

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 21 November 2022

Report Title

Refresh of Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy (2018-2025)

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Martin Hughes, Head of Neighbourhoods

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Council's Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2018. Following the publication of the new Council Plan (2022-25) it is now opportune to refresh the Strategy, taking into account the ambitions in the Council Plan and acknowledging that the Council's Neighbourhood Working Model is well embedded and evolving.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve the refreshed Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy (2018-2025).
2. That Cabinet agree that the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy Delivery Plan and Full Equality Analysis are developed by April 2023 and presented to the Improving Places Select Commission in Spring 2023.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy 2018-2025 (refreshed November 2022)

Appendix 2 – Initial Equality Screening Assessment

Appendix 3 - Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy Annual Report (2021/22) – presented to
Improving Places Scrutiny Commission (20/09/22)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Refresh of Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy 2018-2025

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet formally approved the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy (2018-2025) in November 2018 following the introduction of a new Neighbourhood Working Model in May 2017.
- 1.2 The Council Plan (2022-25) has further developed the Council's vision under its 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving' theme.
- 1.3 It is now opportune to refresh the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy so it can take into account the ambitions within the Council Plan and acknowledge that the Council's Neighbourhood Working Model is now well embedded and evolving.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy (2018-25) provided the platform for the Council to take a new approach to working with local neighbourhoods and developing the role of Councillors as Community Leaders.
- 2.2 The narrative within the current strategy lays out what the Council intends to do. Following four years of implementation, the language and appearance of the Strategy is dated and in need of refreshing.
- 2.3 The Council's Neighbourhood Working Model is now well embedded and continues to evolve. This is evidenced via annual reports presented to Improving Places Select Commission (the last one being on 20 September 2022) and the ward reports presented by Elected Members at each Council meeting.
- 2.4 The Council Plan (2022-25) has further developed the Council's vision under its 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving' theme -

'Our vision for Rotherham is for every neighbourhood to be a thriving neighbourhood, where people are able to work together to achieve a good quality of life. We want to work with local people to find solutions to local issues and to build on our heritage and assets. We will help create vibrant communities in which people feel happy, safe and proud. To do this, we will make it easier to get involved in the local community, work closely with our partners and local voluntary and community groups, enhance our town and village centres, green spaces and libraries, and effectively tackle community issues'.

- 2.5 The refreshed Strategy has a new look and feel (Appendix 1). It reflects the ambitions under the 'Every Thriving Neighbourhood' theme within the Council Plan, whilst maintaining the desired outcomes and other key components of the original strategy.

- 2.6 The main differences from the original strategy include –
- A foreword from the Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.
 - Reference to the Council's 'Place-Based' and 'Strengths-Based' approaches.
 - Greater emphasis on the role of the Councillor, referencing Birmingham University's 21st Century Councillor Model.
 - Reference to how success is measured.
 - Links to relevant webpages, which illustrate the progress made since 2018.
 - Removal of case studies – as there are now other avenues to promote these such as ward e-bulletins, ward webpages and Members' annual ward reports to Council.

2.7 On approval of the refreshed Strategy, it is proposed to develop a Delivery Plan, which will capture the key components of the Neighbourhood Working Model, how the Model will continue to evolve and how the impact will be measured. The Delivery Plan will be developed in consultation with local communities, Elected Members and other stakeholders between January and March 2023. This will also help further promote the Neighbourhood Working Model and the role of Elected Members as community leaders within their wards. On completion, this Delivery Plan will inform the key milestones for Every Neighbourhood Thriving theme within the Council Plan's Year Ahead Delivery Plan. It is recommended that the completed Delivery Plan be presented to Improving Places Select Commission in Spring 2023.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Cabinet could consider not refreshing the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy at this juncture, but given points articulated in Section 2 of this report the recommended proposal is to approve the refreshed version (Appendix 1) and the development of a Delivery Plan, as outlined in Paragraph 2.7.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Consultation on the ward-based Neighbourhood Working Model and the subsequent Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy took place in advance of the implementation of the Model in 2017 and the approval of the strategy in 2018.

4.2 Consultation on the Council Plan (2022-2025) took place in 2021. This confirmed that Thriving Neighbourhoods should remain a key theme for the Council and helped shaped the main priorities underpinning that theme.

4.3 As indicated in Paragraph 2.6, it is proposed that a Delivery Plan will be co-produced with local communities, Elected Members and other stakeholders between January and March 2023.

4.4 Elected Members may choose to do further consultation within their wards when refreshing their ward priorities and plans in Spring 2023.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Approval of the refreshed Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy will be followed by the production of a Delivery Plan, as indicated in Paragraph 2.6. The Delivery Plan will be completed by April 2023.
- 5.2 The Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report will be presented to Improving Places Select Commission in Autumn 2023.
- 5.3 Elected members will continue to present their ward reports to Council up to January 2024.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in the report. Devolved Ward Budgets are managed in line with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules. Devolved Ward Budget and expenditure is published on the Council's website as referenced in the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct staffing implications other than the recruitment and deployment of Neighbourhoods staff as per the Neighbourhood Working Model.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The outcomes within the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy support the delivery of the Council Plan themes 'Every Child Able to Fulfil Their Potential' and 'People Are Safe, Healthy and Live Well'.
- 9.2 The Neighbourhood Working Model includes the need to identify ward priorities and agree action to address these through ward plans. The most recent ward priorities were published in July 2022 and illustrate where ward members are targeting resources towards Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults. This includes new or additional activities, improved facilities or improved access to services. A number Wards have priorities which will try to mitigate against the 'Cost of Living' crisis and continue to assist communities with Covid recovery.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The Neighbourhood Working Model enables the Council to respond to the specific needs of Rotherham's increasingly diverse communities. Engagement with residents takes into account the strengths, assets and needs of different communities of interest, which differ in each neighbourhood and ward. Neighbourhood working allows the flexibility to respond to these needs.
- 10.2 The ward priorities and ward budget statements published on the website illustrate how Ward Members have targeted activity and resources toward communities with protected characteristics.
- 10.3 An initial Equality Screening Assessment is attached as Appendix 2. A Full Equality Analysis will be completed by April 2023. It will be written alongside and informed by the Delivery Plan, which will be developed in consultation with local communities, including those with protected characteristics. It is recommended that the Full Equality Analysis is presented to the Improving Places Scrutiny Commission in Spring 2023, alongside the completed Delivery Plan.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 A number of ward priorities and plans have specific references to issues such as active travel, air quality and climate change that would positively contribute to tackling this agenda within these wards. The development of projects and awareness raising through e-bulletins and other engagement methods will encourage resident participation in this agenda.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. Joint working with partners (from the public, voluntary and private sector) and Parish Councils is essential to the delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Council's Neighbourhood Working Model.
- 12.2 The ward priorities and plans are informed by the experience and intelligence from these partners, which encourages the establishment of shared priorities and goals.
- 12.3 A range of neighbourhood-based partnerships and networks are in place to tackle the priorities within the ward plans. This includes Community Action Partnerships (CAPs) which operate in all 25 Wards and provide a vehicle to tackle community safety related issues.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Risks and the associated mitigations relating to the delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy are captured and tracked in the Assistant Chief Executive Directorate Risk Register. These include –
- Failure to enhance community cohesion throughout the Borough

- Lack of development or support for Elected Members preventing them maximising their role as community leaders
- Capacity of Council services and partners to respond to local priorities and issues
- Parish Councils not actively involved in neighbourhood working

14. Accountable Officers

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Martin Hughes, Head of Neighbourhoods

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	07/11/22
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	01/11/22
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	01/11/22

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