

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 22 March 2021

Report Title

The Year Ahead Plan – progress report

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

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Year Ahead Plan, approved by Cabinet on 21 September 2020, is the Council's plan for operating in and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the plan is to support residents, communities and businesses through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, helping to build resilience whilst also continuing to drive our ambitious plans for Rotherham.

The plan sets out the headline themes and corresponding outcomes and key actions for September 2020 through to May 2021.

Formal quarterly progress reports are presented in public at Cabinet meetings, with an opportunity for Scrutiny consideration if required. The first public report was presented to Cabinet on 21 December.

This is the second quarterly progress report to Cabinet, focusing on the progress made since September 2020.

Recommendations

1. To note the progress made with the Year Ahead activities.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Year Ahead Plan milestone tracker

Appendix 2 - Case studies

Appendix 3 - Timeline

Appendix 4 – Initially Equality Screening Assessment

Background Papers

The Year Ahead Plan – report to Cabinet on 21 September 2020

The Year Ahead Plan progress report to Cabinet on 21 December 2020

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Yes – Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 17 March 2021

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

The Year Ahead Plan – progress update March 2021

The Year Ahead Plan – progress report

1. Background

1.1 The Year Ahead Plan is the Council's plan for operating in and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the plan is to support residents, communities and businesses through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, helping to build resilience whilst also continuing to drive our ambitious plans for Rotherham. It sets out the headline themes and corresponding outcomes and key actions for September 2020 through to May 2021.

1.2 The key aims of the Year Ahead Plan are to continue to:

- Work with our residents and stakeholders, supporting them and adapting with them to meet current needs in light of the pandemic
- Manage the ongoing effects of the pandemic, including the local outbreak control plan
- Drive our ambitious plans for the borough wherever possible
- Develop and embed new ways of working.

1.3 The Year Ahead Plan replaces the Council Plan for 2020/21 and was approved by Cabinet on 21 September 2020.

1.4 The plan is framed around 5 themes:

- Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Better Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Recovery
- New Ways of Working
- Hope and Confidence in Rotherham.

The plan also includes the following cross-cutting strands, which are integral to each theme:

- Equalities and Social Justice
- Climate Impact.

1.5 In delivering against these themes, the plan outlines a total of 77 actions.

1.6 Formal quarterly progress reports are presented in public at Cabinet meetings, with an opportunity for Scrutiny consideration if required.

1.7 The first public report was presented to Cabinet on 21 December. The report stated that: 18% (14) of the activities had been completed, 70% (54) were on track, 4% (3) had been delayed, 0% (0) were off-track and 8% (6) were not scheduled to start.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Progress update

2.2 This is the second quarterly progress report to Cabinet, focusing on the progress made since September 2020. The Year Ahead Plan milestone tracker (Appendix 1) outlines progress against all the actions within the Year Ahead Plan. Each action has been rated as follows:

Action fully complete
Action started and on track to be delivered by the deadline originally set
Action has some risk/delay to delivery or is behind the original schedule – deadline may not be met
Action will not be met within the original timeframe or the deadline has been missed
Action not yet scheduled to start and status is not relevant

2.3 As of 25th February:

- 26% (20) of the activities outlined within the Year Ahead Plan have been completed to date
- 54% (41) are on track
- 16% (12) are behind schedule
- 4% (3) are off track.

In addition to the above, there is a specific action in the plan to ensure that 'Initiatives and activities across all themes are on track.'

2.4 A small number of activities within the plan have been delayed. This has been in the context of lockdown regulations in November and further announcements by national government regarding the COVID-19 Winter Plan. Similarly, it is difficult to determine when large regeneration schemes will complete and therefore some of these may also be delayed.

2.5 Thriving Neighbourhoods

2.6 The Thriving Neighbourhoods theme is focused on building and supporting community resilience. This includes working with local people and the voluntary and community sector to deliver the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and provide effective support to those affected by COVID-19, particularly the most vulnerable residents.

2.7 Within this theme, the Council is focused on the following outcomes:

- Putting communities at the heart of everything we do
- Democratic arrangements are open, transparent and accountable
- Vulnerable residents affected by COVID-19 are supported by the Council
- Rotherham residents, VCS organisations and businesses use their skills and assets to help others.

Key areas of progress to deliver on these outcomes are outlined below.

- 2.8 Building on the Rotherham Heroes programme, volunteer co-ordinators for the north, south and central area have been recruited and commenced in post in December 2020. They will evaluate and develop the Rotherham Heroes programme, work with partners to develop and support new volunteering opportunities and implement a Council staff volunteering programme. Additionally, the Staff Volunteering Policy and the Valuing Volunteers Guidance are both nearing completion, whilst the new service level agreement for voluntary and community sector infrastructure support is on track to go live from April 2021.
- 2.9 Neighbourhood working remains crucial in this time of national crisis. Streetpride zonal managers have now attended all ward briefings over the last three months, in which they worked with the Neighbourhoods Team and ward members to discuss and agree local priorities and the deployment of resources, identifying locations or activities where greater focus may be required. Information from these sessions is now being consolidated to develop a programme of implementation for the agreed priorities and actions, allowing resources to be better targeted according to where they are needed in each ward.
- 2.10 Ward budgets and Ward Housing Hub budgets were agreed in April 2020 and are currently being allocated to projects and activities that address ward priorities. Ward budgets have now been fully committed (bar some residual amounts), with a total of £310,310 either spent or committed. In relation to Housing Hub budgets, at 31 December, £182,400 of projects had been identified and were being progressed through approvals and delivery processes, with £21,300 of funding left to be allocated and spent before 31 March.
- 2.11 The Library Strategy for 2021-26 was approved by Council in November. Key aspects of this strategy include improvements to library buildings in neighbourhoods, making libraries more accessible, and increasing community involvement in the delivery of library services. The capital programme of works to improve libraries is well underway and the capital IT programme for all libraries was completed in December 2020.
- 2.12 Youth work has continued throughout the borough during the pandemic, with support provided in line with government restrictions and following a risk-assessed approach. Up to December 2020, 226 group sessions (some of

which have been virtual) had been delivered with 965 total attendees, and 356 young people have received direct face to face support either in their home, through socially distanced walks or via sessions at school. Additionally, 4,844 virtual sessions have taken place with young people, and 155 young people have been directly engaged following concerns that school closures and disruption may lead to them not being in education, employment or training. At the start of the summer holidays, small, targeted group work was also introduced across three centres in Rotherham, with strict risk assessments, limited numbers and by appointment only. This approach continues under the lockdown restrictions implemented in January 2021.

- 2.13 Using additional investment, 10 Operation Keepsafe interventions have also been delivered to date in direct response to issues identified across Rotherham, including anti-social behaviour and Covid restrictions compliance.
- 2.14 Details of the Member Development Programme for 2021/22 are in the process of being agreed and finalised following consultation with the Deputy Leader. The content of the programme will focus on ensuring councillors have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles and provide effective community leadership. This was reviewed and approved by the Member and Democratic Panel in late January, together with the new Member Induction Programme, which is set to begin following local elections in May.
- 2.15 21 separate web pages for each of Rotherham's wards have now been developed and went live on 7 December 2020. These are being promoted in the relevant neighbourhood e-bulletins and are being updated weekly with the latest local news. Work will continue to enhance these pages.
- 2.16 As part of supporting vulnerable residents across Rotherham, government hardship funding continues to be utilised to increase crisis resources and provide food and other essentials to vulnerable residents. The components of the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies are established and up and running as planned, including providing non-food stock to supplement crisis food, small grants to VCS organisations, school uniforms, household goods and enhanced advice services. The Covid Winter Grant has been utilised to deliver Christmas food and food vouchers in lieu of free school meals (including over the winter holidays), with referrals also being taken for support for utility costs and details of delivering support for school uniforms being finalised.
- 2.17 The new service level agreement for the provision of advice services is on track and due to commence in April 2021, with the co-design completed in January 2021 and approval expected in March. Additionally, a report was presented to Cabinet in December to agree the process to recommission domestic abuse support services.

2.18 One action within the Thriving Neighbourhoods Theme, 'commission new services to prevent financial exploitation', is rated as off track. This is due to the delivery partner, West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team, being unable to go ahead until the autumn.

2.19 **Better health and wellbeing**

2.20 The better health and wellbeing theme is about taking steps to address the health impacts of the pandemic, including managing any future outbreaks, assessing the effect the pandemic has had on health inequalities and building on positive behavioural changes such as increased physical activity.

2.21 Within this theme, the Council is focussed on the following outcomes:

- Local incidents and outbreaks are managed effectively
- Health inequalities are understood and responded to
- Vulnerable adults are protected and adult social care is able to adapt to the changing conditions
- Children and young people are protected, safeguarded and able to achieve their potential
- Active travel is accessible, and local people reap the associated health and environmental benefits.

Key areas of progress to deliver on these outcomes are outlined below.

2.22 The Rotherham 7-day infection rate (all ages) was 183.1 per 100,000 (for 7 days to 20 Feb) compared with the England rate of 118.3 per 100,000. Work is taking place to target households in parts of the borough where deprivation and infection rates are higher.

2.23 Delivery of the Communications Strategy is integral to the work around outbreak control. The core message across communications is now 'Stay at Home' in line with national lockdown. Social media activity has seen positive engagement from audiences. This has included sharing local people's lived experiences of COVID-19 through the 'COVID stories' series. The plan is to now expand the COVID stories series to include vaccination stories.

2.24 Ensuring communications are inclusive and reach all audiences has been a key priority. The Council has recently been awarded some funding to continue work within the community, including work with the digitally excluded and BAME communities. This will be used to repeat a universal mailout, with the intention of reaching all audiences, including those who are digitally excluded. A toolkit of key messages has been provided as a resource for communities and translated into six languages. This includes stay at home messaging. Further to this, work is taking place across communities to produce video content that tells the stories of real residents and those who are on the front line. The videos will help to show the diversity of local areas and promote the message of community and togetherness.

2.25 A new PCR local testing site at Herringthorpe Stadium opened on 10

February to replace the Forge Island site. The Midland Road old bus depot site continues to operate and the local testing sites at Dinnington and Maltby, which opened in November, have improved geographical accessibility to testing. All testing site facilities have been winter-proofed and have been included in gritting routes.

- 2.26 The roll-out of the DPH lateral flow tests (a rapid testing programme for asymptomatic frontline workers) commenced in January 2021 and is currently operating from Riverside House Café. The use of lateral flow tests has also been implemented in care homes, to enhance existing COVID-safe visiting policies and practice. Work continues to develop the local offer with regards to satellite asymptomatic testing sites, working with a number of different settings to offer them workplace-based testing.
- 2.27 The Council is playing a proactive role in support of the NHS in the roll-out of vaccinations. The Council's is using existing channels to communicate key messages, particularly to groups that are harder to reach. In Rotherham, the target to vaccinate 56,000 people during the initial 8-week period was exceeded, with over 60,000 vaccinated and over 90% coverage of initial priority groups. Over 11,500 health and care staff have also been vaccinated (as at 11 February). Second dose vaccinations are scheduled to begin from 9 March.
- 2.28 All actions have now been delivered against Rotherham's Winter Plan. Through the plan, Rotherham place has commissioned 11 nursing beds and 15 residential care beds as designated settings for COVID-positive patients, alongside additional nursing care home capacity to help meet demand over the winter. A role has also been created and recruited to as part of the discharge guidance to co-ordinate discharges from the acute setting.
- 2.29 The Council continues to work closely with education providers to empower all children to fulfil their potential. As part of the national lockdown announced in January, schools were ordered to close to most students, but vulnerable groups and children with education, health and care plans continue to have access to education. The Council is working closely with school leaders to look at ways of minimising the impact of COVID-19 on attainment, and daily testing has been available for secondary schools since January.
- 2.30 Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers for the autumn term were higher than in a typical year, with the primary reason given by those opting for EHE being fears around COVID-19 and contraction of the virus in schools. The EHE multi-agency governance group has remained a robust mechanism to make sure a strong level of support is available for students/families who have elected to home educate. Work has taken place with Ofsted to look at opportunities for development across this area.
- 2.31 The findings of the second survey on children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing have now been shared with schools, as well as across wider partnership bodies. The results from the October 2020 survey compared to June 2020 show that there has been:

- A 7% increase in young people feeling anxious
- An 11% increase in young people feeling stressed
- A decline in young people feeling positive and managing problems well
- An increase in young people feeling confused, uncertain and sad.

Schools have confirmed that they have found it useful to have this information and that it has enabled them to put in targeted support arrangements through the curriculum and pastoral offer. At a system level, resources are being provided to the school workforce to support children and young people with their health and wellbeing. A multi-agency group is developing a wider programme of Continued Professional Development for the school workforce to support whole-school approaches to emotional wellbeing and mental health. Additionally, mental health support teams are providing a valuable source of support to pilot schools and Rotherham will bid for future funding to roll out the Mental Health Trailblazer when the next opportunity is announced. Following this period of continued national lockdown when schools are only open to a limited number of children, it is recommended that a third survey is repeated in the next half term to monitor the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

- 2.32 The implementation of the LAC (Looked After Children) Sufficiency Strategy and development of local residential provision continues to progress. Two new properties have been purchased and capital works will be completed in February 2021. The next two-bedroomed residential home is scheduled to be registered by Ofsted in February and a young person has been identified to move into the home. Emergency accommodation will be registered pending the successful recruitment of a registered manager and the staffing establishment.
- 2.33 Work is ongoing to enable active travel and improve air quality in Rotherham. A cycling strategy is currently in development and will go out to consultation following approval by Cabinet in March. In addition, the outline business case for phase 1 of the Sheffield Road cycleway has been approved by the Sheffield City Region (SCR). The Council has also submitted a business case relating to the Moor Road, Manvers cycleway, which is awaiting approval.
- 2.34 Five of the actions within the Better Health and Wellbeing theme are rated as 'behind schedule' because they are at risk of not being delivered within the original timescales. The reasons include the recruitment of staff and partner delays. One action is also 'off track' due to Herringthorpe Stadium being used as a test centre.
- 2.35 **Economic recovery**
- 2.36 Within this theme, the Council is taking action to provide immediate help to local people and businesses affected by the pandemic, whilst maintaining progress on longer-term priority regeneration schemes. This combined focus on recovery and renewal is critical and the Council is working with local partners, SCR and national government to ensure Rotherham gets the

investment it needs to support and build its economy for the future.

2.37 The theme is focussed on the following outcomes:

- The Rotherham economy can adapt and start to recover from the pandemic
- The vision for the regeneration of the borough rejuvenates communities and businesses
- Social value is maximised to create more local jobs, apprenticeships and benefits in communities.

Progress updates are set out below.

2.38 Support to local businesses affected by the pandemic continues. Under the new Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRS) schemes, over 1,500 businesses have been supported so far, with a total value of £17.8m. Further support has also been provided via SCR, where discussions regarding recovery programmes and projects are ongoing.

2.39 To help support local people whose jobs have been affected, officers have been in discussion with the government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to secure a commitment for DWP work coaches to be based in local libraries. Due to COVID restrictions, work coaches are currently being advised to work from home, with face to face appointments only available in job centres for vulnerable customers.

2.40 On 25 January, following Cabinet approval, the Council launched a local scheme offering financial assistance to people who fall outside the Government's national criteria for self-isolation support payments. The intention is that anyone who needs to self-isolate and who would otherwise lose income as a result, is entitled to cash support.

2.41 Major regeneration schemes are continuing, with remediation work having been completed at all three sites in the town centre housing development programme. Flood mitigating retaining structures have been completed at Westgate Riverside (72 homes) and construction has reached first floor level at Wellgate Place (54 homes).

2.42 On the Forge Island site, essential infrastructure work to pave the way for the new development remains on track. The Arc Cinema has now signed a long-term lease with national urban regenerator, Muse Developments, to operate the cinema. Construction work is expected to begin later in 2021.

2.43 The Towns Fund bid has been submitted to government, seeking investment of £35 million, and funding of £12.6 million has been offered from the Future High Streets Fund, with the Council submitting further details at the end of January and now awaiting a response from Government. Demolition work is underway at the Primark site, which is to be transformed into a pocket park as part of the Towns Fund accelerator programme. In addition, public realm schemes across the town centre are underway, with broadband infrastructure works also taking place on College Street as part of the full fibre broadband

network.

- 2.44 Finally, good progress has been made on social value. A report to Cabinet in February outlined the next steps in responding to recommendations made by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, including further work on community wealth building and anchor networks. The report also set out the various social value commitments secured through the Council's procurement activity.
- 2.45 Four of the actions within the Economic Recovery theme are rated as 'behind schedule' because they are at risk of not being delivered within the original timescales. The reasons include utility delays and the national lockdown restrictions currently in place. One action is also 'off track' due to the need to seek additional funding.
- 2.46 **New ways of working**
- 2.47 In response to the pandemic, the Council rapidly adapted and embraced new ways of working and continues to develop new digital processes. This theme will see further steps taken to support staff and improve outcomes for local residents; utilising technology, acting on feedback and continuing to evolve to meet current and future challenges.
- 2.48 Within this theme, the Council is focussed on the following outcomes:
- High quality customer services which are efficient and accessible
 - Staff are supported to work flexibly, building on recent experiences of home working
 - An empowered and agile workforce, feeling valued and embracing new ways of working.

Progress updates are set out below.

- 2.49 New online processes have been developed, which will make it easier for customers and businesses to contact the Council to get the help they need during the pandemic.
- 2.50 Customers are now able to request housing repairs and pay for a bulky waste collection online and work is underway to enhance these processes further. Housing Rent Balance Online was also launched in November, allowing customers to check their rent balance online. Since the online service was launched, 5,916 customers have used the new 'check your rent balance' feature (up to end January). In addition, the digital process to support garden waste collection went live in December 2020. Links to the new online services are provided below:
- [Housing repairs](#)
 - [Bulky waste](#)
 - [Housing rent balance](#)
- 2.51 Between October and December 2020, the Council website was visited

672,500 times by 360,000 customers and there were 53,200 online transactions. This is a considerable increase from October–December 2019, where the website was visited 538,500 times by 287,000 customers. The increase demonstrates how the Council is embracing new ways of working.

2.52 Online videos have been used since the start of the pandemic to communicate key messages and provide customers with online self-help. To date, 24 videos have been added to the Council's ['You Tube'](#) channel. There have been 9,500 views of the videos added since March 2020, which includes 392 views of the [taxi vehicle application](#) process and over 1,000 views of housing repair self-help. In addition, various video tutorials have been created for internal and partner audiences, for example Member E-Casework, Skills Academy for adult care staff and Lateral Flow Testing instructions.

2.53 Due to changes in the national position and a third lockdown, the Council continues to operate homeworking arrangements to ensure services are delivered in a COVID-safe way. It is not anticipated that there will be any change to working arrangements until the end of May 2021 at the earliest, and any changes will be in line with national guidance.

2.54 A new wellbeing programme was agreed in November 2021 and will run until June 2021. The programme sets out the wellbeing support and initiatives that are available for all staff. The wellbeing initiatives have been developed based on the feedback from the July staff wellbeing survey and will continue to evolve taking into account the feedback from future surveys and staff engagement activities.

Ten wellbeing activities took place over December and January; the feedback received has been positive. A number of sessions are also planned for February and beyond based on the feedback from staff via the wellbeing 'pulse' survey.

A second staff wellbeing survey was conducted in December 2020 and a report outlining the results and actions was provided to the Strategic Leadership Team in January. Directorate level reports have been shared with strategic directors, who will now drive forward action based on the results.

2.55 To celebrate the outstanding achievements during 2020, the first virtual 'Big Hearts, Big Changes' awards were celebrated on 15 December via Microsoft Teams. The awards are a way of showing the Council's appreciation for the hard work employees do every day and an opportunity to say a big thank you to well deserving colleagues. Further details are available in the case study attached (see Appendix 2).

2.56 Two of the actions within the New Ways of Working theme are rated as 'behind schedule' due to the national lockdown restrictions.

2.57 **Hope and confidence in Rotherham**

2.58 Through this theme, the Council aims to foster a sense of optimism within

Rotherham. This will be achieved by delivering on the commitments set out across the themes in this plan, by engaging with local people and seeking feedback, by keeping our streets and public places clean and welcoming, and by providing a range of activities that aim to inspire joy and hope.

2.59 Within this theme, the Council is focussed on the following outcomes:

- People trust the Council to deliver on its commitments
- Communication messages are clear along with opportunities to engage and provide feedback
- Local people feel more connected to their community by engaging in positive activities: getting active, creative and outdoors more often
- Places are clean, welcoming and well-maintained.

Key areas of progress to deliver on these outcomes are outlined below.

2.60 A communications strategy was put in place at the start of the COVID-19 crisis. Its aim is to provide a reliable source of information to all audiences, including residents, businesses, elected members, staff and all partners. This has been achieved by delivering coordinated, frequent and clear public messaging in weekly electronic briefings, COVID-19 specific web pages, printed leaflets for members and households, and by targeting specific groups. As a result of the efforts to improve communications, the following progress has been made:

- 45% increase in email subscriptions (93,522 subscribers compared to 64,554 for the same period last year).
- Content continues to be posted online using the hashtag [#HopeandConfidence](#) linked back to the Year Ahead Plan and promoting Rotherham as a place. Recent examples have included the Rosis Virtual Choir (extremely popular and uplifting content), staff involvement in Rotherham Toy Appeal, Rotherham Together events and the proposed new Social Emotional and Mental Health School at Dinnington Campus.
- Short videos produced for social media channels (as mentioned in paragraph 2.52 above) focussed on the Covid response and positive messaging. Other examples include 'thank the cleaner' day and coverage around the Town Centre Masterplan. There is also a plan in place for future videos.

2.61 The Rotherham Together programme is a new creative programme of events, activities and workshops built around the three core themes of Joy, Gratitude and Hope. The programme was launched on 4 September to coincide with what would have been Rotherham Show, delivering the Wildflower Park land art installation at Clifton Park, a demonstration of thanks in the town centre and the Life in Lockdown exhibition at the museum. Around 120,000 people have engaged in over 30 online activities and targeted events to date, delivered by Culture, Sport and Tourism. These figures do not include any activities or events delivered by partners. Further examples of activity are included in the case studies (see Appendix 2).

- 2.62 With libraries closed due to lockdown restrictions, the 'order and collect' service was resumed with the appropriate risk assessments in place, except for Kiveton Park and Mowbray Gardens which are under refurbishment. By offering this limited service, customers can browse the online catalogue and contact their local library to reserve a book of their choice.
- 2.63 Upon reopening in September, Clifton Park Museum offered new temporary exhibition spaces, four new exhibitions, refurbished café and retail space and a new events programme. The museum then had to close again as part of the national lockdown, however the café currently remains in operation as a takeaway service.
- 2.64 Rotherham Music is continuing to work with schools to allow options for children and young people to continue lessons whilst managing risks.
- 2.65 £220k of grant funding has been secured from the Cultural Recovery Fund to enable Rotherham Music and the Civic Theatre to test new ways of working, with a view to ensuring high quality, safe and financially sustainable operations in the future. The funding will be used to cover staffing costs during periods of closure and to enable new models to be developed in response to the pandemic.
- 2.66 Funding has been identified to create a new memorial garden at Thrybergh Country Park and the initial concept designs have been developed ahead of consultation with a range of stakeholders. The memorial garden will be a dedicated place for people to pay their respects to those who have passed, to remember the key workers, front line staff, volunteers and emergency services who worked through the pandemic.
- 2.67 Voluntary Action Rotherham produced a video which was released on social media on 4 December. The video shares examples of volunteers and voluntary organisations doing positive things in the community, such as supporting people during lockdown. The video can be viewed on [YouTube](#).
- 2.68 Progress is underway to carry out a range of environmental improvements around the borough. Progress includes:
- The highway repair schemes first year programme of £6m investment is on course to be fully delivered in 2020/21, including repairs to 263 roads with a total of 79.74km of planned resurfacing. In November 2020, Internal Audit published the findings from a highways audit report regarding the 2020 roads programme, which provided assurance that controls are operating effectively.
 - Programme developed for delivery of gateway cleansing - areas identified as requiring immediate attention are being addressed and delivery is ongoing.
 - Three zonal teams established in October have been completing the removal of local weed growth.
 - Litter bin programme has reached the tender stage and the contract is scheduled to be awarded in February.

- Active use of social media to publicise successes around fly tipping and enviro crime, both enforcement and prevention. Examples can be found within Facebook posts on 12 June, 14 May and 24 April via the following link <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Rotherhamcommunitysafety/posts/>.
- New campaign planned to launch #getridreyt to raise awareness of waste responsibilities and duty of care offences.
- Seven-day night-time anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance response service launched in March 2020 and is being promoted through social media. Future communications are being informed by service demand.
- Household waste sites open seven days a week since 1 November 2020.
- Street cleaning service commenced weekend working arrangements from Saturday 4 October 2020.

2.69 One action within the Hope and Confidence theme is rated as ‘behind schedule’ due to the current national lockdown and capacity issues.

2.70 **Cross-cutting strands**

2.71 The Year Ahead Plan also includes the following cross-cutting strands which are integral to all themes:

- Equalities and Social Justice
- Climate Impact.

2.72 In delivery of the equalities and social justice strand, Cabinet approved the proposal to undertake an equalities review at its meeting in November 2020, setting out the goal of attaining “Achieving” accreditation by the end of 2021 and “Excellent” by the end of 2022 under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

2.73 Work is underway to assess and prioritise the actions that are required to move to “Achieving” accreditation. This involves recognising that the Council is well advanced in many areas of equalities and to ensure that work is prioritised where development is needed. The four key lines of enquiry within the Equality Framework for Local Government include:

- Understanding and working with your communities.
- Leadership and organisational commitment.
- Responsive services and customer care.
- Diverse and engaged workforce.

2.74 Engagement with directorates across the Council and with external organisations will now progress at all appropriate levels, embedding ownership of the review work and making equalities everyone’s business.

2.75 In addition, work has begun to update the carbon reduction action plan. Climate champions will be working across the Council to identify and deliver activities to contribute to the Council’s carbon reduction targets. A report is

due to be presented to Cabinet on 22 March, outlining further details and the progress made.

2.76 **Measuring our impact**

2.77 Continuing to measure impact against the Year Ahead Plan will be crucial to ensure that the Council is focussed on the right things for Rotherham's residents. This will include monitoring the Resident Satisfaction Survey, as well as other key indicators, such as the total funding dispersed to businesses affected by COVID restrictions and the increased social value from Council spend.

2.78 The key indicators that the Council will focus on are outlined in the table below.

Themes	Measures
Thriving neighbourhoods	Satisfaction with local area (Resident Satisfaction Survey)
Better health and wellbeing	Council's response to the Coronavirus crisis (Resident Satisfaction Survey)
Economic recovery	Number of grants and total funding dispersed to businesses affected by COVID restrictions Increased social value from Council spend
New ways of working	Satisfaction with how the Council runs things (Resident Satisfaction Survey)
Hope and confidence	Trust in the Council (Resident Satisfaction Survey)

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 The recommendation of this report is for Cabinet:

1. To note the progress made with the Year Ahead activities.

4. **Consultation on proposal**

4.1 A series of workshop sessions took place in August with elected members around the themes within the Year Ahead Plan. Through these seminars, councillors have had the opportunity to influence the development of the plan.

4.2 The Year Ahead Plan was approved by Cabinet on 21 September 2020.

4.3 Partners were also engaged as part of the development of the plan. The themes were presented and discussed at the Rotherham Together Partnership and several actions identified within the plan will involve close working with partners.

4.4 As part of the delivery of the Year Ahead Plan, engagement with the public will be an ongoing and key priority.

4.5 Each of the action leads have been involved in providing the progress updates included within Appendix A and these have been shared and discussed with assistant and strategic directors and cabinet members.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 This is the second quarterly performance report relating to The Year Ahead Plan. Subsequent performance reports will be considered by SLT and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report, but the plan's delivery will require close financial management to ensure that financial implications are within budget and longer term implications that may be generated by the plan are factored into the Council's medium term financial strategy. As indicated in the latest financial monitoring report for 2020/21 to 15 February Cabinet, the Council's current net forecast position is an underspend of £0.5m after taking account of the emergency COVID-19 funding provided to date by Government.

6.2 The financial impact of delivery of the Year Ahead Plan will therefore need to be monitored as part of the Council's financial management arrangements and considered alongside the ongoing financial impact of COVID and the Council's overall financial position.

6.3 Whilst there are no direct procurement implications as a result of this report, any identified need to procure goods, services or works in relation to achieving the Year Ahead Plan objectives should be referred to the Corporate Procurement Service. This will ensure all projects are procured in line with both the relevant internal financial and procurement procedure rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended), and that social value commitments are secured.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the plan itself; however the delivery of the plan in achieving the identified outcomes will require ongoing legal input to assess the legal implications relevant to each theme and support individual services in the delivery process.

7.2 In the delivery of the plan, the Council will need to continually consider its statutory and non-statutory duties to ensure that these are identified and met at all stages, in order to minimise the risk of legal challenge. Certain duties, such as the Public Sector Equality Duty and the requirements placed on the Council through the Clean Air Directive, have already been identified and clearly addressed through the identification of the cross-cutting strands in the plan.

7.3 The law is continually changing and even more so due to the impact of the

pandemic. It is vital that all relevant legislation and any changes are fully considered at all stages in the implementation of the plan to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with the most up to date legislation.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 The human resources aspects of the plan are set out within the New Ways of Working theme, including delivering high quality customer services which are efficient and accessible, ensuring staff are supported to work flexibly, building on recent experiences of home working, and ensuring that the Council builds on the response to the pandemic, using the learning to shape organisational development and how the Council will work in the future.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Underpinning the delivery of the Year Ahead Plan is a cross-cutting strand relating to equalities and social justice. This includes considering the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups, including children and young people and vulnerable adults.

9.2 The Better Health and Wellbeing theme has a focus on supporting children and young people and vulnerable adults. Specific outcomes include ensuring that vulnerable adults are protected and adult social care is able to adapt to the changing conditions, and that children and young people are protected, safeguarded and able to achieve their potential.

9.3 Protecting the most vulnerable residents is also a key component of the Thriving Neighbourhoods theme.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 COVID-19 impacts on everyone in the borough, with those who are older, with pre-existing health conditions, disabled people and BAME communities particularly at risk. In addition to the direct impacts of infection, the indirect effects of the pandemic are also likely to disproportionately impact on disadvantaged groups. An equality analysis was produced alongside the Local Outbreak Control Plan, which outlined the implications of the pandemic for protected characteristic groups in further detail.

10.2 In recognition of these implications, equalities and social justice has been included as a cross-cutting strand within the Year Ahead Plan. This means that consideration of issues relating to equalities and social justice has fed into the development of each theme.

10.3 As agreed at the November Cabinet meeting, the Council is also delivering on the equalities review, which will help build an understanding of the issues in Rotherham and identify how the Council can make a measurable difference to furthering equality. This will be framed around the four key lines of enquiry within the Equality Framework for Local Government:

- Understanding and working with your communities.

- Leadership and organisational commitment.
- Responsive services and customer care.
- Diverse and engaged workforce.

10.4 Different leads and directorates will be responsible for equalities within their themes and ongoing analysis of data and intelligence with regards to equalities will continue to take place. Any Cabinet decisions linked to the themes within the Year Ahead Plan will include an equality screening to assess the equality impacts. An equality screening assessment is attached to this report (Appendix 4).

11. Implications for Ward Priorities

11.1 The Year Ahead Plan is a borough-wide plan, so has implications for all wards.

11.2 Building and supporting community resilience is a key part of the Thriving Neighbourhoods theme. This will include working with local councillors and residents on ward priorities and plans.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Working with partners will be integral to the delivery of the Year Ahead Plan. Partners have therefore been engaged and consulted as part of the plan's development.

12.2 A complementary partnership year ahead plan has been developed and was agreed by Rotherham Together Partnership in September 2020. This focuses on key milestones relating to the five "game changers" within the Rotherham Plan:

- Building stronger communities
- Integrated health and social care
- Skills and employment
- Town centre
- A place to be proud of

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1. There are significant and serious risks associated with the COVID-19 crisis. Each workstream has undertaken a risk assessment including mitigating actions to be taken. The risks are captured in the threat and risk assessment and are reviewed regularly by workstream leads. This is fed up to the Gold and Tactical groups.

13.2 The risks and issues flagged in Appendix A have been shared at the risk management meeting to ensure directorate risk registers are updated/amended where required.

14. Accountable Officers

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Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	08/03/21
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	04/03/21
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	04/03/21

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