

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time:- Wednesday 9 October 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 10 September 2024 (Pages 5 - 31)

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 10 September 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 Monday 14 October 2024. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

6. Future Rothercare Model (Pages 33 - 80)

Report from the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve option 1 to implement a new technology enabled care delivery model under a collaborative approach between Rothercare and an independent sector technology partner.
2. Approve a competitive procurement process and award of contract on the basis of a 5-year initial term. The contract will include potential extensions for up to 3 years (to be taken in any combination). The new arrangements will commence April 2025.
3. Agree the new charging policy and rates for Rothercare from 2025/26 for existing customers and the policy of applying a new rate to new customers from 2025/26 onwards.

For Information/Monitoring:-

7. Work Programme (Pages 81 - 83)

To consider the Board's Work Programme.

8. Work in Progress - Select Commissions

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

9. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024 (Pages 85 - 92)

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024

10. Call-in Issues

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

11. 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 Thursday 17 October 2024
commencing at 5.00 p.m.
in Rotherham Town Hall.**



**SHARON KEMP OBE,
Chief Executive.**

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Tuesday 10 September 2024

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baggaley, Blackham, Keenan, Marshall, McKiernan, Tarmey and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors A Carter (Councillor Tarmey was named as his substitute for the meeting) Knight, Pitchley and Tinsley.

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

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

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2024

In relation to the previous minutes on the 24 July 2024, it was agreed by the Chair that the minutes on page 20 in relation to the Dennington project, be amended to state that it was critical for the completion of the project to have been finished by the end of the first quarter, 2026.

Resolved: That the minutes with the noted amendments of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on the 24 July 2024 were approved as a true record.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the members of the public and press.

23. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There are no items on the agenda to exclude the public and the press.

24. JULY 2024-25 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

At the Chair's invitation, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities introduced the report and explained that the report set out the Council's financial position as of July 2024, with an estimated overspend of £6.1 million for the financial year.

This was largely due to demand which had put additional pressures on children's placements, adult social care packages, and home to school transport as well as the expected impact of the Local Government Pay Awards.

In addition, the Council had been impacted by inflationary pressures

within the economy. Whilst the actual overspend of £17 million was concerning, it was stated that elements of the overspend had been forecasted and the two key budget contingencies were created as part of setting the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25. The Council had set Social Care contingency of £3.4 million and a Corporate Budget Provision of £3.5million to support anticipated pressures across social care and home to school transport. The Cabinet Member explained that detailed review work of those services had begun, and operating improvements had been made to reduce cost pressures and create avoidance in further overspend.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy had continued to perform well as a result of the Councils' approach to borrowing, which had been adapted to minimise its level of borrowing. Members were informed that this position had improved due to reprofiling of the capital programme delivery, which had pushed back the requirement to borrow more. It had been estimated that this would support the Council to generate savings of at least £4 million, however, Members were informed there was still a possibility that this figure could change due to market conditions which were beyond the Council's control.

As a result of the corporate provision and savings, an underspend of £10.9 million had been forecasted within Central Services bringing the Council's net overspend to down to £6.1 million. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager Board (OSMB) was told that uncertainty still remained within the local government sector beyond the 2024/ 25 budgets, in relation to further allocation funding beyond one year. It was acknowledged that the financial challenges faced by the Council were the same challenges faced by other the councils across the country, with some local authorities even being issued with section 114 notices.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for this overview and then invited the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services, Judith Badger to provide some further context. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services felt it was important to emphasise the various budget contingencies put in place at budget setting, which were there as some overspend was expected.

OSMB was informed that while some of the overspends were expected, it was important to consider the context of why they had occurred. This was illustrated by an example in relation to the placement pressure on Children and Young People's services which had been managed through a long-term plan which had been in place for several years. This plan had showed positive results with evidence indicating its effectiveness over time. However, despite the plan, overspends would continue to occur, which was why a contingency had been included within the Council's overall budget process to address ongoing overspends. Further to this, it was explained that there was no intention of distorting the future budget for children's services, which should ultimately be lower in value, which made the budgeting process somewhat complex.

Another significant area of overspend was the home to school transport service. The Council knew that this budget would need to be reset in the future, however extensive work was required to understand the correct level. It was noted that the Council's overarching budget had catered for the overspends to some degree.

The overarching budget position of £6.1 million overspend did raise some concerns regarding next year's budget and beyond however at the moment the Council needed to wait and see what would come from the Chancellors Autumn Budget Statement, which would give an indication of the implications for the following year.

OSMB would have oversight of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy updates later in the financial year. It was noted that eliminating the overspend completely would be a substantial challenge however lots of discussions were taking place.

In response to the overspend in the Council's budget, Councillor Blackham enquired about the measures being taken to reduce the £6.1 million overspend. He also asked if the mitigation would involve using reserves for the current financial year, and if so, which reserve would it come from. The Assistant Director for Financial Services advised that as stated in the report, reserves would serve as a backstop with the remainder of the financial year focused on mitigating the overspend as much as possible. However, it was acknowledged that eliminating the £6.1 million pressure would be a significant challenge for the Council, and therefore it would fall on reserves.

Councillor Yasseen agreed that issues around overspending had been ongoing for the Council and wanted to know why the Council had not allocated the budget directly to services instead of maintaining a contingency fund. In addition, Councillor Yasseen wanted clarification on the financial approach to managing this consistent overspend for the Council. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services acknowledged that addressing the continued overspending had always been a key priority for the Council. However, she conveyed that there were multiple factors that had collectively impacted the Council's ability to reduce the overspend. An example was the home-to-school transport service, which could not be predicted. It was known that the service would overspend but the pressures for this financial year could not be predicted. The service was undertaking lots of work to understand the needs however if additional funding was provided it could distort the figures further because the additional funding could be too much or too little.

Regarding children's placements, the social care contingency was intended to address less predictable pressures, particularly in adult care. Efforts had been made to increase in-house placements and recruit more foster carers, although delays could occur due to factors such as property

purchases or staffing issues. Allocating additional funds would create confusion for service, as the budget they had was the budget target they needed to meet. The Council's financial approach was to set a realistic budget for the future while managing short-term pressures. It was believed that this approach helped to better understand and manage departmental pressures more effectively and was strongest way to manage the budget.

The Chair then queried as to why costs had gone up so much for the home-to-school transport service, which in parts was outsourced to private companies to deliver the service on behalf of the Council's. In response, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed the Council provided a mix of transport solutions which included a number of in-house routes as well as a number which were contracted to private companies. The rising price of fuel, over the past couple of years had posed a significant challenge and added financial pressure. Efforts were made to reduce costs by placing more young people on the same routes to drive down single occupancy routes. However, it was noted that the underlying pressure for the service was the actual increase in demand, and the impact these measures on further reducing costs.

The Chair asked for clarification on which budget the additional funds would come from if this service continued to overspend, would it be the Children's Services Budget or the Central Budget and then reallocated to the Children's Services Budget. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services confirmed it would come from the Central Budget as the Council's approach was not to transfer funds from one budget to another. Additionally, members were informed that a complexity with the home-to-school transport budgets meant they currently spanned multiple departments. However, ongoing work by the finance service aimed to align these budgets.

Councillor Yasseen asked for clarification on why Rotherham spent significantly more on child placements compared to councils like Barnsley and Sheffield. Rotherham's weekly expenditure per child was 27% which was 20% more than other councils. Councillor Yasseen also inquired whether finance had worked with Children's Services to determine if the additional costs were justified by offering better services. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that prior to 2016, the number of placements had been around 400. Due to increased demand had the number had risen to around 660. She noted that ongoing efforts were focused on reducing costs and enhancing the Council's support for those children and families. This included reducing caseloads through early intervention, which had helped prevent children from entering various care settings. As a result of these efforts, the number of placements had reduced to 500 placements but unfortunately the associated costs had not decreased proportionally. However, work had been undertaken around modelling, and while costs were not fixed due to factors such as inflation, it was evident that departmental efforts had

reduced costs in real terms when accounting for inflation. It was acknowledged that once a child or family was in the system, their appropriate needs were appropriately assessed, and the right service or support provided. This support cannot be abruptly removed but stepped down in a way that would not put children at risk. The service had made significant efforts in this area, focusing on step-downs and transitioning children from one type of support to another aiming to reintegrate them into normal family placements. However, for children with complex needs, the cost of high-cost placements could be substantial. Despite this, efforts over the past few years had led to a reduction in costs. Regarding the number of child placements compared to other local authorities there could be a wide range of reasons and factors for the differences, which might relate to different practices, or varying needs of the children.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services confirmed that the Council had worked to reduce the overspend in relation to the excessive costs within this area. However, efforts undertaken had meant that average unit costs had reduced significantly. The Council had also been trying to transition placement types from external, expensive residential placements to internal residential placements, while maximising its fostering opportunities. However, in relation to other authorities and their placement numbers and costs, it was acknowledged that Rotherham had faced the children's placement challenge much earlier than other areas and had experienced significant rises in costs. Through the work being undertaken the Council hoped to reduce these costs and improve its cost position to a more static level, which was why the budgets had been maintained at the current level.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning and Performance confirmed that reviews on costs and placements had been frequently considered using local benchmarking data on the numbers of children who had gone into care, children in need, and those on child protection plans. It was also acknowledged, that Rotherham's spending had been comparable with most other local authorities in the region, as these challenges had been seen across the country. It was hoped that national efforts could support councils in reducing the costs of external placements for children. Regarding the number of children in care, while other local authorities had experienced a rise in these figures, Rotherham had taken a different path. Despite starting with slightly higher number, the Council had implemented numerous initiatives to support families in caring for their children longer. As a result, there had been a reduction in the number of children entering care, contrary to the trend observed elsewhere. This was a particularly important development, and there had been no negative impacts from this approach.

Councillor Yasseen acknowledged that the Council had done everything to provide the best possible care for the borough's children but had concerns regarding the £5 million overspend even though much had been achieved in terms of progress and interventions.

Councillor McKiernan requested further clarification on the decision-making process for budget overspends, particularly when the budget had already been set but additional spending became necessary across various sectors. He enquired about who was responsible for making those decisions.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that once the budget had been set it would go through the Council's decision-making processes and would be agreed by Full Council. However, this would be based on professional advice from both the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and the Assistant Director for Financial Services.

Councillor McKiernan was further informed that officers only provided advice on the budget required to deliver on the priorities determined by the Council. For example, officers might estimate the current costs of children's services based on caseloads and activities, and project the costs of actions that could reduce those expenses. The budget was assembled to avoid overspending, based on the best available information and assumptions. However, there could be unavoidable cost pressures, such as an unexpected increase in home-to-school transport needs. In such cases, the goal would be to manage these costs effectively. Additionally, budget holders at various levels had individual budgets, and if they overspent without justification, it became a management issue to address. Efforts to tackle overspending included reviewing all expenditures and identifying areas where costs could be reduced, such as postponing non-essential training courses and other cost-reducing measures. At a detailed level, budget holders managed their own budgets, contributing to the Council's overall financial position. However, the Council's overall overspend was primarily due to two or three key issues, and efforts were being made to address these challenges and manage the problem effectively.

Councillor McKiernan sought further clarification as to who would approve additional spending and at what point would that spending be challenged there was an overspend. The Chair informed Councillor McKiernan that officers were responsible for running the authority operationally and managing budgets. If there was any overspend, they were expected to report and discuss this with the relevant Cabinet Member. Elected members were responsible for setting policy and addressing overspend. OSMB had opportunities throughout the year to scrutinise the budget.

Councillor Keenan remarked that, as a trustee for the homeless charity 'Help for Homeless Veterans,' she had observed a substantial increase in homeless veterans seeking accommodation. Additionally, there had been a rise in early releases from prison without adequate support services, due to current challenges facing the Probation Service. Considering this, along with the ongoing high costs to Neighbourhood Services and housing individuals or families in hotels, Councillor Keenan asked about the measures Council had taken to address the growing homelessness

issue within the borough.

It was noted by the Assistant Director of Financial Services that homelessness presented a significant challenge for the borough, especially since COVID-19 which saw a noticeable increase in homelessness across the country. It was noted that policies during this time, were implemented to ensure councils provided housing for everyone, which had led to a substantial increase in homelessness. OSMB was told that this trend had continued since COVID-19, which resulted in increased use of hotels to meet the demand. The Council had explored a number of options to address this challenge, but was focused on optimising its operational model, especially around temporary accommodation. This had involved using the Councils existing temporary accommodation stock and if a unit became vacant then the property would be repaired and prepared for the next occupant. This approach enabled the Council to maintain a constant flow of available temporary housing.

Additionally, the Council had reviewed the operations of its virtual team and other structures to ensure they were as efficient and effective as possible. This included having the right administrative levels, and the right support structure for prevention and case management. Further to this, work had taken place with external consultants to understand the broader picture of why certain people became homeless, such as veterans, people released early from prisons and other groups. By assessing and analysing the reasons behind homelessness, it was the intention of the Council to develop plans to mitigate homelessness moving forward. All this had been underway for a significant period, and it was acknowledged there would be ongoing challenges in this area for future years.

Councillor Keenan then enquired if this issue would be reviewed by OSMB at a future meeting. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service explained that members could choose to nominate an area for further scrutiny through the usual mechanisms. The overview provided by officers at the meeting, focused on the operational business approach, where the service had worked to learn, understand, and try different models to deliver improved outcomes and reduce costs, while ensuring the Council delivered quality services for people with needs.

Councillor Bacon then posed several questions regarding the reprofiling of the Capital Programme, particularly concerning the significant slippages reported in capital projects related to the Mainline Station (£4.357 million slippage), Riverside infrastructure (£1.057 million slippage), and Riverside Gardens (£1.585 million slippage). He inquired at what point the slippage would be considered 'out of control' and whether this would be discussed further with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities. He also wanted to know the current stage of the Mainline Station project and how much more slippage was expected, as he felt the project was in its initial stages and had already incurred a £4.357 million slippage. Finally, Councillor Bacon sought information on the current

situation regarding the caravan site mentioned in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities informed Councillor Bacon that the Council had a Capital Project Board which monitored all of the capital projects. He noted that it was an expected part of capital work projects to experience slippages and in relation to larger projects delays were always anticipated. However, the role of the Capital Project Board was to monitor the progress of these projects and they would reschedule wherever possible but in certain case, some delays were out of the Councils control.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment informed Members that the Main Line Station was considered a long-term project with no expected end date. The expectation was that it would take at least 10 years to be fully built and opened. However, Members were told that the timeline for this project was not within the Council's or the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's (SYMCA) control but was ultimately managed by Network Rail and Central Government.

It was noted that within the context of a 10-year project, some slippages in site acquisitions were not critical. Regarding the predicted slippage, it was important to gather the right level of information about the site being acquired to ensure the Council did not acquire an asset that could become a liability due to issues below ground. Detailed site investigations were expected to conclude next year before finalising negotiations with the landowners. The overall project, along with the outlined business case, would be presented to the SYMCA before the end of the year. The Council was also awaiting technical information from Network Rail and cost estimates for the network's likely expenditure and the overall project. It was felt that, despite this being a long-term project, it remained on the programme with the potential to proceed, unlike some other medium-term projects that had been withdrawn.

Regarding the Riverside projects that had been itemised, the riverside infrastructure work was already underway, with visible construction and piling work to stabilise the river wall before introducing the walkways. The Riverside Gardens project was expected to be on site before the end of the month. This followed some work with Yorkshire Water, which had identified a sewer not included in the original plans. Such complications often arise when breaking ground on projects like this.

Councillor Bacon requested further clarification regarding the slippage for the project and whether this was expected. He also sought clarification on the role of the SYMCA and the support it could provide. Additionally, Councillor Bacon resubmitted his question about the caravan park mentioned in the report. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment reiterated that the Mainline Station project was a long-term strategic project of national significance, and he had no concerns regarding the slippage. He acknowledged that SYMCA had played a vital role with the Council in discussions with the Department for Transport and

had also funding some of the initial development phase on this site, making a close working relationship with SYMCA essential.

Regarding the caravan park, it was acknowledged that there had been ongoing issues combined with potentially over-optimistic income forecasts, which had an impact. The Council planned to undertake a review to establish a sensible income projection for the caravan park for 2025 onwards. The Council had explored mechanisms to share some of the costs between the country park staff team and the caravan park, which would reduce some costs, and aimed to identify a realistic income forecast for the next year.

Councillor Bacon welcomed the update on the projects. He then asked about maintained schools, noting from the report that they were costing the authority money. He inquired whether there was an opportunity to convert these schools into academies, which could potentially save costs for the Council.

The Chair noted that it was up to individual schools if they wanted to become academies. This was confirmed by the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance, who explained that the Council did not have the option to force a school to become an academy. In the current system, schools could not initiate this process themselves. If a school received a 'requires improvement' rating and inspection grades were inadequate, they would be asked to become academies. However, the Department for Education (DFE) had recently announced additional information suggesting that this process could change, although full details had not yet been disclosed. The indications were that alongside Ofsted one-word judgements, there might be changes to the policy on academisation, but the local authority still could not insist that a school become an academy.

Councillor Yasseen noted that in the report, Central Services was shown to have a £10.9 million underspend and wanted to know how it could generate such a significant savings underspend and whether this would be just a one-time occurrence or if this could be repeatable. In addition, Councillor Yasseen also queried whether the savings suggested that some services had not fully delivered or if it meant that services would be delivered at a reduced level.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services confirmed that no services had been lost or reduced to achieve the financial savings for Central Services. The primary reason for the savings was effective treasury management. Treasury Management focused on optimising the use of funds received on a given day that were not needed until later. This involved managing cash flow and determining the best places to invest money to achieve the highest returns without taking undue risks. Members were informed that there were stringent rules within the Treasury Strategy regarding risk, particularly with council money, which had to be kept safe within these rules.

Regarding the capital programme, if capital funds were not spent as quickly as expected for various reasons, the Council could avoid borrowing money. Instead, cash flow was managed through the Treasury budget, optimising benefits, and minimising risks, especially when interest rates were favourable for the Council. The biggest benefit here was effective treasury management, which was partly due to the skills and activities of the team handling this function and partly due to favourable interest rates.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services explained that the Central Services budget included provisions for various levies, such as the Integrated Transport Levy, which was repaid to SYPT or SYMCA as it was now known, and Public Finance Initiative (PFI) financing. The Council had several PFI arrangements for waste, leisure, and schools with all financial transactions for PFIs managed through Central Services. Additionally, the budget included contingencies for items such as the pay award. Although the Council did not control the pay award, it did prepare funds to cover the full impact of any award.

Regarding the main savings in the Central Services budget, it was anticipated that contingencies would be utilised, including those for social care and home-school transport. Members were also informed that another significant area of savings had come from treasury management. In recent years, the Council had benefited from its treasury management strategy by holding cash from long-term borrowing in a high-interest-rate market, resulting in savings above the planned amounts. However, as the new financial year progressed, cash balances had significantly reduced, and the Council would only borrow when absolutely necessary. This approach involved some risk, but the Council made informed decisions based on internal expertise, technical guidance, and advice from external consultants and treasury specialists. This strategy would help manage the 2024/25 financial position and achieve the projected savings.

The projected savings for the rest of the year would be as a result of the Council minimising its borrowing costs. Members were informed that the longevity of these savings would be discussed at the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) setting period. It was acknowledged that the treasury management savings would be a challenging task beyond 2024/25 due to a number of economic factors. In recent years, this included significant fluctuations in the Bank of England Base Rate, rising interest rates, and borrowing costs. These changes made future predictions challenging, but the Council would continue to monitor this position and would be responsive to market conditions from a treasury management perspective.

Councillor Jamie Baggaley asked about the £6.3 million shortfall in the agreed savings, as mentioned on page 26 of the report. He sought clarification on how these savings were distributed throughout the year and whether they could be achieved. Additionally, he wanted to know if

the savings gap was already included within the forecast to ensure a more balanced financial position for the Council.

The Assistant Director for Financial Services clarified that the savings position shown on page 26 of the report had been accounted for within the budget. All the savings outlined in the report, except those related to children's services, were expected to be achieved within the financial year. Additionally, there would be regulated internal monitoring to track the progress of these savings, with the majority expected to be achieved this year. However, there would still be ongoing pressures on services to achieve these savings.

The residual balance for Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) had constituted the majority of the Council's savings. These savings stemmed from historical agreements made several years ago, specifically from the 2018/19 budget, to be delivered over time. As previously discussed, significant challenges around children's placements had delayed these savings, and it was now expected that some of these savings would extend into 2025/26. However, continuous efforts were being made to reduce the remaining savings that needed to be delivered. Over the past two to three years, CYPS had broadly seen a £5 million overspend on a reducing budget position with more savings to be implemented each year. Therefore, CYPS spending had reduced, showing a positive trend towards achieving the savings, even though some of these savings still needed to be delivered.

Councillor Marshall enquired about section 2.27 of the report, noting that waste management was currently forecasting a £1.5 million overspend, primarily due to pressures around vehicle costs. She also identified increased staff costs and sought clarification on whether those additional staffing costs were due to the use of agency staff.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that agency staff costs were a pressure within the service as mentioned in the report. He confirmed that there were challenges related to vehicle costs and staffing, particularly with recent sickness figures in that area. However, the service had started to manage these issues, which had resulted in modest reductions in sickness levels. Efforts to address those challenges would continue, and additional agency costs were being closely monitored.

In addition, Members were told that the service was exploring options to optimise routes to ensure efficient use of vehicles, fuel, and staff costs. Other factors contributing to the budget pressures included increased costs for waste disposal and fluctuations in commodity prices, which affected recycling income. The service was also working closely with financial services to identify further options to align the budget.

Councillor Marshall queried whether the savings in community safety and regulation services were due to difficulties in recruiting to the vacancies that the service had or if the vacancies were being maintained to save

money.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene explained that community safety and street scenes services, encompassed a wide range of services, which employed around 600 staff who covered various functions. Those vacancies were not related to waste management but were in other areas of the service and were vacancies which required specialist skills or qualifications. Members were informed, this included vacancies such as environmental health officers where the availability of qualified people had been limited and not quite as good as in previous years. To address this issue, strategies had been put in place to help grow and develop internal talent to be able to take up those roles to ensure the service had qualified staff.

However, it was acknowledged that as the budget challenges remained, ongoing discussions would take place with the service, the directorate, and finance about the need and necessity for those particular posts. There could also be opportunities considered which would allow the service to carry some vacancies for a period, to support the budget position (if required) without compromising members' priorities.

The Chair asked the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service if assurance could be given that the budget would be kept under control until the end of the financial year with the predicted, £6.1 million overspend.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service responded stating that they had been working diligently with all the directorates and senior officers. They regularly reviewed their activities and maintained pressure by holding everyone accountable for their spending, regardless of the issues causing the overspend.

The Strategic Director further emphasised, that while efforts to reduce the overspend would continue, significant more time was being dedicated compared to previous years due to future economic and demographic uncertainties. They assured Members that their focus remained on the long-term sustainability of the budget and acknowledged that the current position could not be maintained indefinitely. The activities they would undertake included ongoing discussions and in-depth work with directorates to determine what decisions could be made and if there were actions that could save money for the rest of the year. Members were told that some of those decisions would be operational, whilst others would require input from members. If member decisions were required on budgets or overspend, then they would bring these matters forward. The Strategic Director assured the Chair that they maintained ongoing pressure to achieve the best possible financial outcomes for the Council and the people of Rotherham.

The Chair then asked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities if he were also assured that officers would be able to

manage the situation, and to make sure that everything would be done by finance to manage the overspend.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities assured OSMB that every Cabinet Member investigated any overspend within their own portfolios and would work to understand the mitigating factors had caused the overspend and worked with senior officers to reduce it. He acknowledged that his central aim was to work within the revenue budget and to hold officers to account. However, as previously highlighted some costs for statutory services, such as homeless services had skyrocketed over the past year. Furthermore, the Council had statutory responsibility to deliver a number of services by law, even if it resulted in overspends on budgets. OSMB was assured that Cabinet Members were also held to accountable to ensure budgets were delivered within allocated spend. Work was also undertaken to review any mitigating factors for overspends and identify what more could be done to reduce those budgets.

The Chair acknowledged that the Council faced many challenges moving forward and noted that OSMB had asked for reports, as part of their work programme, on the transported children's services and overspend.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and the Assistant Director for Finance for their participation at the meeting.

Resolved: – That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendation that Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £6.1 million.
2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it is possible that the Council will need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2024/25 position.
3. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme, including proposed capital programme variations to expenditure profiles and funding.

25. BOROUGHWIDE AND TOWN CENTRE/CLIFTON PARK PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities explained that The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) provided powers to introduce PSPO's in order to prevent individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public spaces.

The current Town Centre/Clifton Park Protection Order and the Borough-Wide Dog Fouling Protection Order were renewed in January for a period

of twelve months. The Town Centre/Clifton Park Protection Order contained a number of conditions linked to anti-social behaviour whereas the Borough-Wide Dog Fouling Protection Order dealt with dog fouling.

The report proposed consultation would take place with established stakeholders to seek their views in relation to both PSPO's and gain support for future designation, which would be sought regarding the conditions not included in the order. The number of complaints related to dog fouling across the borough had steadily increased, and anti-social behaviour continued to be a concern. He also informed members that inconsiderate and rowdy behaviour had been the most prevalent form of anti-social behaviour and had increased further in Quarter 1 of 2024/25 compared to the previous year.

The Cabinet Member explained that several powers that could be used against individuals committing anti-social behaviour, and the PSPO would serve as an additional tool. The town centre, considered part of the Council's regeneration programme which included Forge Island, required available tools to address anti-social behaviour to ensure the successful completion of the projects. Members were informed that the consultation would take place over a few weeks and would involve engagement with key stakeholders including elected members, businesses, partners, and the public.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene informed members that, as indicated in the report, it was part of the legal process for introducing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO). Public Space Protection Orders gave authorised officers, whether police or council officers, the power to take certain things against individuals committing criminal offences.

Members were informed that PSPOs could only be implemented where specific legal thresholds had been met, as detailed in the legal section of the report. However, PSPO's could only be introduced where activities were carried out in a public place or were likely to impact the quality of life for those in that particular area. Furthermore, the behaviours must be persistent or continuing in nature and sufficient to justify the conditions proposed within the order. The report indicated that the Council was satisfied that these initial thresholds had been met and that the consultation was a legal necessity. The matter would then go for public consultation before being submitted back to Members to seek permission to introduce orders in the future.

Councillor Joshua Bacon asked a question on behalf of Councillor Tinsley, who had provided his apologies for the meeting. He enquired, whether in addition to the dog fouling PSPO, if any consideration be given to other borough-wide PSPO, such as protecting life-saving equipment. He asked if there could be a PSPO for Rotherham's parks, such as Rother Valley, to deter swimming and stipulate that swimming could only take place with a swimming club. He also mentioned that places such as

Maltby suffer from street drinking and could benefit from the reintroduction of PSPOs, such as alcohol exclusion zones which had previously lapsed. He wanted to know if the consultation would include other concerns or issues which could be addressed by PSPOs to reduce other kinds of anti-social behaviour in Rotherham. Additionally, Councillor Bacon (on behalf of Councillor Tinsley) asked if appropriate signage would be put up in places with fenced play areas to prevent loose dogs running around.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene stated that the report had been presented in a specific order, including appendices that were part of the consultation and highlighted certain legal thresholds that needed to be met. One of these threshold's was to have evidence of the particular issues and whether they were persistent and significant enough to require a PSPO. He explained that this had previously been reviewed by the last Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), and included extensive research on the existing evidence base, particularly concerning the issue raised by Councillor Bacon about life-saving equipment.

Furthermore, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene noted that there had only been one recorded incident of damage to life-saving equipment across the entire borough. This presented a challenge determining whether there was a sufficient evidence base to bring any criminal sanction for that type of behaviour, and to date, there had been no incidents raised. Substantiated evidence of such incidents would be required to introduce those types of orders. However, officers from Neighbourhood Teams, Community Safety and Community Protection were keen to work with Ward Members to understand the current local issues and challenges in their wards. It was expected that these officers, along with partners and stakeholders would try everything at their disposal to resolve those issues. If those efforts failed, and PSPO's seemed the most appropriate route, the matter would then be brought back to members for their approval. In addition, it was noted that enforcement had continued to be challenge for the Council, particularly in terms of resourcing and enforcing those orders. This was another challenge that needed to be considered when implementing any such orders.

Councillor Bacon responded and asked when the report about the proposed PSPO's would be sent to Elected Members to gain their feedback as part of the consultation process, so they could provide a full picture of their wards.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that he would liaise with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities on how to proceed with any further engagement with Members. He stated that it would be expected for council officers to routinely work with Elected Members to identify and resolve issues in their local areas. Members were informed about problem-solving plans where the Council worked with partners and the police to tackle specific local issues. However, if this approach failed, council officers would consider

further actions in collaboration with Elected Members to implement additional measures. It was expected that this approach would naturally occur during conversations within the Community Action Partnerships, and ward briefings, but it would be jointly reflected upon with the Cabinet Member to determine if further actions were needed by the service.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concerns regarding the history of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) introduced for Boston Castle. She noted that the initial consultation previously taken place had been poor, particularly highlighted by the significant turnout of frustrated dog walkers at a Clifton Park meeting. Councillor Yasseen enquired how future consultations with Elected Members would be more effective and evidence based. Additionally, she asked what measurable improvements had been observed since the PSPO's implementation, concerning issues like dog fouling and whether evidence could be provided to show that those interventions had made a meaningful difference. She pointed out that dog fouling and anti-social behaviour had increased, suggesting that the PSPO's were not fully utilised.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed he had just joined the Council when the initial consultation took place at Clifton Park in 2017. He acknowledged there had been failures during the engagement and consultation with that part of the community at that time, but overall, there was still considerable support from the broader public consultation regarding those conditions. However, following discussions, the Council sought to make adjustments on how it enforced the powers and conditions in Clifton Park to address and ease the concerns raised by the dog walkers. It was noted that there had not been the same level of backlash when renewing those orders, which had suggested the adjustments made had been effective in alleviating some of that group's concerns.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene further noted that it was difficult to determine if those measures had been effective, which often happened with preventive measures as it was challenging to know what the impact would have been if these tools or powers were not in place. He also confirmed that this would be an area where the Council would continue its work in the coming years, subject to any orders being granted and approved by Members. He noted that the effectiveness of those powers largely depended on the feedback from officers who utilised them daily, particularly across the town centre, with the most common incidents around individuals surrendering alcohol. It was found that when people complied willingly and handed over the alcohol, it prevented potential offences. The Commission was informed that it only become an offence when someone refused to surrender their alcohol to an officer. In those cases, they were not recorded as a fixed penalty, but officers had reported that the order had been a valuable tool in preventing disruptive behaviours and identifying persistent and repeat offenders.

However, it was evident from the data that anti-social behaviour had

continued to increase in the areas mentioned, which often was against a backdrop of decreased anti-social behaviour across other areas. Ultimately, whilst officers had found this tool effective, there needed to be further analysis to understand its impact on this area, especially if the Council was to be successful in designating additional orders.

Councillor Yasseen explained that the reason there had been no backlash since 2017 was that the order had not been fully enforced and, therefore, had not affected anyone. Councillor Yasseen also mentioned that she had met with a group of volunteers from among the dog owners on a weekly basis after that initial meeting in 2017 and wanted to know if that same group would be consulted as part of this new consultation. She felt that the questionnaire should also include Clifton Park, but she had no objections to including the town centre, as it would make for a more appropriate use of resources given the rising anti-social behaviours. Councillor Yasseen then enquired about the clear metrics that would be used in the PSPO to determine whether the measures had been effective, noting that there were still costs associated, even if the police had primary responsibility for the enforcement.

The Chair acknowledged the comments submitted on this issue made and assured Members that in relation to PSPO's and parks, if dog owners were responsible and followed the guidelines within the PSPO, then they would not be fined.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene concurred with the Chair that responsible dog owners would not be fined if they followed the designated guidelines when walking their dogs in parks. He informed Members that, as a result of discussions with the dog walkers back in 2017, a concern had been raised about the immediate issuance of fixed penalty notices when a dog crossed a designated line. Consequently, specific guidance was developed for officers to ensure if such situation arose, they would ask the dog owner to recall their dog and demonstrate full control before any enforcement actions would be taken.

He also confirmed that he would discuss consultation methods further with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities. He advised that, for many of these conditions, it would not be appropriate to separate the town centre from Clifton Park. For instance, with alcohol consumption he noted that the risk of displacement into other areas could be significant if treated separately. However, in relation to dog control, he acknowledged that the impact might vary across various locations, particularly since many people visit Clifton Park specifically to walk their dogs. He confirmed that he was open to exploring the possibility of developing more tailored questions to be used as part of the consultation to include Clifton Park.

The Chair proceeded to ask a couple of questions on this issue. He wanted clarification as to who would be consulted and if Parish Councils would be included. In addition, he queried how long the consultation

activity would take.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that the consultation period would take around six weeks and would start from mid-September to the end of October. The consultation would include a variety of different consultation methods to gather feedback which he knew had been effective from previous consultations he had delivered. However, he informed Members that the most valuable method of consultation would be the face-to-face engagement, so it was intended that council officers would collect feedback directly from the community in Clifton Park by either using iPads or paper questionnaires. Furthermore, Parish Councils Members would be contacted and included in the consultation. The consultation would also utilise digital channels, this includes emails to provide further information on the consultation, and newsletters. Additionally, the planned to work closely with colleagues from Neighbourhood Services and other areas to ensure a wider selection of people were engaged.

Councillor Bacon appreciated the Council was taking anti-social behaviour seriously. However, he stated that current anti-social behaviour figures reflected only 50% of the actual situation in Rotherham, as he felt people lacked the confidence to report these issues. He asked if anything else could be done by the service or the Council to improve reporting figures, so they accurately reflected of the problems within Rotherham. Councillor Bacon then queried what plans and metrics were in place to measure the success of the PSPO, and whether a decrease in reported incidents was anticipated. Finally, Councillor Bacon asked if there were any plans by the Council to lobby the Police and Crime Commissioner or to have more targeted action days across the town centre and in the borough to combat the rising figures.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene acknowledged the importance of fostering public confidence in reporting issues and emphasised that concerns extended beyond just the specific behaviours discussed. He notes that non-reporting, also applied to many other types of criminal behaviour such as domestic abuse, where a considerable number of incidents would occur before a crime was reported. He assured Members that this had been a priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership, which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities which was the legal body in place. This partnership had prioritised addressing anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns for some time and was entering a revised priority-setting process, which would shape the partnership's strategy for the next few years. This priority setting would also include discussions with Members to help determine future priorities.

Although the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene was not in a position to pre-empt any decisions, he assured Members that community-based concerns, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour, would remain a key focus for the Council and Members. He

confirmed that he would advocate for a reduction in anti-social behaviour across the town centre, which would serve as a key indicator of success. Additionally, he acknowledged that the Council needed to enhance its operational delivery, and this success would depend on how effectively systems were established to record enforcement actions, as current systems had not been fully adequate. It was acknowledged that there also needed to be improvement in the exchange of information between council officers and the police regarding interventions, to enable more accurate data capture and reporting.

Regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner, Members were informed that role was now a part of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). The Council aimed to continue collaborating with partners across the region and engage in various forums that would address anti-social behaviour issues affecting Rotherham and the region. Members were informed that there was a strong partnership working across teams co-located together, enabling closer collaboration with police colleagues to drive enforcement activities and achieve better solutions.

Councillor Bacon further asked if the proposed PSPO could include both drugs and alcohol in the order, as the report only referred to alcohol. He had felt that changing the wording might provide additional tools and powers to help prevent drug-related anti-social behaviour in the town centre. He also enquired if the service would commit to any targets at this stage or even to a percentage decrease in their targets.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene stated that it would be difficult to commit to specific targets at this stage, as part of the challenge faced by the Council was the under-reporting of incidents, as previously discussed. He agreed with Members that more needed to be done to encourage and enable people to report incidents. However, he also noted that having specific targets in place could adversely affect reporting rates. In relation to including with drugs or other substances in the PSPO, he stated that existing laws were in place, which already addressed this issue. It needed to be noted that the Council would be unable to duplicate existing statutes through the PSPO, especially when those laws carried more significant penalties. However, it was acknowledged that the broader concerns and challenges facing the town centre were experienced throughout the country, and the service was keen to address the issues in whatever capacity it could.

Councillor McKiernan then asked about paragraph 2.14 in the report, which referred to external funding from the Home Office. He wanted to know what would happen if the funding was not extended for another additional year. He also sought clarification on how much the consultation would cost the Council?

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that the costs for the consultation would be covered by existing resources

within the service's budget. In relation to the funding, it was confirmed that the extra funding from the Home Office would be for the Safer Street's initiative, and the Council was currently on round six or seven of that funding. He noted that historically, the funding primarily supported capital-related projects, such as improving lighting in Clifton Park, and enhancing CCTV across the borough. However, the latest rounds of funding would be allocated for more revenue-based activities. This would allow the Council to apply for funding to deploy extra patrols and provide more police and council officer coverage, without relying on overtime. Members were informed that this funding represented more additional money on top of any separate commitments from the Home Office, which would be used for more police officers on the street and would be reviewed in terms of impact and outcome at the appropriate time.

Councillor Blackham then raised a valid concern regarding the ongoing issue of anti-social behaviour at Greenland's Park in Anston. He noted that while the police had responded to a recent incident, to help reduce anti-social behaviour in that area there had been ongoing discussions about locking a gate at Greenland's Park. A resident with council-owned property beyond the gate had attempted to secure it, but the situation had been complicated due to the proximity of their house to the Health Centre next door. Councillor Blackham wanted to know about the responsibility for locking this gate as he believed that it would be a simple solution that could reduce anti-social behaviour, and in turn be less demanding on resources.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene acknowledged these concerns but confirmed that he would meet Councillor Blackham privately to discuss these issues further, as he was unable to go into specifics of this incident during the meeting. However, he agreed that dynamic thinking to address such problems should be considered and the Council would always look for creative ways to reduce the demand on resources. He explained that legal requirements compelled the Council to explore alternative options, and much was being done to promote this approach. He assured Members that there were collaborations with colleagues and partners on strength-based strategies, which focused on leveraging existing community assets and infrastructure. He further stated that this was a prime example of how various approaches could be combined to develop more dynamic solutions that effectively addressed issues whilst minimising resource strain.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene for his participation at the meeting.

Resolved: – That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendation that Cabinet agree:

1. To carry out a consultation in relation to the future Town Centre

and Clifton Park Public Spaces Protection Order.

2. To carry out a consultation in relation to the future Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order specifically dealing with dog fouling and control.

26. SCRUTINY REVIEW - PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

The Chair explained to members that this agenda item had been a scrutiny review, which had been carried out by the previous Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) and was a review of adults and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, known as SEND.

The Chair informed Members that the Chair of ILSC (Councillor Pitchley) was unable to attend to present the report. However, the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration were present at the meeting to answer any questions from Members in relation to the review.

The Chair explained that once the report had been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), it would then be considered by Cabinet who had an eight-week period to respond back to the OSMB. The Chair then asked if members if they had any questions or comments in relation to the report.

Councillor Yasseen stated that she had been involved in the spotlight review at some stage and had contributed to the report. She felt it was crucial for Cabinet to understand this situation, given the previous discussion around the Council's overspend and weekly expenditure for Rotherham's Children in Care.

Councillor Yasseen raised her uncertainty as why Rotherham had such a high percentage of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) compared to the national average and other councils such as Barnsley, Doncaster, and Sheffield. She felt that this report did not provide clarity on the issue. Additionally, Councillor Yasseen was concerned that the long-term implications for Rotherham, particularly around the school-to-home transport service. She stated that a higher number of SEND children would contribute to increased transport costs and affect transition services into adult social care. She suggested that there should be an academic inquiry or a commissioned report from scrutiny to better understand why Rotherham had such high prevalence of SEND pupils, as this could lead to further overspend for years to come.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance stated that the area raised by Councillor Yasseen would be more relevant to an independent inquiry from the service. However, she informed Members that it had not been in the scope for this particular review to consider why

Rotherham had such high SEND numbers. She apologised for being unable to provide a response to the question at the moment.

Councillor Yasseen was concerned that as this report would go to Cabinet it did not include any in-depth investigation as to why Rotherham was an outlier which should have been considered within the report. She believed to really understand the reasons behind such high figures there should be an academic piece of work undertaken if there was not the right expertise in Children's Services. Councillor Yasseen stated that as these young people entered into transition services there would be a greater impact on the system, which would result in a greater overspend for the Council. She proposed that an additional recommendation should be submitted to Cabinet, in addition to the report.

The Chair acknowledged Councillor Yasseen's comments and assured Members that there were experts in Children's Services who understood SEND and could provide further information on Rotherham's criteria and threshold. He suggested that the high figures could possibly be due to Rotherham's thresholds being much lower than Barnsley, Doncaster, or Sheffield.

Councillor Yasseen agreed and emphasised the importance of receiving a response on this matter. She noted this was not a new issue and that the actual figures showed Rotherham had the highest number of cases at 22.1%, compared to Barnsley at 6.9%, Doncaster at 17.9%, Sheffield at 19% and Leeds at 10.2%. She asked whether Rotherham's threshold was different from that of other councils, if the characteristics varied, and how the assessment of SEND pupils was conducted. Councillor Yasseen acknowledged the report's value but expressed that the current version did not adequately address these concerns.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance commented that the issues raised by Councillor Yasseen had not been included in the original scope of the review, which had been conducted by ILSC. However, she did state that the Board jointly chaired by the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration had recently reviewed their plans. These plans fed into the SEND Executive Board as well the SEND Delivery Plan for the whole borough addressing some of the concerns raised at the meeting.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance stated that there were specialists within Children and Young People's Services who actively worked with schools to ensure they could effectively identify children as SEND. It was noted that Rotherham and its partners had been particularly pro-active in this area, and were engaged in understanding the needs of children, including those related to SEND and safeguarding. She informed Members, that the figures for Rotherham actually showed a higher number of children and young people who had been diagnosed with autism.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance assured Members that the national framework was being used by the Council and regular engagement was maintained with schools to benchmark against the framework. In addition, Rotherham also had a graduated response system that instructed schools to identify children or young people as SEND in accordance with this framework. The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance concurred with Councillor Yasseen that exploring and analysing the reasons behind such high numbers for Rotherham and its associated needs could possibly exceed the expertise of officers within Children and Young People's services and may need an external academic review.

Councillor Yasseen confirmed that it was an accurate scrutiny report and appreciated that the issue in relation to SEND was not part of the original scope. However, she felt it was important to understand why Rotherham had such a higher prevalence as it could have significant implications for the service in terms of pressures and costs.

The Chair suggested that as this had not been in the original scope of the report that this issue be referred back to ILSC for them to consider and investigate the reasons why Rotherham has such high SEND figures, particularly when compared to other local authorities and the national average.

The Chair then thanked the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care for their participation in the meeting.

Resolved: - That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. received the report and considered the following recommendations for onward transition to be considered by Cabinet.
 - 1) **School Effectiveness:**
 - a) That the support available for preparation for adulthood for children and young people with SEND in mainstream education, in both the early years and post sixteen settings, is further enhanced.
 - b) That education pathways relating to preparation for adulthood for children with SEND are reviewed, ensuring clear communication of the pathways to parents and carers.
 - 2) **Inclusion and Communities:**
 - a) That information relating to the support available to parents and carers within communities is developed, enabling a seamless service that supports and empowers parent carers.
 - b) That the feedback from the Autism Strategy Consultation is

reflected in the support offer available, to ensure children and young people feel safe within their communities, at school and online.

- c) That there is a further focus on enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in relation to this area of activity, with a particular focus on improving engagement levels with children and young people with SEND in marginalised communities.

3) Communication:

- a) That established networks and partnerships, such as the Rotherham Parent Carers' Forum, are further embedded, to increase awareness raising and increase the number of SEND families that are engaged and reached in the Borough.
- b) That the process relating to Education, Health and Care Plans is reviewed to ensure the young person's voice is present throughout the process.

- 2. Agreed that the ILSC give consideration to investigating the reasons why Rotherham has such high SEND figures, particularly when compared to other local authorities and the national average.

27. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/2024 and confirmed that this was on the agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and would be going to Full Council on 11 September and would be presented by the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor Bacon.

No comments or questions were raised, and the Chair thanked Members for their consideration of this report.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

- 1. Noted the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24; and
- 2. Noted that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 was being presented to Council on 11 September 2024.

28. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme which was attached for members information and was related to a previous workshop held at the beginning of August. Members at this workshop had discussed and reviewed the work programme which represented all the Scrutiny Commissions as well as Overview & Scrutiny Management Boards (OSMB) own work programme. The Chair then invited Members for any comments or questions relating to the work programme.

Councillor McKiernan commented that in relation to the Improving Places Select Commission there had been some disappointment from Councillor Jones as this Commission would not be reviewing the Grounds Maintenance Policy but instead this would fall to OSMB. Councillor McKiernan accepted that it was a decision that already had been taken and it had gone to OSMB for the reasons in relation to grass cutting. However, Councillor Jones expressed that he had hoped to look at the overall Grounds Maintenance Policy and just asked then OSMB would themselves, look at the whole policy and not just the aspect of grass cutting within that policy.

The Chair stated that if OSMB had done the full resolution which had not been submitted to Full Council the process would have taken two years to have done a full this review. Following discussions with the Vice Chair of OSMB and officers, it was agreed that the best approach would be for OSMB to look at just the grass cutting section. However, the Chair reiterated that any Member could put themselves forward as part of a working party which would look at this area.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme be approved.

29. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

The Chair asked Councillor Kennan to provide a progress update on work by the Health Select Commission.

Councillor Kennan explained that the agenda for the Health Select Commission (HSC) would include the Annual Report from TRFT, which was the Rotherham Hospital, and they would also receive an introduction and overview from Healthwatch, Their work programme also included Place Partners 'Winter Planning,' Adult Social Care Update and the Director of Public Health Annual Report.

In addition to this the HSC were also looking at new ways of dealing with some of the other issues that had come up for consideration, such as Menopause and Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights. The Commission would be also working in a very dynamic way with Council's partners such as Rotherham United Community Sports Trust and RDaSH.

It was hoped that HSC would undertake reviews as well as conducting workshops. In addition, the Commission would explore a new topic to its work programme 'Veterans' Mental Health and GP Practices.' Councillor Keenan informed Members that this had originated from the Armed Forces Covenant Working Group which involved collaborative work with the veterans from the Covenant Group and would be brought into the Commission. Another topic was Physical Activity for Health (Sport England).

Councillor Keenan noted that she has had incredible support from the Governance Officer who was supporting this Commission and allowed

HSC to approach reviewing important topics in a unique way. She explained that instead of reviewing items scrutiny would be done in a more interactive way through workshops and other interactive methods.

Councillor Keenan noted that it was an exciting programme for the Commission over the next included variety of interesting topics including 'Sleep Pathways' which would be a forthcoming report. Councillor Keenan then offered an open invitation to Members for them to attend HSC meetings if they were interested in any of the areas discussed.

Councillor McKiernan then proceeded to discuss the work programme for Improving Places Commission (IPSC) but noted that due to the General Election there had been some delays with meetings which had been frustrating for its Commission members. However, they were looking forward to their future meetings and their new work programme.

Councillor McKiernan confirmed that the upcoming IPSC meeting in October, would focus on the 'Section 19 Flood', which he believed would be an interesting area. He mentioned that he would be inviting external partners that contributed to the report so they could be questioned as part of this review.

Councillor McKiernan acknowledged the significance of this topic as it was an area that affected the entire borough. However, he noted that this review would only focus on the areas highlighted within the report and asked Commission Members to suggest who they should invite to the meeting to discuss 'Section 19 Flood'.

Councillor McKiernan then stated that the next item for the Commission would be 'Flood Alleviation' which had been delayed due to the 'Section 19 Flood' which needed earlier considered given its importance when there could be considerable flood-related work in the borough over the forthcoming months.

Additionally, Councillor McKiernan explained that while IPSC currently did not have any workshop-style sessions, he was exploring the possibility of turning some scheduled items into workshops and awaiting responses, which could lead some of the Commission's planned becoming interactive sessions over the next year.

Resolved: - That the updates from the Chairs of the Select Commissions on work undertaken and planned for the future were noted.

30. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024, which had been circulated along with the OSMB's papers.

He informed members that this was a standard item on the agenda and asked if members had any questions relating to it. He reaffirmed that the Forward Plan and Key Decisions could also be used to identify future areas for review by any of the Commissions.

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

31. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

32. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

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Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 14 October 2024

Report Title

Future Rothercare Model

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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

Report Author(s)

Kirsty-Louise Littlewood, Assistant Director, Adult Care and Integration

Kirsty-Louise.Littlewood@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The recommendations in this report are a direct follow on from the Cabinet Report presented on 22 January 2024, Digitalisation of the Rothercare Service and details a strategic approach to delivering the Rothercare service.

The Council's Adult Social Care vision is to:

'Enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time.'

The Council's intention is to use Assistive technology to enable the people of Rotherham to remain independent within their own home for as long as possible.

To achieve the vision there needs to be a significant increase in the use of assistive technology to enable people to remain independent within their own home for longer. Assistive technology can reduce dependence on formal care by helping to avoid early admission to care homes, reduce the amount of home care required and help to galvanise strength-based approaches to care. As such, this type of technology contributes to efficient use of resources across health and social care services and improves the quality of life for many users.

Assistive technology has a strong evidence base demonstrating its ability to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people's independence for longer.

The Council's assistive technology offer is delivered via its in-house Rothercare service. This is an 'end to end' service which manages referrals and triage, installation of equipment, the monitoring and responding to alerts. The service also procures all technical aspects including the hardware and software (alarm receiving centre, digital box/pendant, licences and peripheral technology).

The service is intrinsic to a strength-based approach in supporting people towards independent living. A recent review of the service has identified opportunities to address the operational challenges of the analogue switch off and the remodel of the assistive technology offer.

This report details an options appraisal and seeks approval to implement a new model where the assistive technology elements of the service will be undertaken by an independent sector technology partner and Rothercare will continue to deliver the core service elements, engaging with the public and service users under a realigned delivery model.

Rothercare is a chargeable service currently funded through a mix of weekly charges to customers and a subsidy from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and therefore the pricing policy has been considered alongside the operating model.

Subject to approval, a formal procurement process will commence in Autumn 2024. A mobilisation period will ensue following the tender award which will be aligned to the revised Rothercare operating model from April 2025.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approve option 1 to implement a new technology enabled care delivery model under a collaborative approach between Rothercare and an independent sector technology partner.
2. Approve a competitive procurement process and award of contract on the basis of a 5-year initial term. The contract will include potential extensions for up to 3 years (to be taken in any combination). The new arrangements will commence April 2025.
3. Agree the new charging policy and rates for Rothercare from 2025/26 for existing customers and the policy of applying a new rate to new customers from 2025/26 onwards.

List of Appendices Included

Background Papers

Appendix 1a. Initial Equality Screening Assessment, Part A - Future Rothercare Model.

Appendix 1b. Equality Analysis, Part B - Future Rothercare Model.

Appendix 2. Carbon Impact Assessment - Future Rothercare Model.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Future Rothercare Model

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Adult Social Care ambition is to deploy and utilise Assistive technology to enable the people of Rotherham to remain independent within their own home for as long as possible. This aligns with the vision for Adult Social Care to:

'Enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time.'

- 1.2 To achieve this vision, there needs to be a step change in the amount and type of assistive technology deployed in Rotherham to enable people to remain independent within their own home for as long as possible.

1.3 Principles of assistive technology:

Assistive technology has a strong evidence base demonstrating its ability to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people's independence for longer.

- 1.4 Assistive technology can reduce dependence on formal care by supporting the avoidance of premature admission to care homes, reduce the amount of home care required and helps to galvanise strength-based approaches to care. It also makes a significant contribution to supporting unpaid carers and sustaining them in their role by enabling a person in need of care and support to feel more confident being by themselves. This can offer reassurance to an unpaid carer which may help them to take a break from caring.

1.5 Case for change:

Increasing the amount and type of assistive technology deployed in Rotherham will help realise an anticipatory model of care by utilising non-intrusive devices to prevent the deterioration in people's needs living at home or within supported environments. As such, this type of technology contributes to efficient use of resources across health and social care services.

- 1.6 Assistive technology has a strong evidence base demonstrating its ability to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people's independence for longer. The Local Government Association has gathered a strong evidence base to demonstrate the ability of assistive technology to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people's independence for longer.

- 1.7 Benchmarking against other local authorities has indicated that greater investment in assistive technology delivers significant efficiencies, especially in terms of cost avoidance.

1.8 What is Assistive technology:

Assistive technology refers to environmental and personal sensors which monitor a person's safety and well-being and standalone technology to assist people with their activities of daily living (mobility, nutrition, communication). Environmental sensors (smoke, carbon monoxide, temperature, etc.) and personal sensors (fall detectors, location trackers, etc.) and other self-determined alerts, interface with 24/7 monitoring services. Alerts to the alarm receiving centre (ARC) trigger a response or, if appropriate, a person's natural form of support or the emergency services.

1.9 Service review and consultation:

Rothercare is considered critical to preventing, reducing or delaying the need for formal care and support in line with the Care Act 2014. As such, the service has undergone a review during 2023 to ensure it remains effective in meeting the duty and the ambitions set out in the Council's Adult Social Care Strategy for 2024-2027.

1.10 The service:

The Council's assistive technology offer is delivered in-house via a dedicated service branded as Rothercare. This is an 'end to end' service and includes management of referrals, installation of equipment, monitoring and responding to alerts. The service also procures all technical aspects including the hardware/software (alarm receiving centre, digital box/pendant, licences and peripheral technology). Whilst the service is fundamental to a strength-based approach in supporting people towards independent living, the service has been reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and able to respond to future need and technological advances such as the move from analogue to digital as a result of the UK's telecom infrastructure upgrade.

1.11 The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and referrals to the service are processed through the Council's Adult Social Care contact centre.

1.12 At present circa 5,600 households have the Rothercare community alarm installed and around 1,200 customers join the service each year. Customers accessing the service do not require a Care Act Assessment to determine eligible needs for support.

1.13 Around 55% of Rothercare customers (households) choose to receive interactive welfare checks and a wearable pendant alarm only and, 45% choose an enhanced offer (Table 1). The enhanced offer includes additional personal and environmental monitoring sensors. There are approximately 8,777 sensors which interact with the Rothercare alarm receiving centre (around 3 per household).

Table 1 details the breakdown of the customer profile by service level.

Item	Detail	Households	Total
Rothercare	Digital box/Pendant and response service only	3,105	5,646
Rothercare/ monitoring sensors	Digital box/Pendant and environmental/personal sensors and response service	2,541	
Peripherals	Sensors which are linked to the ARC Active (@ 02/07/2024)	3,131	8,777

- 1.14 The alarm receiving centre (ARC) received around 32,000 prompts in January 2024 from the pendant alarm (active - activated by the individual) or monitoring sensors (passive – do not require to be activated by the individual) (Table 2). Not all prompts require a mobile response (i.e., low battery alert), and if required the response is met utilising Rothercare mobile staff or from the customers natural forms of support, or in some cases, an emergency service response as appropriate.

Table 2 details the types of sensors which communicate with the alarm receiving centre (ARC).

Description	Number of alerts
Voice	7,022
Bed chair sensor	1,114
Self-determination – alarm trigger	6,111
Fall	3,321
Fire (smoke)	1,056
Flood	590
Intruder	1,192
Second resident personal	627
Others	11,113
Total	32,146

- 1.15 In addition to the peripherals that interface with the alarm receiving centre (ARC) approximately 1,651 standalone technology items are purchased/stored/issued to assist people with their activities of daily living (mobility, nutrition, communication, sensory needs).
- 1.16 Findings:
The outcomes of the Rothercare review have been divided into the core components of the service. The findings of the review are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Review Findings.

Service Elements	Findings/ Recommendations
Referral/Triage	Systems to support the recording, triage, and risk management process will be further enhanced.
Identification of Assistive technology Solutions and Installation	A technology partner could provide further expertise to ensure the service keeps pace with technological advances in such a fast-paced environment and ensures the service is able to continue to meet need.
Monitoring/Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC)	A significant amount of data is produced by the ARC. This will continue to be used to drive service improvement, understanding customers, improving the business and performance.
Response to alerts	The operational response to alerts is appropriate to need. This will continue to be reviewed and enhanced as the service evolves and takes advantage of the technological advances in the marketplace.
Outcome Monitoring	There is further scope to understand the impact and outcome from the technology installed and issued. This could mean a stronger contribution to the revision of a support plan (for Care Act Assessed customers), or to contribute to a review.
Procurement	Procurement activity is undertaken by the service and there is scope to improve this approach further to ensure Best Value principles are applied for technology requirements, including tasks such as: storing equipment, servicing, cleaning/re-issuing, recovering and appropriate disposal of equipment.

The review of the service has identified opportunities to address the operational challenges and to remodel the assistive technology offer.

1.17 Feedback:

An online survey and face to face consultation 'Have your Say on Rothercare' launched in August 2023 indicated that 88% of the 121 respondents identified the positive impact of the service on their ability to live independently, followed by feeling safe and giving peace of mind for family and friends. This indicates the service is highly valued by customers.

1.18 Implications of the UK Telecoms infrastructure upgrade:

Until recently the alerts to the alarm receiving centre relied on analogue technology. However, in 2017 the Department of Business and Industry announced that the UK's telecoms industry intended to retire analogue phone lines to be replaced with digital infrastructure. The UK's telecom infrastructure analogue to digital upgrade programme is now underway on a national scale. As a result of the Analogue to Digital (A2D) programme the Council was compelled to replace the Rothercare's analogue units with digital units. These are installed

in customers' homes and have an integrated Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) which are a component of digital boxes.

1.19 In order to deliver the Analogue to Digital (A2D) programme, the Council has allocated £1.4m of a £1.7m investment budget to replace analogue to digital units (boxes) and are progressing toward a total of 2,858 new digital boxes and pendants which utilise an integrated SIM. There is a warranty on this type of equipment for a period of 2 years. Whilst the installation programme of new digital boxes will continue until September 2025, these items will be subject to reallocation, refurbishment and reissue to meet ethical and ecological objectives.

1.20 Cost implications weekly service charge:

SIMs are a requirement to connect and operate the digital service. The costs of the SIM licences are £1/per household per week. The ongoing licence costs must be met by the income generated by the service.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The service is fundamental to a strength-based approach in supporting people towards independent living. The service review identified that the service is unable to expand the assistive technology offer further without a significant investment in additional staff capacity and process re-design.

2.2 Demand for adult social care services in Rotherham has increased significantly since 2021 with overall customer numbers increasing by 11%, with older adult services, such as home care and residential care, increasing the most. The use of assistive technology is identified as a way of managing demand on higher cost interventions and providing valuable support to customers.

2.3 It is imperative that the ongoing service costs are met through the income generated by the service to ensure that this critical service is sustained. There is therefore a requirement to revise the charging policy and the associated Rothercare weekly service charge.

3 Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1 – (recommended) - A collaborative approach between an independent sector technology partner and Rothercare

In this option, Rothercare will continue to deliver the referral, triage, monitoring and response service whilst the assistive technology elements (identification of assistive technology solutions, installation, recycling, disposal and maintenance and procurement of assistive technology equipment) are delivered by a technology partner from the independent sector.

Advantages:

- Expands assistive technology to target prevention, early intervention and builds on strength-based approaches to promote independent living in line with Care Act 2014 principles (prevent, reduce, delay).
- Increases opportunities to manage demand on formal and higher cost support options and offer dynamic solutions to address increasingly complex needs.

- Support the existing Rothercare capacity to focus on their core purpose (referral/monitor and response to alerts).
- Utilises expertise of a technology partner to appropriately assess customers and supply technology in targeted way.
- Procures technology from a diverse market with relevant knowledgeable purchasing power increasing budgetary control.
- Offers personalised identification of assistive technology solutions to improve customer experience.
- Promotes positive practice and knowledge transfer across the directorate of innovative technologies and how they can benefit people.
- Increases the opportunity for performance management (KPI/contract management and realign the in-house operations) to continue to demonstrate value for money.
- Offers a route to advance progression to integrated care and health provision i.e., telehealth.
- A compliant recycling programme would be implemented by the technology partner for the disposal of waste from electrical and electronic equipment.
- Retains the capacity for emergency response should this be required.
- Formal procurement arrangements will be implemented in line with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and relevant procurement legislation.
- Allows for growth in the volume of assistive technology solutions in line with population increase (older people) and complexity of need.

Disadvantages:

- Option 1 requires a level of investment to support the expansion of assistive technology.

Conclusion:

As the balance of advantages are significant when compared to the other 3 options, option 1 is recommended to be taken forward.

3.2 Option 2: - Rothercare continues to deliver all elements of the service in-house (not recommended).

Option 2 would mean all elements of Rothercare remain to be delivered in-house and the service would retain control over all activities under revised operational arrangements.

Advantages:

- Rothercare is an established brand with mature relationships across the customer base, workforce and specialist areas such as Occupational Therapist and Social Workers.

Disadvantages:

- Financial resources to continue to improve the service in line with the findings of the recent review would be required. The level of investment is estimated to be significant.
- Whether further investment would lead to improvement at the pace required cannot be confirmed.

- The skills and knowledge required to deliver an improved assistive technology offer are currently beyond the capability of the Rothercare service and it would take time to cultivate the skills and knowledge required.
- The advantages outlined with option 1 would not be achieved without significant investment and a protracted time period.
- The required horizon scanning and insight of the technology market to ensure appropriate procurement of technology in such a fast-paced environment would be extremely challenging without technology partner expertise.

Conclusion:

The Council is facing significant financial pressures and there is an urgent need to manage the demand for care and support, so it is important that adult social care can prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support.

Given the findings of the Rothercare review, the recommendation is that Option 2 is not progressed.

3.3 **Option 3: Arm's Length Management Organisation (not recommended)**

This option would mean an organisation i.e., Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) or a Community Interest Company (CIC) is established to deliver all the elements of the Rothercare function, and the service operates outside the constraints of a local authorities' rules and regulations whilst still being required to comply with legislative requirements.

Advantages:

- All risks relating to the Rothercare service are ported to the private entity.
- The technology partner would be performance managed, and a suite of performance reports would provide effectiveness and value for money to be demonstrated.

Disadvantages:

- Typically, a subsidy would be required in the first few years to ensure that the service can be sustained.
- Rothercare would require time to adopt this model which would have an impact on operational practice.
- Considerable funding would be required to setup an ALMO/CIC. Estimated procurement and implementation time would be approximately 24 - 36 months.
- Additional in-house resource would be required to act in the client role and effectively manage and monitor the contract to ensure satisfactory performance and compliance.
- A contingency plan would be required in the event that the organisation could no longer trade.

In 2013, another Council entered into a Service Level Agreement to develop this approach, with some functions transferring to a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2016. It was envisaged at the outset that it would transfer to a completely independent company. However, after 10 years this still has not been achieved. The view of the Council is that due to various market challenges the Council will retain ownership of the company.

Conclusion:

Option 3 would present the Council with significant challenge to financial and officer resources and delay the achievement of the advantages outlined in option 1 and is therefore not a recommended option.

3.4 Option 4 – A commissioned technology partner delivers all elements (not recommended).

This option would mean that an external technology partner is commissioned under contract arrangements to deliver all elements of the Rothercare service. In this option customers who could potentially benefit from technology will be referred to the service for identification of assistive technology solutions, separately to care planning.

Advantages:

- Continuity of the service would be preserved.
- The technology partner would be a subject matter expert and would be best placed to appropriately assess customers and supply technology in targeted way.
- Expands the assistive technology offer and builds on strength- based approaches to promote independent living in line with Care Act 2014 principles (prevent, reduce, delay).
- Increases opportunities to manage demand on formal and higher cost support options and offer dynamic solutions to address increasingly complex needs.
- Procures technology from a diverse market with relevant knowledgeable purchasing power increasing budgetary control.
- Offers personalised identification of assistive technology solutions to improve customer experience.
- Increases the opportunity for performance management (KPI/contract management and realign the in-house operations) to continue to demonstrate value for money.
- Offers an in-road to advance progression to integrated care and health provision i.e., telehealth.
- A recycling programme would be implemented by the technology partner and the disposal of waste from electrical and electronic equipment would comply with relevant legislation.

Disadvantages:

- Reports of change of need and associated risks to vulnerable adults accessing the response service are currently escalated swiftly via internal pathways and processes. The preferred option 1 retains this element in house. If this service element was transferred to the technology partner this may introduce unnecessarily complex communication channels as an external technology partner using remote and less integrated communication and recording systems.
- Opportunities would be missed to promote positive practice and knowledge transfer across the directorate of innovative technologies and how they can benefit people.
- Resources currently available in the Rothercare staff resource which support the Council to respond to borough emergencies would no longer be available.

Conclusion:

Option 4 would present significant risks to individuals and would hinder the Council when required to respond to environmental and ecological emergency planning scenarios. Therefore option 4 is not recommended.

3.5 Associated Costs estimated for option 1 (recommended)

The service cost associated with the recommended option 1 have been estimated. The total cost is estimated at £1.6m and comprises of Rothercare 'in-house' operational cost and the costs associated with the procured Technology Partner to achieve the collaborative approach model.

3.6 Revenue:

Rothercare:

The Rothercare element of cost is budgeted at £1,012,085 and this budget will continue to support the staffing cost and non-staffing cost associated with operating the service including managing referrals, monitoring of the alarm receiving centre responding to alerts.

3.7 Technology Partner:

The Technology Partner procured will carry out the identification assistive technology solutions and review individuals and procure, deliver, collect/dispose and recycle the technology equipment.

The annual contract value associated with the service proposed to be procured from the Technology Partner is estimated to be £587,915. The contract value for a 5 year initial term is therefore estimated at £2.9m. The contract includes potential extensions for up to 3 years (to be taken in any combination) should this be exercised; this would bring the total contract value to £4.7m. These values will be subject to inflationary increases on an annual basis.

3.8 The revenue cost associated with the proposed option 1 have been estimated and illustrated in table 4 below.

Table 4. Revenue Cost Option 1

Collaborative approach Model	Detail	Annual Cost 2025/26
Rothercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral/Triage • Monitoring of the ARC • Response 	£1,012,085
Technology Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of assistive technology solutions and review • Collection/Disposal/Recycling of technology • Procurement of technology 	£587,915
	Total	£1.6m

3.9 Capital Costs:

In 2022/23 the Council spent a total of £712,856 on peripherals and standalone technology. The capital budget is sourced from the Disabled Facilities Grant and therefore does not need to be recovered through the weekly charge. There are approximately 5,646 digital boxes and pendants in circulation at any one time and a number of units held in storage. In addition, there are circa 1,651 standalone technology items and 18,000 items including 8,777 peripherals (environmental/personal sensors) purchased/stored or issued. The collection, disposal and recycling programme implemented by the technology partner will support control over expenditure associated with this budget.

3.10 Rothercare Service Charge:

The weekly charge for the Rothercare service (2024-25) is £3.50 per week. The service costs and associated charge to customers have not been revised for an extensive period. The weekly service charge needed to achieve full cost recovery (2025/26) has been calculated at £6.88 per week.

Whilst the service charge has remained stable the associated service costs have risen. Additional service requirements are as a result of increasing presence of technology, connected digital devices, remote monitoring capability and individual data driving practice.

In addition, as a result of the UK's telecom infrastructure upgrade, the current charge is insufficient to cover the costs of the sim cards (a component of digital boxes) which are a requirement to connect and operate the service (see 1.20).

3.11 Weekly Charge:

It is proposed that the weekly charge will increase from the current £3.50 to £4.50 (2025/26) for a 12-month period. This will cover the costs associated with the fact that the UK's telecom infrastructure analogue to digital upgrade programme is now underway on a national scale. As a result of the Analogue to Digital (A2D) programme the Council was compelled to replace the Rothercare's analogue units with digital units. These are installed in customers' homes and have an integrated Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) which are a component of digital boxes.

SIMs are a requirement to connect and operate the digital service. The costs of the SIM licences are £1/per household per week. The ongoing licence costs must be met by the income generated by the service. This increase will not achieve full cost recovery and therefore it will be necessary to continue to subsidise the service through the HRA. This will keep the financial impact to individuals to a minimum. Over a few years full cost recovery can be achieved gradually through a period of transition. The impact of the rising service costs will be mitigated by continuing to subsidise the service through a transitional phase towards zero subsidy. This will enable; customers who are receiving a subsidised service to continue to do so until they leave the service and, where people pay the Rothercare charge as part of a tenancy agreement but do not wish to do so, they will be offered an opportunity to have their needs for assistive technology to be identified prior to opting out of the charge.

3.12 Benchmarking

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken in order to compare the weekly charges set by other Councils. Findings indicate a wide range of weekly charges applied by other local authorities. Rothercare charges are significantly lower than those applied elsewhere hence the proposed increases seem reasonable. Table 5 illustrates approximate weekly charges for a similar service offer identified in the proposed Option 1.

Table 5. Weekly Charges:

Council	Charge 2024/25
Doncaster	£6.20
Barnsley	£5.88
Sheffield	£6.99
Leeds	£10.55
Kirklees	£10.26
Calderdale	£5.85
Rochdale	£5.65
Hampshire	£5.00
Coventry	£9.63
Sandwell	£5.20
Walsall	£6.25

3.13 Charging proposals:

There are fixed costs associated with the service and the current model is subsidised as well as being dependent on paying customers continuing to access the service. To understand the associated risk impact relating to service sustainability and reliance on the subsidy, an assessment of the impact of the weekly charge has been undertaken.

- 3.14 The attrition rate from the service has been estimated at circa 21% of subsidised customers who leave the service annually. The service growth is around 3% (net of new customers and attrition). The new service will be promoted, and the growth of the service will accelerate beyond 3% increasing the numbers of paying customers. The subsidised customers will reduce over time along with a reduction on the requirement for subsidy.
- 3.15 A transitional increase in the weekly charge (in addition to inflation increase) will be applied in subsequent years which will be an important step to sustain this critical service and balance income and expenditure without a need for further subsidy.
- 3.16 Full cost recovery will be achieved gradually over a number of years. As the cost model relies on attrition rates and service growth, the pace at which reduction of reliance on the subsidy cannot be accurately determined. Potential charges and required subsidy have been modelled for the first two years and are illustrated below in Table 6. This is a conservative estimate taking into account a 3% service growth only and these figures are based on the current information available and best estimates.

Table 6: Estimated weekly service charge and subsidy required to mitigate shortfall:

Year	Estimated Charge – customer per week	Subsidy – customer per week
2025/26	£4.50	£2.38
2026/27	£5.00	£1.60

- 3.17 If approved, the implementation of the new collaborative approach model between an independent sector technology partner and Rothercare will undergo an assessment of benefits realisation which will inform the level of cost efficiencies derived. This will inform the revision of the service costs going forward which are likely to be favourable

4 Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Engagement events have taken place to develop the new model. Attendees have included professionals and technology experts from the independent sector.

Method of Engagement	Date	Target Audience
Workshop – Rethink Partners	March 2023	Broad range of key stakeholders - Health and Social Care Professionals, Practitioners and Therapists, commissioners and frontline staff.
Engagement with the Operational Business Unit	Continuous throughout period	Head of Service Provider Services and relevant in-house management.
Workshop – Town Hall	29 May 2024	Health and Social Care Professionals, Practitioners and Therapists, and industry experts.
Workshop – Riverside House	1 July 2024	Health and Social Care Professionals, Practitioners and Therapists.

- 4.2 The LGA Care and Health Improvement Team have collaborated with Rethink Partners to support Councils to realise their ambitions for care technology and adopting digital tools and solutions in social care. Rethink partners engaged with Rotherham Council in March 2023, through a series of events. The outcome of their work led to recommendations being made to develop a blend of in-house and commissioned service model that plays to the strengths of Rothercare but with the benefits of a strategic partnership (technology partner - collaborative service model). They advised that to bring in expertise would de-risk 'technology redundancy' and a joint project was required involving a strategic technology partner to deliver a specialist technology offer and that Rothercare continue to

deliver and provide a monitoring and responder service for a new technology service offer.

- 4.3 Outcomes from the other events undertaken during 2024 have been reviewed and there is general support for the technology partner - collaborative service model. Queries raised on process and handoffs have been captured and will be addressed as part of the procurement exercise. The detailed service revision of Rothercare and design process of the model will address any potential concerns.
- 4.4 Further engagement events with Rotherham residents took place at Rotherham Show in September and their views will support the refinement of the service specification.
- 4.6 Benchmarking

Other local authorities have adopted different approaches to deliver their assistive technology offer (see Table 6).

Table 6: Local Authority Service Model

LA	Model			comment
	In house	Fully outsourced	Technology Partner/in house Collaborative model	
North Yorkshire		✓		Fully outsourced service since 2018.
Sheffield			✓	Elements of service undertaken externally and planning to outsource purchasing of equipment and identification of assistive technology solutions.
Derbyshire			✓	Technology partner commissioned to do monitoring and installations.
Doncaster	✓			
Bristol	✓			
Barnsley	✓			
Wiltshire			✓	Commission 24/7 monitoring and installation externally.
Hampshire		✓		Fully outsourced since 2014.
West Midlands Combined Authority			✓	Active tender taking place.

5 Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Pre-market engagement has commenced and if approved, the procurement/tender process will commence following Cabinet decision. A mobilisation period will ensue to ensure that the tender award is aligned to the revised Rothercare service operational arrangements.

6 Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 Finance

Rothercare is currently funded through a mix of a weekly charges to customers and a subsidy from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Capital costs are funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). It is anticipated that the full revenue cost will eventually be recouped through a staged increase in the weekly charge to existing and new customers, eliminating the need for HRA income.

- 6.2 The proposed charge has been calculated by estimating the number of users who will continue to require a service. If this estimate is wrong, then there is a risk that there will be insufficient income to cover the cost of providing the service. If this occurs then the operating model can be reviewed so that it operates within budget. The service budget will be monitored closely over the years of transition to minimise any risks associated with this

6.3 Procurement:

All procurement activity aligned to the recommendations detailed in this report, must be undertaken in full compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 (whichever is the applicable legislation at the time) as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7 Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 As stated above the procurement of the assistive technology supplier will need to be carried out in compliance with the relevant procurement legislation which is in force at the time, and the appropriate contractual arrangements will need to be put in place with the chosen supplier.
- 7.2 The Care Act 2014 ("CA 2014") creates a general duty for the Council to promote the individual wellbeing of adults with care and support needs and carers. s1 of the CA 2014, requires the Council to have regard to the importance of preventing or delaying the development of needs for care and support.
- 7.3 Under s2 CA 2014, the Council must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by adults in its area of needs for care and support; reduce the needs for care and support of adults in the borough and reduce the needs for support of carers in the borough.
- 7.4 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance ("the Statutory Guidance") sets out that the care and support system must work to actively promote well-being and

independence and does not wait to respond when people are in crisis by early interventions which prevents need or delays deterioration wherever possible.

- 7.5 Under s18 of the CA 2014 the Council has a duty to meet needs for care and support having determined that a person has needs which meet the eligibility criteria and a duty under s20 of the CA 2014 to meet a carer's needs for support. The eligibility criteria is set out within the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015.
- 7.6 Personalisation is central to ensuring people receive the right support that helps them live independently and connected to their communities. The Statutory Guidance recognises that concept of meeting need is different and personal to individuals and that modern care and support can be provided in many ways, including the use of technology. Paragraph 10.12 of the Statutory Guidance states: 'Where the local authority provides or arranges for care and support, the type of support may itself take many forms. These may include more traditional 'service' options, such as care homes or homecare, but may also include other types of support such as assistive technology in the home or equipment/adaptations, and approaches to meeting needs should be inclusive of less intensive or service-focused options'.
- 7.7 The Council has a market shaping duty under s5 CA 2014 to promote an efficient and effective market for care and support services for people in the borough including a variety of service providers and services and a variety of high-quality services.
- 7.8 On the Council's behalf, Rothercare is designed to promote the welfare of its customers by providing an alarm service to help tenants live safely in their own home. The alarm can be used inside the home during the day or night to send for help in circumstances including where a tenant has an accident or incident inside their home, suffers a medical emergency, and/or suffers from harassment or anti-social behaviour.
- 7.9 In connection with its provision of housing accommodation, s.11A(1) Housing Act 1985 allows for Local Authorities to provide '*services for promoting the welfare of the persons for whom the accommodation is so provided, as accord with the needs of those persons*'.
- 7.10 The Operation of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ring-fence Guidance ("the Guidance") provides for the provision of HRA expenditure on Core and Core Plus services. The Guidance states '*A service that cannot be defined as core or core-plus should be accounted for in the council's General Fund.*'
- 7.11 The Guidance defines Core services as including those related to low level anti-social behaviour. Core Plus services are defined as HRA housing related support services only, including alarm services.
- 7.12 Under s.11A (2), 'The authority may make reasonable charges for welfare services...', provided in connection with its provision of housing accommodation.

Customers currently pay a reasonable weekly charge to use Rothercare Services. Planned transitional increases in the weekly charge in consequent years will be

an important step to sustain the Rothercare service and balance income and expenditure without a need for further HRA subsidy.

- 7.13 The Guidance imposes no income-based funding restrictions on HRA expenditure for Core and/or Core Plus services.

8 Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 Should any Human Resources matters arise from this report, including where TUPE Legislation applies, the Council will follow due processes.

9 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Expanding the assistive technology offer represents a positive step in supporting vulnerable customers. The recommendations in this report if approved will offer new opportunities to prevent, reduce and delay the need for more formal types of care provision.

10 Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Equality analysis of the potential beneficiaries of the new service who are living in Rotherham with protected characteristics (see attached Equality Analysis - Appendix 1a, 1b) has been undertaken. Where people with protected characteristics are under-represented, the new service will be designed to overcome any issues identified.
- 10.2 The recommendations in this report will promote assisting those most vulnerable in society to have their needs met in the least restrictive way.
- 10.3 The proposals in this report support the Council to comply with legal obligations encompassed in the:
- Human Rights Act (1998), to treat everyone equally with fairness dignity and respect with a focus on those who are disadvantaged as a result of disability: and
 - Equality Act (2010) to legally protect people from discrimination in the wider society.
- 10.4 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes the public sector equality duty ("PSED") – which requires that the Council, as a public body, in carrying out its functions must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10.5 The relevant protected characteristics referred to in the Equality Act are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the

need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

- 10.6 There is a duty on the Council to keep a record to demonstrate that it has genuinely and consciously had due regard to the PSED.

11 Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 The technology partner will be replicating activity that is currently undertaken by Rothercare. In terms of emissions from non-domestic buildings and transport, much of the impact of emissions (in comparison to the current service model) depends on whether the chosen technology partner is already operating in the Rotherham area. Emissions can be mitigated in this area by asking the technology partner to produce a carbon reduction plan, engaging with the technology partner regarding electric vehicles and optimising non-emergency routes.

11.2 In terms of waste, it is envisaged that the successful technology partner will operate more efficiently from a carbon perspective throughout the contract. In the event that a national organisation being the successful technology partner there remains a real opportunity for carbon reduction as the Council can exploit their supply chain and existing resources. It is expected that a new technology partner could support waste minimisation. Equipment is expected to be reissued where possible and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) recycled, this will be monitored.

11.3 The exact requirements and responses from the successful technology partner will be gleaned via their formal response and the relevant procurement framework requirements on carbon declarations. Carbon impact plans will be requested to understand the organisations carbon impact and mitigating actions to address these.

11.4 Outcomes aimed to be achieved by the new technology partner:

- A technology partner that has infrastructure in or near to Rotherham to reduce domestic building emissions.
- Reduce emissions from transport by being more strategic in visits.
- The use of more environmentally friendly vehicles to achieve the councils Net Zero 2030 target.
- Reduction of waste via a WEEE compliant process.

12 Implications for Partners

12.1 The recommendations in this report if approved:

- Will represent a positive step in respect of hospital and care home admission avoidance and accelerating safe hospital discharge.
- Have synergies with telehealth and will promote technology advancement in integrated health and social care.

13 Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Risk: The competitive tender process has a poor response from the market.

Mitigation: Further market development, engagement, co-production, research on specifications and costs.

13.2 Risk: The new technology partner fails to expand the assistive technology offer and strength-based approaches are further hindered.

Mitigation: Detailed mobilisation and ongoing development plan.

Mitigation: Services will be clearly specified with the Council's expectations in respect of competency, capability and high standards. Robust arrangements will be in place to monitor service delivery and outcomes with associated performance targets and KPIs and enforcement action taken when technology partner deviates from the standards.

14 Accountable Officers

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

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	30/09/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	26/09/24
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	26/09/24

Report Author: Kirsty-Louise Littlewood, Assistant Director Adult Care
Kirsty-louise.Littlewood@rotherham.gov.uk

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

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Appendix 1a.

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 considered 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: Future Rothercare Model	
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Service area: Provider Services
Lead person: Deborah Ramskill	Contact: Deborah.ramskill@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p>Adult Social Care has an ambition to fully utilise the benefits and opportunities provided by assistive technology to enable individuals to live healthy, fulfilled, and independent lives within their homes.</p> <p>The Council intends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase awareness of assistive technology and its benefits. · Explore new ways to support people to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care Expand the provision of assistive technology across formal and informal

care sectors.

- Develop a Strategy for Technology Enabled Care, to give a clear vision for provision of assistive technology in Rotherham.

Assistive Technology has a strong evidence base demonstrating its ability to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people’s independence for longer. Benchmarking against other local authorities has indicated that greater investment in assistive technology delivers significant efficiencies, especially in terms of cost avoidance (Local Government Association - LGA. 2018)

The Rothercare service has been reviewed and a proposed model will be presented to Cabinet on 16 September 2024.

This assessment is screening the potential impact - subject to Cabinet approving the new Rothercare business model, on people receiving the services and the staff delivering it. If approved a new provider will deliver parts of the service, whilst key elements of Rothercare will continue to be delivered in house, such as triage, monitoring and mobile response.

The proposed new model will have a clear focus on expanding the current Assistive Technology offer, allowing people to remain independent in their own home for longer. There is recognition the impact of digital inclusion needs to be considered and how it can be addressed.

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?	X	
Could the proposal affect service users?	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how the Council’s services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	X	

Could the proposal affect the Council’s workforce or employment practices?		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason.		

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?**

A recent review of the Rothercare service has identified opportunities to address operational challenges and remodel the assistive technology offer to optimise success and cost avoidance.

This report follows a Cabinet Report presented on 22 January 2024, Digitalisation of the Rothercare Service. This report indicated a new strategic approach to delivering the Rothercare service would be presented to Cabinet in the Summer 2024.

At that time a 90-day public consultation took place between 5 August 2023 and 13 November 2023. The outcome of the consultation supported the Council’s strategic approach in relation to the digitalisation of the Rothercare service in response to the national digital agenda.

The consultation was accessible borough-wide in a range of formats, including online, public drop-in sessions and home visits for those who are most isolated. The consultation breadth covered all age ranges from 18 and above and was open to people with the full range of protected characteristics.

A range of engagement events have taken place to develop the new assistive technology model. These included health and social care practitioners, health professional, therapists and industry experts. These stakeholders represented a wide range of people accessing services, with protected characteristics.

A wider range of assistive technology will further support people to remain independent within their own property for longer. To achieve this vision their needs to be a significant increase in the technology deployed. Expanding the assistive technology offer is an

important step in supporting people with protect characteristics including people with disabilities including, mental ill health, learning disability, autism and prevent reduce and delay the need for more formal types of care to keep people independently in their communities as far as possible.

Changes to how the Rothercare and the assistive technology model is delivered will impact positively on people.

• **Key findings**

These proposals will affect people boroughwide in relation to support to live independently in their own homes, reassurance, and safety. Therefore, it is critical that the service is accessible affordable and operates using the most efficient systems and digital connectivity.

• **Actions**

The output of the previous formal, public consultation was acknowledged by Cabinet on 22 January 2024, see [Cabinet Report](#).

Full screening (Part B) will ensure the proposed model considers equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis	05 May 2024
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	08 August 2024
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title)	Deborah Ramskill - Interim Head of Provider Services

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Cllr Baker-Rogers	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health	9 September 2024
Ian Spicer	Strategic Director, Adult Care, Housing & Public Health	6 September 2024

6. Publishing

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

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

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

Date screening completed	08 July 2024
Report title and date	Rothercare review and proposed business model
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Report date: 14 October 2024 Publication date: 30 September 2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	16 August 2024

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Appendix 1b.

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 considered 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: Rothercare Future Model	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 04 July 2024	
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Service area: Provider Services, Adult Care and Integration
Lead Manager: Deborah Ramskill – Interim Head of Provider Services	Contact: Deborah Ramskill Deborah.Ramskill@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" 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 (e.g. service user, managers, service specialist)
Deborah Ramskill	RMBC	Head of Provider Services
Jacqueline Clark	RMBC	Head of Prevention Early Intervention – Strategic Commissioning
Tony Sanderson	RMBC	Project Manager
Claire Green	RMBC	Programme Manager

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, other groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

Rotherham's Adult Care, Housing and Public Health directorate sees the future delivery of care being around personalised outcomes and proactive and preventative services, enabled by digital intervention and technology. This aligns with the Rotherham's Adult Social Care vision to:

'Enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time.'

To achieve this vision there needs to be a significant increase in the amount and types of assistive technology that is deployed to enable people to remain independent within their own home for longer and reduce pressure across the health and social care system.

Assistive technology refers to environmental and personal sensors which monitor a person's safety and well-being and voice activated technology. The types of technology in scope include standalone technology to assist people with their activities of daily living (mobility, nutrition, communication) and environmental sensors (smoke, carbon monoxide, extreme temperature, door), personal sensors (fall detectors, location trackers, medication prompts) which interface with 24/7 monitoring services to mobilise a response or, if appropriate, the emergency services.

Adult Social Care has an ambition to fully utilise the benefits and opportunities provided by assistive technology to enable individuals to live healthy, fulfilled, and independent lives within their homes.

The Council intends to:

- Increase awareness of assistive technology and its benefits.
- Explore new ways to support people to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care Expand the provision of assistive technology across formal and informal care sectors.

Assistive Technology has a strong evidence base demonstrating its ability to increase wellbeing, reduce more costly health and care interventions and maintain people's independence for longer. Benchmarking against other local authorities has indicated that greater investment in assistive technology delivers significant efficiencies, especially in terms of cost avoidance (LGA. 2018).

Assistive Technology links seamlessly with wider council policies and strategies:

[The Rotherham Council Plan 2022-25^{\[1\]}](#)

One of the four guiding principles in The Rotherham Council Plan 2022-25, is a focus on prevention and to intervene early to prevent problems from worsening. Under our theme '*people are safe, healthy and live well,*' our aim is for everyone to live independently, safely and healthily in their community for as long as possible – and to work with our partners to achieve this.

[The Rotherham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025^{\[2\]}](#)

The strategy includes 4 aims including:

'All Rotherham people enjoy the best possible mental health and wellbeing and have a good quality of life' and *'all Rotherham people live well for longer.'*

One of the underlying principles is to 'prevent physical and mental ill health as a primary aim; but where there is already an issue, services intervene early to maximise impact.'

[Rotherham Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2027^{\[3\]}](#)

Types of support can include access to preventative services including assistive technology, aids and adaptations, provision of information and advice, targeted support for unpaid carers, short-term intensive support through our enablement services or more long-term support such as home care, access to day opportunities or care provided in care and nursing homes

[Digitalisation of the Rothercare Service^{\[4\]}](#)

The increase in assistive technology provision over the years has increased the number of connections and calls to Rothercare. This has resulted in increased service activity with greater levels of complexity and involvement leading to a delivery pressure across the current Rothercare service.

^[1] [Council Plan 2022-25 – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

^[2] [Rotherham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025](#)

^[3] [Rotherham Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2027](#)

^[4] [Digitalisation of the Rothercare Service](#)

Rothercare Community Alarm Service

The Rothercare service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and referrals to the service are processed through the Council's Adult Social Care Customer Contact Team. At present circa 5,600 households have the Rothercare community alarm installed and around 1,200 customers join the service each year with a service growth of around 3% per annum.

Customers accessing the service do not require assessed eligible need under the Care Act 2014.

Approach

A service review has been carried out and we are looking at a revised model. The Council's assistive technology offer is delivered by an in-house dedicated service branded as Rothercare. This is currently an 'end to end' service which manages referrals, installation of equipment, monitoring and responding to alerts. The service also procures all technical aspects including the hardware/software (alarm receiving centre, box/pendant, licences, and peripheral technology).

Whilst the service is intrinsic to a strength-based approach in supporting people towards independent living, the service is only partially successful. A recent review of the service has identified opportunities to address operational challenges and remodel the assistive technology offer to optimise success and cost avoidance.

The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and referrals to the service are processed through the Council's Adult Social Care Customer Contact Team. At present circa 5,600 households have the Rothercare community alarm installed and around 1,200 customers join the service each year with an attrition rate of approximately 900 customers per annum. Customers accessing the service do not require assessed eligible need under the Care Act 2014.

Subject to Cabinet approval, Rothercare will continue to deliver the referral/triage/monitoring and response service whilst the assistive technology elements (assessment, installation, recycling, disposal and maintenance and procurement of assistive technology equipment) are delivered by a technology partner.

This analysis builds on a previous assessment which focussed on a formal 90-days public consultation in 2023 which gathered feedback on Rothercare, including the digitalisation of the service which is driven by a national requirement to replace the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) with a fully digital infrastructure and network in all Alarm Receiving Centres.

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

Rothercare Community Alarm Service

There data recorded by the service in relation to protected characteristics is as follows:

Of 7,631 adults recorded on the Jontek system as of 09 July 2024, the following information is available:

- 1,460 (19%) of customers are aged between 18-64 years and 6171 (81%) customers are aged 65 and over.
- 4,625 (61%) of customers are female and 2916 (38%) are male.

The Rothercare service is available to all adult residents of Rotherham, regardless of tenure type, age, or level of disability/frailty. However, the majority of customers receive the service qualify under VAT exemption eligibility as they are declared disabled.

Demand for adult social care services in Rotherham has increased significantly since 2021 with overall customer numbers increasing by 11%, with older adult services, such as home care and residential care, increasing the most. The use of assistive technology is identified as a way of managing demand on higher cost interventions and providing valuable support to customers. Assistive Technology can reduce dependence on formal care by supporting the avoidance of premature admission to care homes, reducing the amount of home care required and galvanises a strength based approach to care. This will realise an anticipatory model of care by utilising non-intrusive devices to prevent the deterioration in people's needs living at home or within supported environments. As such, this type of technology contributes to efficient use of resources across health and social care services.

An assessment of the support needs of the Rotherham population has been undertaken.

The majority of the customers receiving the Rothercare service are over the age of 65. Published data indicates the population aged 65 and over in Rotherham is estimated at 55,400 in 2023, this is predicted to increase by 3.2% to 57,100 by 2025 and by 11.5% to 61,800 by 2030. (Projecting Older People Population Information -POPPI June 2023).

Support needs

In 2023 it was estimated that the number of people aged 65 and over who need help with at least one self-care activity, was 15,788. This number is expected to increase by 3.4% to 16,354 by 2025 and by 13.5% to 17,867 by the year 2030 (POPPI May 2023).

People receiving service:

There are approximately 2,126 older people receiving service (June 2023). Based on Office of National Statistics - ONS projections this number is predicted to rise by 9.8% to 2,210 people by the year 2027.

The primary need for people aged 65 and over in residential/nursing care homes are:

- 66.1% Physical support,
- 22.0% Support with memory and cognition,
- 9.5% Mental health support,
- 2.3% Learning disability support,
- 1.0% Sensory support and
- 1.1% Social support.

The age of older people being admitted into care homes is also slowly increasing from an average of 83 years in 2015/16 to 85 years in 2018/19. In 2022/23 the average age for admission into a care home has decreased slightly to 84 years.

In March 2023, there are 2,260 older people (aged 65 years and over) registered with GP practices in Rotherham who have received a dementia diagnosis (Source: NHS Digital)

The Council currently supports 411 older people who have a primary need of memory/cognition and who may be diagnosed with dementia (Source: Insight). According to ONS data this number is expected to increase by 23% over the next 10 years to 480 older people. Of the 411 older people currently receiving service the majority (315 or 77%) are living in a care home indicating more needs to be done to support people to remain in the community.

Learning Disability & Autism

The population of people living with a primary need of a learning disability in Rotherham was estimated to be 5222 in 2023. This number is predicted to increase by approximately 100 people every 5 years, with an overall increase of 5% by 2032.

The population of people predicted to have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Rotherham in 2023, is 1553 people aged 18-64 and 514 people aged 65 and over. By 2030 the overall number will increase, this is expected to be driven by an increase in the number of older autistic people receiving a diagnosis as the number of younger autistic people remains static.

There are approximately 753 people with a primary need of a learning disability receiving a service (June 2023). Based on ONS predictions, this number will remain relatively static over the next 10 years.

Mental ill-health

The Council currently supports 357 people who have a primary need of mental health. 214 of which are aged 64 and under. This indicates an approximate 9% increase since January 2022. A review of the care and support provision for people experiencing mental ill health in Rotherham was undertaken in 2020 and this indicated that the market in Rotherham was undeveloped and reliant there was a reliance on the residential care model.

Physical Disability

Rotherham has a high rate per 100,000 population of 18-64 Physical Disability customers at 274.5, for the Yorkshire and Humber Region as a whole this figure is 217.7. Neighbouring authorities of Barnsley (145.0) and Doncaster (226.3) Sheffield (204.5) have significantly lower rates (ref: Short And Long Term - SALT Return 15/16). Rotherham's current figure is 270.02. Currently there are 431 people (age 18-64) with a primary need of physical disability accessing services.

Unpaid Carers

In Rotherham, there is a predicted 31,500 unpaid carers, meaning at least 12% of people living in Rotherham fulfil an unpaid caring role. As Rotherham's ageing population increases, it is predicted that more people will identify as an unpaid carer. Additionally, findings from Carers UK July 2021 suggest there has been a large increase in new carers since the start of the pandemic.

Consultation

In relation to Rotherham residents, the 90-day public consultation was accessible borough-wide in a range of formats, including online, public drop-in sessions and home visits for those who are most isolated. The consultation breadth covered all age ranges aged 18+ and included representation from people within the full range of protected characteristics. The consultation included the availability of an online questionnaire, with paper version available.

This was also promoted through Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs, with assistance to complete online forms. A series of drop-in sessions were attended across the borough by customers of Rothercare, family carers and members of the public. Individual letters were sent to all current Rothercare customers and home visits were offered to support some customers. The consultation was widely promoted via social media channels, poster and banner campaigns and public events such as The Rotherham Show 121 people participated in total during the 90 days.

Support of our strategic approach and service delivery in relation to digitalisation was determined from the consultation. Feedback from people regarding the service and how it should be developed for the future, in response to the national digital agenda was received and has informed a proposed model.

The need for additional consultation has been identified and events such as the Rotherham Show have been planned to promote Rothercare reach out to the wider community for their views and opinions. Additional consultation has also been identified within the action plan.

How will you ensure this work helps to reduce health inequalities and / or digital exclusion?

Through assistive technology, inequality can be significantly reduced by enabling persons with a disability to participate in all areas of life. With assistive technology, there will be more accessible access to communities and transport systems for all people, especially those with disabilities.

Research tells us that amongst the groups most affected by digital exclusion are disabled people and people with limiting health conditions, older people, people who face severe and multiple disadvantages (e.g., mental ill health).

17% of over 65-year-olds said they lacked a suitable device to download a Covid-19 contact tracing app (Health Foundation 2020). 66% of all adults had never used the internet or apps to manage their health before the Covid-19 pandemic (Lloyds 2020). People facing digital exclusion experienced more loneliness and isolation during lockdown (British Red Cross 2021).

People without digital skills are the group already most likely to experience health inequalities. The pandemic has accelerated the use of digital technology, but also exacerbated digital exclusion and the digital divide.

RMBC have invested in areas to support digital inclusion such as Rotherham Digital, whose focus is Digital Inclusion. Our client groups include individuals who will fall into groups

traditionally most affected by digital exclusion, and who do not have the access, skills and confidence to benefit fully from digital technology in everyday life.

Of 2,297 individuals receiving a service from Rotherham Sight and Sound: 993 are hearing impaired, 1,345 visually impaired, 11 dual sensory loss.

Targeted intervention will be undertaken with groups who are:

- Older people.
- Unpaid carers.
- Digitally excluded.
- Living with disabilities.
- Experiencing barriers to digital inclusion due to disability/language/deprivation/education.
- Belonging to communities of interest.

Work to explore digital inclusion with partners such as Rotherham Digital and Ability Net will break down barriers and improve the quality of life of people who are unable to exploit technology or the internet.

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

Data relating to some protected characteristics is not available for customers of staff, including Gender Reassignment, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups.

Where gaps have been identified these gaps have been captured within the action plan. At a service level work will be undertaken to understand how data can be collated in core systems to further evidence the requirements of its client base.

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

Impact according to protected characteristics will continue to be monitored through data available on the Council's systems for customers and staff, including:

- Information collected as part of the referral process and service reviews.
- Data regarding customers is captured on the Rothercare Jontek Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) system.
- Monthly performance data and highlight reports are completed.
- Customer surveys are carried out to gather customer feedback on service quality.
- If approved for a new service delivery model, the new provider would provide additional demographic insights that currently remain unexplored.

Engagement undertaken with customers (date and group(s))

A 90-day public consultation took place between 5 August 2023 and 13 November 2023.

A summary of the responses:

<p>consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>What would people like from the Rothercare service in the future? Many respondents who are residing in designated Council properties would prefer to have individual choice of whether they require a service from Rothercare rather than the current mandatory charge being applicable to their property irrespective of whether they use the service.</p> <p>Most respondents who are required to have a landline solely to enable the use of Rothercare are unhappy with this and would welcome a digital/Wi-Fi offer.</p> <p>Would people like RMBC to continue providing the Rothercare? 88%, people responded that they would like the Council to continue providing the service. Almost 25% of respondents said that they would not know what to do in an emergency if Rothercare was not available.</p> <p>What is the most important principle of the service? Of those that responded, support to enable people to live independently in their own homes was considered the most important, followed by customer choice around having the service and the level and type of support received.</p> <p>What are the main benefits of the Rothercare service? 40% of respondents considered that the main benefit is the reassurance that someone will be there to help in the event of an emergency. Other recognised benefits included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone being able to help if people are ill or have a fall or injury. • Peace of mind for carers, family, and friends. • People feeling safe in their own homes. • Respondents commented that they would like a new service to provide virtual support via a video link, provide specific carer support and offer daily welfare-calls. <p>Value for money 84% of respondents said that the Rothercare service provides value for money.</p> <p>How much would people be willing to pay for the service? Most respondents were generally satisfied with the current cost of the service with the majority not opposed to a reasonable increase in cost.</p> <p>Respondents who pay the Rothercare mandatory charge and don't want the service were very unhappy that they must pay for services they do not require.</p>
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	<p>Charging for Rothercare in the future Respondents were clear that the service should be choice based and only people who require a service should have to pay for it.</p> <p>Overall consultation opinion The golden thread throughout responses was that Rothercare provides an excellent service which is respected and valued, giving peace of mind and reassurance to support people to live independently in their own homes across the borough. People also commented that the service provides excellent value for money.</p> <p>See the Cabinet Report from 22 January 2024 for further details.</p> <p>Weekly Service Charge: The weekly charge for the Rothercare service (2024-25) is £3.50 per week (excluding VAT). The service costs and associated charge to customers have not been revised for an extensive period. Additional services costs are as a result of the UK’s telecom infrastructure upgrade. The current charge is insufficient to cover the costs of the sim cards (a component of digital boxes) which are a requirement to connect and operate the service.</p> <p>It is proposed that the weekly charge will increase from the current weekly charge of £3.50 to £4.50 excluding VAT (2025/26) for a 12 month period. The proposed increase of the weekly charge to £4.50/week will not address the rising service cost entirely and it is proposed to subsidise the service to keep the financial impact to individuals to a minimum to avoid the exclusion of customers who require the service.</p> <p>A transitional increase in the weekly charge (in addition to inflation increase) will be applied in consequent years which will be an important step to sustain this critical service and balance income and expenditure without a need for further subsidy.</p>									
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s)consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Two workshops have been facilitated to engage the wider adult care and integration workforce during the review, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="517 1585 1489 1957"> <thead> <tr> <th>Event Details</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Target Audience</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Workshop – Town Hall</td> <td>29 May 2024</td> <td>Heads of Service, Provider Services, industry experts, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Workshop – Riverside House</td> <td>1 July 2024</td> <td>Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Practice, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists, Performance, Finance.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Event Details	Date	Target Audience	Workshop – Town Hall	29 May 2024	Heads of Service, Provider Services, industry experts, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists.	Workshop – Riverside House	1 July 2024	Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Practice, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists, Performance, Finance.
Event Details	Date	Target Audience								
Workshop – Town Hall	29 May 2024	Heads of Service, Provider Services, industry experts, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists.								
Workshop – Riverside House	1 July 2024	Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Practice, Commissioners, Occupational Therapists, Performance, Finance.								

	<p>In addition, engagement has taken place with senior managers within the service. Outcomes from the co-production events have been reviewed and no explicit objections to the hybrid model were presented. Queries raised on process and handoffs have been captured and will be addressed as part of the procurement exercise. Further co production events will be undertaken to refine the contract specification, if approved.</p> <p>Further customer engagement events have been planned, including the Rotherham Show on the 7th and 8th September 2024 to understand people's views. People engaged will not all be current Rothercare customers so we will be able to understand any future needs for the service.</p> <p>Feedback from these events will further inform service decisions and allow valuable insights into service delivery.</p>
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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 new model has been designed to ensure Rothercare has the capacity to fulfil its core function to provide a responsive community alarm service to vulnerable people in Rotherham.

Allowing an external partner to deliver assistive technology will ensure more people receive the most effective and personalised solutions for them and keep them independent in their own home and community for longer. Assistive Technology (AT) and the delivery of AT will equally meet the needs of the different communities and groups.

Specialist assessment and access to advancing technology will meet the needs of people. Combined, the model will maximise people's independence by preventing, reducing, or delaying the need for statutory care and support.

In 2026 Rothercare will undertake a procurement exercise to procure an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC). Within the specification for the ARC, wider consideration will be given to how data can be captured, and analysis can be undertaken to ensure that communities are not underrepresented.

The new model will include the identification of the types of technology required and will include an assessment of protected characteristics of individual customers. This will

support an equality analysis of the service to be undertaken to identify where unintentional discrimination has occurred.

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

The service is available to all Rotherham residents, including groups such as partially sighted, hard of hearing, learning disabilities and ethnic minorities.

SMS messaging can be utilised to ensure that customers who are hard of hearing can be communicated with in the event of an alarm activation.

Digital inclusion will be considered, and support mechanism developed in line with the external provider, Ability Net, Rothercare and Rotherham Digital.

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

Changes to how the service is delivered will impact positively, the new model will:

- Improve the Council's personalisation offer by ensuring people receive the right support that helps them live independently and stay connected to their communities.
- Strengthen the Council's prevention offer by proactively delivering personalised care and support through digital intervention and technology.
- Supports the Council to broaden its digital offer, to maximise people's independence.
- Introduces expertise, resource, and capacity to provide people with bespoke, digital solutions to meet needs.
- Improve access to supply and ensures fast deployment of equipment.
- Improve the quality of life of unpaid carers by providing peace of mind.
- Allows people to utilise technology, and so start breaking down the digital divide.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?

It is anticipated that the proposal will have a positive impact on the boroughwide community and the relationship with the Council as it demonstrates commitment to the future of this service which is respected and valued.

The model is modern and in line with the national digital agenda; it has been designed on feedback gathered from the community, including people that use the service and it is hoped that informed changes to delivery will be recognised by the community.

All the current outdated analogue equipment is being upgraded with digital equipment to all current Rothercare customers. New technologies will be made available by the external provider, which will broaden the client groups, which in turn will benefit from assistive technology.

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

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

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

Title of analysis: Rothercare Future Model
Directorate and service area: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.
Lead Manager: Deborah Ramskill, Interim Head of Provider Services, ACHPH
Summary of findings:
The equality analysis has been completed to ensure that people who use the services of Rothercare, their families and carers can fully access the service and it is inclusive to all irrespective of protected characteristics. This provides the benefits of independent living, personal assurance and safety and supports health and wellbeing.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Ensure that further consultation and engagement outcomes are reported in a clear, representative, and balanced form.	A, D, C	December 2024
Establish a system to record protected characteristics of people using the Rothercare service.	A, D, C	December 2024
Ensure that the information captured above is used to develop the service and ensure it is inclusive.	A, D, C	January 2025
Work is undertaken by Rothercare to mitigate any gaps in recording peoples characteristics	A,D,C,O	January 2025

Implement a transitional increase in the weekly charge and utilise subsidy to assuage negative financial impact and monitor the impact of the increase in to prevent exclusion of people who may require the service.	A,D,S,RE,C,O	March 2027
Work is undertaken by Rothercare to undertake engagement events with hard to reach community groups	A,D,S,RE,SO,C,O	February 2025

***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
DLT	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health DLT	09 July 2024
Cllr Baker-Rogers	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health	9 September 2024
Ian Spicer	Strategic Director, Adult Care, Housing & Public Health	6 September 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 For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	16/08/2024
Report title and date	Future Rothercare Model
Date report sent for publication	16 September 2024

Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	16 August 2024

Appendix 2

Will the decision/proposal impact.	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	Unknown	As the potential partner has not yet been selected, this is unknown. A new potential partner may already have premises from which to deliver the services in Rotherham (in which case emissions impacts would be limited); or they may need to set up a new premises, in which case their emissions may be higher than the current model.			
Emissions from transport?	Unknown	As the potential partner has not yet been selected, this is unknown. Much of the emissions impact would depend on whether a new partner is already working in the area.		<p>Due to the nature of Rothercare emergency installations and emergency response, route planning will not be efficient.</p> <p>Providers can be asked for their carbon action plan and intention to move to electric vehicles.</p> <p>Providers should consider optimisation of vehicle</p>	<p>Request carbon action plan as part of the contract.</p> <p>Council officer travel is included with the Council's Net Zero 2030 greenhouse gas emissions accounting.</p>

				routes for non-emergency visits.	
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	Unknown	<p>By procuring a specialist partner to manage procurement and assessment, it is expected that provision of AT may be minimise emissions from waste via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the risk of stocking obsolete equipment; • Providing a personalised approach whereby unnecessary equipment is minimised; • Supporting the cleaning and reissuing of equipment where possible. 		<p>Equipment is cleaned and reissued where possible. All electronic waste will be disposed of in a WEEE compliant manner; providers will be asked to recycle products wherever possible.</p>	<p>Request carbon action plan as part of the contract</p> <p>Evidence of WEEE compliant disposal will be requested.</p>
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	N/A				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	N/A				

Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	N/A				
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Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

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

The provider will be replicating activity that is currently undertaken by Rothercare.

In terms of emissions from non-domestic buildings and transport, much of the impact of emissions (in comparison to the current service model) depends on whether the chosen partner is already operating in the Rotherham area. Emissions can be mitigated in this area by asking the partner to produce a carbon reduction plan; engaging with the partner regarding electric vehicles and optimising non-emergency routes.

In terms of waste, it is envisaged that the successful provider will operate more efficiently from a carbon perspective throughout the contract. In the event that a national organisation being the successful provider their remains a real opportunity for carbon reduction as RMBC can exploit their supply chain and existing resources. It is expected that a new partner could support waste minimisation. Equipment is expected to be reissued where possible and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment WEEE waste recycled, this will be monitored. Electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) is regulated to reduce the amount of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) incinerated or sent to landfill sites. Reduction is achieved through various measures which encourage the recovery, reuse and recycling of products and components. The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013 (as amended) is the underpinning UK legislation.

The exact requirements and responses from the successful provider will be gleaned via their formal response and the relevant procurement framework requirements on carbon declarations. Carbon impact plans will be requested to understand the organisations carbon impact and mitigating actions to address these. The successful provider will be encouraged to operate in a carbon friendly manner.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Tony Sanderson – Interim Project Manager – Strategic Commissioning – Adult Care and Integration – Adult Care Housing and Public Health
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.	N/A
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Tracking reference: CIA269 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer

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

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

Establish as a starting point:

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

Agree principles for longlisting:

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

Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.

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

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

<p>17-Oct-24</p> <p>Additional Meeting (5pm - 7pm)</p>	<p>Children's Takeover Challenge - Children's Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>(single item agenda)</p>
<p>Monday 4 November 2024</p>	<p>Planning Enforcement: A meeting with Chair of OSMB, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, Chair of Planning Board, and Development Manager - South Team & Enforcement to discuss the strategy for planning enforcement, specifically the measurements for success and current statistics.</p>
<p>13-Nov-24</p>	<p>Complaints Annual Report (including Housing Process) Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report Medium Term Financial Strategy Update - Poss. Pre-decision September 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
<p>11-Dec-24</p>	<p>Byelaws/Life Saving Equipment motion Home to School Transport Budget pressures / mitigations Update</p>
<p>14-Jan-25</p>	<p>Mid Year Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Report - Poss. Pre-decision HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25 - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
<p>05-Feb-25</p>	<p>Budget and Council Tax Report (Usually a single item agenda)</p>
<p>12-Mar-25</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Annual Report Social Value Annual Report - Poss. Pre-decision Transport Capital Programme 2025/2026 - Poss. Pre-decision Modern Slavery Transparency Statement - annual Refresh - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
<p>08-Apr-25</p>	
<p>07-May-25</p>	

**Items for
Scheduling**

Dec-24	A spotlight review into life-saving equipment and related byelaws - as agreed by OSMB at it's meeting on 10 May 2023 (https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=894&MID=15772#AI96184) linked to the Byelaws/Life Saving Equipment motion (Council 30/11/22 https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=95268)
In progress	Spotlight Review - Agency Staff
In progress	Spotlight Review - Grass Cutting / Ground Maintenance
TBC	Community Infastructure Levy
TBC	Leader of the Council - General Q&A
TBC	Major Capital Projects (delays, project scaling back)

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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024

This is formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of Key Decisions due to be taken by the Authority and of those parts of the Cabinet meeting identified in this Forward Plan will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

Contact Information:-

Democratic Services
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Email: governance@rotherham.gov.uk
Tel: 01709 822477

What is the Forward Plan?

The Forward Plan contains all the key decisions the Council expects to take over the next three months. It will be refreshed monthly and will give at least 28 days’ notice of any Key Decisions and, if applicable, the Cabinet’s intention to discuss an item in private. This gives you the opportunity to submit relevant documents to the decision maker concerning any individual Key Decisions and draws to your attention any relevant constitution process.

What is a Key Decision?

A Key Decision is one which is likely to:-

- relate to the capital or revenue budget framework that is reserved to the Council, or
- result in income, expenditure or savings of £400,000 or greater, or
- have a significant effect on two or more wards

A Key Decision can be made by the Cabinet. The Forward Plan also includes some matters which are not Key Decisions under the heading “Decisions which are not Key Decisions”.

What does the Forward Plan tell me?

The plan gives information about:

- what key decisions are to be made in the next three months.
- the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made.
- who will make the key decisions.
- when those key decisions are likely to be made.
- what documents will be considered.
- who you can contact for further information.

Who takes Key Decisions?

Under the Authority’s Constitution, Key Decisions are taken by the Cabinet. Key Decisions are taken at public meetings of the Cabinet. The Cabinet meets once a month on a Monday at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall. Meeting dates for 2024/25 are:

10 June 2024	16 September 2024	18 November 2024	20 January 2025	17 March 2025	12 May 2025
8 July 2024	14 October 2024	16 December 2024	10 February 2025	14 April 2025	

Further information and Representations about items proposed to be heard in Private

Names of contact officers are included in the Plan.

If you wish to make representations that a decision which is proposed to be heard in private should instead be dealt with in public, you should contact Democratic Services by no later than five clear working days before the meeting. At the end of this document are extracts from the Local Government Act 1972 setting out the descriptions of information which may be classed as “exempt”, and the definition of confidential information.

The members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility are: -

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Councillor Chris Read | Leader of the Council |
| Councillor Dave Sheppard | Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood |
| Councillor Joanna Baker-Rogers | Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health |
| Councillor Victoria Cusworth | Cabinet Member for Children and Young People |
| Councillor Saghir Alam | Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities |
| Councillor Sarah Allen | Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Councillor Robert Taylor | Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy |

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 14 OCTOBER 2024								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Future Rothercare Model	July 2024	To approve the future model and financial implications and agree to consult Rothercare users on proposals.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Cabinet Member, Members and Customers.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Dinnington Compulsory Purchase Order	August 2024	To approve the acquisition of land at Laughton Road on terms to be agreed and approve the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order if required.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	Dinnington	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 14 OCTOBER 2024								
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Scrutiny Review - Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	August 2024	To receive the Improving Lives Select Commission Scrutiny Review recommendations - Preparation for Adulthood.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Applications for Business Rates - Hardship Relief	September 2023	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 18 NOVEMBER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy	August 2024	To agree the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Gas and Carbon Monoxide Policy and Electrical Safety Policy.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Cabinet Member, officers, and tenants.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update)	July 2024	To receive an update on progress and agree the LAC Sufficiency plan 2025/26.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk
Rotherham Leaving Care Strategy 2024-2027	August 2024	To approve the Rotherham Leaving Care Strategy 2024-2027.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	July 2024	To approve the new children's safeguarding arrangements as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
September 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report	August 2024	To note the current revenue and capital monitoring position and agree any required actions.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	August 2024	To note the updates to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Property Transactions	August 2024	To consider any recommendations for property transactions, including disposals, acquisitions, leases and licenses.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Waste Collections Policy	August 2024	To approve the revised Waste Collections Policy.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 18 NOVEMBER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Temporary Accommodation Policy	July 2024	To approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Policy.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Cabinet Member, key stakeholders and customers.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Household Support Fund Update	October 2024	To receive an update on the Household Support Fund.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	August 2024	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26	October 2024	To approve the HRA 2025-26 Business Plan and associated rents, fees and services charges for 2025-26.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Cabinet Member, Ward Members and tenant representatives.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
Property Transactions	August 2024	To consider any recommendations for property transactions, including disposals, acquisitions, leases and licenses.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Borough wide and Town Centre Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's)	October 2024	To approve the Boroughwide and Town Centre PSPO's.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk
Refreshing the Health and Safety Policy	October 2024	To approve the refreshed Health and Safety Policy.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Officers, Cabinet Members and relevant Ward Members.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
Our Places Fund	August 2024	To agree to the allocation of the Our Places Fund and the subsequent implementation of projects.	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk

Decision title	Date added to the Forward Plan	What is the decision?	Cabinet Portfolio	Who will be consulted	Documents to be considered	Wards affected	Is the decision to be made in private	Directorate and contact for further information
NON KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 OR LATER								
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Cabinets Response to Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Preparation for Adulthood	October 2024	To formally respond to the Improving Lives Select Commission Review Recommendations – Preparation for Adulthood.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	October 2024	To consider the recommendations for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 SCHEDULE 12A
ACCESS TO INFORMATION: EXEMPT INFORMATION
PART 1
DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND**

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

**PART 2
QUALIFICATIONS: ENGLAND**

Paragraphs 1-8 repealed.

- 9 Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.
- 10 Information which –
 - a. falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - b. is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
SECTION 100A(3) – DEFINITION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

- Confidential information means –
- a. information furnished to the council by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and
 - b. information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a court;
- and, in either case, the reference to the obligation of confidence is to be construed accordingly.