1% in March 2023 to 3.2% in March 2024. The sharp fall in headline inflation was driven in part by

a reduction in energy regulator Ofgem's price cap, reflecting lower wholesale gas prices. Slowing food price inflation also helped bring the headline number lower. However, this doesn't mean that prices are falling, just that the rate of increase is slowing as higher prices become embedded in the Council's base costs. The overall reduction has helped support the Council's Budget for 2024/25 but the position will continue to be closely monitored. These financial challenges are being regularly reviewed as part of the Council's ongoing Medium Term Financial Planning.

## 2.2 CYPS Fostering Allowances and Skills Payments 2024/25

2.2.1 Fostering Allowances are statutorily uplifted annually each year by Government and for 2024/25 the confirmed uplift rate (at December 2023) is 6.88%. This uplift will result in an increase in the following payments: Foster Care Allowances, Special Guardianship Orders, Child Arrangements Orders and Adoption Allowances. The total uplift cost is estimated at £660k. Overall, this compares favourably to the inflation cost £881k agreed for 2023/24, which was based on a 12.43% NMA uplift. It should be noted that the impact of the uplift cost in 2023/24 should have been higher as the 12.43% uplift was not applied to the 11-15 and 16+ age bands (as RMBC rates were already above the NMA rates).

2.2.2 In addition, it was agreed at Cabinet in October 2022 that the skills payments annual uplift would also be uplifted at the same rate as the Fostering Allowances. As a result, skills payments would be uplifted in 2024/2025 by 6.88% at a cost of £118k. An officer decision was recorded for this uplift in May 2024.

2.2.3 In addition to the above, budget provision was made for inflation on CYPS LAC placement costs. However, actual uplifts including Independent Fostering Agencies and external residential care homes are still to be confirmed. Early indication is that inflation uplift cost would be higher than the budget provision therefore likely to create a budget pressure for 2024/25. At present the wider impact is therefore unknown but will be closely monitored through the Council's management of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## 2.3 Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme 2024/25

2.3.1 Council approved as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report on the 28 February 2024, continuation of Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme to run during 2024/25. The scheme will provide an additional award during 2024/25 of up to £121.96 additional support to low income households most vulnerable to rising household costs, through reduced Council Tax bills. The application of the scheme includes all those becoming eligible up to and including 31 March 2025. At the time of writing a total of £1.486m has been awarded across 14,632 accounts, with 12,681 of these accounts being reduced to nil. Those bill payers in receipt of this award have been provided

with a Council Tax bill that shows the top up support from the Council along with a letter explaining the reason for the award.

- 2.3.2 The estimated scheme costs are between £1.7m and £1.9m. As agreed in the Budget Report to Council 28 February 2024, this will be funded by use of two reserves, £1.2m Local Council Tax Support Grant Reserve and £0.7m Collection Fund Income Guarantee Grant. The actual cost won't be known until the end of the 2024/25 financial year. A further extension to the Household Support Fund has since been announced, for the first six months of the year. The HSF could potentially be used to part fund the financial impact of the LCTS Top Up scheme.

## 2.4 Household Support Fund 2023/24

- 2.4.1 The Council was awarded a full year HSF grant for 2023/24 of just under £5m. This was to support vulnerable households with energy, food and other cost of living pressures.

- 2.4.2 As of 31 March 2024, the Council had fully spent this grant allocation, delivering nearly 165,000 Free School Meals vouchers across the school holidays up to and including Easter 2024. HSF contributed over £0.5m to the delivery of the Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme supporting 2,000 households with £250 towards their fuel bills. Care leavers were supported with nearly £90k of HSF covering energy and food costs. Over 15,000 households received extra support towards their Council Tax bills and over 900 were supported with housing costs. In addition, VCS provision supported vulnerable households over Christmas and the New Year, and contributed to the range of food available in crisis food parcels. This provided support to 585 families over Christmas / New Year and the delivery of 15,669 crisis food parcels over the full year.

## 2.5 Household Support Fund 2024/25

- 2.5.1 The Council has been allocated a total of £2.489m from the Household Support Fund for the period of April to September 2024. Following the experience of previous allocations of this fund, it is proposed that the Council will support a wide range of low-income households and is not limited to those in receipt of benefits. There is flexibility within the fund to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply discretion when identifying eligibility.

- 2.5.2 HSF guidance makes specific provisions for use of the fund. These are:
- Energy and water.
  - Food, whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
  - Essentials linked to energy and water – household goods.
  - Wider essentials not linked to energy and water including meeting bills.

- Advice services supplementary to other provision.
- Housing costs taking account of the risk of homelessness and other local factors.

The fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the fund.

2.5.3 Conditions also set out that:

- There must be a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining the approach, including how eligibility is defined and how households access the fund.
- The fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people, larger families, single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.
- Support is not restricted only to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits.
- At least part of the scheme must operate on an application basis.

2.5.4 The details for the recommended options have been produced based on existing delivery of HSF 4 (2023/24), with projections made for the six-month period. These take account of year end demand, especially around increased demand for children receiving free school meals. Consideration has also been given to the actual delivery timeframe for some of the provisions given that where delivery cannot be back dated to April, there will only be a three to four month delivery period.

2.5.5 The costs for each of the recommended options are tabled in section 2.5.6 below, with details of each proposal summarised as follows:

1. Vouchers for FSM children in school holidays - £1.585m

HSF support includes the spring half term, summer, and autumn half term holidays. This approach would fund eight weeks of school holidays. The allocation provides for a growing number of children in receipt of FSMs with the numbers having already increased from 12,702 at Christmas / New Year to 12,955 at Easter 2024 and having risen by over 1,000 in 2023/24 alone. To accommodate the potential for further growth in demand, an assumption of 13,200 FSM children has been used to calculate the allocation for April to September 2024. This would amount to £1.585 million and qualify as pro-active support.

Owing to the Spring half term holiday occurring ahead of the report date to Cabinet, a delegated decision by the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Environment, authorised provision of vouchers for that school holiday period.

### 2. Council Tax Support - £500k

The Council has already applied a top-up to Council Tax Support for 2024/25. Many households receiving support will already have been awarded this top up for the full year. It is proposed that a contribution from the HSF is made of £0.5m to support the costs of this top up for the six months of 2024/25. It is expected that around 15,000 households are projected to benefit through this scheme. This would qualify as open application-based support.

### 3. Housing Support - £160k

HSF has been used to top-up the budget available to support housing costs through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's). It is proposed to use the DHPs process to provide further housing support for the first six months of 2024/25 on the basis of the first two quarters of 2023/24, topping up the budget available. This would amount to £160k, with 450 households projected to benefit. This would qualify as open application-based support.

### 4. Energy Support - £174k

The Council's energy scheme has run into 2024/25 using funding carried over from 2023/24 (Covid Recovery Fund). This can be supplemented again using HSF from the 2024/25 allocation, allocating £174k to energy support. This allocation will support 696 grants at £250 each. This would qualify as open application-based support.

### 5. Wider Essentials - £25k

An option has been progressed to provide parcels of household items (cleaning / personal hygiene etc) to be distributed through VCS community support including food banks and social supermarkets, and as part of the Open Arms programme drop-in sessions. An allocation of £25k is included and on the basis of £25 value for each parcel, this would provide support to 1000 households. This would qualify as third-party organisations spend.

### 6. Support for Care Leavers - £45k

Support for energy and food has been provided to care leavers in previous rounds of HSF. Continuing this provision at the same level as in 2023/24 for six months would amount to £45k. This would qualify as pro-active support. 180 care leavers are projected to benefit from food support at a value of £30,000 with 100 projected to benefit from energy support at a value to £15,000. Care leavers would be assessed for both and awarded as appropriate through pro-active support.

## 2.5.6 Summary of Household Support Fund Spend Proposals Apr-Sep 2024

<b>Spend Proposal</b>	<b>Value £000's</b>
Free School Meal Vouchers	1,585
Council Tax Support	500
Housing Support	160



Energy Support	174
Wider Essentials	25
Support for Care Leavers	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,489</b>

2.5.7 The options for use of HSF have been assessed to meet the criteria of the grant funding streams and aligned with the other actions being taken by the Council to support people in need. The proposed allocations are based on previous experience of impact in distributing these funds. Specific groups of people identified in the guidance as priority households can be targeted through the applications for support options.

## 2.6 Capital Programme Variations

2.6.1 On 18th April 2024 variation forms were presented to the Capital Programme Monitoring and Delivery Board (CPMDB) providing a summary of the latest position on a number of key Highways projects. As these projects have been developed a number of issues have arisen that require a realignment of budgets to address additional cost pressures. The following variations are presented for Cabinet awareness and where required approval.

### 2.6.2 Bellows Road

A Road Safety Audit took place in respect of the Clean Air Zone mandated junction improvement at the junction of Bellows Road and Rawmarsh High Street. This raised a problem that, following removal of the subway as part of the scheme, some pedestrians are crossing at-grade in the vicinity of the former subway. The low wall is sufficiently high to pose a hazard in respect of trips and falls, but insufficiently substantial to deter pedestrian usage. In light of this and given the ongoing maintenance liability posed by the wall and local concerns about its appearance, the agreed action from the Road Safety Audit was to remove the wall.

It is proposed that £160k of underspend from the Clean Air Zone budgets is redirected to the Highways Maintenance budget to fund the removal of the wall.

### 2.6.3 Wath to Manvers Cycleway

This scheme is forecast to overspend by £120k. The scheme included significant carriageway resurfacing, at a value of £165k, excluding additional surfacing identified on-site and already paid for by highways. Therefore, it is proposed that £120k is moved from the Highways Maintenance budget to the budget for the Wath to Manvers Cycleway to fund the overspend.

2.6.4 Sheffield Road Cycleway

It is proposed that £515k is allocated from the Levelling Up Fund to the Sheffield Road Cycleway project. This is to support public realm uplift and increase the quality of the final design surfacing materials on Westgate close to the town centre from the bitumen bound aggregate finish proposed by the cycleway project, to a paved surface in keeping with on-going public realm works in and around the town centre. The works also include associated public realm street furniture.

2.7 Commissioner Support to Nottingham City Council

- 2.7.1 Nottingham City Council have had commissioners appointed to support their improvement journey and the Council's Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp, has been asked by Government to undertake the role of Commissioner for Transformation, a position which she is now undertaking for two days per week. Payment of £1,100 per day will be received by RMBC as a recompense whilst this work is ongoing.

**3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 This report is retrospectively updating on outcomes and outputs from the Councils revenue outturn position and a host of key schemes where the approach has already been approved by Cabinet.

**4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Consultation with residents, business and partners was undertaken as part of the development of the 2023/24 budget setting and then again as part of budget setting for 2024/25.
- 4.2 Officers in relevant Council services along with VCS partners have been engaged in producing the recommended options for allocation of HSF.

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

- 5.1 The report is mainly an update on a range of financial matters.

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

- 6.1 The financial implications are contained within the main body of the report.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

**7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 No direct implications.

**8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 No direct implications.

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

9.1 The report includes reference to the cost pressures on both Children's and Adult Social care budget.

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

10.1 The objectives for the use of Household Support Fund targets towards vulnerable households including families with children and people with disabilities. The fund will contribute to addressing economic and social inequalities. It will have a positive equalities impact. Equalities data will be collected as part of administering the programme of support.

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

11.1 No direct implications.

**12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 The report includes reference to partnership working with the voluntary sector as part of the Household Support Fund.

**13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1. Budget management and spending controls remain as set out within the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

**14. Accountable Officers**

Rob Mahon - Assistant Director, Financial Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	23/05/2024
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	10/05/2024
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	15/05/2024

*Report Author: Natalia Govorukhina, Head of Corporate Finance  
Natalia.Govorukhina@rotherham.gov.uk*

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

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## Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

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.

<b>Directorate: Finance and Customer Services</b>	<b>Service area: Finance</b>
<b>Lead person: Rob Mahon</b>	<b>Contact number: 01709 254518</b>

### 1. Title:

Is this a:

☐

**Strategy / Policy**

☒

**Service / Function**

☐

**Other**

**If other, please specify**

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

The Council has a framework of budgetary monitoring and reporting that ensures budget management is exercised within annual cash limits.

Each month the Budget Manager receives timely information on income and expenditure to enable them to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities. Following the review of the budget information, each budget manager provides a forecast of their projected outturn position on each service. The Strategic Director subsequently provides a consolidated forecast for their directorate to the Chief Finance Officer and relevant Cabinet Member.

A budget monitoring report, which includes an up-to-date outturn forecast, information about significant variances from approved budgets and proposals for dealing with them, is submitted to Cabinet at least 6 times a year, culminating with the Councils Financial Outturn report.

Whilst the framework described above relates to revenue budgets, the capital programme is also similarly monitored and reported alongside the Council's revenue position.

The financial monitoring position report summarises the key variances for each directorate and considers the key financial pressures and risks.

This report is the penultimate financial report in the financial year, it sets out the Council's outturn position in brief as the full revenue outturn position is not presented to cabinet until July. The report also covers off any other key items to be noted at the time.

Given that the revenue and capital budgets have been approved by Council in February each year, when equality assessments would have been considered at that time in respect of the budget proposals, there are no further issues in respect of equality and diversity.

The report also addresses the use of a further allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) grant. The allocation covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The funding must be used or allocated during that time. It is the use of HSF that is directly relevant to equalities issues.

### 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, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

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?		x

<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>		
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please 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 prior to carrying out an **Equality Analysis**.

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 and use the prompts for guidance.

- How have you considered equality and diversity?

The Household Support Fund (HSF) programme of activity in Rotherham primarily added value and extension to existing means of support for low income and vulnerable families. These are households that are shown through various data sources to be impacted by socio economic inequalities. Data detailing the households' receiving support is collected through the administration of each activity and where required will meet statutory requirements for administration of that provision.

The conditions attached to reporting of HSF spend and outputs require data covering:

- Households with children.
- Pensioner households.
- Households including someone with a disability.
- Other households (only adults with none of the other conditions).

- Key findings

The data available is from the HSF monitoring returns for 2023/24. This data shows total awards for households from all measures of support:

17,741 households with children.

334 pensioner households.

10,158 households including someone with a disability.

7,191 other households.

The programme for April to September 2024 is intended to deliver similar outcomes for the types of vulnerable households.

- Actions

The use of both proactive and application-based approaches to access HSF supported provision enables vulnerable low-income households to be targeted, directly tackling socio economic inequalities, and for a wider number of households to also access support.

Access through community-based provision including the Open Arms programme will help to ensure that the overall approach is inclusive.

Data relating to equalities will be collected and analysed in accordance with Council policy and that required to monitoring returns for the HSF programme.

No further action or a full equality assessment is required.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	N/A
--	-----

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	N/A
--	-----

Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	N/A
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## 5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Rob Mahon	Assistant Director of Financial Services	10/05/2024



## 6. Publishing

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

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

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

<b>Date screening completed</b>	09 May 2024
<b>If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	

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#### User guidance:

- The first section of this form guides users through considering major areas where emissions are likely to occur. If emissions are impacted in a way not covered by these categories, please identify this at the bottom of the section
- The first section should be filled as such:
  - **Impact:** identify, in relation to each area, whether the decision of the proposal does the following: *reduces emissions*, *increases emissions*, or has *no impact on emissions*. If it is uncertain this section can be labelled *impact unknown*
  - If **no impact on emissions** is identified: no further detail is needed for this area, but can be added if relevant (e.g. if efforts have been made to mitigate emissions in this area.)
  - **Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions:** two sections deal respectively with emissions from the Council (including those of contractors), and emissions across Rotherham as a whole. In both sections please explain any factors that are likely to reduce or increase emissions. If **impact unknown** has been selected, then identify the area of uncertainty and outline known variables that may affect impacts.
  - In most cases there is no need to quantify the emission impact of an area after outlining the factors that may reduce or increase emissions. In some cases, however, this may be desirable if factors can be reduced to a small number of known variables (e.g. if an emission impact is attached to a known or estimated quantity of fuel consumed).
  - **Describe any measures to mitigate emission impact:** regardless of the emission impact, in many cases steps should be taken in order to reduce mitigate all emissions associated with each area as far as possible; these steps can be outlined here (For example: if a proposal is likely to increase emissions but practices or materials have been adopted in order to reduce this overall impact, this would be described here).
  - **Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out:** in this section outline any steps taken to monitor emission levels, or steps taken to monitor the factors that are expected to increase or reduce emission levels (for example, if waste or transport levels are being monitored this would be described here)
- A **summary paragraph** outlining the likely overall impacts of the proposal/decision on emissions should then be completed - this is not required if the proposal/decision has no impact across all areas.
- The supporting information section should be filled as followed:
  - Author/completing officer
  - **Research, data, or information** may refer to datasets, background documents, literature, consultations, or other data-gathering exercise. These should also be added to the **supporting documents** section of the cabinet report

- 
- Carbon Impact Assessments are to be appended to the associated cabinet reports
  - Prior to publishing reports, Carbon Impact Assessments should be sent to [climate@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:climate@rotherham.gov.uk) for feedback
  - Report authors may also use the above email address to direct any further queries or to access further support regarding completing the assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from transport?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	<i>no impact on emissions</i>				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	<i>no impact</i>				

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

The report is a financial update on previous approvals and as such has limited implications. However, it should be noted in the interests in providing a complete picture, that reallocation of funds for support purposes e.g., for the wider essentials programme where goods may need to be procured for delivery or where energy and water use is paid for, may result in a small carbon impact from the scheme's delivery. Being mindful of the wider impacts of these schemes from a social and equalities perspective and of the support funds' relative value, the carbon impact is likely to be negligible and outside of the intention of the carbon impact assessment process to review.

Similarly, it is likely that the carbon impact of other delivered schemes or changes will be incorporated within other decisions for which this report provides only an update.

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

As this report is a financial update on previous events, updates on levels of funding moving forwards and doesn't approve anything directly to happen, it does not have any carbon implications.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Nikki Kelly, Finance Manager Corporate, Finance and Customer Services.
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager Finance & Customer Services CIA275

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