

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

- Date and Time:-** Wednesday 11 December 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 17 October 2024 and 13 November 2024 (Pages 5 - 57)

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 17 October 2024, and 13 November 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 16 December 2024. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

6. HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26 (Pages 59 - 115)

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

Recommendations:

That Cabinet recommends to Council to: -

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

For Discussion/Decision:-

7. Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge Recommendations - Health and Wellbeing (Pages 117 - 126)

To consider the report and recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge meeting.

For Information/Monitoring:-

8. Work Programme (Pages 127 - 129)

To consider the Board's Work Programme.

9. Work in Progress - Select Commissions

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

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 December 2024 - 28 February 2025 (Pages 131 - 139)

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 December 2024 to 28 February 2025

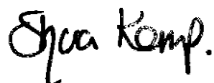
11. Call-in Issues

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

12. 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 Tuesday 14 January 2025
commencing at 10.00 a.m.
in Rotherham Town Hall.**



**SHARON KEMP OBE,
Chief Executive.**

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Thursday 17 October 2024

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, McKiernan, Sheppard and Tinsley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Bacon, Keenan, Knight and Marshall.

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

43. WELCOME FROM COUNCILLOR STEELE, CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Councillor Steele, Chair, welcomed everyone to the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which was once again supporting the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) by working with Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC), many of who were present today.

He introduced Alex G, who would be taking over as Chair of this meeting, but before he handed over a warm welcome was also afforded to officers, Cabinet Members and others from outside organisations.

It was noted that this meeting was not streamed live and the recording would only be kept for training purposes only for the young people participating.

(Alex G assumed the Chair)

44. INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION FROM ROTHERHAM YOUTH CABINET - HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Chair, Alex G, introduced herself and confirmed she had been a member of the Youth Cabinet since February. She issued a warm welcome from Rotherham Youth Cabinet and members of the UK Youth Parliament. She invited other Youth Cabinet Members to introduce themselves and to give a brief history on how long they had been involved with the Youth Cabinet. They included:-

Tom
Ashaz
Amogh
Alex B
Tilly
Mabrookah
Zac
Giancarlo

Harrison
Hope
Dillon
Nana
Falak
Lilia

A new promotional video was shown providing information about Rotherham's Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament. The video set out how the Youth Cabinet worked, how it was made up, decision making having a positive impact on the lives of young people across Rotherham and how it consulted with young people to tackle issues they faced.

The Youth Cabinet provided young people with a voice. The Youth Cabinet had two elected members of the Youth Parliament which were elected nationally. They were elected every two years and made sure that the youth voice was heard.

The Youth Cabinet also assisted with interviewing county directors and commissioning people for the borough. In addition, this included attending civic events like the Remembrance Day Parade.

Every year a new manifesto was developed and launched at the Town Hall and this included issues raised by young people through discussions, and consultations. The aim was to work with people throughout Rotherham in order to create positive change. This could be with elected members, officers and directors from the Council, representatives from schools, charities and even regional mayors and MP's.

The Youth Cabinet also worked with other young people locally, regionally and nationally to strengthen its voice, such as young people's police independent advisory groups.

The Youth Cabinet also worked with other groups such as the Youth Parliament, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Regional Youth Climate Assembly, Regional Ethnic Minority Youth Group and others.

A further presentation about the Youth Cabinet detailed what the Youth Cabinet was all about. Further information was provided on the Youth Cabinet's Manifesto 2023/24 which involved over 4000 young people taking part in the consultation.

Health and Wellbeing came out as the issue nationally and locally with the Manifesto's aims for 2024 including:-

- Health and Wellbeing.
- Vaping and Smoking.
- Climate Action.
- Anti Violence.
- Religious Education.

This Take Over Day Challenge was a fun, imaginative and exciting activity to encourage organisations across England to open their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles. It put children and young people into decision-making positions and encouraged organisations and businesses to hear their views.

This year's Take-Over Challenge had chosen health and wellbeing as a theme and was broken down into four sections:-

- Section 1 Vaping
- Section 2 Mental Health
- Section 3 Physical Health
- Section 4 Healthy Eating

The top two issues were mental health and crime and safety. This national result mirrored what young people in Rotherham said and they had voted mental health and crime as the main issues in Rotherham.

During campaign work around health and wellbeing, the Youth Cabinet aimed to raise awareness around the risk to health from vaping and smoking and in doing so to look at issues around marketing and promotion of vapes aimed at young people.

Mental health and wellbeing was important and as a result the Youth Cabinet was campaigning on improving services for young people. Its aim was to promote projects, groups, sessions which young people could access in order to support their wellbeing.

Work already undertaken included collaboration with:-

- With me in Mind.
- Podcast.
- Mental Health Awareness Day.
- Support to CaMHS.
- Exam stress.

In terms of the Youth Cabinet's themes in its manifesto it was confirmed that of the vaping market:-

- 20.5% of all young people have tried vaping.
- 43% of vapers mostly use disposable vapes.
- 143 million vapes were discarded annually.
- 8 out of 10 purchased their vape via a third-party seller.
- Vaping among 15-year-old girls rose from 10% in 2018 to 21%.
- 57% of teenage vapours buy them from a shop, mostly newsagents, and this figure rose 29% in the last three years.

Given the concerns, the ingredients used in vapes and the health risks it was believed this should be looked into further and the Takeover Day was

a first-class platform to do this.

Mental Health was also a huge issue in Rotherham with 4595 children and young people being referred to mental health services between April 2021 and March 2022. According to the action for children, one in six children aged five to sixteen were likely to have a mental health problem. This figure had gone up by 50% in the last three years,

In addition, the proportion of young people aged seventeen to nineteen in England with a probable mental health disorder jumped from one in six to one in four. Mind and mental health support service for young people suggested that secondary schools were struggling to meet the needs of young people with mental health problems.

A recent survey from approximately 2,000 young people across the UK found 96% reported that their mental health had affected their school work at some point. UK Youth highlighted that a lack of youth services contributed to an increase in mental health issues for several reasons. Firstly, without access to supportive programs and resources, young people may feel isolated and unable to cope with stressors in real life. Additionally, limited services could mean fewer opportunities for positive social interactions, which were essential for emotional wellbeing.

When young people could not access mental health support, it could lead to untreated health issues which escalated over time, resulting in higher prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Mental health was a big issue for young people, and this was also evident in the make your mark consolation results.

The next issue for the Youth Cabinet was physical health. There was a strong scientific NHS evidence that being physically active could help you lead a healthier and happier life. Exercise could reduce the risk of major illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer and lower the risk of early death by up to 30%.

The NHS also stated that regular exercise had lots of health benefits for children and young people, such as providing an opportunity to socialise, increased concentration, improving academic scores, building stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles, improving self-esteem, lowering stress and improving mental health.

Finally, healthy eating was chosen as a subject to highlight today's takeover day meeting. Eating a healthy balanced diet was an important part of maintaining good health and reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Government guidance stated that healthy eating was important as childhood excess weight was a significant health issue for individual children. Nearly a third of children aged two to fifteen, about 28%, were overweight or obese, and younger generations were becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer.

Public Health England highlighted that there could be serious implications for the physical and mental health of a child, which could follow on into adulthood with significant health inequalities for the poorest families.

Rotherham's Youth Cabinet wanted to support the ambition of the Government to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 and significantly reduce the health inequalities that persisted.

These were the reasons why Rotherham's Youth Cabinet have chosen health and wellbeing for the theme of today's takeover day.

45. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH OFFICERS

A series of questions had been provided from Rotherham Youth Cabinet for partner agencies to answer. A number of recommendations would also be put forward which could hopefully be agreed.

Today's meeting was being recorded for internal purposes only and the Youth Cabinet would review what had been said and agree an action plan going forward. This would be shared in due course with the aim of a further meeting in six months' time to look at progress of the recommendations and actions highlighted.

There were fifteen questions put forward which were broken down into categories. After each category, recommendations would be detailed for that issue.

Vaping

1. What were you doing about reducing vaping adverts in public spacing?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health, here on behalf of Ben anderson, Director of Public Health

The Public Health team were supporting the development of an RMBC Advertising Policy to ensure inclusion of vapes and tobacco related restrictions. The proposed advertising policy would ban any communications or adverts featuring vapes on Council owned advertising space or in our online communications. Public Health were not aware of any space that was owned by the Council that currently did not meet this commitment.

Unfortunately, there was advertising space in the borough that was not under the control of the Council, which made further restrictions difficult. However, Mayor Oliver Coppard had committed to an advertising ban on South Yorkshire public transport, which stopped pictures of food high in fat, salt and sugar, as was put in place by Transport for London, but Public Health and the Council would work

together for a broader health approach including vapes.

2. What were you doing about vape wastage? Had you considered vape recycling?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

To start with all retailers of vapes were required by law to offer a takeback recycling service.

Vapes and disposable vapes could not be placed in your kerbside bins but could be disposed of at local household waste recycling centres. These were then set for recycling and component parts broken down. Residents were advised to remove all batteries before disposal where possible. For more information, a member of site staff could provide advice on where to place vapes and disposable vapes.

This information was supplied on our Council website - [A to Z of Waste – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

Supplementary - It was asked if it was being made easy for the people who vape, to actually remove the batteries or would they actually know that they had to go to a local recycling centre to dispose of their vape.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

There was great onus on the retailers. All the retailers should have places in the shops that made it clear that vapes could be disposed of responsibly and make sure this was available to the customer.

3. What was the Multi-agency Tobacco Control Steering Group doing to try and reduce vaping among young people - such as identifying sources of vapes from young people?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

There were several actions in the Tobacco Control Steering Group's action plan relevant to reducing vaping amongst young people:-

- Support schools to minimise uptake of smoking and e-cigarette use amongst Rotherham children and young people.
- Reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and de-normalise smoking and vaping by expanding and enforcing smokefree place policies.
- Create a hostile environment for tobacco fraud and underage sales through intelligence sharing.

- Tackle illegal activity including sales of counterfeit and illegal nicotine containing products.
- Change perceptions about illegal tobacco sales and the harms of buying and using illegal vape products.

A vaping toolkit was shared with teachers last year to provide key facts for young people, families and teachers around vaping. Copies of this information for parents, young people and teachers on vapes was available on the [RotherHive website](#). Some secondary schools had worked with Trading Standards and an organisation called Pain 2 Success and was funded through a grant from the Safer Rotherham Partnership's Emerging Issues delivered assemblies in the spring term of the 23/24 academic year. This was delivered as a pilot project across four educational settings with separate sessions for professionals delivered both in-person and virtually for maximum reach. Wider roll out to all secondary schools is being considered for funding options for this year.

ROADS (the Rotherham Drug and Alcohol Support Service) had school's workers who were able to provide support and education sessions for Year 6 and secondary schools. School nurses could also provide one-to-one support as well as groups sessions around stop smoking or vaping and there was a lead school nurse for this role.

The Police Inspector leading the Rotherham Central Neighbourhood Team was co-ordinating meetings to bring together key partners specifically to discuss vapes and young people. This included Public Health, Trading Standards, Education Safeguarding Officer, Community Safety Officer, ROADS Young Person project lead, and the Police. These meetings took place quarterly but also acted as a starting point in the event that a meeting needed to be called in relation to a significant vape incident.

Factual information alone would not stop young people taking up vaping. Social norms were very influential. Work was taking place to develop new signage for smokefree areas, to ask people not to smoke or vape in public outdoor spaces where families or young people spent time. This helped create a smokefree norm which could be supportive in both helping people to quit smoking and to not ever start smoking or vaping.

The other main opportunity for reducing youth vaping was to make it harder for young people to access vapes. More investment had been put into a new Trading Standards Officer who had recently joined the team with a dedicated focus on illicit and underage sales of tobacco and vapes. Last year 28,163 vapes were seized, alongside 2,178 liquid bottles with a street value of £318,975. Schools were encouraged to share intelligence with Trading Standards about known sources of illicit or underage sales of tobacco or vapes so this

could be investigated.

4. Do you believe you were doing enough to discourage young people from vaping within school grounds? What else could you do?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Schools had highlighted that vaping was an increasing problem but was one that was dealt with by the school as part of their behavioural policies. Schools in Rotherham did have no smoking and no vaping policies in place. The most effective way of stopping young people vaping in schools, would be to stop young people from vaping. As mentioned above, this would need a combination of factual awareness, a change in societal/social norms and more restrictions on access to vapes.

Further response from Niall Devlin, Assistant Director for Education.

It was an important question about whether or not the Council thought it was doing enough. There needed to be a look at what a strategy or a plan would look like. That would include six basic points.

There was a clear need to engage young people, to confiscate vapes and also to try to engage schools in the process. The next thing would be to stop young people who wanted to stop vaping within a range of programs. It would be interesting to learn how to engage the wider community, including retailers, parents, police, and services. The use of effective data and how this was collected on the numbers and to record incidents of vaping in the region would shape plans.

Finally, agencies should be working nationally and locally to help shape policy.

Further response from Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

The Children and Young People's Partnership Board chose to scrutinise the activity referenced in the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan to reduce the prevalence of smoking. When considering this for young people, this was mainly relating to vaping, with less children stating they smoked. During the meeting, colleagues from Public Health and Licensing provided some data, explained the risks associated, and what controls were in place.

In the meeting, issues about vaping in groups was discussed and the concern that vaping had become the 'norm' with more young people vaping than smoking. Concerns were expressed that the risks were not well understood by young people, and their parents.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That consideration be given to making public buildings vape free zones, where possible.
2. That the Director of Children's Services works with the Youth Cabinet to promote the Government consultation for children and young people.
3. That the Public Health Team, work with the Youth Cabinet to develop a 'Rotherhamised' campaign relating to vaping.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Mental Health

5. Evidence was suggesting that a lack of a youth offer was impacting on young people's mental health, what was the council doing about spaces for young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

There were fifteen Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs located across the borough. Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, libraries were recognised as neighbourhood hubs that were welcoming and safe and places to access information along with recreational, cultural and learning activity. The service offered young people a space for quiet study or reading, a range of activities, events and groups which bring people together these included:-

- Makerspace activities – facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing.
- Bee bot's robot club.
- Weekly Lego sessions.
- ICT courses.
- Readers groups.
- Warhammer club.
- Board games and jigsaw club.
- Homework club.
- Activities and events e.g. Harry Potter book day, Halloween crafts.
- Free PC and internet/ Wi-Fi access.

- Printing and photocopying.
- Wide range of physical books, eBooks, e-Audio, e-Magazines and e-Comic books.

The service also supported young people to undertake work experience and volunteering opportunities within the library which boosted confidence and improved skills in readiness for work.

There was evidence to suggest that engaging in physical activity and sport could also support positive mental health and wellbeing. The Council had a good network of parks, green spaces, multi-use games areas, sports pitches and leisure centres, which all provided places for young people to exercise. Services work with the Moving Rotherham Partnership, which included voluntary sector partners such as Rotherham United Community Trust, as well as Health partners, to better promote the value of physical activity.

Next year, Children's Capital of Culture would deliver a wealth of new opportunities for young people to participate in creative and cultural activities, both in school and within their communities. As well as a regular programme of public events – such as Signals Music Festival, Uplift festival of urban sports, Roots community carnival and Plug In and Play – a gaming festival, there would be many more opportunities to take part in local community venues, libraries and parks.

Further response by Kirsty Woodhead, Manager in Early Help and Engagement

The Council was committed to having an inclusive universal offer for all young people that included places to go and things to do in all wards across Rotherham. This formed part of the wider Early Help offer. Through the Universal Youth Work fund, Early Help provided funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to expand the existing youth offer and create high quality, universal youth provision for young people across the Borough. This was to ensure young people have somewhere safe to go and socialise, providing an opportunity to learn new skills, with a trusted adult who was skilled and trained to support them.

Funding was open to constituted voluntary groups, charities, private sector organisations, schools, faith groups who could demonstrate they could meet the minimum standards of a high-quality offer for young people, with funding provided based on identified need and gaps in existing provision.

The Rotherham Healthy Holidays Programme (HAF), which was funded by the Department for Education provided support to families who may find school holidays difficult. The funding enabled eligible children from reception to Year 11 to access holidays clubs for free.

The programme was delivered by a range of providers over the Easter, Summer, and Winter School Holidays. Each activity lasted four hours per day. Programmes were for four days at Easter and Winter, and sixteen days over the Summer Holidays. Each activity included a nutritious meal and a variety of sports and enriching activities.

In 2023/24 Rotherham Healthy Holidays commissioned a total of 35,022 sessions that were available across the Borough, provided a total of 27,388 meals, with over 6,500 children and young people attending. In 2023-24 20% of children attending provision were secondary age and work continues with providers to ensure an appropriate offer which was attractive for teenagers.

The Youth of Rotherham website provided an online space to showcase the range of provision available for young people across the Borough and included:-

- Events in libraries were mostly free of charge.
- Event at Magna for reading challenge.
- YP quality for Rothercare which provides discounts.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Youth Cabinet for bringing such a great range of questions to the meeting but wished to make an input on this one as quite a lot fell within his portfolio.

One of the golden threads was for the young people to have access to as many positive activities as they could, but also for there to be no barrier for accessing all those. Almost everything provided within the library network was free of charge. Sometimes there was a very small fee for certain sessions, but there was always some help towards accessing those.

There was also a great celebration weekend coming up at Magna where all of the young people and their families, who have completed the summer reading challenge, were able to have a great day out. Along with the presentations there would also be African acrobats this year. Each year it was a different theme, but most importantly it was free to all those families that engaged with the library's summer reading challenge.

In terms of physical activity, quite a few of the Youth Cabinet were in the age range of sixteen to twenty which meant they qualified for a RotherCard. This provided discounts in leisure centres for a lot of activities. Youth Cabinet Members were encouraged to apply.

As already mentioned, Rotherham's Children's Capital of Culture would mean 2025 would be an incredible year. Many of the events planned were free of charge and hopefully many of the Youth

Cabinet could get involved.

Supplementary Question - So from the specific activities mentioned that took place in libraries were there anymore that were specifically aged at people that were in the age range eleven to eighteen rather than to younger groups. In addition, did the Council think that people of that age group were going to want to spend their leisure time in a library or did they think they needed a dedicated youth space?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

Lots of young people already spent a lot of leisure time in the libraries, which was great to see. Certainly, people were encouraged to interact with the libraries to use those more. However, if the Youth Cabinet believed there was more that could be done outside of the libraries, the team would be more than happy to discuss this further.

The Deputy Leader responded saying that focusing on more activities, this was certainly something the Council had invested in, so this was relatively new. Visits had been made to other local authorities who had brought additional services into their library network. This included 3D printers and activities for a broader range of ages.

Any ideas that the Youth Cabinet had were welcomed that could be employed and piloted across the library network. With fifteen locations there was plenty of scope to promote positive activities.

6. In the Director of Public Health Report for Rotherham, 2023, it was noticed that there was a feeling of continued anxiety among certain cohorts of young people. What were you doing to ensure that young people felt confident to interact normally and achieve full integration with society?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

The Council had an Early Prevention and Intervention Service which focused on early prevention and intervention; ensuring children and young people, their families and carers were able to access appropriate support to improve and maintain positive emotional wellbeing, to expand and widen positive self-esteem and to increase their self-efficacy in order to create resilience. Work was taking place in collaboration with schools/education settings/external agencies to enhance and improve relationships. It was hoped that this would support educational settings to develop a whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing ensuring that positive mental health was recognised as everyone's business and all pupils/adults could access an environment that developed and strengthened coping skills that underpinned resilience.

Schools had been doing a lot of work on mitigating pandemic impacts, including putting in Educational Welfare Officers and pastoral support, and support through the 0-19 service. There was [anti-bullying work](#) with information available online, work on supporting young people into school through adapted timetables and sharing of good practice around a range of inclusion topics, including taking trauma-informed approach.

[With Me In Mind](#) had coverage across 70% of Rotherham schools. With Me in Mind was the name of one of the national Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) and there were teams based in both Doncaster and Rotherham. The service was identified following the release of the Government Green Paper (2017), “Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health” in which there was a focus on earlier intervention and prevention, especially in, and linked to schools and colleges.

One of the core proposals from the paper was to fund new Mental Health Support Teams, which were predominantly being supervised by NHS Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services as well as local charity/private services. The service was committed to ensuring that the Mental Health Support Teams reached those most in need of the support. The team were currently working in selected educational settings in Rotherham, and offering support to students not in mainstream education, including working in some special education schools, home educated pupils and to pupils attending certain alternative provision settings.

Kooth was an online mental health service available for 11–25-year-olds available to all young people in Rotherham. More specialist support was available from talking to a GP and accessing community mental health services.

Young people’s voices were feeding into plans and service delivery through various ways, including Young Inspectors and Guiding Voices as well as wider surveys including the schools survey. The findings of school surveys were shared anonymously with schools so that they could consider ways to support the issues raised by their pupils. CaMHS were attending the Youth Partnership Board this month (22nd October). This Board looks at different aspects of the NHS Place Plan and CAMHS would present to be questioned at this event.

Finally, to be mentally well everyone could benefit from simple changes to lives that could be helpfully remembered as the five ways to wellbeing. These included:-

- Connect – ensuring some meaningful social time was built into

days to talk to other people.

- Be active – ensure some physical activity every day, even if it was a short walk – being active had many physical and mental benefits for health.
- Take notice – evidence showed that being ‘in the moment’ such as noticing little changes in nature, or spending time colouring, could help to be aware of feelings and help shift focus from worries about the past or future.
- Learn – finding out or achieving new things could give a rewarding sense of achievement and focussed brain break, even doing a sudoku or crossword puzzle.
- Give – being part of a community or doing something kind had been shown to help us feel happier.

Ensuring there were lots of opportunities for young people to make these things part of their everyday lives, such as through opportunities in the Children’s Capital of Culture or school or community-based activities would help all young people to have better mental health.

Further response from Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Access to mental health support was a priority in Rotherham and a key workstream under the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) was reflected as a specific priority for children in the Place Plan. The SEMH Strategic Group met bi-monthly to oversee progress against this priority.

Rotherham had maximised available funding for Mental Health support teams, successfully engaging schools to ensure all secondary schools and the majority of primary schools have access to With Me In Mind (tier 2 mental health support). This means 80% of pupils across the Borough were supported. With Me In Mind ambassadors were ensuring children and young people’s voice influences service development. Parent carer groups were supporting consistent application of advice and guidance for children and young people.

Five bases were offering open access youth groups, activities, drop-ins and 1-to-1 support to improve social engagement, emotional wellbeing and mental health. Here, a trusted adult would also help young people access other opportunities in the project through our ‘basket of support and provision.’

The number of children waiting for tier 3 mental health support was reducing, with fewer children waiting longer than 18 weeks for support than last year. Children and young people continue to be

supported by tier 2 services whilst waiting, with regular review to inform re-prioritisation if appropriate.

Where children and young people required in-patient support from tier 4 mental health provision, access assessments were offered. Partnership relationships with the Provider Collaborative and NHS England enabled appropriate challenge and escalation if provision was not available.

The volunteer sector had secured £899,000 of funding from the National Lottery to be able to deliver smiles for miles for another three years across the borough, and that was providing children and young people aged 8 to 19 or up to 25 with special educational needs or disabilities, with a variety of activities offering open access youth groups, drop-ins, one-to-one support, with a view to improving social engagement, emotional wellbeing and mental health.

This would mean a trusted adult that would help young people access other opportunities through what they described as a basket of support and provision.

Supplementary – What were the five bases?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

This information was provided by Voluntary Action Rotherham. More specific information would be obtained, and this would be fed back to the Youth Cabinet.

7. Lots of young people in Rotherham faced stress as a result of school. How were you planning to work with schools to ensure there was enough effective support for young people?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

A digital counselling service (KOOH) was jointly commissioned providing access to information, guidance and support to children and young people aged 11–25-year-olds. A service for adults (QUELL) was also available to 18–25-year-olds.

Rotherham had maximised available funding for Mental Health support teams, successfully engaging schools to ensure all secondary schools and the majority of primary schools had access to With Me In Mind (tier 2 mental health support). This meant 80% of pupils across the Borough were supported. With Me In Mind ambassadors were ensuring children and young people's voice influenced service development. Parent carer groups were supporting consistent application of advice and guidance for children

and young people.

A clear multi-agency continuum of need had been developed and was launched at the SENCO network meeting on 3rd July 2024. This was supported by ASPIRE Pupil Referral Unit Outreach, With Me in Mind, the Specialist Inclusion Team and the Educational Psychology Service. It was timetabled to be reviewed at the joint CAMHS and SENCO network in March 2025.

The SEMH graduated response had been developed and was part of the toolkit alongside the continuum and competency framework. This would be further developed as part of the thresholds of need guidance documentation. This would continue to link to the multi-agency continuum, but would provide additional clarity regarding assessment, teaching and learning strategies, interventions and resources and staffing. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes would also be embedded into the new version.

SEMH provision had been developed to meet need. The SEMH Special Free school opened in September 2022, providing an additional 125 specialist SEMH places. Capacity at the school had been developed with 179 children now on roll.

Two new SEMH integrated resources had been established offering twenty places (one primary and one secondary offering ten places each) and there was an additional primary SEMH integrated resource scheduled to open in January 2025 offering a further twenty places, these were on mainstream sites.

Supplementary – following the Youth Parliament elections which were based on manifestos, but more specifically to the improving school communication, how did the Council feel young people's voices were being reflected in terms of their mental health, what provisions were being gathered feedback from and what was being done at the moment.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

This was a little more difficult with separating what type. The Me and Mind Service were gathering lots of feedback from children and young people with some in training to be ambassadors.

Those young people were having a voice around how they influenced activities within their own schools. The ambassadors were influencing activities to support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health, not just in their schools, but across all services.

The Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the Youth Cabinet where young people were able to provide feedback to

influence the development of services and this was taken very seriously. Much the same if it was feedback from parents and carers or from other services.

In terms of whether this was enough, particularly in relation to the education places being developed, probably more could be done to engage with children and young people. CAMHS were keen to meet with children and young people to do a little more in terms of engaging when preparing education provision.

8. We were concerned about the time it took to diagnose neurodiverse young people. How could RMBC and RDASH support the increase of earlier diagnosis of young people?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Some children and young people had, had to wait longer than eighteen weeks to access health services they needed. Pathways with waiting times above NICE guidance were discussed in development meetings and formally acknowledged in contracting meetings. Where single agency improvement plans did not reduce waiting times, a partnership approach was taken to systemically address the issue, exploring demand management and 'waiting well' in addition to increasing capacity for diagnostic assessment. Trajectories were then established to achieve eighteen week waits, these were monitored in the development and contractual meetings.

The Council did not pay for or design CAMHS services, this was under Health. The Council provided support to try and help when children were waiting for assessment.

Where waiting times were consistently longer than eighteen weeks e.g. neuro developmental pathways, we had worked to ensure pathways encourage the identification of need and provision support at the earliest opportunity. The schools led referral pathway for 5–19-year-olds was a good example of our systemic approach. Referrals were screened within 4 weeks of receipt and opportunities for re-prioritisation were regular throughout the waiting time.

Signposting to available support whilst waiting routinely took place (at screening and through regular bespoke communication to those on the waiting list and via Rotherham Parent Carer Forum (RPCF) and the Local Offer). This included access to universally available services and targeted services including the Early Help disability service and RPCF Peer support.

The Council would also work with NHS South Yorkshire and other representatives to look together at how improvements for young people could be supported and this was done via the SEMH Group,

through the Ascend Executive Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Director of the ICB. The Groups collectively would determine whether or not the single agency plan was working and was on trajectory. So, the trajectory meant that for every month RDASH were asked how many children they thought would be waiting, how many referrals did they think they were going to get, how many assessments were they going to manage to undertake and how many children at the end of that month were still going to be waiting.

The trajectory that RDASH had put in place for the neurodevelopmental pathway showed that they would get down to a four-week wait by December 2026. That was ambitious, so this was dependent upon staffing resources be available and being able to recruit if people left very quickly. Realistically this wait could be reduced down to eighteen weeks by that time and all involved were working very hard to do this with the investment provided.

In Rotherham, for referrals for a neurodevelopmental assessment for a school aged child, the school were asked to get involved in making that referral asking for information from children and people themselves. Parent and care information was still required, but by asking the school, the school had to implement the graduated response with children and young people requiring other assessments looking specifically what the child needed and the support that would then begin to be put in place.

The Rotherham Parent Care Forum also offered some peer support, particularly for parents because diagnosis tended to happen at an earlier age. Further work had been done that where children and young people were nearing eighteen the assessment should be in place before their eighteenth birthday. Once reaching the age of nineteen a young person would need to be assessed by an adult service.

Work also took place with children and young people if they had been referred for neurodevelopmental assessment close to their eighteenth birthday to decide on the most appropriate pathway for them to be on.

Supplementary – Children could be on CAMHS waiting lists for two years so did the service think it was doing enough to minimise this.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

The only CAMHS waiting list that was two years or more, was for that neurodevelopmental assessment. To be really clear the numbers of children that were waiting for the normal CAMHS provision like family therapy or psychological therapies, there were

waits of up to two years for those.

If children were waiting for two years it was suggested that they speak to somebody who had made the referral and get in touch with CAMHS because waiting that long was not appropriate. Professionals would need to know that this was the case so it could be followed up urgently.

It was known that the neurodevelopmental waits were longer. Every effort was being made to get this reduced for the last three years. There had been significant investment to get the waiting times reduced and it was hoped this would be more reasonable by 2026. The biggest difficulty being faced, even with great investment, was that the demand was ever increasing for assessments.

Only by now working really carefully with schools was this now improving the quality of those referrals. It used to take eighteen weeks to undertake a CAMHS assessment for neurodevelopmental, but with the support of schools for both. ADHD and ASD where a joint assessment was undertaken, the waiting time had reduced to twelve weeks with quality information from schools to inform the assessment process.

With additional staff and investment, improvements were being done to the referral process with very few inappropriate referrals. Currently there were around fifteen referrals each week and with the fluctuations with referrals during term time and school holidays, the actual demand was more manageable.

The Chair invited questions from any Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Members.

Councillor McKiernan asked if there were any telephone numbers that young people could get in contact for mental health support where it was not necessarily a referral. Whilst there were a number of charities that did this was there anything being advertised within schools? Someone for a young person to contact or to speak to. Was this being implemented?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

As had been mentioned previously KOOOTH and the Me and Mind Service were widely used by schools and the services were good.

The continuum of needs described lots of other places not just for young people themselves, but actually if teachers wanted some advice, they could get this too. This had only launched in July with SENCOs, but this would be shared more widely with a check in March to make sure this was embedded in schools.

Certainly, there was a great deal of support available, but it was more about ensuring everyone had access.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought to encourage all schools in the borough to ensure that young people feel listened to within the schools, and that schools were committed to support.
2. That consideration was given to how the provision of a dedicated youth space for young people could be achieved, for example, a development of a space similar to the Barnsley Youth Zone.
3. That the Council worked with its partners to enhance early detection and diagnoses of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the potential need for an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to assist with the reduction of potential waiting times for the young person to access the EHCP provisions.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Physical Activity

9. Certain areas of Rotherham had been found to be unhealthier and unhappier than their peers in other areas - what was the council doing to target them?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Rotherham had been chosen by Sport England as a new Place Expansion Programme. This meant we had the opportunity to bid for some additional funding to support people to become more active, reduce inequalities in levels of activity and inspire children and young people.

As part of the first development phase a bid had been submitted which included an ask for resource for a dedicated officer for young people. This person would work with other officers in neighbourhoods where it was known physical activity levels were the lowest, to hear from young people what could be done to help them get more active and build that activity into their daily lives. Furthermore, funding could be bid for in 12-18 months for the second main phase of the bid to help support the changes that would be prioritised from this insight and co-design work.

This work would be linked to the Children's Capital of Culture programme, which would include physical activity opportunities, such as Uplift, giving young people access into a wider range of ways to be active. It would also link to the School Games programme, which had delivered specific events to young people identified as less

engaged in sports or activities to widen opportunities.

This would also be linked to a wider programme of work in specific neighbourhoods, as it was known where anyone lived impacted on opportunities to be active, so some of the changes identified might be small changes to local pocket parks, or streets, to help people feel safer being active as part of their daily routines or giving young people the opportunities to play.

Work would continue with partners, including Rotherham United and Places Leisure to bring programmes to communities or offers to facilities that reached less active young people and improve opportunities. An example of this was swimming lessons for children and young people with learning disabilities, who could now access more appropriate individual lessons, but at the same price as children's group lessons. Places Leisure also offered a variety of activities for young people including free holiday camps in partnerships with RUFC for children on free school meals and foster families and free swimming for under 8's.

Supplementary - what areas/types of young people have been identified as less active or less engaged with this sort of stuff?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

It was difficult to measure how active people were as greater understanding of groups was needed and where they lived. From national data the areas where income was lower was where it was likely to see lower levels of activity.

People with long-term health conditions or disabilities were also less likely to be active and certain ethnic groups might be less likely to be active in different ways. For example, girls, the amount of activity that they did as they got older reduced quicker than the amount that boys did as they got older. Some group activity was known, but it was intended to do some more work in Rotherham to gain a much better understanding.

Supplementary - The Council were going to be doing a lot of things next year and the year after that, but what was the Council doing right now to target really young people and what was the Council doing now in the current moment for 11- to 18-year-olds specifically?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Perhaps this question would be better responded to in writing where a detailed response could be provided due to the level of different activities.

To note, however, there was a tremendous level of work taking place

in the partnership, so it was not specifically just the Council,

10. Could we work with you to create an activity walk similar to that found in Grenoside woods.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

It was hoped Rotherham would benefit from development grant funding from Sport England over the next eighteen months with a bid to be submitted in October. During this period priorities would be established to take forward into a larger funding application. It was envisaged outdoor (free/ family) activities such as this would be an outcome from the funding to create activities such as activity walks as described.

The Council was also going to be doing more work at Thrybergh and Rother Valley Country Parks, where there would be specific investment in new walking routes at both of those locations.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

As described in the previous question response, the Sport England programme would enable us to be creative in increasing activity levels in neighbourhoods and green spaces. As well as a new Active Young People Officer funding had been sought for an Active Outdoors Officer to help engage with communities and hear what changes could be made to help residents use green spaces in the borough more. This could include marked walks and trails and views were welcome on where this could be successful.

11. What were you doing to make physical activities more accessible and attractive to young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

Places Leisure offer a variety of activities for young people including free holiday camps in partnerships with RUFC for children on free school meals, SEND swimming lessons through secured funding and free swimming for under 8's.

Investment at Thrybergh Country Park would see improved paths and play facilities, as well as a refurbished cafe, which would help to make this beautiful park more attractive to young people.

Investment at Rother Valley Country Park would see improved play facilities and a new cafe and events space. It was worth noting that the playing pitches there had been renamed after Lioness, Millie Bright – a source of inspiration to young people, particularly girls.

Work commenced just over a week ago and would continue over the next year.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

With the support of the Sport England Place Expansion Programme this would enable and add more focus and resource to continue to build on Rotherham's physical activity offer. There was already lots of fantastic green spaces, leisure facilities, sports clubs and facilities that were well used by young people. There was a need to ensure these were welcoming to all young people as well as increasing the breadth of options available, so that those interested in other ways of being active could find what they liked to do. The Children's Capital of Culture would allow for learning in ways of working with young people to ensure they were part of the design for solutions.

Supplementary - What do you do about skateboarding, scootering, BMXing and stuff more down that end?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Absolutely these types of activities need to be part of that solution. Uplift was a good example of that where those urban sports could be brought into the town centre. The programme had changed over the last few years as to how it had been delivered. It was now growing year on year. It would still be part of Children's Capital of Culture.

Supplementary - The Uplift Festival was not as good as expected, was there anything that could be done that was more long-term rather than just a weekend festival?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

To capture these experiences an invitation was extended for the young people to attend a feedback session to hear more about their experiences. It would be most helpful and useful for the culture and tourism team who had put it on to find out more about it. Certainly, the work with Sport England was about the environment. It needed to be about making those opportunities not just inspiring people in a one-off, but still provided opportunities for young people.

Supplementary – Referring to long-term skate parks and stuff there were areas of green space near different homes so was there any opportunities to have something different, maybe an exercise type of equipment not specifically play areas, but things that were accessible to all ages to make it more appealing.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

These were the sorts of things that were being looked at within the country parks, but also when it came to new developments in the borough the Council would work with developers to ensure they put in play facilities and sports facilities. This was something that could be negotiated with developers as part of planning applications.

Supplementary – Thrybergh and Rother Valley Country Parks had been mentioned. Rotherham was a big place. If you lived far away from those places as a young person, you could not drive there. Do you think that these places were accessible for everyone no matter where you lived?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

This point was valid. Obviously, Rother Valley was right at the southern edge of the borough, so if you lived in the north of Rotherham this was not very accessible. The Council wanted to look at opportunities across the borough and certainly would welcome engagement with the Youth Cabinet on thoughts for other locations where similar things could be done.

Supplementary - You mentioned a lot of actions the Council was doing, a lot of great actions, but were young people consulted before you made those decisions or were they just made by the Council?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

There had been a lot of engagement through the Children's Capital of Culture Programme over the last four or five years on what young people wanted to see. It would be interesting to hear about experiences with the Uplift Festival as the team had been enthusiastic about and looking to grow every year. If this was not meeting the needs of young people, then those voices needed to be heard and to consider what changes could be made.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Just on that point specifically about young people being able to influence, the Council did do quite a lot of work to try and consult with young people when big proposals were coming up. One of the things that the Council was keen to do through the Children and Young People's Partnership Board was actually to get young people involved in setting what they thought the priorities needed to be. Lots of the questions had been about things that obviously impacted on budget and not a lot of funding was available across Rotherham. On this basis it would be really useful to have an opportunity to engage with young people and with the Youth Cabinet about actually when

the money was limited, what were the priorities so that this was in consultation when we decide to do something.

This was about understanding across not just the Council but the NHS, the voluntary sector, the private sector, what were the priorities for young people, what would be the things that young people absolutely needed.

There was a real opportunity because the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan was up for review next year and young people would be welcome to get involved in setting parts of the priorities for that plan.

The Council were attending the Children and People's Partnership Board on Tuesday to talk about the refresh of the Council Plan, so again this was an opportunity to come up with new priorities because it was a refresh, not a complete rewrite. This would allow for consulting with young people and for them to be given the opportunity to influence what went in there.

Decisions could be influenced, but it was difficult coming to a decision on what the Council spent its money on.

Councillor McKiernan asked if the Council had an active Travel Officer and if so felt it would it be a good idea for them to attend the Youth Cabinet and ask for any opinions on active travel be it walking, cycling or other means of getting to and from home to school or getting from home to the actual park.

Rother Valley Country Park had been mentioned, but what about the other green spaces within Rotherham. In the past there were more opportunities for short circular routes so people and families could take the children out for the cheapest form of exercise, walking or running. Could the Council not only look at country parks, but at working with the South Yorkshire Combined Authority for routes across the whole of South Yorkshire.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

There was an opportunity coming up with South Yorkshire Combined Authority in the new year where they would be consulting on their Nature Recovery Strategy, which in part would be about how better to use green spaces across the region. This would be out for public consultation in the new year, and it would be coming to the Cabinet and then out for public consultation.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

In terms of the Sport England, work had taken place closely with

Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield University. There was a strong partnership through Yorkshire Sport Foundation who worked across all of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire of sharing best practice.

Supplementary - You said something about a music festival. Could the youth perform at that music festival?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

The Children's Capital of Culture next year would see a whole host of opportunities for people not only to visit events, but to participate. The Council wanted to see people actively participating so there would be plenty of opportunities to join that, particularly for music events.

Councillor Baggaley noted there was mention of new developments. What were the Council doing to ensure that new developments looked at infrastructure and activity beforehand? For example. Waverly, the new development there. Parks had been built for young children, 0-5 years old, but it had taken ten years to get the BMX pump track installed from a Sports England bid. This was ten years for a teenager with nothing to do. How did we ensure that developers were bringing forward these activities quickly to support young people in new developments specifically?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

This was a very valid question. From personal experience three of the largest house builders in the country were taken to court over failure to deliver Section 106 obligations. This was not uncommon that developers held back, but it was incumbent upon us as the Local Planning Authority to hold developers to account and deliver on their Section 106 agreements obligations for community facilities in a timely fashion. It was necessary for fixed timelines to be set for developers.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough that they would consider increasing extracurricular clubs, including the range of sports.
2. That the Council aimed to ensure that all parks within the borough were kept in good condition and safe.
3. That consideration was given to providing exercise equipment to all parks in the borough, where possible and that activity-based walks were considered at popular locations, in conjunction with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Healthy Eating

12. What influence did you have over the meals provided within schools?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Schools decided who they wanted to provide their school meals. However, unlike in many other areas of the country, in Rotherham, the Council still provided school meals to many of schools through Riverside Catering, the internal catering provider. Riverside Catering provided school meals for 14,000 pupils every day across Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster. For schools who chose to get their meals from Riverside Catering there was some influence on the meals available.

13. What could Rotherham Council do about making school food healthier?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

If schools chose to use the Council's Riverside Catering for their school meals, they had access to a healthy balanced meal. Meals were prepared according to the Government's nutritional guidelines using fresh locally sourced produce. Riverside Catering had maintained their Soil Association Food for Life Served Here Bronze award accreditation.

In addition to this Riverside Catering offered attending parents' evenings with sample menus showing the food variety and the balanced meals so that parents could see what their child got and tasting sessions in schools so that the children could taste new foods before they arrived on the menu.

They also attended school council meetings to meet with the pupils, listened and where possible implemented some of their ideas (as long as they were within nutritional standards). Surveys were also undertaken with pupils and parents to ensure the thoughts of many were being captured.

Every year Riverside Catering took part in the "Eat them to defeat them scheme" making eating fruit and vegetables a fun and good thing. Trained chefs from Riverside Catering based in schools often worked with pupils to increase education and awareness of healthy food and to encourage tasting of healthy options with talks to the children about balancing meals and eating healthy.

Food was provided for many cultural and medical diets and meetings

with parents were held to ensure the food provided fit in with each individual child's needs, with allergen trained cooks and assistants.

Councillor Keenan asked if the Council felt enough was currently being done to incentivise schools to use Riverside Catering rather than an external service?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

At the moment the Council offered that service, but it was about what additional benefit a school could get from having Riverside Catering as opposed to another catering provider. Obviously, it was a competitive market for schools. Some of which, would come down to what schools wanted to pay for. One of the things being looked at was what could be offered around extra services with chefs providing those activities, the children's choices and links with local providers.

It was hoped to provide extra information to contracts where food was bought, but also making contact with those suppliers who were able to come and deliver extra additional benefits for schools and for their families as an extra attractive package.

14. We were aware of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) initiative during school holidays, did you ensure that meals offered to young people under this scheme were healthy?

Response by Kirsty Woodhead, Manager in Early Help and Engagement

With regards to the healthy holidays programme before any funding was given to any of the providers, they were expected to demonstrate that they could meet the standards of the programme.

The first one of those was that they must ensure that at least one healthy meal a day was provided. In order to understand that they were healthy, they must meet the school food standards throughout the day. That included the meal provided, but also any snacks provided during those sessions.

Monitoring visits did take place and visits were made to some of the providers during the period of delivery in order to make sure they were compliant and in terms of delivery for children and young people.

If there were any concerns around the quality of the food or the meals that were provided, then this was challenged, and support offered to be able to address some of those concerns.

All of the providers had to have the five-star food hygiene certificate,

and this was checked that it was in place prior to the service level agreement being signed. The case study provided in the information spoke far more volumes about the impact of the Healthy Holidays programme.

Supplementary – With regards to the school food standard did schools have to follow this as well? It had been referred to in Youth Cabinet meetings that some young people do not have access to healthy foods. The school either did not have it or if they did have it, it was in a different canteen, and they did not have enough time during lunch to actually get that. On this basis did you feel there was enough being done to make sure that schools get kids healthy meals?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

From a Council perspective there were very limited things that could be done to enforce that. Who should be enforcing it, would be the school's governing service. Schools and the Council did have a responsibility to support the Youth Cabinet to do that. Everyone must make sure that information was provided, but the people who governed what the schools were doing, school governors, even school council reps would probably have as much, if not more influence than the Council did. If there were issues, then support would be provided to challenge within practice within individual schools.

15. How were you promoting healthy eating to young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

There were some very informed young people in Rotherham, including some young people from Youth Cabinet, who came with the Public Health team to Tesco in March to talk to their national head office staff about Tesco's new nutrition strategy. As those young people articulated very well, they knew what healthy food was, but they expressed frustrations that often it was not the cheapest or easiest option, and there were social pressures.

One young person explained they would not go into a local shop with their mates and buy an apple rather than a chocolate bar or his friends would think he was weird. These young people had lots of ideas, however, about marketing of healthier food, removing appealing cartoon images from unhealthy breakfast cereals and instead promoting healthier foods in the same way and increasing offers on healthier foods rather than ultra-processed foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

In Rotherham efforts were being made to promote a compassionate approach to food that recognised that shaming people for their 'poor lifestyle choices' was not useful or fair. We all faced a barrage of advertising, marketing, social, family and societal pressures as well as constraints from our skills, experience, confidence and opportunities, that all influenced the food eaten in a day. As a borough work should take place with partners to change not just knowledge and skills around food, but also the wider environment, such as the Council planning guidance on restrictions to new takeaways near to schools.

Rotherham had a Food Network of partners working together to try to tackle some of these broader issues, including supporting access to crisis food, food growing and community food events. In July, the network was awarded bronze award by Sustainable Food Places in recognition of their progress, but we know the challenge of making healthy sustainable food the easy and common choice for everyone was a big one.

Supplementary – Young people were taught about healthy eating at school but were never actually shown any or food to try. There were lessons on healthy eating, naming all these healthy foods, but why not let people try first. Perhaps there should be a dedicated PSHE lesson learning about healthy eating and healthy foods.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Recommendations would be taken on board and all points would be put to school governors.

Supplementary - There were comments about what the Youth Cabinet and what the Council had done already in the past, however what was being done right now?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

The food network had just received the bronze award working together with partners, and the Council was the one that pulled together that network. Work was taking place within working groups around specific themes where it was known there was room for development, like growing food. We know that there were some pockets of really good activity happening, There were some allotments in various different places around the borough where they had community groups working on food growing. What we wanted to do with that working group was to share that best practice with other people, some training for other groups so that we could expand what that looks like.

Similarly, around cooking, the adult weight management service had changed its delivery so that rather than that being a Slimming World

voucher, it was now a more holistic cooking session with advice and guidance for adults so they could take that home to families and that had had really good feedback.

Also around including a physical activity offer by taking away some of that stigma and looking at real opportunities for making change that made sense for people. This group looking at this met very regularly as part of those working groups to continue the action plan. The action plan would be refreshed now bronze had been achieved to see how to progress further.

Councillor Steele as Chair of the Allotment Society, which was responsible for thirty allotment sites across the borough, amounting to around 3,000 allotment holders, noted that, if people were interested in going around or visiting allotments to see how their work and food was produced, a visit could be arranged for the Youth Cabinet at some point. It would have to be in the daytime or late summer at some point, but this could be worked towards.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough, that they ensured that healthy food options were available to all young people.
2. That schools in the borough to give consideration to the young inspectors completing an inspection of school lunches and lunches provided as part of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, where possible.
3. That the Council and its partners gave consideration to producing a teenage-specific campaign to support healthy eating.
4. That a site visit to the allotments be arranged for members of the Youth Cabinet.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor Steele, offered his thanks for the questions and answers and looked forward to working on ideas and suggestions. Work would take place with the Democratic Services team to finalise the proposed recommendations as agreed today.

The Youth Cabinet were thanked for their attendance and in doing an excellent job in putting questions forward and also by putting the statements on the subject matters raised.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board gave its assurance that the recommendations made today would be given some serious consideration and forwarded to Cabinet Members.

Cabinet Members would make the final decision, and this would be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. In terms of consultation, every year the Council had to agree its budget and sometimes savings had to be made. However, every effort would be made to minimise how this affected children and more so to consult with young people on these budget changes. Liaison would take place with officers as to how this could be achieved.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 13 November 2024

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, Knight, Marshall, McKiernan, Tinsley and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Keenan and Pitchley.

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

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

46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2024

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 9 October 2024 be approved as a true record.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

48. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

49. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press and public.

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

The Chair invited Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning & Performance to introduce the report. James Clarke the Assistant Director for Housing was also in attendance for this item.

The report was both an annual update on the residential development programme, which was keeping the Council in line with Cabinet's intention to increase the number of children's homes across the borough to be able to accommodate the children in care.

It also provided an update following a peer review into the Care Leavers service, where it was recommended that the Council review its Looked After Children's (LAC) Sufficiency Strategy to reflect the needs of care leavers more accurately across the borough.

There were two reasons why it had changed since the LAC Sufficiency

Strategy had been written. The first was there had been a significant increase in the number of care leavers and the population had increased. The second was the Ofsted published regulation to that part of the sector, for 16+ provision and consequently the market had changed significantly. The report covered both an update on where the Council was with its residential development and its plans based on the needs analysis that had been undertaken to update the Sufficiency Strategy to increase the provision for care leavers within the borough.

Councillor Blackham noted that permission had been granted to acquire up to 100 properties and sought an overview on the latest position and the plan to address this over the next two-three years. It was clarified that recommendation number 4 was to make members aware that approval had already been granted to increase the housing capacity across the borough, but this was not specifically for children in care or for care leavers. The plan was already in place and a number of care leavers received their permanent accommodation when they turned 18 through that plan to provide accommodation to any member of the Rotherham borough.

It was noted that good progress had been made since Cabinet agreed the acquisitions policy and that target. This year the Council was on track, forecasting between 50-60 acquisitions, which was a significant improvement. For each property that came to the point of being let, the Council made a decision on whether it was used as general needs social housing or if it was appropriate for use as care leaver accommodation or temporary accommodation for homelessness. Those decisions were made on a case-by-case basis based on this such as need and location.

Councillor Blackham sought clarification on the number of properties that would be needed over the next two to three years for this specific provision. The information within the report considered the trend and the Council knew how many children in care were going to turn 18 over the next couple of years. It was felt that 70 additional properties would be required. A number of care leavers may move into their own provision, they may return to live with their parents, they may move outside of the borough. Some accommodation may be provided via the housing allocations policy which was not specifically for care leavers. The Council did have a number of care leavers who were not ready to live independently, who may need additional support. The Council had a duty to support those care leavers up to age 25, if required.

The report was seeking additional authorisation to be able to work with Housing Associations, private landlords, and private providers to develop accommodation so that the Council had accommodation which could be provided to care leavers as accommodation. Then if those care leavers, then needed support either by the Council delivering it through the personal advisors already allocated or through commissioning that support, this would be a more cost-effective option that what was in place currently.

Council Marshall asked if the Council had enough staff experience to meet the needs, rather than using outside providers. Where the Council knew there was a cohort of young people who would need support for a prolonged period, it was more cost efficient to employ staff. Some care leavers did not feel confident to live independently initially but may only need support to three or four months. The Council was therefore balancing, if additional support was needed, how many personal advisors would be needed on a permanent basis. The Council would then employ them if it was more cost efficient to do so. It was noted that there was some flexibility and resilience sometime by using commissioned providers however it depended on what type of support was needed and which providers were being used. Some of the charities were affordable in terms of the additional support they provided with additional benefits because they also offered other groups that the care leaver could continue to access after the Council stopped paying for the support. It was clarified that all of that was taken into consideration when determining how support would be provided.

Councillor Yasseen noted that page three of the report mentioned the development of in-house residential provision but did not detail the criteria or protocol to use when a child should be taken into care. It was queried how the Council would be able to demonstrate improvements in wellbeing, education, achievement, and mental health, which were key issues that when a child went into care they actually fell. There was a need to understand how the in-house residential offer would pick those aspects up. It was queried if it was intentional to make it holistic, rather than just providing a roof over a child's head.

It was noted that the earlier part of the report provided the update on the children's residential homes. That was slightly different to the care leavers accommodation. Those were children's homes for children under 16 who predominantly needed that level of support. The reason the Council developed its own in-house provision was because it received significant challenge in terms of getting external market providers to be able to support the children and to provide all the things previously mentioned. So external market could provide a roof over their head, at a significant cost, however the Council was concerned that there were often children were then out of borough, that the Council's ability to provide an education, the emotional wellbeing and support and the persistence that children needed, not just children in care but all children needed someone who was committed to them. Sometimes the Council did not find that the private providers were able to do that as well as the Council could itself.

Consequently, the whole residential programme in-house had been built on that basis, so they had really good links with the Rotherham therapeutic team, with Rotherham's CAMHS, good links with dental and health checks to make sure the children received that holistic health support, including good links with local education providers. The Council was able to accommodate children with more complex needs in borough

with its residential provision.

External placements did cost a lot of money, therefore one of the intended benefits, was that this was more cost efficient. The Council was not just placing children within its in-house provision that were currently located out of the borough but that it was also being used to be able to prevent children with complex needs needing to be placed out of the borough. One of the properties was focused on, what's known as 'Step-Down', which was where children should be cared for in a family home rather than a children's home, so fostering or return to parents. That provision was not necessarily for children that would have been out of borough, it was for children where the Council wanted a children's home that would focus their support on returning those children into the family setting instead of staying in a residential. It was for all of those different reasons the Council wanted to create its own provision.

Councillor Tinsley queried if the Council expected any challenges to purchasing those properties. For example, residential care homes had to apply for a change of use. For the in-house under 16, children's residential homes there were a number of challenges in identifying appropriate properties within the right areas. Those homes required a change in planning permission because they required a specific regulation because it would be somebody's place of work. Regarding the care leavers accommodation, as it would be a young adult's home, there was no requirement for a change to planning permission.

The report did mention exploring some supported group living accommodation, where three or four care leavers would live together, if they required additional support, if they were not ready to maintain their own tenancy or if they didn't want to stay in Rotherham. If this was used there were no current requirement for a change of use application for those properties. However, the regulation of those properties had changed for 16+, so if the Council wanted to create one of those properties for young people under 18, it may be that the planning department would recommend seeking a change of use permission. The Council did not know what was needed in terms of how many 16+ or 18+ so it was anticipating that being a barrier or issue in the future.

Councillor Tinsley asked how the Council worked with residents, who may not be supportive of the proposed change in use to try to offer reassurances around potential changes. The Council had made positive progress in terms of the residential children's homes development and there was only one property outstanding. A lot of engagement with local communities in the areas when a property was identified. The challenge was when that engagement was carried out prior to the planning application was that the residents only wanted to speak about the planning application which made it harder to work with residents positively to help them understand what it would be like following the planning process. There was continued engagement following the planning process as the Council was aware those people would be the children's

neighbours. It was in the Council's best interests to continue to work hard to engage with those residents. The Council had some really positive success, even in areas where residents were very anxious about the change use.

Councillor Baggaley asked in terms of acquisitions going forward if the Council had a view of what would open market verses new build. It was clarified that the emphasis was on what was called 'street' properties, which meant existing properties, with a focus on right to buy properties, where then Council had a statutory right to buy back the property if the ex-tenant was selling it within ten years of purchasing under that scheme. The figures would be reported to Cabinet shortly, but the majority had come from the source and would largely be semi-detached houses in existing housing estates that were owned by an owner-occupier but were previously council homes.

The Council would also look to do opportunistic acquisitions, which included purchasing from developers where they were struggling to sell new properties or where the Council was already planning to buy some Section 106 properties and had an opportunity to buy more. The focus would always be on second-hand properties, largely because they were cheaper, but the policy allowed new builds to be purchased as well, if needed. Whilst only a small number of properties had made it to the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), this was because the Council was being cautious about which properties met those specific needs. It had been a successful programme as the Council had acquired about 30 properties, with another 20 to 30 forecasted for this financial year, meaning the acquisitions target had been exceeded in year one.

In terms of the children's residential development programme, with 55 properties that were considered to purchase one, it was clarified that there was one remaining outstanding property that needed to be completed. All other properties had now either been acquired or were being built. It was anticipated that the roof would be added imminently to the property at Rowen. There were no plans to build anything else in terms of the children's residential programme. The properties and accommodation for the care leavers, beyond the acquisitions previously mentioned, the Council would work with housing associations, with private providers, to look at house existing properties could be utilised. There was a bulge in the Council's care leavers that would last for the next three years but would then reduce as the number of children in care who were under 16 was reducing, so the Council would not want to acquire long term properties that may not be needed beyond the next five years.

Councillor Yasseen noted that the Council did not like to carry out consultation alongside the planning application but wanted to know if the Council inputted into the planning process from the specialist perspective of supporting young people in care. For the children's homes that would be run by the Council, when it was the Council requesting permission for conversion of those homes then CYPS would engage with members of

the public, local residents and local members before the planning application is submitted. The Council would not comment if a private provider was to request planning application in that area from a CYPS perspective.

Councillor Blackham notes that recommendation five was to negotiate any additional accommodation required and queried if that was within the 100-property cap or open ended? The Assistant Director for Housing explained he had a delegation to acquire properties in consultation with the Cabinet Member that were added to the Council's housing revenue account stock. Some of those properties could be used to support this need but that did restrict the Council because there were some properties which the Council may want to acquire or enter into a lease which would not be appropriate to hold as council housing. This provided the Council another means to acquire or enter into a lease for properties that were not covered under the existing delegation.

The report suggested that around 70 additional properties were needed, so that would be the maximum number. There would be no benefit to acquire accommodation beyond that number.

Councillor Yasseen asked that when the properties were identified in the various locations across Rotherham that the neighbourhood teams and local councillors within those localities be included within those discussions.

Upon a vote, the following was resolved:

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

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

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

51. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The Chair invited Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing and James Clarke, Assistant Director for Housing to introduce the report. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained the report was seeking approval for the new Temporary Accommodation Policy. It explained how the Council met its statutory obligations and provided a brief update on the demand for temporary accommodation. It mentioned the work being undertaken to improve the situation for residents and indicated a negative impact on the Council's financial position, which was welcomed.

Councillor Yasseen expressed that she was supportive of the idea of not using hotels for temporary accommodation due to the expense and didn't feel they were fit for purpose. She felt that demand had increased because the Council did not build enough houses that fit within the alternative model. She noted that around 600 houses had been built in Boston Castle but understood that very little of that stock could be used for this clientele. There were lots of factors that contributed to that. She asked if the new Housing Strategy plans ensured this need was accounted for.

A new Housing Strategy was being developed and would be presented to scrutiny and Cabinet next year. It was explained that the majority of the need could be met through straightforward general needs accommodation. Generally, rents needed to be low, which was why social housing was the preference. This was one of the reasons why there had been long standing support for an ambitious housing growth programme in the borough. Many of the Council lettings did go to households who were homeless or were previously homeless but there was a shortage of council housing which led to the temporary accommodation issue. All members were encouraged to support housing growth initiatives within their areas.

There was a small proportion of the caseload whose needs could not be met through traditional general needs council housing. An example would be single males with a history of rough sleeping where those things had been tried previously but not worked. Supported accommodation was needed for those households, and this was a challenging sector due to the

funding issues. The Council was considering that as part of the Housing Strategy what it needed to do but also where did it need to work in partnership with charities and housing associations who already did this in other areas to ensure the right provision was in the right locations.

The routine use of hotels as temporary accommodation needed to be phased out but unfortunately, there would always be a place for the use of hotels as emergency accommodation when people present on the day, because it was not feasible or pragmatic to find a permanent or even semi-permanent property in all cases.

Councillor Yasseen sought assurance that when the policy was implemented that all safeguarding issues were considered when using hotels and that when new housing was developed that the Council was not concentrating on availability in one area over another. Part B of appendix one was a practice guide for officers on risk assessing and managing the impact of hotel and bed and breakfast placements. The policy was introduced as a response to the Council using a lot more temporary accommodation than previously. The Council did not have to have this policy but felt because it was making a lot of placements in temporary accommodation that it was important to have clear, authorised by Cabinet, guidelines and policies around how placement decisions were taken effectively. As part of that process, the Council had realised it had, on occasions, become overly reliant on some hotels. The guidance in Part B provided some guidance, mechanisms, processes, and trigger points for ensuring that was done as safely as possible.

The Council had a statutory duty to accommodate and there were only so many hotels in Rotherham and many of those were in areas already built up with residential accommodation nearby.

Councillor Marshall felt it was a fully comprehensive temporary accommodation policy but queried why delegated authority had been sought to make operational amendments to the policy for a three-year period. The policy was a very operational policy and had been written to provide full transparency on an important area however it included lots of detail and flexibility was needed within that three-year period to make changes in light of pressures and demands and legislative changes. The principles of the policy would not be changed.

Councillor A Carter sought clarification that his understanding that when the Council used temporary accommodation such as crash pads, that a number of them were available and ward members and members of the community got notified in the consultation and acquisition process. He also expressed concerns that recommendation 3 to delegate authority would remove some of the wider democratic accountability. It was suggested that when operational changes had been made that they be submitted to scrutiny for discussion.

The Chair explained that councillors set policy and were responsible for

the budget, that operational issues were for the Strategic Directors, and it was expected that the Strategic Directors would liaise with the Cabinet Members on any major changes.

It was clarified that ward members were not consulted with prior to a decision being taken to aside one of the council properties for use as temporary accommodation. This was because those decisions had to be made quickly along with issues regarding safeguarding and the sharing of information which may not be appropriate. It was acknowledged that the Council had not been transparent enough in the past about where the properties were located and a table had recently been produced, which could be shared with members which set out how many properties were in each ward by bed size. The Assistant Director of Housing made a commitment to share with ward members where those properties were located in terms of how many were in each ward but not the actual addresses.

Upon the vote which included one member voting against and one member abstaining from the vote, the following was resolved:

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

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

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- The Assistant Director of Housing would share information with members regarding the number of temporary accommodation properties located in each ward, but not the actual addresses of those properties.

52. HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Chair invited Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing and James Clarke, Assistant Director for Housing to introduce the report and

noted that the report had also been considered by the members of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC). The Cabinet Member for Housing clarified it had been discussed at IPSC where they had set out their approach to delivering the repairs and maintenance service to make sure it met the needs of tenants and leaseholders, along with ensuring that the Council was able to meet its statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations. The report also updated members on work being undertaken to consider the future of the repairs and maintenance service in light of consumer regulations.

Paragraph 2.18 of the report discussed the decorating allowance which was the subject of much discussion at IPSC. As a result of those discussions the Cabinet Member for Housing sought the Board's views on a proposed amendment to that section for Cabinet's consideration at its meeting on 18 November 2024, which would propose that the sums awarded for the decorating allowance be increased in line with the corporate Fees and Charges annually.

The Chair welcomed the proposed amendment, which would be considered during the discussions.

Councillor A Carter noted the number of repairs carried out over the years but queried what key performance indicators (KPI's) were being met with the policy. The Assistant Director for Housing indicated the KPI's could be shared outside of the meeting with members noting that many of them were corporate KPI's as part of the Council Plan. They were reported on quarterly and could be shared. The service had also taken a decision recently to start sharing, on a quarterly basis, on the website, more detailed information about performance across the landlord services. This information in the form of a link would be shared with the Governance Manager to be circulated to members of the Board and he was happy to respond to any additional questions outside of the meeting.

Councillor Yasseen queried if our current contracts supported the Council's goals and was responsive to its needs. It was clarified that this was being considered as part of the work to determine the future repairs and maintenance model. The contracts were performing well on their own terms and assurance was provided that both contractors were performing well against their measures. The questions were, were those the right measures. More of an emphasis was being placed on triaging the repairs adequately in the first instance to ensure those were being prioritised in the right way.

The authority was in a strong position on the responsive repair aspect. When repairs were logged it was good at fixing them and fixing them properly, but the data needed to be considered because if the same things kept breaking again and again, it provided an indication of where investment could be made. The repairs and maintenance service needed to move from not just being good at responding to be more preventative and more predictive.

Councillor Blackham queried on what basis had the existing contracts been extended by. The Council was currently in a position where the regulations around repairs and maintenance were changing but hadn't yet been finalised. The full impacts of Awaab's Law and how that would impact our repairs and maintenance service were not yet known. The new consumer regulation and inspection regime was introduced in April and the whole sector was assessing possible impacts of that. These were extended to allow the Council to ascertain what the requirements would be. The existing contracts were performing well and getting value for money for tenants.

Councillor McKiernan acknowledged that this had been discussed at IPSC and as Chair of that Commission he gave reassurance that a lot of similar questions had been asked during that meeting. He put forward a suggestion that fences be included as part of the household going forward. It was noted that if fences were included in the policy, it would raise the costs of the service.

Councillor McKiernan acknowledged that including maintenance of fences would increase the budget requirements for the service but suggested that current fences could be maintained. It was clarified that the Council would intervene where damaged fences caused a health and safety risk but could not commit to making sure the fencing was of a good standard when a property was re-let. It was confirmed that the maintenance of fences would be considered as part of the repairs and maintenance review.

Councillor A Carter raised concerns that in some instances mould in council properties was seen as a lifestyle choice due to the way people maintained their homes. It was noted that two to three years ago damp and mould weren't reported as they were now but the Council had brought in a damp and mould policy and reassurance was provided that this was now core business for the Council.

Councillor Baggaley sought reassurance the needs of vulnerable tenants were being prioritised. It was clarified that once known, repairs were escalated accordingly. The contact centre used a script when receiving calls, which determines if a repair is urgent or less urgent. Traditionally those questions hadn't been asked and whilst an IT solution was investigated the housing team were looking to update the script to ascertain those needs in the first instance.

Upon a vote, which included the additional recommendation proposed by the Cabinet Member for Housing, the following was resolved:

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

1. Approve the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy

(Appendix 1).

2. Approve the increase in decoration allowance from £25 to £50 per room, up to a maximum of £350 per property, as proposed in the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Note the ongoing work to scope the future repairs and maintenance delivery model for Rotherham and agrees to receive a further update on this work in 2025.
4. Approve the Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy (Appendix 2).
5. Approve the Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy (Appendix 3).
6. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make amendments to the following housing policies in line with operational, regulatory and legislative demands:
 - Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy
 - Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy
 - Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy
 - Housing Services Fire Safety Policy
 - Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy as it relates to housing assets.
7. That Cabinet supports the proposal that the sums awarded for the decorating allowance be increased in line with the corporate Fees and Charges annually.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- The Assistant Director for Housing would provide the Governance Manager with the link to the published performance information for circulation to members.

53. ANNUAL COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT 2023-24

The Chair invited Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive to introduce this report. She explained that an overview presentation was usually provided with this report to highlight the key trends.

The report set out the annual position on both complaints and compliments for the year ending March 2024. The report included figures on the overall council position and detail by directorate. A training briefing had been circulated to all Councillor post-election as a result of previous feedback. That briefing provided information of how the Council responded to formal complaints, and the differences between the formal complaints process and the things members may see in their surgery

enquiries. Information was also provided in December 2023, on the compensation levels in 2022-23.

New reporting had been developed around financial redress as a result of any upheld complaints, which provided additional reporting through directorates to monitor and ensure appropriate levels of financial redress were maintained.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- It showed the number of complaints received each year between 2019/20 through to 2023/24.
- The lowest number of complaints were seen during 2020-21 when across the country complaints were suppressed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- The highest number of complaints received was in 2022/23, 1,397 but this decreased in 2023/24 to 1,212.
- The number of compliments received had a slight decrease in 2020/21 however this increased over each year with 902 compliments being received in 2023/24.
- The comparison between 2022/23 to 2023/24 showed that 185 fewer complaints were received which was a decrease of 13%. 25% of complaints were upheld and this was a decrease on 2022/23 when 32% of complaints were upheld.
- 111 more compliments were received, which was an increase of 14% and it was noted that not all compliments were passed on to the Complaints Team by staff.
- Over the last two years Housing and Regeneration and Environment (R&E) had received the highest number of complaints.
- The largest decrease in the number of complaints received over the last two years was in R&E with a decrease of 27%.
- The second largest decrease in the number of complaints received over the past two years was in Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), with a decrease of 45%.
- Finance and Customer Services also decreased by a percentage of 13%.
- Adult Care services had a percentage increase of 16% with Housing an increase of 1%.
- The Assistant Chief Executives directorate had increased from four to five and Public Health remained unchanged at zero complaints received.
- In terms of performance, 82% of complaints taken through the formal process were responded to within relevant timescales. This was slightly below the Council Plan target of 85%.
- Finance and Customer Services resolved 91% of complaints within timescales.
- CYPS increased the number of complaints resolved in a timely manner up to 89% from 64%.
- Compliments had increased from 791 in 2022/23 to 902 in

2023/24, whilst the number had increase overall, the numbers had not increased across all the main service areas where it was noted that not all compliments may have reached the Complaints Team.

- Within in the first six months of the year 567 complaints had been received with 85% responded to in time and 464 compliments had been received which was an increase compared to the 396 received during the same period.

Councillor Yasseen welcomed the decrease which showed the benefits of investigating complaints. An area of concern was around the response timescales as the target had been missed and it was queried if there was a clear theme where the directorates were missing that target.

The target could have been missed due to the complexity of the complaint, some of which were multifaceted and coordinated across directorates or services to provide a comprehensive response. There were no discernible patterns. Assurance was provided that no manager wanted to respond to things out of time. However, when the target was missed this was sometimes down to the complexity of the complaint or sometimes it was due to issues with the individual. The Complaints Team provided support to managers were needed and had weekly dashboards, and monthly performance report, which monitored this.

Councillor Yasseen noted that sometimes residents contacted their ward members when they had not received a response to their use through other avenues and queried the timescales by which members should received a response in instances such as this.

The Chair noted that council procedures should be followed and if they were not followed then a complaint should be raised.

The Vice-Chair noted that whilst there had been a decrease in the number of complaints, there had been an increase in the number of complaints not being responded to within the correct time limits. It was queried if complaints for this particular year had been more complicated that other years. It was also asked how many staff in that area worked from home? Training had been discussed at last year's meeting and had been mentioned again at this meeting and it was queried when the training would be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.

The Chair commented that whether the staff were working at home should not make a difference to the performance.

In response it was noted that pressures within services differed month on month so it was acknowledged that, at certain times of the year, services may struggle to pull information together particularly if it was a complex response. It was agreed that processes should be followed, and the Council should be aiming to meet people's expectations wherever possible, to provide timely and quality responses. The complaints process was there for a reason and should be utilised when all other routes had

been exhausted but look to resolve those instances as quickly as possible.

The Council had a Working Location Policy which provided flexibility to staff, but it had always focused on service delivery to residents. Training was continually provided by the Complaints Team, who pushed for high standards in complaints responses, both in quality and timeliness.

In response to a follow-up question by the Vice-Chair it was noted that when a complaint came from the Ombudsman, the Council had done all it could to try to resolve that complaint, but it was noted that even at that point, more could be done to try to engage with the customer to see if there was anything further the Council to do to resolve it. Consideration would be given to how members who put through high numbers of case work relating to customer service complaints could be involved further.

Councillor Blackham felt that it was not just the attitude of our staff that needed to be considered but also the attitude of our providers and contractors as well. The attitude they projected when visiting someone's home was important and related to the quality of service offered. Assurance was provided that regular conversations, including contract management meetings took place, going down to individual complaint level if required. The number of housing complaints raised when compared to peers was lower.

The Vice-Chair asked if in future reports that the Complaints Team would consider how members who put through high numbers of casework relating to customer service complaints could be involved further.

The Chair noted that OSMB was the forum where the complaints report was considered, and it was expected that all officers of the Council would follow policy and procedures. It was suggested that a recommendation that a Member Session be held for all members to consider the complaints report following its consideration by OSMB.

Upon a vote, the following was resolved:

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Noted the Annual Compliments and Complaints Report for 2023/24.
2. Agreed that a Member Session be held for all members to consider the Annual Complaints and Compliments report following its consideration by OSMB.

54. THE SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP (SRP) ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Chair noted that Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene would answer questions on the Safer Rotherham

Partnership (SRP) Annual Report 2023-24.

Councillor Tinsley asked if there had been any further discussions regarding restorative justice and if there were plans for this to be reintroduced. It was noted there were some formal aspects in terms of reparations where it related to criminal offences and often those powers were only available to the police. The Council did have a number of options available. The report mentioned community payback, which was where the SRP had invested funding to bring more offenders into the borough to deliver some of that reparation work. Another key area of that work was one the Council had chosen to fund itself as part of the budget setting process for that year. The report referred to hate crime in particular. For many years they had been engaging with victims and those impacted by hate crime and the feedback received indicated they wanted to see more restorative justice approaches in relation to hate crime. Short term funding from the partnership was provided to address this as part of a pilot. Following on from that as part of the budget setting process the Council had been able to provide the funding for that service to continue. It was highlighted that wherever those opportunities presented themselves the Council had sought to exploit those along with the partners in the SRP.

Councillor Tinsley noticed the hate crime element and noted there was a lot of migration across Rotherham along with people moving into Rotherham. It was asked if there was anything that could be done more proactively to engage that cohesion locally.

It was noted that cohesion was like an ecosystem, whereby a breakdown in cohesion could lead to community tensions within communities, tensions could lead to hate crimes and much more significant areas of concern. The community safety partnership took care of the later stages of that, in terms of monitoring tensions in communities. It was noted that this was a relevant point on the back of the disorder in Manvers over the summer. The Assistant Chief Executive explained she was leading on a piece of work with partners and council officers to look at some of the things that could be done together, some of the things that were already being done well but that could have the most meaningful impact, which included youth outreach, working with schools to help educate and look to upscale what was done, which involved working closely with the Children and Young People's Services. Another aspect was looking at what could be done with communities and particular groups within communities as well. Community cohesion was at the forefront of the Council to address.

Councillor Marshall queried if safeguards were put in place with outside providers to ensure they were following the same standards and not being people in and exploiting them, regarding modern slavery and human trafficking.

There was a range of actions done in relation to modern slavery. The Council, as an organisation, had an annual statement, which was

produced in relation to modern slavery. A big part of the commitments in relation to that charger and the statement produced annually was that the Council ensured any third parties it worked with, contactors, and suppliers had clear, demonstrable, commitments in terms of how they would tackle and address modern slavery.

Councillor McKiernan, under the protecting vulnerable adults and mental health section, he noted that there was a specialist but asked if more than one person was required for this task.

This section of the report was specifically about a mental health clinical lead being embedded directly with the Safe Enable Service, which was a joint team with the Council and Police, where they were dealing with the more significant, severe cases that were escalated through the normal casework reporting arrangements. That clinical lead was there specifically for cases where there was a community safety, criminal justice aspect. More staff would always be welcomed in this particular area because it would allow delivery of much more intensive provisions, but the Community Safety Partnership and the SRP Board continued to monitor the demand to ensure it could respond if that demand outstripped the level of supply. This was not passing comment in terms of the wider mental health issues.

Councillor McKiernan noted that the report mentioned that interventions by the mental and clinical health were reviewed and improved, could further detail be provided. Further detail would be provided in writing to members of OSMB outside of the meeting, but this was about the referral processes and the actual interventions that that officer delivered.

Upon a vote, the following was resolved:

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board noted the progress of the Safer Rotherham Partnership in tackling crime and disorder in 2023-24 against its key priorities and makes recommendations in relation to the current and future work of the partnership.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene would provide further information to members of OSMB regarding the section of the report that mentioned that interventions by the mental and clinical health were reviewed and improved, to provide further context.

55. RESPONSE FROM CABINET 16 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO THE SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - REFERRAL FROM COUNCIL TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (OSMB) - PETITION "ROTHERHAM'S COMMITMENT TO A PERMANENT CEASEFIRE AND TO PROMOTE PEACE IN PALESTINE AND IN THE REGION"

The Chair invited Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working to introduce the report. The report outlined that a subgroup of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) met with representatives of the petition prior to the local elections. His thanks to those members of OSMB who were involved in this work were noted.

The recommendations from the subgroup were approved by OSMB on 24 July 2024 and it was noted that consideration of the report was delayed due to the pre-election publicity restrictions in place at that time. Following a request from the Chair of OSMB, Cabinet agreed to amend the usual timescales and process and Cabinet's response to those recommendations was provided alongside the formal receipt at the Cabinet meeting on 16 September 2024.

The response included in the agenda pack included Appendix 1, which was a detailed letter to the Chair of OSMB. Appendix 2 detailed the 13 recommendations, of which five were in progress and eight were completed.

Chair invited questions but highlighted the report was presented for members of OSMB to note it's content.

The Vice-Chair noted that recommendation 1D and 1E along with a couple of others used officer time and resources and queried if a breakdown as to how many hours work would be undertaken to discharge those recommendations and if an estimate as to what the cost to the authority would be. It was noted the information was not available however it was clear that OSMB felt strongly that it needed to be in the recommendations and Cabinet were happy to act on OSMB's responses in that instance.

The Chair reminded members that this was Cabinet's response to the recommendations, and it was understood that a meeting was being arranged with the lead petitioner to discuss the outstanding recommendations.

The vice-Chair reiterated his query regarding how many hours and staffing hours this was going to use and asked if that information could be provided. It was explained that enquiries could be made regarding what the time and cost implications were however the Vice-Chair was referred back to the previous statement whereby it was noted that OSMB had referred the recommendations to Cabinet and Cabinet had accepted them.

The Chair reiterated that the report was presented to be noted. It had gone through the usual processes, had been submitted to Cabinet and Cabinet had provided a written response back to OSMB, it was not about the costs of carrying out those recommendations, which had already been agreed.

Councillor Marshall noted that the target completion date for some actions was 30th September 2024 and sought an update. It was noted that there were some elements of the recommendations that were still in progress, one such element was the meeting with the lead petitioner that was being arranged and would take place within the next few weeks.

Councillor McKiernan noted Action four agreed that the Cabinet spokesperson continued to hold dialogue with petitioners to continue to seek peace in Palestine and the region and sought an update as it did not appear there could be a completion date for that and expand on how that task would be completed. It was explained that this was to ensure there was a continued dialogue with communities in Rotherham and whilst it was not suggested that the Council would be able to have any direct impact, in terms of a resolution of the horrific situation over there, it was important that the Council met with members of it's community, especially those most affected by the current problems over there to ensure the Council was responding wherever it could.

Councillor McKiernan sought clarification if a meeting had been held and what was discussed. It was reiterated that a meeting would be arranged in the next few weeks. As per the recommendations an updated would be provided within six months.

Councillor A Carter felt that the recommendations were not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) recommendations. Disappointment was expressed that the discussion with the lead petitioners had not taken place to determine how to display the Palestinian flag on 29 November 2024. This was an issue that many residents felt strongly about.

The Chair noted that the Leader had responded to this at Council and Cabinet were speaking with the lead petitioners regarding the flag. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working noted that there had been lots of ongoing discussions which the Leader had highlighted during the Council meeting. Regarding the point about the recommendations being SMART, it was highlighted that recommendations were received from the subgroup and Cabinet were happy to support them.

Councillor Tinsley noted the recommendation to fly the Palestinian flag and understood from discussions at the Council meeting that there may be an event at the same time. Were those discussions taking place with the lead petitioner to ensure everything was in place. It was clarified that discussions were still taking place with the group to understand their requests and the decision had been taken to fly the flag.

Upon a vote the following was resolved:

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

- 1) Noted the Cabinet response to the petition as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 2) Noted the progress made in discharging those recommendations requiring action, as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 3) Agreed that progress on discharging any outstanding actions arising from its recommendations be reported to OSMB in six months.

56. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair of OSMB and the Governance Manager met with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, the Chair of the Planning Board and planning officers, to discuss the process of planning enforcement. The Chair advised that was assured that the correct planning enforcement process was followed. The service provided statistics to the Planning Board on a six-monthly basis, it was agreed that the statistics would be provided to all elected members, to ensure an awareness and understanding of the planning enforcement process.

Concerning the potential spotlight review on 'Grass Cuttings and Grounds Maintenance', the Governance Manager was in discussions with relevant officers, to arrange the spotlight review.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme for 2024/2025 be approved.

57. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

The Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission, (IPSC), noted that the Repairs and Maintenance Policy had been discussed at the previous IPSC meeting. The Chair welcomed in inclusion of a couple of members of the IPSC to join the proposed review on Grass Cutting / Grounds Maintenance.

The Vice-Chair of IPSC would be chairing a review into the School Road Safety motion. The other two workshops were on housing matters and the Chair would be contacting members to seek additional participants for those. The Chair welcomed suggestions for topics for future scrutiny.

The Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission advised that the Commission had participated in an additional session led by the Head of Service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to capture feedback as part of the consultation process for the development of the new SEND Strategy. The session was well attended, and members provided detailed feedback on the proposed strategy. A further update on the proposed strategy, including a summary of the consultation phase and proposed amendments would be presented to the Commission in December.

The Vice-Chair noted that the Commission met on the 29 October and

were presented with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report and the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report. South Yorkshire Police, the Integrated Care Board and the Rotherham Hospital Foundation Trust were all in attendance and provided a partnership approach to questions raised by members.

The Vice-Chair informed OSMB that the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission would consider an update from Childrens and Young People's Services on all types of absences from education including elective home education, Children missing education, education other than at School, persistent and severe absence and exclusions. Absences from education had been a focus of the Commission previously and the upcoming meeting could identify areas for potential review work.

58. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 NOVEMBER 2024 - 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 November 2024 – 31 January 2025.

The Vice-Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) sought a briefing to provide further information regarding the Our Places Fund.

The Chair suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the IPSC could take this forward for consideration on their work programme.

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

59. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

60. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 16 December 2024

Report Title

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

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the report

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

Report Author(s)

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

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide – all wards

Report Summary

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends to Council to: -

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

List of Appendices Included

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

Background Papers

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

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

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

1. Background

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

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

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

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

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

2. Key Issues

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

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

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

2.4 Capital Investment

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

Improving homes and estates

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

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

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

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

Housing Delivery Programme

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

Digital transformation

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

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

2.5 Revenue Account

Repairs and maintenance

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

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

2.5.3 In 2025/26, the budget includes:

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

Supervision and management

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

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

2.5.6 Key areas of expenditure in 2025/26 include:

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

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

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

Estate caretaking

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

2.6 **Rents, Fees and Charges**

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

Social Rent

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

Table 1 – Options for Social Rent increase

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

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

Affordable Rent

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

Table 2 – Options for Affordable Rent increase

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

Formula Rent

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

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

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

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

Shared Ownership Rent

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

Furnished Tenancy Charges

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

District Heating

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3 – District Heating pricing options

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

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

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

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

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

Garage Rents

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

Table 5 – Impact of Garage Rent Increase

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

Other Fees and Service Charges

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

2.7 Impact on tenants

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

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

Affordability

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

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

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

Supporting tenants with financial pressures

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

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

Private Sector Rents

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

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

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

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

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

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

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

4. **Consultation on proposal**

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

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

5.1 The table below shows the approval timeline:

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

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

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

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

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

Financial Position of the Housing Revenue Account

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

6.4 Based on the recommended 2.7% increase in dwelling rent income and an increase in service charges of 2%, budgeted income of £107.2m is anticipated to be collected in 2025/26 and this is reduced by £104.6m of budgeted expenditure, which represents the net cost of delivering the service.

6.5 As budgeted income is greater than the net cost of delivering the service, there is an overall net income of £2.6m to the service after interest received. This will be used to part-fund the Housing Delivery Programme. A capital contribution of £9.7m is also required to fund the Housing Delivery Programme, so a transfer from the HRA Revenue reserve of £7m is required to balance the HRA.

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

6.6 A copy of the proposed draft detailed HRA budget 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 6.

6.7 The HRA operating balance is forecast to be at a fairly low level for Years 4-7 in the Business Plan and at the minimum sustainable level from year 29 onwards. The minimum balance is £5.3m in Year 1 and uplifted by CPI annually and is the minimum level required to manage financial risk.

6.8 To maintain adequate operating balance levels Housing Delivery projects will need to breakeven. This will support the overarching strategy for the Business Plan to promote growth rather than manage decline. This will be managed via existing capital governance routes.

Capital Borrowing Requirement

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

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

7. Legal Advice and Implications

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

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

8. **Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no immediate human resource implications.

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

9.1 There are no implications for CYPS or Vulnerable Adults.

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

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

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

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

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

12. **Implications for Partners**

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

13. Risks and Mitigation

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

14. Accountable Officers

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

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

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

Report Authors:

Lindsay Wynn, HRA Business Planning Manager 07342718601

Paul Elliott, Head of Housing Income and Support Services

Kath Andrews, Finance Manager (Housing)

01709 255987

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

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

Appendix 1 - HRA Business Plan Operating Account

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2

Weekly social rent payable by number of bedrooms and % increase

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

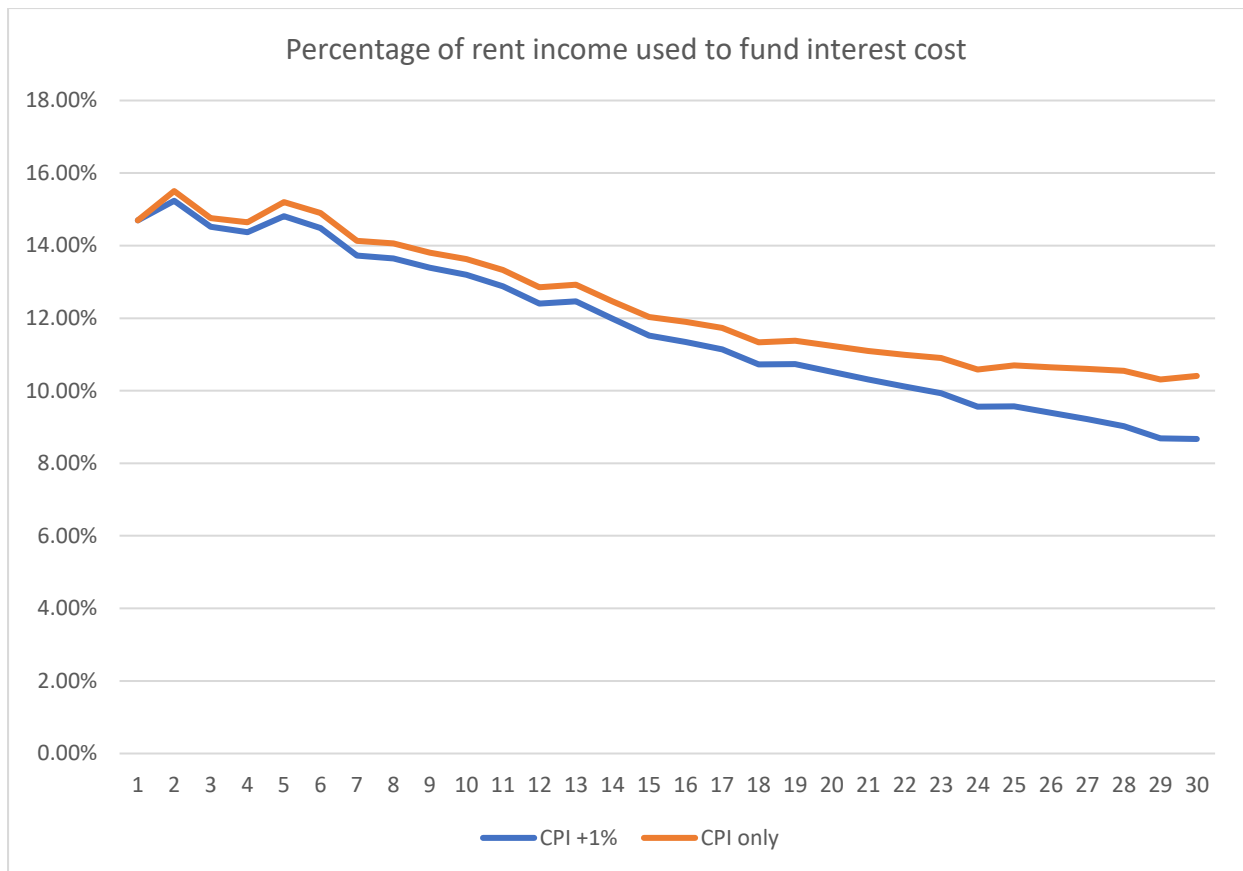
This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3 - HRA Business Planning Assumptions

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 4 – Percentage of rent used to fund interest costs



This page is intentionally left blank

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

APPENDIX 5

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

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

Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget Operating Statement 2025/26

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 7 - Affordability Analysis

AFFORDABILITY RATES FOR PROPOSED INCREASES AGAINST CURRENT AFFORDABILITY

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

Assumptions

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 8 – Support For Tenants with Financial Pressures

Support Service	Description
RMBC Tenancy Support Service	Provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/ electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit.
Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service	Provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/ home insulation etc.
RMBC DHP Fund	Residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
Inclusive Employment and Individual Placement Support Employment Projects	Provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/ heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
RMBC Household Support Fund and energy crisis support	Supporting vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, one-off grants of £250 to help with energy costs.
RMBC Money and Benefits Advice Service	Providing people with practical support to challenge refusal of benefits. The Team assist with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/ tribunals. Money Advice Workers who works with residents to provide affordable debt solutions and budgeting advice. Macmillan benefit service provide access to benefits and grants for residents with cancer, their families and carers.
Foodbanks	Provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis.
Social Supermarket	Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills.
Rotherfed 'Making your money go further' project	This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
Citizens Advice Rotherham	Providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 9.

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

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

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

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• **Key findings**

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

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

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

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

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

• **Actions**

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

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

5. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:		
Name	Job title	Date
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	25/11/24
<p>This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.</p> <p>If this screening relates to a 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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Date screening completed	18 November 2024	
Report title and date	HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26	
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	16 December 2024	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	21 November 2024	

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 9.

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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

This form:

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

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

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

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

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

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Lindsay Wynn	RMBC	HRA Business Planning Manager
Kath Andrews	RMBC	Finance Manager
Mark Edmondson	RMBC	Housing Income Manager

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

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

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

The annual HRA Business Plan, Rent setting and service charges report sets out all proposed income and expenditure for the HRA for the next 30 years as required by HRA Self-financing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £104m per annum.

Demographic information

- The Census population of Rotherham in 2021 is 265,800, an increase of 8,200 (+3.2%) compared with the 2011 Census, with around half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. The remainder live in smaller towns such as Wath, Dinnington and Maltby, and in numerous large villages and rural communities, all of which have their own distinct identities
- The 2021 Census further shows that Rotherham had 113,900 households, compared with 108,300 in the 2011 Census, an increase of 5,600 or 5.2%. In 2021, 17.7% of Rotherham's population were under 15 years, whilst 25.8% were aged 60 or over. The

population of Rotherham aged 60 or over is slightly higher than the England figure of 24.2% and the Yorkshire and Humber figure of 25%.

- Rotherham's young population (under 15) increased from 46,000 in 2011 to 47,100 in 2021 (a 2.4% increase). This increase followed a 6% fall from 48,900 in 2001 to 46,000 in 2011. Whilst the school age population has increased, the number of children aged 0-4 has decreased from 15,738 in 2011 to 14,600 (a 7.3% reduction) which reflects the impact that the pandemic has had on the birth rate.
- Rotherham's older population (over 60) has increased from 61,500 in 2011 to 68,600 in the 2021 Census, an 11.5% rise (51,700 in 2001). Rotherham's population is ageing broadly in line with national trends and the percentage aged over 85 increased from 2.1% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2021.

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

45,259 children attend 117 Rotherham schools.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central Rotherham forms the main area of high deprivation although there are also pockets in Maltby, Rawmarsh, Dinnington, Thurcroft, Wath, Swinton and Aston. The main

forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are low levels of qualification, poor health, high rates of disability and high worklessness, notably long term sickness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<p>4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)</p> <p>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)</p> <p>The HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by earmarking investment in Supervision and management to increase capacity in the housing management teams to deal with the issue of complex tenancies including ASB, financial inclusion and engaging with under-represented groups.</p> <p>The Business plan maintains investment in housing stock which ensures investment in properties to install insulation, new heating systems etc. which tackles fuel poverty agenda.</p> <p>The Business plan responds to the needs of communities for affordable housing through gearing funds towards building circa 1000 new Council Homes by 2027. The tenure, size</p>
--

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

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

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

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

Customers are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community. Support available in Rotherham includes:

- RMBC Tenancy Support Service – Provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/ electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit.
- Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service – Provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/ home insulation etc.
- RMBC DHP Fund- Residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
- Inclusive employment projects – Provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/ heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- RMBC Household Support Fund – Supporting vulnerable people through the provision of food vouchers, one-off grants of £250 to help with energy costs.
- RMBC Money and Benefits Advice Service – Providing people with practical support to challenge refusal of benefits. The Team assist with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/ tribunals. Money Advice Workers who works with residents to provide affordable debt solutions and budgeting advice. Macmillan benefit service provide access to benefits and grants for residents with cancer, their families and carers.

- Foodbanks – Provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis.
- Social Supermarket – Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills.
- Rotherfed ‘Making your money go further’ project – This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
- Citizens Advice Rotherham – Providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt.

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

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

It is not envisaged that the HRA Business Plan, rent setting and service charges report will negatively impact on community relations.

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

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

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

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

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

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

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

*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

6. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.		
Name	Job title	Date
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	25/11/24

7. Publishing	
The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.	
If this Equality Analysis relates to a 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	19/11/24
Report title and date	HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	21/11/24

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 10 – Carbon Impact Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 11 December 2024

Report Title

Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge Recommendations – Health and Wellbeing

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager

Barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) is a national initiative, where children and young people take over an organisation or meeting and assume management / leadership roles. As part of RMBC's commitment to the CCTOC, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) supports Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC), in undertaking a focused piece of work on a topic chosen by the young people.

RYC chose Health and Wellbeing as the theme for this year's takeover challenge, as it was identified as an issue nationally and locally within their manifesto's aims.

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Receive the report and the recommendations outlined in Appendix 1.
2. Agree that the report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for response.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing

Background Papers

Rotherham Youth Cabinet manifesto 2023/24

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, 17 October 2024 – Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 17 October 2024

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge Recommendations – Health and Wellbeing

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) is a national initiative where children and young people take over an organisation or meeting and assume management / leadership roles.
- 1.2 As part of RMBC's commitment to the CCTOC, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) supports Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC) in undertaking a focused piece of work on a topic chosen by the young people.
- 1.3 The CCTOC held on 17 October 2024 was chaired by Alex G, RYC. RYC chose Health and Wellbeing as the theme for this year's takeover challenge, as it was identified as an issue nationally and locally within their manifesto's aims, following consultation with over 4,000 young people.
- 1.4 The theme had been broken down into four sections:
 - Section 1 Vaping
 - Section 2 Mental Health
 - Section 3 Physical Health
 - Section 4 Healthy Eating
- 1.5 During their campaign work around health and wellbeing, the RYC aimed to raise awareness around the risk to health from vaping and smoking and in doing so to look at issues around marketing and promotion of vapes aimed at young people.
- 1.6 Mental health and wellbeing were also important and the RYC were campaigning on improving services for young people with the aim of promoting projects, groups, and sessions which young people could access in order to support their wellbeing.
- 1.7 The RYC had already undertaken the following work in collaboration with:
 - With Me in Mind
 - Podcast
 - Mental Health Awareness Day
 - Support to CaMHS
 - Exam Stress
- 1.8 In relation to vaping, the RYC had concerns around the number of young people who had tried vaping, the number of vapes that were discarded annually, the numbers of young people who purchased their vape via shops or third-party sellers and the potential health risks due to the ingredients used in vapes.

- 1.9 In relation to Mental Health, the RYC noted the number of children and young people who were being referred to mental health services in Rotherham, with the figure rising each year. There were concerns regarding schools' abilities to meet the needs of young people with mental health problems along with the lack of youth services available. If left untreated, it was felt this could result in a higher prevalence of anxiety, depression and other mental health challenges.
- 1.10 In relation to Physical Health, the RYC noted that being physically active could lead to a healthier and happier life and could reduce the risk of major illnesses. The health benefits for children and young people included opportunities for socialising, increased concentration, improving academic scores, building stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles, along with improving self-esteem, lowering stress and improving mental health.
- 1.11 In relation to Healthy Eating, the RYC noted that eating a healthy balanced diet was an important part of maintaining good health. They raised concerns that around 28% of children aged 2-15 were overweight or obese and that this was occurring at earlier ages and children were staying obese for longer. This could lead to serious implications for the physical and mental health of a child and could following on into adulthood.
- 1.12 The RYC wanted to support the Government's ambition to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 and reduce the health inequalities that persist.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Appendix 1 sets out the recommendations following the CCTOC held on 17 October 2024.
- 2.2 A series of questions were put by members of the RYC to Council officers covering a range of topics associated with Health and Wellbeing. The questions are set out below:

Section 1 – Vaping:

1. What are you doing about reducing vaping adverts in public spacing?
2. What are you doing about vape wastage? Have you considered vape recycling?
3. What is the Multi-agency Tobacco Control Steering Group doing to try and reduce vaping among young people – such as identifying sources of vapes from young people?
4. Do you believe you are doing enough to discourage young people from vaping within school grounds? What else could you do?

Section 2 – Mental Health:

5. Evidence is suggesting that a lack of a youth offer is impacting on young people's mental health, what is the council doing about spaces for young people in Rotherham?

6. In the Director of Public Health Report for Rotherham, 2023, it was noticed that there was a feeling of continued anxiety among certain cohorts of young people. What are you doing to ensure that young people feel confident to interact normally and achieve full integration with society?
7. Lots of young people in Rotherham face stress as a result of school. How are you planning to work with schools to ensure there is enough effective support for young people?
8. We are concerned about the time it takes to diagnose neurodiverse young people. How can RMBC and RDaSH support the increase of earlier diagnosis of young people?

Section 3 – Physical Activity:

9. Certain areas of Rotherham have been found to be unhealthier and unhappier than their peers in other areas – what is the council doing to target them?
10. Can we work with you to create an activity walk similar to that found in Grenoside woods?
11. What are you doing to make physical activities more accessible and attractive to young people in Rotherham?

Section 4 – Healthy Eating:

12. What influence do you have over the meals provided within schools?
13. What can Rotherham Council do about making school food healthier?
14. We are aware of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) initiative during school holidays, how do you ensure that meals offered to young people under this scheme are healthy?
15. How are you promoting healthy eating to young people in Rotherham?

2.3 In light of the responses to the questions provided by the Council Officers the RYC developed the recommendations contained in Appendix 1. These recommendations aimed to:

- Identify the sources where vapes could be purchased by young people.
- Reduce the amount of vaping marketing on view.
- Work with schools to highlight the effects of vaping.
- Increase the provision of dedicated spaces for young people.
- Enhance early detection and diagnoses of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- Work with schools to increase extracurricular clubs
- Increase the maintenance and provision of equipment within parks and create activity-based walks.
- Ensure healthy food options were available in schools.
- Create a marketing campaign directed toward teenagers to promote healthy eating.
- Organise a visit to the allotments for members of RYC in relation to healthy eating.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's recommendation was that the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 are supported.

3.2 That Cabinet are asked to respond to the recommendations set out in Appendix 1.

The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules require the Cabinet to consider and respond to recommendations made by scrutiny within two months.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The recommendations set out in Appendix 1 have been circulated to Council Officers within Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Regeneration and Environment and Children and Young People's Services for their information, however, they were present during the meeting.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The report will be presented to Cabinet to request a formal response on the recommendations in January 2025.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 Consideration should be given to the procurement and financial implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 Consideration should be given to the legal implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 Consideration should be given to the Human Resources advice and implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Consideration should be given to any implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Members have had regard to equalities and human rights implications when developing the recommendations.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Consideration should be given to the implications for CO₂ Emissions and climate change arising from the report's recommendations as part of the Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Consideration should be given to the implications for partners as part of the Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Members have regard to the risks and mitigation factors associated with CCTOC topic of Health and Wellbeing and the recommendations had been made accordingly.

Accountable Officer(s)

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

Report Author:

*Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services Emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk
Barbel Gale, Governance Manager Barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk*

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

**Recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge –
Health and Wellbeing (17 October 2024)**

Recommendations	
Section 1 – Vaping:	
1.	That consideration was given to several young people from the Youth Cabinet to support a mystery shop in vape shops to identify sources, where possible.
2.	That the Council identified and considered any potential opportunities to reduce vaping adverts on shopfronts, including areas where the Council does not have direct control, where possible.
3.	That the Council sought to encourage all secondary schools to work together, to ensure a synchronised response to the vaping.
Section 2 – Mental Health:	
4.	That the Council sought to encourage all schools in the borough to ensure that young people feel listened to within the schools, and that schools were committed to support.
5.	That consideration was given to how the provision of a dedicated youth space for young people could be achieved, for example, a development of a space similar to the Barnsley Youth Zone.
6.	That the Council worked with its partners to enhance early detection and diagnoses of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the potential need for an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to assist with the reduction of potential waiting times for the young person to access the EHCP provisions.
Section 3 – Physical Activity:	
7.	That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough that they would consider increasing extracurricular clubs, including the range of sports.
8.	That the Council aimed to ensure that all parks within the borough were kept in good condition and safe.
9.	That consideration be given to providing exercise equipment to all parks in the borough, where possible and that activity-based walks were considered at popular locations, in conjunction with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet.
Section 4 – Healthy Eating:	
10.	That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough, that they ensured that healthy food options were available to all young people.

Appendix 1

Recommendations	
11.	That schools in the borough to give consideration to the young inspectors completing an inspection of school lunches and lunches provided as part of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, where possible.
12.	That the Council and its partners gave consideration to producing a teenage-specific campaign to support healthy eating.
13.	That a site visit to the allotments be arranged for members of the Youth Cabinet

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</p> <p>Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"</p> <p>Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update) - Pre-decision Temporary Accommodation Policy - Pre-decision Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy - Pre-decision</p>
<p>11-Dec-24</p>	<p>Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25 - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
<p>14-Jan-25</p>	<p>Mid Year Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Report - Poss. Pre-decision Home to School Transport Budget pressures / mitigations Update (Moved from December) Leader Q&A - to be scheduled after Council plan on the agenda.</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 Council Plan 2025 - 2028 & New Year Ahead Delivery Plan</p>
<p>08-Apr-25</p>	

07-May-25	
-----------	--

**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?CId=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 Infrastructure Levy
TBC	Leader of the Council - General Q&A
TBC	Major Capital Projects (delays, project scaling back)
Apr-26	Future Rothercare Model

This page is intentionally left blank

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
1 December 2024 – 28 February 2025

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 2022/23 are:

20 June 2022	19 September 2022	21 November 2022	23 January 2023	20 March 2023	15 May 2023
11 July 2022	17 October 2022	19 December 2022	13 February 2023	24 April 2023	

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 Sarah Allen	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working
Councillor Saghir Alam	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance
Councillor Dominic Beck	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Councillor Amy Brookes	Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Victoria Cusworth	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Local Economy
Councillor David Roche	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor David Sheppard	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion

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 16 DECEMBER 2024								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2025-26	October 2024	To recommend to Council approval of 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
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Community Recovery Fund	November 2024	To approve the allocations of the Government Grant Funding.	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
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Planning at Newman School	November 2024	To approve capital investment at Newman School to provide sufficiency of accommodation and contribute towards the improved condition of the school site.	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								
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
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

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
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
Indicative Highway Repair Programme 2024/25 - Additional Schemes	November 2024	To approve the proposed additional roads to be added to the Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
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
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
NON KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 16 DECEMBER 2024								
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								
Building Compliance Policies	November 2024	To approve the updated Compliance Policies for Fire and Legionella in relation to Council Buildings.	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
New Applications for Business Rates Relief for Arc Church	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

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 20 JANUARY 2025								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Re-commissioning of Rotherham's Domestic Abuse Refuge	December 2024	To re-commission and undertake a procurement exercise for Rotherham's Domestic Abuse Refuge.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Cabinet Member and relevant Members.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
November 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report	November 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
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								
Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document	November 2024	To approve the draft Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation and to give authority to explore a collaborative working agreement.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Officers and Cabinet Member.	Report and appendices	Greasbrough; Rawmarsh West; Rotherham West	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

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
Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Collections Policy Renewal	December 2024	To adopt the proposed policy for the management of Archives and Local Studies Collections and delegate future alterations and updates to the Policy to the Assistant Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member, in line with other collections management policies.	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

NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 JANUARY 2025

ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update	November 2024	To update on Housing Service delivery against the social housing regulations.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
---	---------------	---	----------------------------	--	-----------------------	-----------	------	--

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update	November 2024	Report on progress against Council Plan performance and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2024-25.	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
Outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board relating to the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge - Health and Wellbeing	November 2024	To receive the report and note the recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing.	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	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

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 10 FEBRUARY OR LATER

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
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Update (Safety Valve)	December 2024	To provide the annual update on SEND sufficiency (Safety Valve).	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
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy & Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy	December 2024	To approve the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy & Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy.	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								
Budget and Council Tax Report 2025-26	December 2024	That Cabinet recommend to Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the Budget and Financial Strategy for 2025/26. To approve the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27. To approve the Reserves Strategy. To approve the proposed increase in Council Tax. To approve the Council's updated Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27.	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
December 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report	December 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
Business Rates Discretionary Relief Renewals in 2025/26	December 2024	To consider the recommendation for the annual renewal applications 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
Property Transactions	December 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

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
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Climate Emergency Annual Report	December 2024	Approve the Climate Change Action Plan noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in this report.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant officers, Cabinet Member and relevant Ward Members.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
Highway Adoptions Procedure (Section 38 Highways Act 1980)	December 2024	To publish the procedure and guidance documents to assist developers wishing to enter the Section 38 process. Also to align fees and charges with our neighbouring local authorities.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant officers and Cabinet Member.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy	December 2024	To approve the Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	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 10 FEBRUARY 2025 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
Housing Delivery Programme Report 2024-25 – Update	December 2024	To provide an update on the Housing Delivery Programme 2024/25 in accordance with the decision taken at July Cabinet.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Cabinet Member.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
New Application for Business Rates Relief	December 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

**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.

This page is intentionally left blank