

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 13 December 2022**

Present:- Councillors Wyatt (Chair), Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Browne, C Carter, Castledine-Dack, T. Collingham, Cowen, Ellis, Havard, Hunter, Jones, McNeely, Taylor and Tinsley (Vice-chair).

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Khan and Monk and Mrs. Jacques.

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

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

38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2022

Resolved:-

1. That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of agenda item 6, Cllr Jones declared a personal interest as a member of one of the Friends of Cemetery groups

In respect of agenda item 9, Cllr Tinsley declared a personal interest as a volunteer.

40. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair confirmed that questions from members of the public had been submitted.

1. Ms. Shazia Yousaf asked the following question: After all of Dignity's failures and dishonesty to their customers, why has RMBC not kept on top of their progresses. Appears RMBC lacks the resources or will power to keep Dignity under close scrutiny, which in turn leads to distrust from the public. How can RMBC show to the public that Dignity will be and is being held to account?

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that, as shown in the annual report, the Council had so far received £232,935 that the Council have charged Dignity for areas of the contract that had not met the contractual requirement. Responsibility for the management of the contract was transferred from R&E to Legal Services in November of 2021. There are performance Management meetings monthly of Bereavement officers with Dignity, and quarterly meetings of the internal group of officers. There three Council officers ensuring there is robust contract management.

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Supplementary: Can the minutes of the meetings be shared with the public, or can the public get involved in the meetings?

The response from the Cabinet Member was that this is a commercial contract, so under the commercial rules for local government, they are not public meetings in that sense. Much of the information that the Council does hold is included in the annual report, which is brought to public meetings like this one. That can be challenged by Members of the Public.

2. Ms. Nida Khan asked the following question: Rotherham Borough Council has fined Dignity for its failures and not-fit-for-purpose service. How has Rotherham Borough Council been held accountable for its failures, and what action has been taken against those responsible?

The response from the Cabinet Member affirmed that since the contract had been managed by Legal Services, the Service had maintained openness and transparency. The Council had numerous arrangements in place to ensure that it is accountable, including scrutiny meetings such as these where questions can be asked. Robust contract performance management measures were in place to show that going forward there was zero tolerance for failure.

Supplementary: Have you had scrutiny meetings before, or is this a new approach to resolve this problem?

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that the Bereavement Services annual reports had been submitted for scrutiny since 2016. Every year, Elected Members and the public have had a chance to challenge Dignity.

3. Ms. Nida Khan asked the following question: Why is Rotherham Borough Council not allowing Dignity to make independent decisions and keep its promises, as lines keep getting blurred as to who is in charge of what.

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that since taking over responsibility for the management of the contract, the Service has been working to clarify that governance of contract management was the Council's role, and operations was the responsibility of Dignity. Therefore, the Council was allowing Dignity to make decisions and should not be intervening in operational issues. The Council were then holding Dignity to account for their promises through our contract management process.

Supplementary: Related to a specific funeral that was initially cancelled, did RMBC have to intervene for Dignity to do its job?

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The response from the Cabinet Member noted that in the specific case the Superintendent Registrar had communicated with the Rotherham Business Lead who oversaw action taken on the operational side to ensure the funeral went ahead.

4. Mr. Saghir Hussain asked the following question: Where are the scrutiny reports and inspection reports; how are the reports managed; where is the audit trail of inspection visits; and are these accessible by the public?

The response from the Cabinet Member clarified that scrutiny reports were available on the Council website and were available to members of the public, and the inspection reports of the gravesites were done by Bereavement Services officers who were happy to send the information in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

Supplementary: Why are the inspection reports not included in the scrutiny annual reports?

The annual report and performance reports came to this committee (Improving Places Select Commission). The visits and operational inspections do not come to this committee, but these could be accessed through an FOI request.

5. Mr. M. Osman Suleman asked the following question: Why can't we find any established social media group, social liaison groups to join in our efforts. Or any of their contact details?

The response from the Service was that details of Friends groups were available on the Council's Website. Any cemetery that has a social media presence had a link to this on the Council's website.

6. Mr. M. Osman Suleman asked the following question: Can you please explain how £250,000 has been invested in the Muslim burial area at East Herringthorpe cemetery and over what time period?

The response from the Cabinet Member was that £250,000 had been invested in East Herringthorpe this year. In relation to investment decisions by Dignity the question should be addressed to them. The Dignity Operational Director offered a schedule with detail of the investments made outside the meeting.

Supplementary: The work has not been completed so far regarding paths and drainage. Can you provide assurance that all the remaining works will be completed in full as soon as possible?

The response from the Operational Director noted the remaining paths had been started but had encountered weather issues, so a

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definite date was not known. The Service had previously hoped it would be completed by December and assures that the Service will do everything necessary. The work on drainage has not been halted, and that the necessary expert-to-expert geology and hydrology report had been commissioned to define and solve the problem. When the report is received, this will be disclosed. It was hoped that the findings in the report would enable the Service to address drainage issues effectively.

7. Mr. Arshad Mahmood was sent the answer to this question in writing following the meeting: Dignity and RMBC are proud promoters of equality and diversity across race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, and disability. Why do we not yet have a Muslim liaison officer within Dignity, based at the Rotherham office, overseeing the needs of the Muslim community?

The response from the Service was: This is a question which we will forward to Dignity to provide you with a response as staffing matters are operational and it would be for Dignity to consider. We have requested that they provide you with a direct response.

8. Mr Arshad Mahmood was sent the answer to this question in writing following the meeting: Why have we only been given two days to read a vast document before submitting a question to the committee?

The response from the Service was: The Council procedure rules are set out in the Constitution and the process for the publication of Reports are set out in the Local Government Act 1972. The reports were available 5 days prior to the meeting as required under both.

9. Mr. Farooq Tareen asked the following question: After Dignity staff were given training on Muslim Faith Burial, why does the report claim an incorrect information?

The response from the Cabinet Member invited Mr Tareen to share the details, and he will address the point.

Supplementary: In respect of Muslim burials, once the death has taken place, the burial procedure should take place as soon as possible, rather than within 24-hours. This timeframe has been confusing to staff who were under the impression that the burial can be anytime in the next 24 hours. Can the 24-hour limit be removed and replaced with "as soon as possible"?

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that the advice was as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours. Within the rules governing the coroner's releasing the body and post-mortem requirements, etc, 24 hours should be the latest timeframe with the expectation being as soon as possible.

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10. Mr. Farooq Tareen asked the following question: Did you say in the last meeting that you became aware of the water issue on 18 April of this year? In 2016, Dignity offices contacted a group called EH to report a water issue. EH was called in to deal with the drainage problem. Their report is available on their website. In 2020, the Clancy report noted there was water and the ground was being saturated every time it rains.

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that the paperwork had been examined when this was formally raised with Dignity, the information had not been referenced in the formal process. The main focus now was to resolve the issue. It was hoped that the investment being made will clear the issue and that going forward, the Service ensure that the drainage system works and that there be no water retention.

11. Mr. Arshad Azam asked the following question: From a performance management perspective, how can the commercial element, the contract, be separated from the day-to-day operations, and the community cannot be engaged. Why is RMBC saying that within this assurance process why can the community not be engaged?

The response from the Cabinet Member emphasised that the rules around commercial contracts require the Council to respect the confidentiality so there were certain proprietary things that we cannot disclose.

Supplementary: How might members of the community be engaged in the operational processes, for example around decisions such as the decision to extend the burial hours?

The response from the Cabinet Member noted that the five-year plan was and the annual report was publicly available. It was the finance and commercial elements which were confidential. Regarding out-of-hours burials, this was publicised extensively within the community. There were burial committees that were engaged through the normal process. The contract was being managed by the service agreement officers. If the five-year plan dates and objectives were not delivered, there were financial penalties, like those enforced on Dignity colleagues this year. To seek specifics about the operational delivery of the 5-year plan objectives, that is a question to address to Dignity directly.

12. Mr. Arshad Azam asked the following question: "Friends of.....," social media groups, emails to mosque leaders and Muslim Bereavement Liaison Group - to name a few - are methods of contact that have been aired by Dignity and RMBC. Why can't we simply sit round a table and discuss matters in hand?

The response from the Cabinet member noted that, in terms of engagement, the council had engaged with approximately 30 groups including burial committees, faith groups, and mosques. But going forward, the desire was to have Dignity manage operational issues, and RMBC will be over the contract. An external review had been commissioned with an expert advisor who can clarify certain areas.

Supplementary: What authority does this external advisor from London have over the diverse Muslim community of Rotherham, why not engage with the local Muslim community?

Brother Omar manages the largest cemetery in the country which is award winning. He was an advisor to ministers regarding burials and is being consulted to come to Rotherham to meet with the stakeholders and give an expert view. Has advised the Ministry of Justice on Muslim burials and will provides an expert view outside of the Council and Dignity.

41. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair confirmed that there was no reason to exclude members of the public or press from observing any items on the agenda.

42. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to an annual report in respect of Bereavement Services. This report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Finance and by the Head of Legal Services. Also presenting were the Business Leader and Operational Director who were in attendance as representatives of the contractor, Dignity Funerals, Ltd. The Cabinet Member noted recent penalties to the contractor associated with breaches of the contract. Some areas of performance had been higher than the target. Religious awareness training had also been delivered, and faith leaders had been enlisted as active participants in discussions of service provision going forward.

The Operational Director acknowledged that Dignity had not fully delivered on the contract. A substantial investment programme which had invested well over a million pounds was described. The activities had included works such as road surfacing to improve safety and accessibility of cemetery sites. It was felt that these efforts had changed the quality of service delivery vastly. These changes should have been done many years ago to improve facilities and access to sites at Maltby, Greasbrough Lane, and East Herringthorpe. The Operational Director acknowledged years of quality not being up to standard and noted the need for more burial space. This was being addressed through the planning process. The Business Leader who runs the day-to-day operations noted several areas of service improvements, throughout the crematoriums. The Service provider had given consideration to re-evaluating prices for burial fees.

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Late burial times had been delivered, working alongside Glendale to ensure religious requirements for a late burial throughout the week can be achieved up to 6.30pm with no additional costs. Improvements had also been made to lighting and tarmac paths to allow burials to take place safely during the winter months.

The Service provider had also undertaken consultation with the community and with "Friends of" groups on the running of service functions. Comments were welcomed, and feedback was thoughtfully and seriously considered. The Service provider had undertaken events with the community, recognising multiple faiths in the community as well. A natural burial ground at Rawmarsh had also been established. The Business Leader welcomed a further opportunity to speak in depth about this work on another occasion. A section in Greasbrough Lane was being replanted with birch trees, Glendale was preparing a new burial ground area for planting with meadow plants. Graves were planned which would be dug by hand, and red robin shrubs were being planted. The addition of a Friends Group Room at East Herringthorpe had also been established for use by all cemetery site users. Electricity was being connected to the room, after which an appointment could be booked to have the room available for general activities. A performance management framework was in place with Glendale, involving cemetery supervisor walks to inspect and create a report that is monitored with Glendale in regular meetings using a performance framework to improve performance. Tarmac paths had been installed towards the end of Maltby Cemetery, with further work being finished at East Herringthorpe. Additional taps and rubbish bins had been provided within the cemeteries, as the Service provider were continuing to improve.

In discussion, the Chair noted the production of the five-year plan, which had been requested as part of the September 2021 scrutiny discussion of the previous year's report. The progress on green burials was also noted and the investments that had been made by the provider in improving service delivery.

Clarification was requested regarding the timescale of delivery of the Muslim burial development. The response from the Service Provider noted that the contactors were on the site now. The Provider had hoped the works would be done before getting into any adverse winter weather conditions. There had been equipment stolen from the site, and contractors doing the works were the same as those working at the Maltby site.

Clarification was also requested regarding refunds of certain burial fees. With regards to the weekend burial fee, the response from Service Providers noted that several people had been refunded. Information currently on the Council website directed people who had been charged the fee to contact Dignity. The Service Providers had been working with members of the public to relay relevant information to the community.

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Members noted the five-year plan was positive, but it had been observed that the plans were not very reader friendly to cemetery site visitors. It was noted that without a cemetery map, it can be hard to understand the content of the five-year plan. A publicly displayed plan and map was proposed along with a follow-up seminar for all members of all wards to facilitate a more detailed discussion.

Members requested assurances that the Service Providers were responding to reports of anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and thefts from graves. It had been noted that the five-year plan included assessment of feasibility of CCTV installation by December 2023. The response from Service providers noted that three sites experienced vandalism and theft especially during the winter season. The Service had been discussing the provision of extra security with the relevant security officers. One of the quotes received had proposed the installation of a big pole in the middle of the cemetery for the purpose of providing electricity for the CCTV. This was felt to be unsightly, but temporary measures had been explored in order to ensure security was provided at the site.

Members requested more information around the reasons for the historic underinvestment. The response from the Operational Director noted that there had not been enough commitment to the contract previously. Although it was difficult to comment on history of operations before the current directors were in leadership. It was noted that the directors were all different now.

Members requested assurances regarding drainage surveys which were projected to take two years to complete. The response from the Operational Director noted that after clearing the drains, some of which were over a century old, the issue had not resolved, which suggested that some of the drains have collapsed. Work to address this was on the five-year plan and progress would be monitored.

Members requested clarification of the agreed method and standards which were referenced in the performance rating of red, amber and green, with four performance measures in red. The response from the Operational Director noted that these measures reflected the desired level of maintenance, including how the landscape is maintained, and the desire for performance to improve in these areas. There was still work to do to improve performance in these areas. Dignity's goal as a national business was supporting people who had lost family and friends to be able to remember them in a way that was positive.

Members requested clarification around the measures within the five-year plan that seemed basic, such as additional seating benches at six of the eight cemetery sites. The response from the Operational Director noted that whether these were replacement or new benches was not known, but the approach to the five-year plan included as much detail as possible so that the full scope of improvement could be monitored.

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Members noted the heart of the issues was equalities and the importance of meeting the needs of a diverse community. It was noted that improvements had resulted from the involvement of community members. Clarification was requested regarding the representation of equalities on the initial equality screening, and the amber rating for equality and diversity as a key performance indicator. The response from the Head of Legal Services noted that the role of the Council was limited to contract management. The operational side was for Dignity to complete. This was one of the contract performance issues that the Council's Bereavement Services team had raised with Dignity to seek improved performance. Dignity was still working on this area. There were equalities issues and the Council's Bereavement Services team does raise these with Dignity as part of the performance management framework. For the Service completing the initial equalities screening form, the report was about the performance of Dignity. Dignity had commissioned their own report as to the offer and the Council had commissioned an independent report to ensure that in the performance of the contract, equalities objectives are being met. It was noted that the contract with Dignity was one of the Council's 350 contracts for services to be provided which the Council has outsourced. The Council expects providers to then meet equalities requirements as they have conduct of the operational day to day matters.

Members expressed interest in further information regarding consultation with neighbourhood residents who live near the sites where there are late burials around any impact to the wider community. The response from the Service providers noted that Dignity respect staff and expect them to be treated with respect. Dignity worked with the community and residents as well.

The Chair noted that many sites do not receive the benefit of support from Dignity; therefore, the Friends groups played an important role in fundraising and in funding applications for additional work. It was felt that this engagement work was key.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the feedback from Members be noted.
3. That an all-member session be convened to facilitate a further dialogue around improvements to Service delivery in the five-year plan.
4. That Bereavement Services and Dignity work together to better demonstrate how equalities duties are adhered to in contract management and operational delivery.

43. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to an annual report and presentation in respect of progress in self-management of the Council's allotments by the Rotherham Allotments Alliance (RAA). The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, the Green Spaces Manager and representatives of the Rotherham Allotments Alliance. The Cabinet Member noted all the work that had been done throughout the year by the RAA and thanked the representatives for their hard work to ensure the success of the model which had been adopted. The model allowed allotment holders with close knowledge of their allotments to take control of their own allotment environments. A key element in 2021, and even more this year, had been involving local groups and reinvesting in the community. The RAA year ran from January to December, and recent progress had been made in improving web presence, undertaking and completing projects, and preparing the way for the the upcoming head lease agreement.

Performance Indicators had been requested from the RAA as part of the Service Level Agreement that runs alongside the self-management model. It was noted that Lowfield was the only site that was not fully tenanted. The forward plan for 2023 included preparing this site ready for letting. Getting rid of asbestos had been a significant challenge, which had been addressed using the moneys the authority had put aside. It was also noted that the process of preparing the lease to be signed had been protracted. The Administrator of the RAA worked with local Elected Members where possible to coordinate efforts, including the thirteen site societies that collaborate with the RAA.

The RAA used portable, battery-operated CCTV cameras to alleviate instances of vandalism. The RAA work to ensure allotment holders know their responsibilities, and if allotment holders breached the law, the RAA reported this. Improvement works to a number of sites were described, including extensive waste removal. Part of what the RAA was trying to do was general education and encouragement of allotment holders of how to make the best use of sites for growing fruit and vegetables for families, and not for piling plastic rubbish and wood. Photographs were presented depicting overgrown conditions that had been rectified through the efforts of the RAA. Community payback services had saved resources, and a further approach that had been successful was taking on smaller plots which some holders find more manageable. The RAA had been reaching out to community groups.

In discussion, the Chair noted the nearly full sites and new plots being developed. The community payback scheme had also been a boon to the RAA community that had become accessible under the self-management model. It was felt that this was an example of strong partnership working.

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Members requested further information about how the RAA worked with schools. The response from RAA representatives noted that they work with schools. A nursery had taken a plot on the site. Limitations around the powers of the RAA to lease a plot to schools were discussed. It was noted that the local authority retains the statutory designation as allotment authority.

Further details were requested in respect of a specific site on Psalter Lane. The response from representatives of the RAA was that this site had been considered for incorporation into the RAA, but the site sadly was well known for fly tipping. It therefore posed a significant cost risk to the RAA to take on. The site inspections were undertaken every six months. Usually, these were done personally by the Chair or the Administrator, and any rubbish found on the sites was addressed with the plot holder responsible to remedy the issue.

Members noted that the capital allocated by the local authority was coming to an end and requested additional information around the forward financial plans. The response from the RAA representatives noted the external funding from place, as well as the lottery. The RAA administrator had recently attended workshops to develop the potential of applications for further external funding opportunities. The small surplus from the year before last had been deployed to pay for clearance projects. The funding for extra projects and waste removal had come from this year's revenue fund, and the RAA had been able to do even more. At the end of the year, the exact amount left over to be carried over was known. A wooded site at Swinton had been leased as a pasture. The RAA also had been able to put aside ten percent for reserves. The directors had been putting in their own time wherever possible, whilst ensuring health and safety risk assessments are in place and any hazards accounted for. This meant that next year, the RAA would deliver significant savings again by doing things themselves.

The Chair noted the importance of allotments, given the implications of rising cost of living and potential mental health benefits. Members also noted the importance of links with Ward Members for support.

Resolved:-

1. That the progress of the transfer be noted.
2. That the comments of Members in respect of the arising issues be noted.

44. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation in respect of progress in delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan, which included several project areas for regeneration and development interventions in the public realm in Rotherham Town Centre. This update followed on from a spotlight

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review undertaken in November 2021 which examined external sources for funding these projects. Delivery of development opportunities were described. Secured external funding was noted as part of the presentation.

The presentation described the projects that would be part of the Leisure and Culture Quarter, including a cinema and hotel, six restaurants, and a public square. These plans worked around the riverside and the scheme of flood defence works already completed. The plans for connecting Forge Island to Riverside Gardens were described and the progress in respect of the Forge Island and Riverside Gardens plans were described. Indicative visualisations of the designs of these interventions were also provided. In respect of the interventions associated with Corporation Street, these would be described further in a January Cabinet report and would involve disposal of some of the Council's land in that site to enable the development to happen. At the moment the Council sought acquisition by agreement with owner rather than a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). The Service reported preliminary discussions had been positive. A planning application was in progress to address the site which had been an eyesore. It was noted that connections in this area would be pedestrian-friendly, to help foster an atmosphere in which people would want to spend time. Progress in delivery of the Riverside Residential Project was also described.

In respect of the Markets and Library Scheme, it was noted that this would include a new community hub, improvements to the public realm, and Town Centre connections. A contractor had just been appointed to take the project forward, and it was noted that the contractor had experience of working in markets. A challenge was anticipated around managing the construction at the same site with traders already present. It was observed that much would be happening in the Town Centre from now through 2025. In terms of challenges around timescales, it was noted that The Snail Yard had not progressed at the speed desired. Challenges with contractors and resource limitations were articulated as well as specifics of the site and interim arrangements to address what had been a vacant area and a building which did not have a future in the Town Centre. Bridge Gate had been completed and College Street works and additional car parking spaces were noted. This work was connecting key developments with high quality public realm interventions including better lighting and improved environment. Through the Future High Street Fund, a project at Grimm and Co. had been undertaken, with extra funding through the Mayoral Combined Authority (gainshare) had enabled the project to proceed without disruptions.

In discussion, Members expressed interest in further highlighting the chapel on a bridge. The response from officers noted this had been raised previously as a historic site of interest although it was not associated with a project in the current scheme of funding. A previous scrutiny discussion had noted the significance as part of the cultural offer.

Members emphasised the promised pace of the work and the need to

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maintain projects that are already built. Members noted that there were enduring concerns about safety of the Town Centre and the success of businesses there. It was felt that the direction of travel was right, but timetables were an issue. The response from officers noted that the Service were cognisant of the challenges encountered by businesses in the Town Centre and the importance of building and maintaining momentum in delivery of the Town Centre projects. The last few years had seen Rotherham making the most of funding at historic levels and having success at bringing that funding in for Rotherham. Challenges during the pandemic had been experienced, as with all sectors, the construction industry had experienced limitations. These limitations in the construction market had flowed through to the projects such as the Snail Yard. Momentum remained important, and the message to businesses was observable progress. This was the same message to investors coming in. The Forge Island scheme was fully let, and the local economy would continue to build on this confidence in the future pipeline. Members noted the work going on in the background and emphasised the importance of timescales to local people and local businesses.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.

45. COUNCIL-OWNED LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT

Consideration was given to a report and schedule of local defibrillators. Over the past few years, there had been an improvement in the number of defibrillators located throughout the borough. Some of these were sourced directly by Asset Management, whilst others were sourced through ward and parish Councillors. The presentation described how the defibrillator equipment is housed, with each defibrillator in a metal cabinet and displaying a contact number for emergency services. A few types of defibrillators were located throughout the borough. Each defibrillator had a nominated guardian. If the defibrillator were to be used, the guardian would be notified directly. These defibrillators, including those in other buildings such as neighbourhood and community buildings, used to be inspected by the Ambulance Service; this changed last year. Particularly in neighbourhood sites, there had been a lack of information on the guardians for defibrillators in those sites. In recent months the Service had managed to identify the guardians, ensuring that the defibrillators were still at the sites in working order and with fully charged battery. The Service go out every week and check all the sites as part of the normal inspections. It was noted that defibrillators can cost up to £1500 each. If a defibrillator went missing, there could be a lead time for replacement. The Service was on the register and were notified if the defibrillators are used. The next day, the Service would ensure the defibrillator was back up and running. Some external information had circulated which had highlighted sites that were not Council sites. The Service provided assurances that records would be kept up to date. The Service provided further assurances that the systems and register in place could be add to the

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Council's mapping system. The Service ensured that they are supplied with a list of guardians for other sites.

In discussion, the Chair noted the maintenance responsibilities associated with a defibrillator throughout its life cycle, including testing and replacing of renewables such as pads and batteries. In respect of obtaining information about the guardians throughout the borough, assurances were requested that the Service was confident that the list is complete regarding library and theatre sites. The response from officers noted the current status of library and theatre defibrillators.

Members noted that defibrillators registered with the British Heart Foundation could be referenced on public websites such as <https://www.defibfinder.uk>. This website, for example, indicated whether each defibrillator is active or inactive. Assurances were requested around resiliency of the guardianship of defibrillators belonging to the Council, if only one staff member is nominated as a guardian. The response from the Service confirmed that one person is nominated, however, if this team member were not in the office the day that a defibrillator is used, the notification email would also go to Asset Management and would be picked up by half a dozen members of staff.

Members referenced specific defibrillators and associated time limitations. Further clarification was requested around which defibrillators are owned by Rotherham MBC. The response from the Head of Asset Management noted that the external ones at the front of riverside with football and redevelopment would be useful, so this is being looked at. The overall distribution of defibs was an area that required further consideration. Members noted that, where there may be a shortage of funding, there were excellent local charities who help with funding.

Members noted the need for sub-guardians. The example offered was that Civic Officers at the Town Hall cannot update the registry after inspecting the defibrillators at the Town Hall because they are not designated sub-guardians. This means that Asset Management must be contacted to request that the registry be updated, which creates an extra step. A further example was provided of a specific defibrillator that had been registered but was not appearing on the registry. The response from officers noted that clarity around how this information is collected and reported about coverage is an area of ongoing work.

Resolved:-

1. That the report and schedule be noted.
2. That clarification be provided in respect of defibrillator governance, including updated guardianship information, usage data, and maintenance procedures for defibrillators in the borough, including those that have been in use, or that have been deployed but not used.

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3. That consideration be given to strategic placement of defibrillators throughout the borough, taking into account the proximity and volume of people and the hours of public access to defibrillators that are housed indoors.
4. That an update be submitted in 12 months' time.

46. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to an updated work programme including an outline schedule of scrutiny work for the remainder of the 2022-23 municipal year.

Resolved:-

1. That the report and proposed schedule of work be noted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Governance Advisor in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair to make changes to the schedule of work as appropriate between meetings, reporting any changes back to the next meeting for endorsement.

47. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring a decision at the meeting.

48. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

1. That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 7 February 2023 commencing at 1.30pm.