

ELECTED MEMBER INDUCTION HANDBOOK 2021

Handbook aimed to assist newly elected Councillors in understanding their role and place in the Council.

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND GETTING TO KNOW THE COUNCIL

This section will help to provide Members with general information about how the Council operates and the different service areas.

1.1 Welcome from the Chief Executive

Dear Member,

Congratulations on your election to Rotherham Council.

The Council is committed to supporting its Elected Members throughout their term of office. We welcome all new and re-elected Members with a Member Induction Programme which covers the basics of what you need to get up and running. This includes briefings on how to comply with the Code of Conduct and other protocols; the major issues facing the Council; introductions to specific services and more detailed learning events.

For example, you will not be able to serve on the Planning or Licensing Committees without undergoing an introductory training course. These roles are subject to legal requirements and a lot of public scrutiny.

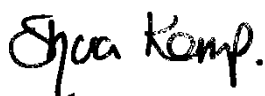
As Elected Members you have taken up the challenge to use democracy and public participation to shape your community and to provide your society with a better future.

I want your term of office to be successful and enjoyable and the Council will do everything possible to support you in your role.

As a starting point, I would ask that you read this **Member Induction Handbook** that we have put together for you which will also require you to connect to the [Council's Elected Member Portal](#) where you will be able to access a significant amount of information to enable you to fulfil your role as an Elected Member.

It will provide a useful starting point for the Member Induction Programme, which will occur over the coming weeks. After the induction, there will be a rolling Member Development Programme that will occur over the next three years.

I look forward to working with you, as do the rest of the Council's officers, and I know that together we will be able to make the Council even more successful and deliver even better services to our residents.



Sharon Kemp
Chief Executive

1.2 Our Values

The One Rotherham values set out how Council employees are expected to behave with each other, our partners, Elected Members, and customers. They seek to break down barriers, creating a one team approach which ultimately puts the customer at the heart of everything the Council does. These include:

- **Honest** – open and truthful
- **Accountable** – own decisions, do what we say and acknowledge and learn from mistakes
- **Respectful** – regard and sensitivity to the feelings, rights and views of others
- **Ambitious** – dedicated, committed and positive, embracing change and creativity
- **Proud** – take pride in the borough and the job we do.

For further details click [here](#).

1.3 Council Priorities

Council Plan 2022-25 and Year Ahead Delivery Plan

The Council Plan is the core document that underpins the Council's overall vision. The Plan sets out the headline priorities and outcomes for the coming years, along with the key performance measures that will demonstrate the delivery of the vision and ensure that this can be reported.

The plan is framed around five themes:

- Every neighbourhood thriving
- People are safe, healthy, and live well
- Every child able to fulfil their potential
- Expanding economic opportunity
- A cleaner, greener local environment.

These five themes are underpinned by a cross-cutting strand - 'One Council' - which sets out how the Council will operate to achieve the vision.



To enable the Council to work towards the Council Plan outcomes a Year Ahead Delivery Plan has also been developed, setting out the key activities to be delivered over the next year.

The measures and targets within the Council Plan, along with the Year Ahead Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually.

Further information on the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan is available [here](#).

Other key policies, strategies, and plans

There are a range of policies, procedures and processes which collectively provide the foundation for an effective, modern Council. Some of those which are key to how the Council operates are available [here](#).

1.4 Budget

Prior to each financial year the Council is required to prepare a budget report to be presented to Cabinet and approved by Council. This report proposes the Council's budget and council tax for the coming year, based on the Council's Final Local Government Finance Settlement, budget consultation and the consideration of directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal budget process, alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In setting the proposed budget, Cabinet will recommend to Council, any required increase in the Council's basic council tax and an adult social care precept.

This report also proposes an updated capital programme and the plans for financing that capital expenditure, either through external grants or corporate resources such as capital receipts and borrowing.

The budget report covers the following key areas:

- Available resources, as a result of the financial settlement, this is the money the Council has to support its expenditure. Such as revenue support grant, council tax and business rates.
- A reserves strategy setting out how reserves will be used and or increased during the year.
- A plan of how expenditure can be managed within the constraints presented by the availability of resources. This may require savings plans to be proposed.
- A plan of any required new directorate investments in services and how they can be supported.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy update outlining the longer-term impact of the Council's budget planning, including projections for the availability of resources and challenges presented by increased spending pressures.
- A capital programme setting out the Council's longer-term capital projects and their funding.

Once approved the Council will then deliver services within the remit and conditions set out within the budget report. The budget position is monitored closely and reported to Cabinet at regular intervals during the year via the Council's financial monitoring reports.

1.5 Key Facts & Figures

Key facts and figures about Rotherham and the Council are available [here](#).

1.6 Council Structure

The day-to-day management of the Council and its services is overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team and led by the Chief Executive, who is the Head of Paid Service and has overall responsibility for implementing the Council's policies.

The Assistant Chief Executive reports to the Chief Executive, focusing on corporate services in the Council and working with officers and Elected Members to transform the organisation. Additionally, four Strategic Directors each have responsibility for a different area of the Council known as a directorate:

- Children and Young People's Services
- Regeneration and Environment
- Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
- Finance and Customer Services

Full details of the Council's Strategic Management Structure can be found [here](#).

1.7 Guide to service areas (Directorates)

The Council has five service areas, known as directorates. A summary of each of these can be found below, as well as links to their intranet pages where further information can be found.

[Adult Care, Housing and Public Health](#) support Rotherham's residents by providing adult social care services and housing services, while also working to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in the borough.

[Assistant Chief Executive's](#) directorate provides cross-cutting support across the organisation, including policy development, performance and risk management, managing the democratic process and supporting ward Members, communicating and engaging with residents on Council activity and supporting the effective management of the Council's workforce.

[Children's and Young People's Services](#) work with Rotherham's children, young people and families. Their work includes safeguarding children and young people, offering early help and family engagement services, assisting young people with regard to education and supporting looked after children and care leavers.

[Finance and Customer Services](#) provide financial and legal support to the Council, are responsible for corporate procurement and insurance, and manage the organisation's customer, information and digital services.

[Regeneration and Environment](#) work to develop and promote Rotherham as a good place to live and work. They support the economic growth and regeneration of the borough, provide planning, regulatory and transport services, and work to ensure Rotherham is a clean and safe place for local residents.

1.8 Key Contacts / Routes

The Council's Elected Member Portal provides a route for all Elected Members to access the Council's [main people / telephone directory](#) and lead officer contact details within each Directorate / Service area within the Council.

The Council's intranet pages for each Directorate also details who is who in the Council. To find out who is who in the Council and obtain key contacts [click here](#).

Below is a useful list aimed to provide some of the key telephone numbers / routes for Elected Members in the first instance.

Emergency Contacts <i>Emergency Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To report an emergency to the Council call the following numbers:</i>		
Emergency Council House Issues & Repairs		01709 336009
Emergency Highways Issues		01709 336003
Children and Young People's Services		01709 336080
Adult Social Care (Single Point of Access)		01709 822330
COVID		
If in a crisis due to COVID-19 and require immediate help.		01709 807319
Other Emergency or Immediate Danger		
Immediate Danger		999
Other Emergency <i>Most emergency reports made to the Council sit within the Housing, Social Care and Highways categories listed above. However, if a customer has an emergency outside of those categories, contacting the number opposite will allow the customer to speak to a Council officer who will offer advice and signpost the problem to the right area, generating an emergency response if required.</i>		01709 382121
General Enquiries		
Council Switchboard - General Enquires / Customer Services		01709 382121
Council's Elected Member E-Casework System		
Route to log all issues raised by residents through the E-Casework System. This enables Members to log into the online system via the Elected Member Portal to ensure all cases for residents are logged on a central system, flagged, tracked, monitored and resolved by officers in the Council within a timely manner providing Members with a full audit trail of all cases.		
Democratic Services (Head of Service & Management Team)		
Emma Hill	Head of Democratic Services	Emma.Hill@rotherham.gov.uk Tel: 01709 823566 (internal ext. 23566)
Vicky Hartley	Executive Office Manager	Vicky.Hartley@rotherham.gov.uk Tel: 01709 255100 (internal ext. 55100) Mobile: 0755 7312996

Lesley Hatton	Cabinet Support Manager	Lesley.Hatton@rotherham.gov.uk Tel: 01709 8222771 (internal ext. 22771)
Barbel Gale	Governance Manager	Barbel.Gale@rotherham.gov.uk Tel: 01709 807665 (internal ext. 07665)
For details of Who's Who in the Council click here .		

SECTION 2. GETTING STARTED – YOUR ROLE AS A COUNCILLOR / BEING AN EFFECTIVE COUNCILLOR

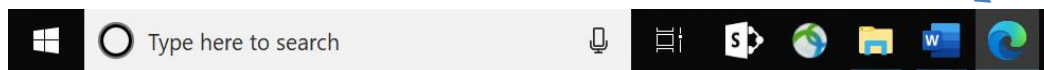
This section will help provide Elected Members with the information they need to get started and be effective.

2.1 Elected Member Portal

The Elected Member Portal is an internal Council system that holds all key information for all Elected Members in one easily accessible central location.

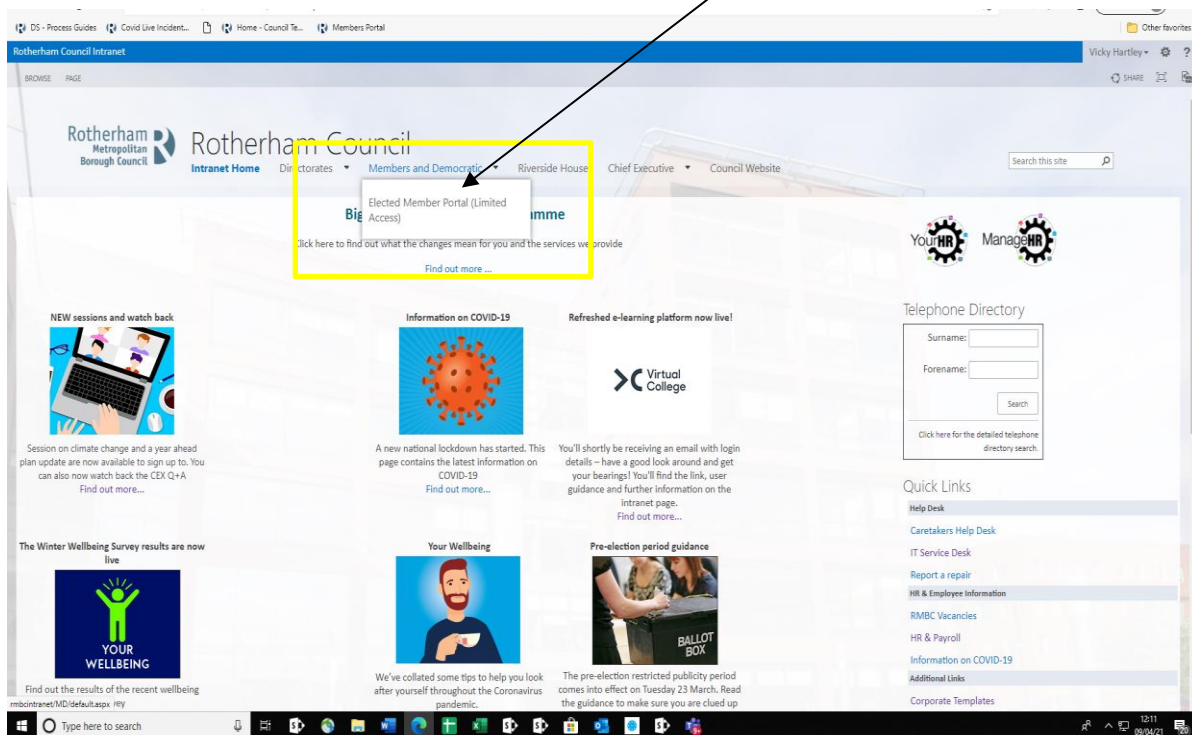
The Portal includes the Elected Member E-Casework System, guidance, handbooks, policies, protocols, processes, calendar of meetings, agendas, minutes, reports, webcasts of meetings, library of recorded Elected Member seminars and sessions, all e-bulletin communications, access to the HR Portal and Payroll self-service, IT service helpdesk and much more.

The Portal can be [located here](#) or very easily through device desktops – just select and click the Microsoft Edge icon located on the desktop (see below).

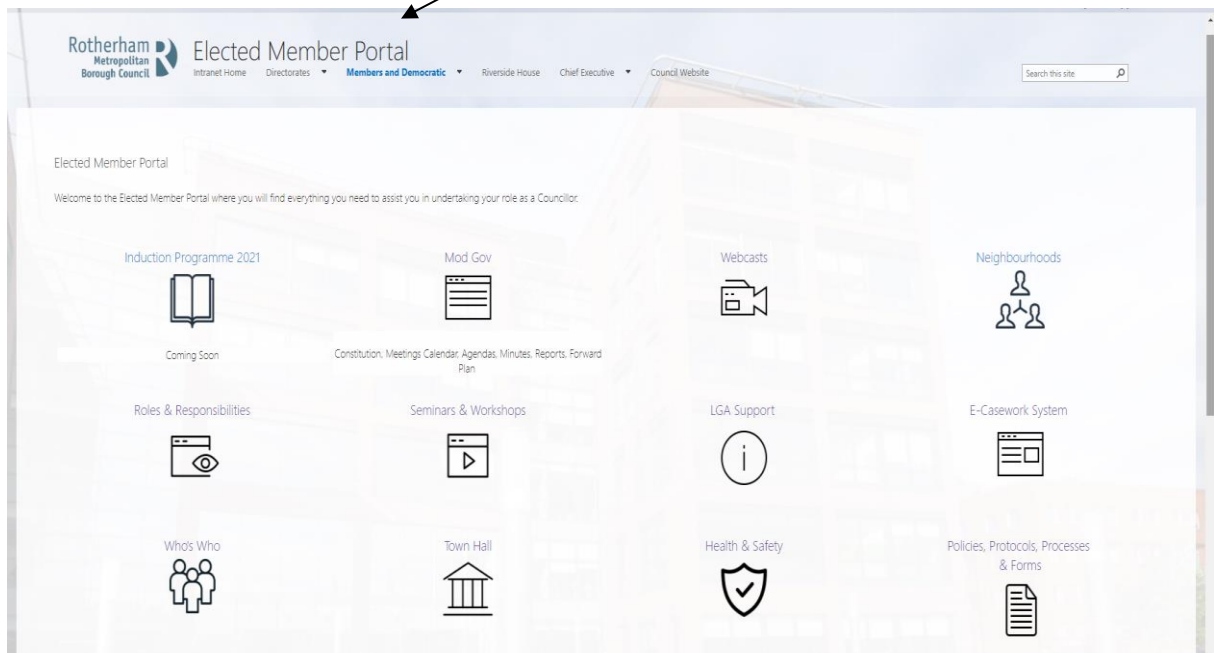


This will automatically take Elected Members to the Council's Elected Member Portal.

If for any reason this does not take you to the Portal you can access through the Council's intranet home page by selecting '**Members and Democratic**' **Elected Member Portal (Limited Access)** as shown below.



Select the **'Elected Member Portal – Limited Access'** which will take Elected Members straight to the **Elected Member Portal** (see below).



The Council's Member Induction Programme timetable, this handbook and associated papers for the sessions can be accessed through this Portal.

2.2 Learning & Development Protocol

Elected Members are from a range of diverse backgrounds and bring different and valuable skills to the role.

The Council's Elected Member Learning and Development Protocol details the learning provision and support that will be offered to Elected Members in their roles to develop knowledge as a result of issues such as new legislation or more local issues, whilst contributing to the delivery of the Council's priorities, objectives and ambitions.

The Elected Member Learning and Development Protocol can be [located here](#).

2.3 Allowances, Expenses & HR Self-Service System

Elected Members are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

The amount each Elected Member receives relates to the duties they perform and can include basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependent care allowance and travel and subsistence.

The Council's Member Allowances Scheme (Appendix 8 of the Council's Constitution) can be [located here](#).

Creating an Account on the Council's HR System

The Council's Head of Democratic Services is responsible for ensuring all Elected Members when elected to office are set up on the Council's HR system.

All newly Elected Members are asked to complete a 'HMRC New Starter Details Form' and 'HR Bank Details Form' and submit these to membersupport@rotherham.gov.uk **by no later than Friday, 21st May**.

The Council's Member and Civic Support Unit shall be responsible for ensuring this information is submitted to the Head of Democratic Services who shall work with the Council's HR Service and Payroll Manager to ensure the HR system is updated accordingly.

YourHR Portal and Payroll Self Service

The Council operates a self-service portal known as YourHR to enable Elected Members and staff to access the system to view payslips and personal information.

Once the Head of Democratic Services has set this up for each individual Elected Member there will be a requirement for all Elected Members to access the system on a regular basis to view allowance payslips and personal information.

It is the responsibility of each individual Elected Member to ensure throughout their term of office that their personal data is updated directly onto the system.

The system can be accessed on the [YourHR Portal and Payroll Self Service pages on the Elected Member Portal](#).

Should Elected Members require further assistance, please contact Frank O'Neill, Team Leader, Firstline Team in the HR service on telephone 01709 334141 or at frank.o'neill@rotherham.gov.uk or General Enquiries hrpgeneng@rotherham.gov.uk.

First Payment of Allowances

All newly appointed Elected Members shall receive their first payment of the basic allowance in June 2021. This will be backdated to 11th May, that being the first official day in office. Any special responsibility allowances will be paid from June and backdated where required.

2.4 IT Policy for Elected Members

The Council provides Information Technology (IT) resources to support all Elected Members in the course of their duties. The Council's IT and Digital Service plays a key role in helping to develop the capacity to enable Elected Members to execute their duties at a community and authority level to:

- Enhance communication between Elected Members and their constituents.
- Improve the flow (and timeliness) of information between Elected Members and officers.
- Enable access to a greater knowledge pool - website and Elected Member Portal.
- Provide opportunities for efficiencies by reducing the reliance on paper-based communications.

The Council's IT Policy for Elected Members located on the Elected Member Portal sets out what IT / telephony equipment, facilities and services will be provided to all Elected Members for the duration of their term of office.

The Council's IT Policy for Elected Members can be [located here](#).

2.5 Member & Civic Support Unit

The Council's Member & Civic Support Unit are responsible for providing a support service to all Elected Members and the Mayoralty of the Council.

The Team

Details of the Member and Civic Support team can be [located here](#).

Roles & Responsibilities

Details of their roles and responsibilities and the processes and protocols Member and Civic support staff follow in relation to providing support to all Elected Members and the Mayor of Rotherham can be [located here](#).

2.6 Rotherham Town Hall

Address: The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham S60 2TH

Please note the building is currently closed (at the time of writing) due to Covid19 restrictions and will reopen in line with national guidance. Elected Members will be kept informed of plans to do so.

Rotherham Town Hall is a civic building at the heart of the town centre and is used by Elected Members, employees, and the public for meetings.

It is the meeting venue for all key decision-making meetings that are taken by Elected Members.

Access (Photo Smartcard ID Badge & Security Fob)

The Council is fully committed to creating a safe and secure working environment for all its Elected Members and employees through efficient and effective identity and access procedures.

All Elected Members and employees who need access to the Town Hall are issued with a photo smartcard ID Badge which must be worn at all times.

The Town Hall can be accessed through the front main entrance doors. Once the Town Hall has reopened you will be issued with a security fob on your visit to Reception, which will allow full access to meeting rooms and facilities.

The security fob is a very small security hardware device with built in authentication used to open the internal doors in the Town Hall. The security fob must always be stored somewhere safe / securely held.

Opening Hours

The Town Hall is permanently staffed with opening hours of Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm.

2.7 Riverside House

Address: Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham, S60 1AE

Riverside House is located in the town centre and is the Council's main Customer Service Centre, Library, Art Gallery and Neighbourhood Hub.

The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and their leadership teams are based here with many Council services and employees.

Access (Photo Smartcard ID Badge)

All Elected Members and employees need to have a smartcard ID-Badge to gain access through to the offices which are located over 5 floors. There are also several meetings rooms located on various floors with the majority of the larger rooms located on the 4th floor (Wing B).

Important note: Elected Members only need to use their smartcard access controlled photo ID badge to gain access to Riverside House and do not require the security fob used for the Town Hall as the access routes are slightly different.

The smartcard access-controlled photo ID system is a key element in the overall security strategy for Riverside House and must always be worn while in the building.

Elected Members will be unable to access non-public areas of the building without a smartcard ID-Badge.

For awareness and to ensure the safety of all employees there is a strict check and challenge policy in place where tailgating through security barriers has been observed.

Printing and Photocopying

The smartcard ID-Badge also enables printing and photocopying from any multi-functional device (MFD) within the Town Hall and Riverside House.

Upon first use of an MFD, the system will require log on with individual email addresses and passwords. This only needs to be done once.

All newly appointed Elected Members will be issued with a photo smartcard ID-Badge to access Riverside House.

COVID - *Until Covid-19 safety restrictions have been lifted, all guidance relating to social distancing, the wearing of face masks, hand sanitisation, one-way systems etc must be observed whilst visiting Council buildings.*

SECTION 3. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

Within this section Elected Members will find information about how the Council works and how decisions are made.

3.1 How the Council works

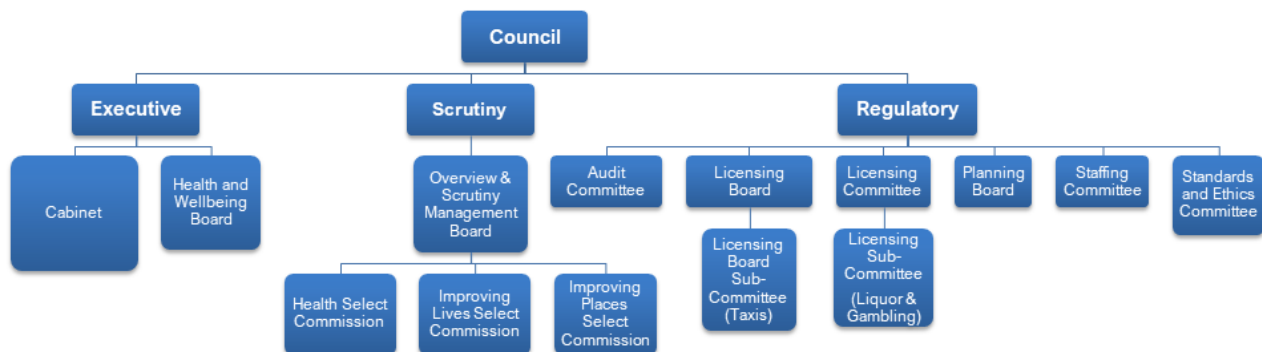
The [Council's Constitution](#) sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Constitution comprises 19 articles. The articles set out the basic rules governing the manner in which the Council conducts its business. The Appendices to the Constitution contain more detailed procedures and codes of practice regulating different aspects of the Council's business.

The Executive is responsible for most day-to-day decisions, including key decisions, which are publicised in advance in so far as they can be anticipated. Executive decisions are made in accordance with the Council's overall policies and budget. Any decision that falls outside the budget or policy framework must be referred to the full Council to decide.

3.2 Decision-making structure

The diagram below shows the Council's decision-making structure including some of its main committees.



Council meetings are chaired by the Mayor and are attended by all Elected Members of the Council. The committees sitting under the Executive and Regulatory functions are decision making committees.

The Council has adopted a “strong” Leader and Cabinet form of the Executive function whereby the Executive carry out all the Council's functions that are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, whether by law or under the Constitution.

The Cabinet consists of the Council's Leader together with no more than nine other Elected Members.

The Scrutiny function does not make direct decisions but will make recommendations to the Executive and to Council with respect to the discharge of its functions or on matters which affect the borough or the inhabitants of the borough. The Scrutiny function also assists with policy development and review.

The Council appoints the committees listed under Regulatory to discharge various other functions required, such as licensing and planning. Further information on the roles of these committees and boards is available in Appendix 9 of the [Council's Constitution](#).

Elected Members are appointed places on the specific committee in accordance with the political balance of the Council as a whole (i.e. the allocation seats on individual committees must mirror the political composition of the Council). This process is carried out by Council at its annual meeting.

In April each year, the Council's Head of Democratic Services will circulate the list of positions on outside bodies to the political groups of the Council for nominations to be submitted to the first Council meeting of the new municipal year.

3.3 Roles & responsibilities

Ward Councillors

All Elected Members have a responsibility for the residents and businesses in the ward they represent. This can include speaking as an advocate for residents at Planning Committee meetings and working to improve the lives of local individuals and communities. However, ward Members also have a responsibility to the borough and the Council as a whole, which can sometimes lead to Elected Members needing to balance competing priorities.

Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)

The Leader of the Council is elected by the Council to serve a four-year term. The Leader is then able to appoint up to 9 portfolio holders who take responsibility for particular areas of the Council's business.

Scrutiny Members

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) is comprised of 12 Members, including:

- the Chair and Vice-Chair appointed by Council
- the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the 3 Select Commissions and
- the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.

The other seats will be filled according to political balance and entitlement to seats.

OSMB is complemented by 3 thematic Commissions (Health, Improving Places and Improving Lives) each comprised of:

- Up to 18 Members of the Council
- any non-voting co-optees appointed from time to time by each select commission; and
- in the case of the Improving Lives Select Commission the education representatives appointed by the Council.

The Mayor

The Mayor is a ceremonial post held by an Elected Member of the Council and is elected annually. The Mayor is the town's First citizen and has the civic responsibility of representing and promoting the borough, giving precedence only to Royalty and the Sovereign's representative (Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire).

As First Citizen, the Mayor acts as a focal point, particularly in times of crisis, celebration or tragedy.

The Mayor undertakes the role of chairing the Council meetings and promotes events and causes by attendance at a variety of engagements throughout the civic year including parades, receptions and general visits that raise the profile of Rotherham and its people, both in the borough and beyond.

Further details on the appointed Mayor of Rotherham can be located on the [Council's website](#).

A Civic Handbook outlining the key rules, guidance, etiquette and financial arrangements for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Rotherham can be located on the [Roles and Responsibilities pages on the Elected Member Portal](#).

3.4 Committee Roles

Council

The purpose of the meetings is for all Elected Members to meet to determine the Council's overall policy structure, set an annual budget, and establish the annual calendar of Council meetings. It also provides an opportunity to hold the Leader of the Council and Executive to account, by allowing Members to ask questions on areas of Cabinet Portfolio responsibility and Council Services.

The Annual Council meeting appoints the Mayor of the Borough for the forthcoming municipal year and constitutes Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Panels, including the membership and Chair.

Cabinet

The Cabinet is the body that takes most of the decisions relating to the running of the borough, within the policies that have been agreed by Full Council. The Cabinet is responsible for most day-to-day decisions, discharged through the executive network of the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and other officers.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (and Commissions)

The Council's overview and scrutiny committees monitor the work of the Executive and enable local people to have a greater say in the Council's business by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board can "call-in" certain executive decisions that have been made but not yet implemented and question the appropriateness of the decision. The Executive can also consult Overview and Scrutiny Select Commissions before making a decision or shaping policy.

Licensing Board and Panel

The Council's Licensing Board is responsible for discharging functions that are not the responsibility of the Executive. These functions are regulatory in nature, for example the licensing of operators of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and the determination of planning applications. Liquor licensing is dealt with by a Licensing Committee comprising members of the Licensing Board. A Member cannot be on both the Licensing Board and Planning Board.

Planning Board

The Planning Board considers officer reports on planning applications and decides whether to grant permission after reading the recommendations provided by the director of borough development and listening to the views of members of the public.

A Member cannot be on both the Planning Board and Licensing Board.

Complaints Panel

The Council's Complaints Panels consider complaints from individual members of the public who are not satisfied with the standard of a Council service. Subject to any legal mechanism for challenging or appealing against a Council decision, a member of the public may complain about the particular decision in so far as it concerns or affects him or her.

Standards and Ethics Committee

The Council's Standards and Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members and overseeing other probity issues. (See section 4).

SECTION 4. ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Within this section Members will find information regarding the standards expected when they are acting as a representative or conducting business of the Council.

4.1 The Constitution of the Council

The Council's Constitution located on the [Council's website](#) sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Constitution comprises 19 articles and several appendices. The articles set out the basic rules governing the way the Council conducts its business. The appendices to the Constitution contain more detailed procedures and codes of practice regulating different aspects of the Council's business.

The purpose of the Constitution is to:

- enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations.
- support the active involvement of citizens in the process of council decision-making.
- help councillors represent their constituents more effectively.
- enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively.
- create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account.
- ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved.
- ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

4.2 Code of Conduct

Healthy System of Democratic Leadership & Accountability

Elected Members have special responsibilities to help the Council to improve, learn from the past and increase public confidence. Elected Members need to be accessible in approaches to respond to people's needs and enable communities to pull together and find local solutions.

The Council's Code of Conduct located on the [Council's website](#) sets out the standards expected of elected and co-opted borough, parish and town Councillors. It says what is required of Elected Members when they are acting as a representative or conducting the business of the Council.

This Local Code should therefore be read as supplementing the National Code which covers general behaviour around things like confidentiality, impartiality and bullying. It also details the financial and other interests that Elected Members must declare.

The Code also expects Elected Members to uphold the seven principles of public life:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

4.3 Member / Officer Protocol

All Elected Members and officers are subject to the Member-Officer Protocol. The protocol sets out detailed guidelines for the behaviour of Elected Members and officers towards one another.

The working relationship between officers and Elected Members has to be built upon mutual respect. It is also necessary that both officers and Elected Members have a clear idea of the differences between their respective roles.

4.4 Register of Interests

All Elected Members are required by law to provide a list of their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election or appointment to the Council.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are:

- any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation
- any sponsorship of the member, including contributions towards their election expenses and payments or financial benefits from a trade union
- any contracts between the member and the authority
- any land the member has an interest in and lies within the area of the authority
- any licences the member holds to occupy land in the area
- any corporate tenancies
- certain securities they hold

Elected Members are also required to list the disclosable pecuniary interests of their spouse or civil partner, or person with whom they are living as if they were their spouse or civil partner.

These disclosable pecuniary interests are recorded in the Register of Interests which is published under each Elected Member's profile on the Council's website to ensure openness and transparency.

On election to office each Elected Member is asked to download the Council's Register of Interests Form [via the Policies, Processes and Forms pages of the Elected Member Portal](#) and ensure completion as early as possible.

Completed Register of Interests forms should be sent to the Member and Civic Support Unit at membersupport@rotherham.gov.uk by no later than **Friday, 28th May 2021** to enable review and sign off by the Council's Monitoring Officer and publication on the Council's website within the 28 day timeframe.

4.5 Gifts & Hospitality

All gifts and hospitality received by Elected Members should be declared to staff in the Council's Member and Civic Support Unit by completion of the Council's Elected Member Gifts and Hospitality Declaration Form.

Full details of the process and appropriate forms to be completed when making a declaration can be located on the [Policies, Processes and Forms section of the Elected Member Portal](#).

4.6 Political Groups

Any party with at least two councillors on the Council may form a political group.

The group with the most seats on Council will be deemed the 'majority party' and will nominate a Leader of the Council.

The group with the second largest number of seats will be deemed 'the opposition'.

Groups have an entitlement to seats on statutory and regulatory boards and committees with the number of seats based on the political proportionality of the full Council.

Non-aligned Elected Members are not entitled to seats ([under prescribed law](#)), however, Rotherham has adopted a position which does consider independent Elected Members when determining proportionality.

Independent Elected Members may choose to align to form an 'Independent Group'.

Some Elected Members do not belong to political groups and are referred to as non-aligned.

4.7 Safeguarding

Rotherham Council believes that every child, young person and adult, regardless of their background, age, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity or religious belief, should be able to participate in a safe society without any fear, violence, abuse, bullying, discrimination or exploitation. Safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone at the Council shares a responsibility, both corporately and individually, to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect and protected from others who may abuse them.

All Council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers, particularly those who come into contact with, or who share information about, children, young people or adults in the course of their work - but not exclusively so - have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of the most vulnerable people in Rotherham, young or old. Procedures and good practice will be developed within the Council to ensure that every service and employee can demonstrate that they understand their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults.

If you are worried about someone and it is an emergency call 999.

In other cases, Elected Members can contact the Council anonymously, and in confidence.

If Elected Members are concerned about the safety of a child or young person report abuse by clicking [here](#) or telephone 01709 336080.

If concerned about the safety of an adult report abuse by clicking [here](#) or telephone 01709 822330.

4.8 Equality & Diversity

The Council is committed to working on behalf of and for all of its customers, residents, partners and visitors. This includes understanding the diversity of communities and their specific needs in order to provide the most appropriate and responsive services, and ensuring all are treated fairly, with dignity and with respect.

This commitment is reinforced by the Equality Act 2010 which requires the Council to promote fairness and equality through community leadership. In particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people.

As publicly elected officials who represent Rotherham's population, all Elected Members are expected to act in accordance with the Council's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) and the [Code of Conduct for Members](#). This includes a need to:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect;
- Know the local community and its different needs, and ensure Council services meet these diverse needs; and
- Engage with and listen to all sections of the community.

All Members will be able to receive training and resources on equality and diversity as part of the induction and development programme.

4.9 Prevent Duty (safeguarding vulnerable people from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting extremism)

Prevent is about safeguarding children, young people or adults by offering support at an early stage to any individual who is identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into harmful extremism or terrorism. It deals with all kinds of terrorism or groups that encourage violence to influence governments, intimidate the public and advance their cause. The internet is a powerful tool that radicalisers use to influence or recruit vulnerable individuals. They make extensive use of different online platforms, spreading hate, extremist ideology and propaganda.

The Prevent Duty is a legal duty introduced by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The duty requires local authorities and other public bodies, such as schools, colleges, health, probation and police, to safeguard people from being drawn into terrorism. It applies to both children and adults and sits alongside other long-established duties to safeguard vulnerable people from a range of harms such as drugs, gangs, abuse and sexual exploitation.

If you are worried about someone being drawn into terrorism, contact the South Yorkshire Police Prevent Team by calling 0114 2523217 (Mon-Fri 8am to 4pm) or 101 (out of hours) or call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline (can be anonymous) on 0800 789 321.

Elected Members can also contact the Council's children's or adults safeguarding services. See section 4.7.

In an emergency where Elected Members or others' safety is at risk, call 999.

To report online material promoting terrorism or extremism, please click [here](#).

Further information regarding safeguarding people from being drawn into terrorism can be found [here](#).

The Home Office Prevent Handbook for Elected Members can be located on the [Policies, Processes and Forms section of the Elected Member Portal](#).

4.10 Corporate Parenting

Currently Rotherham has just under 600 children and young people who are 'looked after'. The Council holds and shares Parental Responsibility for all these children while they are looked after, and they are all allocated a named social worker. The whole Council has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parent would for their own children and as they progress into adulthood. Elected Members play a key role in fulfilling this responsibility and ensuring the standard of care and support promotes the looked after children of Rotherham children achieving their full potential.

As a Corporate Parent, each Elected Member has a responsibility to scrutinise the quality of the services they receive and ask 'would this be good enough for my child?'

More information on Corporate Parenting, including the principles of Corporate Parenting and why the Council needs to be a proactive and challenging parent, can be found in the [Children's Services Policies, Values and Principles](#).

How can Elected Members help?

You need to make sure your council is doing its very best to help these children.

A key way to do this is to understand the role and function of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the strategic Elected Member group which provides leadership and direction to the Council and partners on their corporate parenting responsibilities. Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Panel takes lead responsibility for ensuring that there is a multi-agency action plan that will address the objectives identified above. The Panel also regularly consults with the LAC Council to ensure that developments are in line with the wishes and feelings of our looked after children.

You should also find out more about the children and young people in Rotherham and what type of support they need. This includes looking at the number of local looked after children and where they are placed, the number of care leavers, and how many children and young people are from a minority background or are disabled. Additionally, you should question how well your council looks after these children, whether they are well supported by other services, what are the barriers to this and how the council is addressing these, whether there are enough resources, qualified staff and local placements, and whether care leavers have adequate accommodation.

You should undertake appropriate training that will help you understand your role as a Corporate Parent and the needs of the looked after children and young people.

Corporate Parenting is part of the Member Induction Programme and regular courses are run each year for Members. Details of these can be found in the Member Development Programme.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Wall, Head of Children in Care.

SECTION 5. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Within this section Elected Members will find information regarding the neighbourhood working model and how to be effective when working with communities.

5.1 Neighbourhood Working (Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy)

The [Rotherham Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy](#) is integral to the way the Council works, aiming to improve outcomes by putting communities at the heart of everything the Council does. This includes a move towards 'doing with' rather than 'doing to' by working with communities on things that matter to them and listening to the views put forward by local people.

Neighbourhood working includes taking an asset-based approach by drawing on existing community strengths, producing individual ward plans which set out each ward's characteristics and priorities, and working closely with a range of partners to address local problems.

As part of this, the Council hopes to utilise the skills and expertise of local councillors who are well placed as community representatives and leaders to understand local issues and support community action. Elected Members will work with a team of dedicated Neighbourhood Coordinators whose role is to facilitate community engagement and help administer a devolved budget to fund local projects.

More information about neighbourhood working can be found on the Council's ['Your Neighbourhood'](#) page.

5.2 Representing your ward (including map and new boundary information)

A map of Rotherham's wards can be found on the Council's ['Your Neighbourhood'](#) page. Following the May 2021 elections, Rotherham has moved from 21 to 25 wards and has nine three-councillor wards and sixteen two-councillor wards.

Elected Members should aim to be familiar with their ward, its communities and key local contacts. Elected Members can find more information about their ward through the [dedicated pages for each ward](#) on the Council's website, which include a ward profile and map, the ward plan and budget summary, and the most recent ward report.

Elected Members will be supported by the [Neighbourhoods Team, including their ward's own Neighbourhood Coordinator](#), to agree a ward plan and priorities, allocate ward budgets to local projects and work with local people and organisations. Elected Members will be contacted by their Neighbourhood Coordinator shortly after being elected to arrange a local ward-based induction which will cover key ward issues, stakeholders and what it means to be a ward councillor.

5.3 Ward Budgets

Elected Members can decide how locally to spend their ward budgets. Ward budget allocations must be aligned to ward plan priorities and fund activities or services that address these, and guidance for Elected Members on how to agree and allocate use of their budgets is issued annually by the Neighbourhoods Team.

Each of the borough's 25 wards receive a devolved ward budget to support the delivery of their ward plan priorities and increase the engagement of local residents. The 2021/22 Budget approved by Council includes £7,120 Capital for wards with two Elected Members and £10,680 for wards with three Members. Capital expenditure generally relates to the acquisition or improvement of significant and relatively expensive items, including land, buildings and equipment which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.

Additionally, the Community Leadership Fund was established in 2003 to enable Members to address local priorities, support grassroots groups and quickly instigate changes in response to local opinion. For 2021/22, each Member will have £1,584 to spend at their discretion on local ward-based issues, plus an additional £1,000 uplift which was agreed at Council in March. Each ward's Neighbourhood Coordinator will be available to support Members in allocating this.

Elected Members will also have the opportunity to work with Ward Housing Hubs to agree the allocation of devolved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding. The budget is set annually and there is a 'roll forward' provision to carry forward any unused budget from year one, two and three to the following year within a four-year cycle. The total budget for the year 2021/22 is £205,900. From this, each ward receives a base budget of £4,000, with a 'top up' based upon the percentage of Council homes within each ward. More information on Ward Housing Hubs can be found [here](#).

5.4 Ward Surgeries

Most Elected Members hold regular surgeries in their wards to allow them to meet and engage with local people and learn about potential casework issues. These have previously been largely held in a face to face format, with a publicised time and place where Elected Members will be available to speak to local residents. This model requires Elected Members to book a local venue in their ward directly, with the hire costs paid by the Council. Typical venues include local community centres, parish halls, libraries and churches.

Since the onset of the pandemic, which forced normal surgeries to cease, some Elected Members have explored remote alternatives and set up virtual surgeries. These work similarly to face to face surgeries but remove the need for travel or booking a venue by allowing residents and their Elected Member to connect using video-conferencing software. A time, date and link are published on the Council's website, which once accessed by a resident will place them in a virtual waiting room until the Elected Member admits them into a private meeting.

Elected Members can choose a format for their surgeries which they best feel suits them and their communities. It may be helpful for Elected Members to discuss this with their ward colleagues.

The Member and Civic Support office (membersupport@rotherham.gov.uk) are able to help advise on available venues, provide advice on virtual surgeries and publicise surgeries on the Council's website.

More information on surgeries and potential models for these can be located on the [Policies, Processes and Forms section of the Elected Member Portal](#).

5.5 E-Casework

Casework is where a constituent raises an issue with an Elected Member where they require a response from the Council. This could be a query, complaint, request for specific action or to resolve an issue.

Elected Members are contacted by constituents through various routes - ward surgeries, email, letter, telephone, door knocking, in the street and in social settings. It is therefore important that there is a very simple and easy means of requesting action through a system to enable casework to be logged, processed and actioned by the Council with the data used to help inform service improvement.

The Council's E-Casework System

The Council has an e-casework system which is managed within the Council's Customer Experience Case Management System (CXM). In summary, the system enables Elected Members to:

- Be more responsive to constituent queries and have assurance that cases are initiated, flagged, monitored and resolved preventing duplication of time and effort spent on researching frequently asked issues / areas of concern to constituents.
- Easily submit their casework electronically via a smart online form from a laptop, tablet or mobile device.
- Select from a wide range of service categories to report issues into the system.
- Log onto the system 24/7 to track progress against issues, monitor and analyse existing and historic casework (full audit trail of activity - photos, documents, live updates, messages, notes and issued responses).
- Receive key notification timelines – confirmation of when cases are allocated and which lead officer in the Council is dealing with the case, deadline for case completion, notification of any delays and when completed and closed down.
- Receive a written response from officers within the Council's corporate response timescales.

All newly appointed Elected Members will be set up on the E-Casework System and training provided on how to use the system will be provided.

All detail on the system including how to log e-casework, the process for how casework for individual Elected Members is managed in the Council and details of how to access the system can be located on the [E-Casework System section of the Elected Member Portal](#).

5.6 Health & safety (your personal safety)

Being at the heart of the communities and staying in touch is what being an Elected Member is about. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have, dealing with community tensions and addressing wider community issues. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of Council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and non-adversarial. However, Elected Members can find themselves in a position where they need to manage angry and frustrated residents who often contact their elected representative when they feel that they have no other avenue to pursue. Often Elected Members will deal with constituents on a face to face basis when alone.

In many cases, considering and maintaining personal safety and security is common sense. Elected Members should always assess the level of risk and what arrangements are in place for their safety.

The Members' Health and Safety Handbook is available as a guide for Elected Members. It's important you familiarise yourself with how to best prevent issues arising and know how to deal with any instances should they arise. If you ever want to discuss any aspect of your personal safety please contact the Head of Democratic Services.

The [Health and Safety Handbook can be located on the Health and Safety pages of the Elected Member Portal.](#)

5.7 Rotherham's Town, Parish & Community Councils

Local Councils are the first tier of local government and play a vital role in engaging with local people and helping to shape their communities. In Rotherham, they are generally referred to as parish, town, and community councils. They are uniquely placed to make a major contribution to neighbourhood working.

There are 31 civil parishes situated across the Rotherham borough with an established network of local councils comprising of two town councils, 25 parish councils, one community council, plus three parish meetings. The south of the borough is fully parished extending into the central and north areas. Two parish councils are isolated from the main network but are adjacent to each other at the top of the borough bordering Barnsley.

Each Local Council is a corporate body, a legal entity separate from that of its members. It is an elected body in the first tier of local government and the decisions are the responsibility of the whole body. Local councils have the legal power to take action, but they have very few duties and greater freedom to choose the communities they serve and improve the quality of life and the local environment. Furthermore, they influence other decision makers and can, in many cases, deliver services to meet local needs.

The principle consultative group between RMBC and the Town, Parish, and Community Councils is the Joint Working Group. The group was originally set up in 2006 due to recognition of the benefit to both tiers of local government including: the development of a Joint Working Agreement; improving communications and engagement; and the offer of training and development opportunities.

To view the interactive map, access information about the work of the Joint Working Group, and view the newly refreshed Joint Working Agreement please click on the link: [Parish Councils – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.](#)

The parish contact list is available to view [here](#).

5.8 Partnership Working

The Rotherham Plan provides a framework for partners' collective efforts to create a borough that is better for everyone who wants to live, work, invest or visit here.

Delivery of the plan is overseen by Rotherham Together Partnership, which includes representatives from various local organisations across all sectors.

A range of thematic boards and partnerships, such as Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board and Safer Rotherham Partnership, are central to achieving the aspirations of the Rotherham Plan. They also deliver a range of complementary activities based on their own plans and priorities, and in line with their statutory functions.

Further information regarding the Rotherham Together Partnership, theme boards and the partnership plans can be found [here](#).