

Annual Report 2017/2018

Neighbourhood Working

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1. Foreword – Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader

Our vision for Rotherham is for every neighbourhood to be a thriving neighbourhood where people have a good quality of life. Last year we set out to develop our new neighbourhood working model by working with residents in our wards on the things that matter to them.

This report provides an overview of our experiences from the first 12 months of neighbourhood working, what we have learned and the areas we want to focus on in the future.

Ongoing austerity and the reduction in public finances will continue to provide challenges for the Council. This means that we have to work in a different way, make decisions about what can be provided by the Council and talk to residents about where they can take more responsibility. It is therefore vitally important that the Council works with others to make the best use of the available resources and the neighbourhood working model is an important vehicle for doing this.

The learning from the last 12 months has informed the development of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy 2018-2025 which will be launched later this year. The strategy sets out three key outcomes that we hope to achieve by working together with Rotherham residents in local neighbourhoods.

- First we want to build on the great community spirit in Rotherham and to know that every neighbourhood is safe and welcoming for all,
- Second we want to take action to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by working hand in hand to address issues like loneliness and to make our green spaces accessible to everyone and
- Third we want to harness the skills and capabilities of residents. We know that the Council is not able to solve every issue on its own but by building the capacity of local communities we can work together to make a difference.

Key to success will be the role of local Councillors who will continue to play a central role in the new neighbourhood approach. They will do this by building positive relationships with local people and partners and using their influence to facilitate local action.

This is already happening across the borough and the report includes many examples of the innovative work that has been done by Councillors, officers and residents working together. It illustrates how much better our engagement is with residents by reaching out to more people on the issues that matter to them. The plans that we now have in place for each ward have provided a focus for community activity and a way of measuring progress, and by taking an asset-based approach we will be able to build on the things that work.

I hope that the recommendations in this report will be adopted. I believe that our approach to neighbourhood working, listening and working together with residents and partners, can

make a huge difference to local communities, giving them a real voice and helping them to thrive.

2. Introduction

At the meeting of the elected member working group on 16th November 2016, there was support for a new neighbourhood working model which would result in the 21 electoral wards becoming the key building blocks for supporting Councillors in their community leadership role.

Cabinet and Commissioners agreed the recommendations for a new neighbourhood working model and 12 month transitional plan on 10th April 2017 at the Cabinet/Commissioners' decision-making meeting. The report also included a recommendation for the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) and Council to receive an annual report on neighbourhood working.

In order to drive this initiative, a neighbourhood working member forum was established in May 2017 with a remit to oversee: the new neighbourhood working approach including the production and delivery of ward plans, the review of the neighbourhood service and the development of the new neighbourhood strategy.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the revised working model, one year on and an overview of progress in relation to the thriving neighbourhoods programme.

This report captures the learning from the transitional year and makes recommendations for future delivery. Feedback has been captured from interrogation of relevant reports and documents (see bibliography on page 22), interviews with elected members and officers and visits to ward projects.

3. Headline findings

Transitioning to a new model for neighbourhood working involves transforming the way that the Council works, moving away from 'top-down' service provision and towards a more collaborative approach with communities as active partners.

Overall, the new model has been well received, with elected members reporting that the new arrangements have improved the quality of engagement with residents and provided a greater understanding of both local needs and current assets within their wards. Members have also reported increased engagement with residents at local surgeries and some members have worked with partners in police and housing to deliver joint surgeries.

Ward plans have been developed through engagement with residents, identifying local strengths and issues. Members and officers have engaged with residents to deliver local projects and community activities. Some examples are set out in this report.

The new model has enabled the innovative use of capital assets to benefit the whole community, such as solar lighting to improve community safety and play equipment to improve health. It has also enabled smaller pots of revenue funding to be used to engage community groups to deliver local projects to meet local priorities, for example allotment projects for increased health and wellbeing or youth projects to reduce anti-social behaviour.

In the first 12 months, examples of excellent practice are already emerging and a number of projects have successfully embraced the principles of the new model. Moving forward, the priority is to use the lessons learned from this transitional period to adopt good practice more broadly, and to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the new neighbourhood working model.

Several wards have established regular ward meetings between members, officers and partners in order to drive local delivery and tackle local issues. These have proved to be a very effective way to deliver the priorities in the ward plan. It is proposed therefore that this approach is adopted formally across the Borough and that ward meetings should take place on a regular basis but a minimum of four times per year. These meetings would help to drive the delivery of the ward plans, including monitoring progress and managing the devolved budgets.

Devolved budgets both capital and revenue have been used very successfully to support local projects. As neighbourhood working progresses and the ward plans become more developed there will be a greater need to align budget allocation to ward priorities. To achieve this there is a need to harmonise the different decision making processes and criteria in relation to the different devolved budgets. It is proposed that there should be a review of these with a view to establishing a more consistent approach to the allocation of funding. There could also be merit in exploring whether the ward budgets and the Community Leadership Fund (CLF) budgets should be pooled thus providing a bigger resource for ward based projects. In addition it is proposed that a review of the Area Housing Panels is undertaken. These are currently based on the old area assembly model and could be revised to fit with the new neighbourhood working model. This could provide additional capacity to wards to help them to deliver the ward plans.

There is broad agreement from members and officers that ongoing training and development is really important for the success of neighbourhood working. This should include practical support and information on local assets as well as professional development in areas such as asset based working, engagement models and communication. It is proposed that a bespoke programme of development and training is co-designed with members in the autumn.

More broadly both members and officers have expressed the view that there is a need for a wider piece of work to identify how all parts of the Council can, in future, support a neighbourhood approach and what staff development is needed to underpin this.

A number of recommendations designed to further improve neighbourhood working are set out at the end of this report.

4. Background

In April 2016 an elected member working group was established, supported by Council officers, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services to review existing neighbourhood structures to engage communities in decision-making processes.

This work was pivotal within Rotherham Council's Corporate Improvement Plan, "A Fresh Start", and the specific improvement theme of "strong, high impact partnerships" including "active ward Councillors working within neighbourhoods to build community and citizens' capacity".

The scope of the review comprised three elements: creating a Council-wide policy for neighbourhood working, developing a multi-agency approach to neighbourhood working; and, following the adoption of the new locality model, a review of the role and funding of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement Service.

The review was overseen by the working group and included desk research to gather good practice, visits to other authorities to view models of citizen engagement, and consultation with elected members on potential models of delivery.

The proposed model for neighbourhood working was approved by Council in May 2017 with a one-year transitional plan.

Core elements of the approved model were:

- The removal of the area assembly governance framework and dissolution of area assembly coordinating groups.
- That members could agree at a local level how to conduct citizen engagement in a flexible and innovative manner.
- That Wards could work together, where needed, in flexible clusters based on geography and common interest.
- The introduction of quarterly updates from each ward to Cabinet.

- The development of place profiles for each of the 21 wards detailing the demographics and community assets of the area.
- That ward plans would be produced and published outlining ward priorities and activities aligned to the Corporate Plan.
- That the £30,000 currently allocated for area assembly chairs from the community engagement budget in 2017/18 would be distributed evenly to all 21 wards.
- That £210k to be allocated equally across wards from the capital programme in 2017/18, to be utilised as determined by the neighbourhood.
- The Community Leadership Fund of £1,000 per elected member would continue, but Members were encouraged to spend this in line with ward plan priorities.
- That decision making would be delegated to wards with spend approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services.
- That officers would explore how support could be provided to members to secure additional funding both internally and externally.

5. Work of the Neighbourhood Working Member Forum

Since July 2017 the Neighbourhood Working Member Forum has met regularly to oversee the implementation of the transitional plan.

Key milestones and timescales for the transitional plan and the elected members involved in the working group are outlined in the tables below.

Table 1: Transitional Plan - Neighbourhood Working April 2017 to May 2018	
Milestone	Achieved
Cabinet approval of Neighbourhood Working Model	2017
New Neighbourhood Working Member Forum formally constituted to oversee implementation of the new working arrangements	May 2017
Devolved budgets approved as part of the Council budget process	March 2017
Pilot of ward plans	June to October 2017
Communication Plan produced	December 2017
Capacity building – ward walks	October 2017 to January 2018
Neighbourhood Working Member Forum develop the draft Neighbourhood Strategy	November 2017
Member and officer seminar on neighbourhood working	December 2017
Neighbourhood Strategy consultation workshop with elected members	20 th December 2017
Member workshop to review progress implementation	January 2018
Communications Toolkit completed and published	March 2018
Training sessions for officers and elected members on Communications Toolkit	23 rd April
Ward plans completed and published on the Council website	May 2018
Web area on Council website for members	May 2018
Neighbourhood Working Member Forum undertook staffing review with a view to new arrangements being in place by May 2018	Ongoing
Case studies developed and published	June 2018
Review of first year with Neighbourhood Working Member Forum and Officer Group	May / June 2018

Table 2: Councillors involved in the Neighbourhood Forum member working group

Leon Allcock
Sarah Allen
Wendy Cooksey
Robert Elliot
Stuart Sansome
David Sheppard
Taiba Yasseen (Chair from May 2017 – May 2018)
Gordon Watson (Chair from May 2018 – current)

6. Ward plans

Elected member visits to other local authorities showed that planning at ward level is an important building block with regards to neighbourhood working and relationships with communities. Annual ward plans support wider delivery by documenting the issues affecting the ward and the detailed actions required to address them.

Place profiles were developed for each of the 21 wards, providing demographics and detailing the community assets of the area.

Elected members carried out an extensive consultation within their wards with residents to share information on local resources and need, agree local priorities and to develop the ward plans. Once approved, plans for each of the 21 wards were published on the democracy area of the Council's website.

Financial decision-making was delegated to individual wards with spend approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services.

7. Communicating with Neighbourhoods

The Council's Communications and Marketing Team has worked with elected members to develop a corporate communications package providing:

- Training on the use of social media and writing newsletter and press releases
- Corporate templates for ward plans, posters, newsletters and letterheads.

A Twitter and Facebook account have been established and both are used by members and officers to promote work and engage with residents.

A new area on the Council website – Your Neighbourhood – has been developed which incorporates information about each ward, local news and details of the local Councillors.

A new post of Senior Communications Officer has been created within the Neighbourhood Partnership Team, whose role will be to develop a communications campaign to support Councillors and Council staff to engage local residents and encourage them to get involved in improving neighbourhoods, ensuring they are places where people are proud to live.

8. Neighbourhood activity – approach and examples of delivery

A key desired outcome of the new neighbourhood working model is the adoption of a community development and engagement approach which is about “working with” residents on the things that matter to them. This could include co-designing solutions with residents and building on individual and community assets. Community assets include physical assets as well personal, social and community assets. With increased and ongoing fiscal austerity, the development of an asset-based approach, bringing together partners and the community, to align resource both financial and voluntary, brings the capacity to deliver more cost-effective local solutions.

A range of projects have been commissioned through delegated revenue and capital budgets in 2017/18 or delivered through partnership arrangements to address ward plan priorities. Examples of these projects and how they contribute towards an asset-based approach are outlined below.

8.1 Making better use of physical assets

A core component of the asset-based approach is ensuring that physical assets are being utilised in the best way for local people.

Ward budgets have therefore been utilised to purchase physical assets that will help to achieve local priorities. One example is in Boston Castle, where ward budgets were used to fund the installation of a community gym in Clifton Park following requests from residents. Feedback from the community and the Council’s Green Spaces Team has been extremely positive, and the equipment has been so well-used that members have invested further to expand the gym.

Similarly, projects have also focussed on making improvements to existing physical assets to ensure that they can be better utilised. An example of this approach is in Wingfield where the ward budget helped to refurbish a closed community centre for a TARA and other groups to use. The Mayor officially opened the new centre on Tuesday 19th June 2018. Members are now working on the refurbishment of a local library which will have more community space and provide hot-desking facilities for housing and police staff.

8.2 Bringing together partners and the community

Key to the success of the new neighbourhood working model is ensuring that the Council is working effectively with partners and residents.

Road safety is an example of one issue where it is vital for the Council to work in partnership. The Neighbourhoods Team has been working jointly with local schools and communities across the borough to tackle issues relating to road safety, including in Wales, Brinsworth, Catcliffe, Rother Vale and Silverwood. Projects have varied in their approach and have included providing 20mph speed signage around schools and funding school crossing patrols. The involvement of communities and schools in these projects was instrumental to their success.

There are also examples of wards coming together and taking a joint commissioning approach to tackle key issues. This has included projects around community safety, such as the joint commissioning of solar lighting across Maltby, Wickersley and Wales and the joint commissioning of Youth Diversionary Projects in Dinnington and Maltby. This approach has proven beneficial in these cases as a way of making the most of the devolved funding.

8.3 Building community capacity

Many communities are already actively contributing to the outcomes that matter to them, and the Council is working to further empower residents and community groups through the devolution of funding.

One way of devolving this funding has been through the series of Dragon's Den events that have been held across the borough, whereby community groups and residents pitch for funding. The value to these events is not only the funding that groups receive, but the connections it creates between different areas of the community. Following the Keppel Dragon's Den event, one community group member stated:

"The event gave me an opportunity to meet other groups within our ward area and this I found most valuable. It was quite humbling to hear of people who struggle to provide the ways and means to help their fellow neighbours by providing basic things such as transport or tidy gardens that most of us take for granted. It was inspiring to see people go out of their way to make their situations better."

Additionally, there are some excellent examples of community groups driving positive change in their neighbourhoods, such as the Friends of Rawmarsh and Parkgate Green Spaces group. This group was formed in March 2017 to help protect, maintain and improve the local environment and is now formally constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, working widely with other groups including schools, businesses and sports groups. The success of this group is an example of how empowered community groups play a vital role in achieving positive outcomes in neighbourhoods.

9. Budgets

Each of the 21 wards received a devolved revenue budget of £1,453 for the 2017/18 financial year to fund ward plan priorities. In addition, RMBC allocated £10,000 capital investment funding to each ward from the Capital Programme (capital receipts). A breakdown of revenue and capital expenditure is outlined in Table 3 and table 4.

Overall, wards committed and spent 82% of the capital budget and 74% of the revenue budget in 2017/18. In some cases, there were unavoidable delays in budget expenditure often related to capital projects or in-house projects requiring quotes, delivery and installation e.g. hubs and area based improvements (Wingfield). Unallocated funds have been carried over to 2018/19.

The following tables outline the budget and expenditure per ward for the new model for Neighbourhood working for 2017/18. Table 3 outlines the capital budget, expenditure and commitments, not including any budget carried forward from the Area Assembly model. Table 4 outlines the revenue budget, expenditure and commitments.

These tables do not include Community Leadership Fund (CLF) budgets or expenditure because the way that this is currently recorded does not harmonise with the new model for neighbourhood working. It is part of the recommendations of this report that the option of pooling devolved budgets, such as the CLF budget and the ward budgets should be considered.

Table 3: Neighbourhoods Budgets – Capital				
	Budget 2017/18	2017/18 Actual Expenditure	Committed spend c/fwd	Total expenditure and commitments, 2017/18
North				
Valley	10,000	0	7,710	7,710
Silverwood	10,000	8,515	0	8,515
Rawmarsh	10,000	6,533	0	6,533
Wath	10,000	2,000	1,500	3,500
Swinton	10,000	4,615	3,250	7,865
Hoober	10,000	6,209	1,150	7,359
South				
Dinnington	10,000	10,001	0	10,001
Anston Woodsetts	10,000	10,000	0	10,000
Wales	10,000	10,000	0	10,000
Rother Vale	10,000	6,928	2,870	9,798
Holderness	10,000	4,854	5,202	10,056
Brinsworth/ Catcliffe	10,000	9,034	900	9,934
Maltby	10,000	3,870	6,130	10,000
Hellaby	10,000	10,000	0	10,000
Wickersley	10,000	383	3,200	3,583
Central				
Keppel	10,000	500	7,017	7,517
Wingfield	10,000	0	12,129	12,129
Rotherham West	10,000	4,255	0	4,255
Rotherham East	10,000	3,840	3,750	7,590
Boston Castle	10,000	7,402	614	8,016
Sitwell	10,000	1,000	10,640	11,640
Total	210,000	109,933	61,311	171,245

Table 4: Neighbourhoods Budgets – Revenue				
	Budget 2017/18	2017/18 Actual Expenditure	Committed spend c/fwd	Total expenditure and commitments, 2017/18
North				
Valley	1,453	0		0
Silverwood	1,453	750	0	750
Rawmarsh	1,453	1,066	0	1,066
Wath	1,453	485	0	485
Swinton	1,453	1,103	0	1,103
Hoober	1,453	20		20
South				
Dinnington	1,453	1,450	0	1,450
Anston Woodsetts	1,453	782	660	1,442
Wales	1,453	988	309	1,297
Rother Vale	1,453	691	0	691
Holderness	1,453	0	1,015	1,015
Brinsworth/ Catcliffe	1,453	785	330	1,115
Maltby	1,453	550	380	930
Hellaby	1,453	1,450	0	1,450
Wickersley	1,453	1,453	0	1,453
Central				
Keppel	1,453	0	1,350	1,350
Wingfield	1,453	1,450	0	1,450
Rotherham West	1,453	0	975	975
Rotherham East	1,453	1,452	0	1,452
Boston Castle	1,453	1,453	0	1,453
Sitwell	1,453	1,000	500	1,500
Total	30,513	16,928	5,519	22,447

10. Learning

The last 12 months have provided the opportunity for members and officers to develop the new neighbourhood working model. In December, two member workshops were held to assess how things were working on the ground and to get feedback on the learning so far. A number of members have also been interviewed to gather their views. These are summarised below:

10.1 What has worked well?

Members, in the main, feel that area assemblies often attracted the same audience at every meeting whereas by utilising a range of engagement and communication methods the new approach has meant they are able to reach more residents, build closer relationships with their communities and partner organisations and - most importantly - align and share resources. This more diverse variety of engagement methods has allowed Councillors to extend their reach with residents. Activities included:

- “Councillors on tour” and ward walks
- Ward plan celebration events
- Community drop-ins
- “Meet your Councillor” events at supermarkets, summer fayres and galas, and coffee mornings
- Outreach activity to sheltered housing or residential homes
- Dragons Den community funding events
- Formal scheduled ward network events involving the public and local voluntary, community and faith groups
- The “Wingfield Wednesday” group where members meet every six weeks with schools, children’s services, housing, highways and the police to discuss issues
- Increased use of email, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and newsletters, as well as linking to school email systems to disseminate information to parents

Ward plans have proven useful in providing a reader-friendly summary of local demographic information, known and emerging issues and planned actions. The report attached at appendix 1 provides a summary of the issues covered in the ward plans. Members were positive about the dedicated officer support which, together with the devolved ward budgets, has enabled them to focus on their own wards, developing bespoke approaches and avoiding tensions between wards. In some cases, members have agreed to pool the Community Leadership Fund with the ward budget to provide increased alignment and greater impact. A number of members have reported that they now feel more confident disbursing grants and managing larger budgets.

Guided by ward plans, members have seen increased coordination and alignment of activity across partner organisations, reducing duplication of effort. There are more opportunities to initiate ward-based projects and cross-ward activity is also starting to emerge. Examples include community safety solar lighting projects in Maltby, Wickersley and Wales.

Finally, the approach to member surgeries has improved, with more residents raising issues and some Councillors planning joint surgeries on a less frequent basis or coordinating meetings to include other partners such as housing and South Yorkshire Police.

10.2 What hasn't worked well?

In terms of member engagement it was suggested that a training and development for members around community engagement and asset-based working, possibly incorporating a buddying or mentoring scheme would be beneficial.

Other identified areas of training include casework management, dealing with complaints, and understanding the role and contribution of umbrella organisations such as Voluntary Action Rotherham, Rotherfed and Age UK.

Ward plans are user-friendly in terms of language, but the level of detail on priorities and actions is variable. Many wards do, however, have more detailed action plans at a local level which enable members to monitor progress.

Currently, there isn't a consistent approach at area level to engage and bring together public, private and voluntary agencies to improve the coordination of activity and enable new ideas to develop. The new community safety arrangements are helping to address this issue, as are the multi-agency groups that are starting to gather momentum, working on a north, south and central footprint. Neighbourhood partnership officers are involved in both and will help to ensure the emerging structures are aware of ward-based issues and priorities.

It was also noted that links between parish Councils and members vary across the borough, and there is a need to improve relationships in some parishes to support local planning and delivery. Similarly, there are opportunities to achieve greater alignment with area housing panels and the budgets they oversee.

In terms of finances, the working group felt that the level of devolved budget, although modest, was appropriate for the first year. However, capital as a percentage of the total budget was thought, by some, to be too high and a more flexible approach was preferred. In some areas, budgets were not spent, and it was suggested that spend details are published so that residents are aware.

Some members have suggested that devolved budgets should be apportioned based on deprivation levels as this would better reflect the level of resource needed across

wards. One approach could be for baseline budgets to be topped up utilising other sources of funding such as the area housing budgets.

Finally, it was noted that many local groups need support to draw up a constitution and access funding. This kind of support is available from Voluntary Action Rotherham as part of their infrastructure grant agreement with the Council.

10.3 What assets can we draw on?

A range of personal, social, community and physical assets have been highlighted by members and include:

- The Community Leadership Fund and the ward level budgets
- Voluntary, community and faith groups and uniformed groups. These groups already provide a range of activities at local level and these need to be incorporated and aligned in ward plans
- Schools which can provide an excellent vehicle for communication to parents and children and engagement in ward activities
- Community centres could be used more widely making them easier to hire and raising awareness of their facilities to residents
- Frontline staff from statutory agencies who are already working on the ground
- Sports clubs
- Private sector involvement and encouraging local businesses to contribute funding or volunteering to deliver ward priorities
- External funding (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund /Don Valley Catchment Trust/Big Lottery) to deliver capital and revenue activity
- Utilising forgotten/disused land or other outdoor spaces for projects, e.g. allotment projects
- Revitalising buildings via community asset transfer can provide local community hubs
- Neighbourhood Watch in terms of crime and antisocial behaviour
- Voluntary sector umbrella organisations such as Rotherfed and Voluntary Action Rotherham who can provide support for groups to become formally constituted in order to access funding

- The National Citizenship Service who can support young volunteers to deliver projects in the community.

10.4 Who else needs to be more closely involved?

Elected Members have identified a range of organisations that need to be involved as the neighbourhood working approach evolves. These vary from ward to ward and include:

- Parish Councils
- RotherFed / Tenants and Residents Associations (Tara's)
- Schools
- Police
- Fire and Rescue
- Health
- Children and Families Services – Social Care and Early Help
- Rotary clubs / Roundtable / Lions
- Local volunteers
- Uniformed organisations
- Churches
- Both national and local businesses

10.5 How can we measure success?

An asset-based approach (ABA) focuses on building the skills and strengths within communities and the positive capacity of individuals and communities rather than solely on the needs, deficits and problems.

The challenge in measuring the impact of asset-based approaches is to ensure that evaluation is valuable, relevant and proportionate; balancing the need for evidence of what works alongside maintaining quality trusting relationships with the community. There currently isn't a clear framework for measuring success but whatever is implemented needs to reflect both outputs and outcomes which need to be measured from a community perspective.

One model that could be adopted to address this is an outcome-based accountability (OBA) model. The OBA model focusses on measuring the impact of asset-based approaches with all stakeholders and using locally devised frameworks to measure softer outcomes, e.g. health, social or environmental outcomes utilising citizen surveys, resident satisfaction surveys or case studies.

11. Recommendations

Successful neighbourhood working involves proactive engagement with residents and drawing on local assets in terms of buildings, people and organisations. In the first year of the new arrangements, steady progress has been made in engaging the public, voluntary, community and private sectors in terms of sharing assets and working as partners in commissioning local activities to meet ward priorities.

In order to further embed the model consistently across wards over the next year, the following recommendations are made:

1. Communication and engagement

- a) Promote the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy amongst residents, community organisations, Council staff and partners in order to get people involved and to explore opportunities for joint delivery.
- b) Ensure that members, Council officers, partners and local people know where to find information on local assets and that the information is regularly refreshed to ensure it remains accurate.
- c) Provide support to community groups, particularly in relation to developing a constitution and applying for funding, or ensure they are consistently signposted to support that is already available (i.e. from VAR or RotherFed).

2. Governance

- a) Continue to use the Neighbourhood Member Working Forum to drive business and to monitor progress of the neighbourhood working model.
- b) Ensure that each ward plan is refreshed and includes clear actions up to 2020.
- c) Establish a set of minimum requirements for the governance of neighbourhood working including:
 - Formalising ward meetings and ensuring that a minimum of 4 meetings take place per year in each ward. The ward meetings should bring together ward members and officers to review delivery of the ward plan and to make decisions regarding devolved budgets and key priorities such as CCTV deployment
 - Developing a resident engagement strategy in each ward as part of the development of the ward plan.

- d) Consider the option of pooling devolved budgets (for example, the CLF budget and the ward budget) and harmonise the processes for allocating funding.
- e) Design and implement a robust evaluation framework to measure impact and outcomes.

3. Joint working and coordination of activity

- a) Review the Area Housing Panels to align them with the new neighbourhood working model.
- b) Forge closer relationships with Parish Councils by working together on shared priorities and reducing duplication of effort.
- c) Embed an asset based approach by ensuring ongoing training and development for members and officers.
- d) Implement the Thriving Neighbourhoods strategy across the Council and clarify how each part of the Council will support neighbourhood working.

12. Bibliography

Table 4 Bibliography
Rotherham Council's Corporate Improvement Plan, "A Fresh Start" (2015),
Review of Neighbourhood Working (Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making Meeting (10 April 2017)
Review of Neighbourhood Working Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting (10 October 2016)
Neighbourhood Working Model Cabinet and Full Council (July 2017).

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Appendix 1 - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council 2018 Ward Plans: April 2018

Purpose

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) is undergoing a transition to a new neighbourhood working model, which is defined by an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach. As part of this transition, the borough has been divided into three areas (North, South and Central) and individual plans have been produced for each ward within the borough.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Review known and emerging issues from the ward plans
- Identify common themes across each area (North, South, Central) and opportunities for wards to work on issues together
- Outline the assets identified in the ward plans for each area

Key Findings

There was a level of consensus across the borough, with wards within all three areas identifying similar known and emerging issues.

The issues cited in the ward plans have been collated into broad themes. The following diagram demonstrates the frequency with which these themes arose across all of the ward plans:

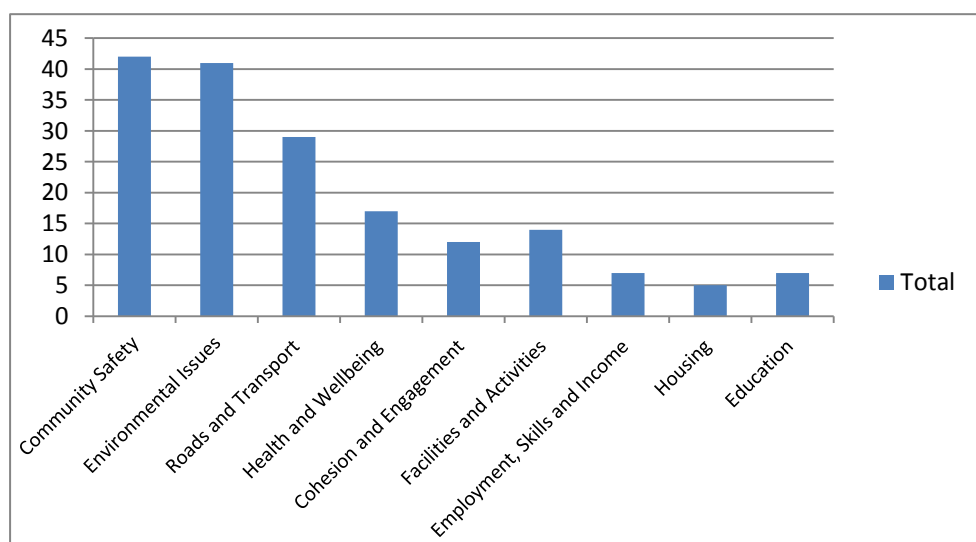


Figure 1: Issues within ward plans categorised into themes

It is important to note that the South area is made up of 9 wards, whilst the North and Central are made up of 6 each. This means that theoretically, for issues to be evenly distributed, the figures for the South should be 1.5 times higher than those for the Central and North areas. Therefore, if certain themes emerged more frequently within ward plans for the South area, these issues may not actually be more prevalent proportionate to the number of wards the South area encompasses. An analysis of the ward plans revealed the following findings:

- The top three known and emerging issues within the ward plans for the **South** were Environmental Issues (19 mentions), Crime and Community Safety (17 mentions) and Roads and Transport (14 mentions.)
- The **Central** area had the same top three known and emerging issues as the South. However, issues relating to Crime and Community Safety were the most prevalent by a significant margin, with 14 mentions, followed by 8 mentions of issues relating to the environment and 7 relating to roads and transport. Proportionate to the number of wards, issues relating to Crime and Community Safety were mentioned more frequently within the Central area in contrast with the South and North.
- Within the **North** area of the borough, Environmental Issues was the most frequently cited theme (14 mentions), followed by Crime and Community Safety (11 mentions) and Facilities (8 mentions.)

In contrast, issues relating to Education, Housing and Employment, Skills and Income were identified as known and emerging issues in significantly fewer ward plans across the borough. However, whilst a large number of ward plans did not explicitly identify these as known and emerging issues, this does not mean that there are not challenges relating to each of these across the borough.

For some themes, such as Environmental Issues, the challenges were cross-cutting throughout the borough, (for example, fly-tipping, dog-fouling and littering were frequently mentioned across all three areas.) However, for other themes, such as Roads and Transport, differing priorities emerged; road safety was mentioned in a significant number of ward plans within the South, but in no ward plans within the North or Central, indicating that there are issues that only apply to certain areas of the borough. Figure 2 (see below) displays the frequency with which themes emerged within the three areas.

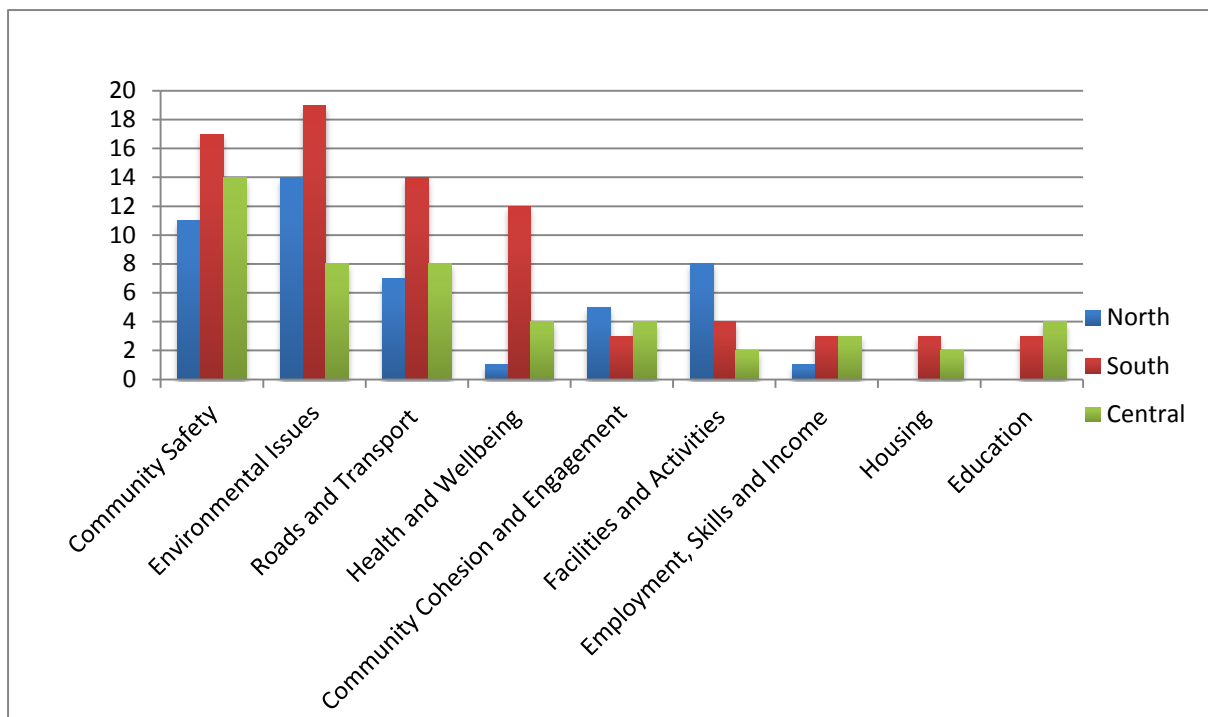


Figure 2: Number of times each theme was cited within the ward plans

Furthermore, in terms of mapping the issues geographically, it is also important to note that all three areas have wards which border (see map below). This is relevant as within the ward plans, there was evidence of issues that are geographically isolated to bordering wards, but which cross area boundaries. Therefore, it will be vital that the approach of the new model facilitates opportunities for areas to work together on shared issues.

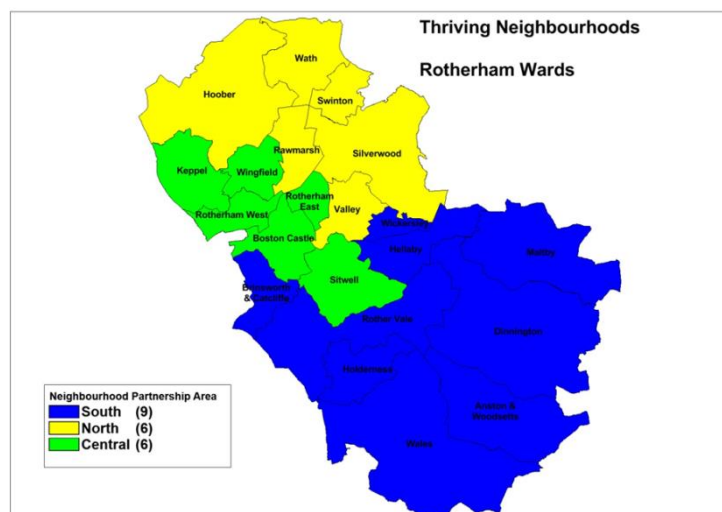


Figure 3: Map of Rotherham by wards and area

Deprivation was also an indicator for some issues, but not others. For example, speeding was cited as an issue in the most deprived ward, the least deprived ward and in a range of wards in between. However, anti-social behaviour emerged more frequently within wards facing significant challenges around deprivation.

Interestingly, deprivation also appears to impact on how wards intend to address certain issues. For example, the two most deprived wards identified different actions relating to addressing environmental issues, than any of the other wards.

Additionally, there were key differences relating to the numbers of community assets identified within each area. Figure 4 (see below) demonstrates that the ward plans within the Central area identified significantly higher numbers of individuals and groups that are considered to be community assets than the South or North areas – (although it should be noted that this may have been impacted by Keppel, which was a significant outlier, identifying 35 individuals/groups out of the total of 123 identified within the area.) It is also important to note that two wards from the South (Brinsworth and Catcliffe and Rother Vale) failed to explicitly mention any assets within their ward. This is likely to have skewed the overall figures for the South area.

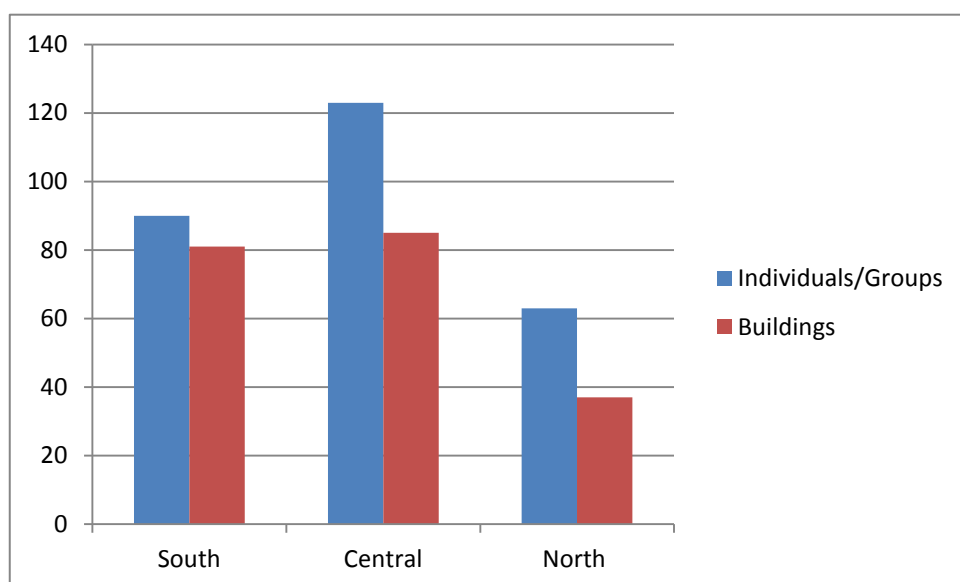


Figure 4: Community assets identified within ward plans

Overall, the ward plans do present a view of certain differing priorities and characteristics within each area. However, whilst some issues can be mapped by geographical area, many cannot, and there are a number of issues that do not appear to fit comfortably within area boundaries. This includes issues that do not appear to be influenced by geography at all, issues that are geographical but which cross area boundaries and issues that are cross-cutting and borough-wide.

Deprivation

As key differences emerged regarding the known and emerging issues within wards depending on the levels of deprivation, it is vital to understand the current context relating the deprivation in the borough.

Rotherham is one of the most deprived 20% of English districts and deprivation affects all wards to a greater or lesser degree. The main forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are high worklessness, poor health and low qualifications. Low income is also an issue, especially affecting children in the more deprived areas and high crime rates are a problem in many deprived neighbourhoods. Poor housing conditions exist mainly in the private rented sector which is an issue for a few areas. A key message from analysis of deprivation data over the last ten years has been the increasingly polarised nature of the Borough with deprivation increasing in those areas already deprived and reducing in the least deprived areas.

The general pattern features a large concentration of high deprivation across the Central area. Rotherham East is the most deprived ward in Rotherham and almost all parts of the ward are affected. Boston Castle, Rotherham West and Wingfield are also amongst the most deprived five wards in Rotherham.

Elsewhere there are pockets of high deprivation within more mixed communities. North Rotherham has high deprivation in Valley ward, ranked second in the Borough, and there are smaller pockets in each ward. South Rotherham is generally the least deprived part of the Borough although there is still significant deprivation in former mining communities such as Maltby (the most deprived ward in the South) and Dinnington.

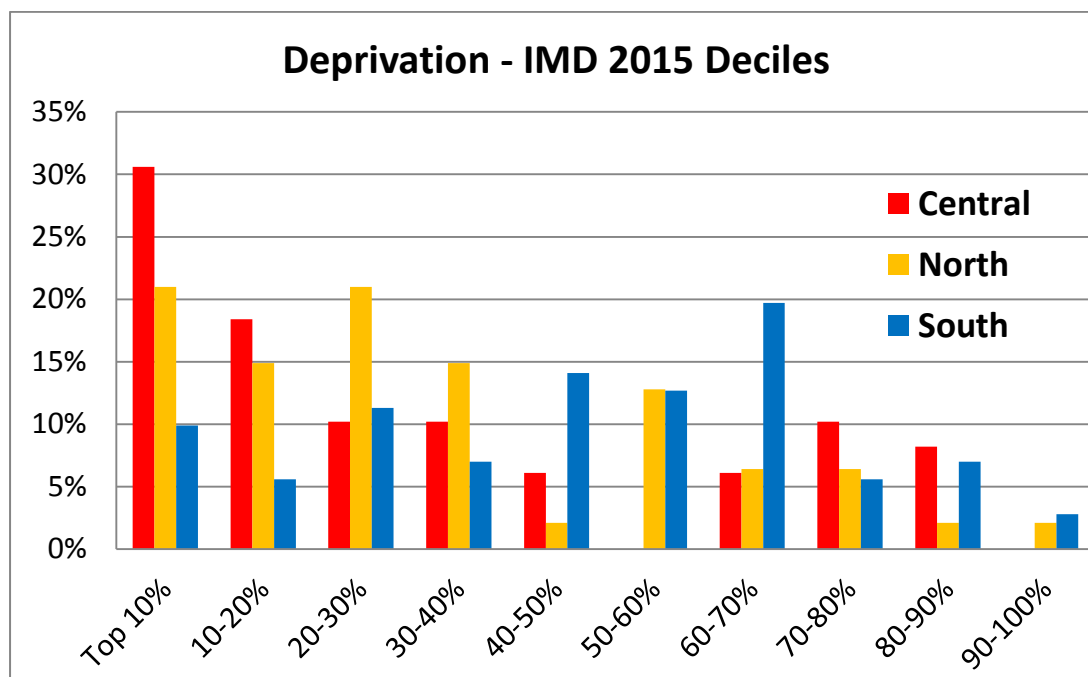


Figure 5: IMD 2015 Deprivation Deciles by Area

The graph above shows that 31% of Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Central Rotherham are in the most deprived 10% of England compared with only 10% in

South Rotherham. About three quarters of areas in both Central and North are more deprived than the national average whereas South is more balanced between high and low deprivation with over half the area being within 20% of the national average.

Rotherham Wards by Estimated IMD 2015 Score and Equivalent SOA Rank*

Ward	Average IMD Score	Equivalent SOA Rank	Percentile (top x%)	Rotherham Rank
North Rotherham				
Hoober	26.8	9,839	30%	9
Rawmarsh	32.5	7,114	22%	7
Silverwood	22.4	12,442	38%	13
Swinton	27.4	9,521	29%	8
Valley	45.3	3,123	10%	2
Wath	25.9	10,345	31%	11
Central Rotherham				
Boston Castle	37.5	5,300	16%	5
Keppel	20.8	13,646	42%	15
Rotherham East	57.7	1,139	4%	1
Rotherham West	42.3	3,843	12%	3
Sitwell	12.4	21,370	65%	21
Wingfield	40.3	4,413	13%	4
South Rotherham				
Anston & Woodsetts	14.2	19,404	59%	19
Brinsworth & Catcliffe	20.2	14,102	43%	16
Dinnington	26.6	9,909	30%	10
Hellaby	13.1	20,594	63%	20
Holderness	21.6	12,999	40%	14
Maltby	36.6	5,584	17%	6
Rother Vale	23.2	11,953	36%	12
Wales	14.9	18,739	57%	18
Wickersley	19.8	14,421	44%	17
ROTHERHAM	28.3	9,023	28%	

Key to Colour Codes

Most Deprived 10%	
Most Deprived 10-20%	
Most Deprived 20-30%	
Most Deprived 30-50%	
Least Deprived 50%	

Estimated IMD scores are calculated by adding the population weighted scores for SOAs (or part) within the ward and dividing by the population. Equivalent SOA rank is the rank the estimated ward (or district) score would have if it were attributed to an SOA, ranked out of 32,844 SOAs in England.

Thematic Analysis

Environmental Issues

Environmental issues emerged as a key theme across the borough, featuring within every single ward plan. This was the theme that came up the most frequently in ward plans within both the South and the North, which suggests that improving the environment is a headline priority. As every ward plan referred to these types of issues, there appears to be no clear correlation between demographics and environmental issues within neighbourhoods.

The types of issues that were mentioned were largely consistent across all three areas. These were: fly-tipping, littering and dog-fouling, as well as unspecific mentions of 'environmental issues.' As well as these issues, two wards plans from the North also mentioned other issues: graffiti (Wath) and the need for cleaner, greener space (Hoover). This could indicate that some of the wards within the North area face different challenges around maintaining pleasant built-up spaces.

Within the action plan section, a significant portion mentioned community litter-picks. There may therefore, be an opportunity to coordinate litter-picking initiatives across ward boundaries.

The two most deprived wards (Rotherham East and Valley) both mentioned the development of artwork in public spaces as an action around improving the environment. This indicates that although environmental issues are a priority across all of the wards, the most deprived wards aim to address these in different ways.

Roads, Transport and Traffic

Issues relating to road, transport and traffic were also frequently cited in ward plans across all three areas, with 17 of the 21 ward plans mentioning issues that fell within this category. However, different priorities emerged for each area within this theme.

The most prevalent issue within ward plans from the South area of the borough was road safety, whilst this was not mentioned in any of the ward plans from the North or Central areas. Similarly, speeding emerged as the most frequently cited issue within the Central ward plans, yet this did not emerge as an issue within any of the ward plans from the South, and in only one ward plan from the North (Valley) which borders the Central area. Furthermore, the condition of roads was mentioned within a significant portion of ward plans for the South and the North, whilst this was mentioned in none of the Central ward plans. This indicates that there is a diverse range of issues facing the borough in relation to roads, transport and traffic, and that these differ based on geographical area.

For some issues, deprivation appears not to be an indicator. As an example, speeding was cited as an issue in the most deprived ward, the least deprived ward

and a diverse demographic of wards in between. In contrast, issues relating to road safety appeared only in the lesser deprived half of wards.

Crime and Community Safety

Crime and Community Safety emerged from the ward plans as a significant issue across the borough, with 17 of 21 ward plans citing these types of issues. This was the most prevalent theme in the ward plans from the Central area.

The majority of ward plans cited relatively broad issues within this theme, such as community safety or crime and anti-social behaviour. Although these are relatively general categories, there was a clear correlation between deprivation and the issues cited – the most deprived wards identified crime and anti-social behaviour as an issue, whilst the lesser deprived wards (with the exception of Wickersley) cited community safety. This may be a matter of semantics, but it may suggest that there are different issues relating to crime and community safety emerging in wards dependent on levels of deprivation.

Rotherham East, Rotherham West, Wingfield and Rawmarsh specifically cited drug and alcohol usage and drug-dealing as key issues. These are neighbouring wards meaning that there is an opportunity for wards to work in collaboration to determine hotspots for criminal activity relating to drugs.

The ward plans also suggest that issues relating to anti-social transport behaviour are emerging within pockets of the borough. For example, bordering wards Rotherham East and Silverwood, both mentioned nuisance motorbikes as an issue. Similarly, off-road biking was also mentioned as a key issue within the plans for neighbouring wards, Wingfield and Rawmarsh. Therefore, there could be an opportunity for these wards to collaborate in mapping the hotspots and causes behind these issues.

In terms of actions to address Crime and ASB within the ward plans, the most frequently proposed actions were partnership working with the police and working to identify hotspots for anti-social behaviour.

Facilities and Activities

The need to improve facilities and activities was also a significant theme within the ward plans, although this emerged more frequently within the ward plans for the North than it did within the ward plans from the South or Central area.

In terms of the types of facilities and activities that the ward plans mentioned, the majority referred to facilities or activities for young people and their families, with the mention of 'diversionary activities' coming up in multiple ward plans. There was no evident correlation regarding the need for improved facilities and activities for young

people and levels of deprivation. This may indicate that the borough-wide offer for children and young people in Rotherham is not meeting residents' expectations.

Certain ward plans also mentioned improvements to be made to existing facilities such as Lyme Tree Recreational Ground (Hellaby) and making better use of existing facilities, such as Neighbourhood Centres (Valley.) Valley in particular mentioned the need to map facilities to open them up for residents and community groups.

Employment, Skills and Income Deprivation

Unsurprisingly, all six of the most deprived wards within the borough featured employment, skills or income deprivation as known and emerging issues. All of these wards are either within the most deprived 10% or 20% of wards in England.

One of the key issues that emerged within these wards was low levels of adult education, and the relationship between employment and skills, which is consistent with the information around deprivation that is outlined above. However, within the action plan section, none of the ward plans proposed actions relating to improving the skills profile of adults with no or low qualifications. This indicates that it may not be clear how to address these kinds of issues at a local level, and there may be a need for a coordinated and strategic borough-wide approach.

Some ward plans also raised issues around increasing polarisation in terms of skills deprivation. With regards to qualifications, this was particularly evident within the Central wards such as Keppel and Boston Castle. For example, within both of these wards, the proportion of adults with higher qualifications exceeds the borough average, but the proportion of adults with no qualifications is also above the borough average. Such polarisation poses a significant issue to community cohesion. However, in seeking 'local solutions to local problems' the high proportion of adults with higher qualifications could be an asset and a resource for upskilling the community as a whole.

A number of the plans also mentioned that there are portions of wards that are significantly more deprived than the ward as a whole. Examples include Flanderwell in Wickersley and either side of Lordens Hill in Dinnington. The Wickersley ward plan also raised the issue of income deprivation amongst the older populace as a known and emerging issue.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing featured in a significant number of ward plans, and there were clear differences between the types of issues coming out in each area.

Four of the ward plans within the South mentioned loneliness and social isolation in older people. In terms of deprivation, these wards are relatively varied, but all fall within the lower half of the deprivation ranking for the borough, which indicates that

there may be an inverse correlation between deprivation and social isolation amongst the elderly. Another ward plan from the South mentioned mental health awareness as a key issue, and there are clear linkages between the need for increased awareness of mental health issues and the prevalence of social isolation and loneliness.

Within ward plans for the Central area, the issues were more broadly cited as 'health deprivation.' The majority of wards which mentioned health deprivation in these broad terms were ranked within the top 10 in the borough in terms of wider deprivation issues. This suggests that there is a clear correlation between economic and health deprivation.

In contrast, within the North only one ward plan cited issues relating to health and wellbeing, and this was specifically regarding the ageing population.

Community Cohesion and Engagement

Community cohesion and engagement was mentioned across ward plans in all three areas, and a number of issues came out. The most prevalent issue was the need to celebrate heritage, as this was raised in ward plans within both the South and Central areas. In terms of actions, these wards suggested positive and engaging events and initiatives as a means of achieving this goal.

Similarly, a ward plan from the North raised the issue to recognise strong communities and distinct geographic identities. This indicates that there is a strong sense of community within the North area which could be a significant asset for the new neighbourhood working model, but that this is relatively localised to specific neighbourhoods.

The need to improve engagement practices was also a common issue, although the focus was different depending upon the ward. One ward plan within the South noted that there was a need to improve engagement with particular groups, notably young people and the elderly. Within the Central area, the focus was around engaging on particular issues, i.e. acknowledging diversity within the ward through engagement. Finally, within the North, one ward plan focussed on the methods of engagement, arguing that there was a need to utilise social media to support engagement.

Education

Education did not emerge as an issue within ward plans for the North or Central areas, but it was mentioned in ward plans for the South. The key issues that were mentioned were:

- Family learning
- Schools provision

The fact that education did not emerge as a common issue indicates that there is a high level of satisfaction with the education offer within the borough.

Housing

Issues relating to housing emerged within both the South and Central area, but were not mentioned within any ward plans for the North. This suggests that the Housing provision within the North of the borough is considered to be less of a priority than it is within the South and Central.

The types of issues were relatively diverse within the South of the borough. Multiple ward plans cited issues around private rented housing as an issue. There were also mentions of poor standards of housing and the need for a cladding project. Social factors were also cited including housing deprivation in one ward.

Within the ward plans from the Central area, the issues were less diverse, with a particular focus on the development of new build properties and the need for starter homes.

Community Assets

There was also a section within the ward plans focussed on outlining the various assets within communities, including individuals/groups and buildings. There was a variable approach to this section within the ward plans, with two wards (Brinsworth and Catcliffe and Rother Vale) not explicitly naming any community assets, but rather focussing on the vision of working with communities to improve outcomes. Therefore, these lists are unlikely to reflect an accurate view of the assets within each community.

Similar types of organisations and buildings came up across a large number of the ward plans. This included:

- Schools
- Religious Buildings and Denominations
- Village Halls
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Parish Councils
- Gyms and Leisure Centres
- Youth and Community Centres
- TARAs
- 'Friends of' Groups
- Hobbies/Clubs

The following sections detail the number of community assets listed within each ward plan, broken down into the three areas.

South

The number of assets identified in the different ward plans within the South is outlined in the graph below (see Figure 6 below.)

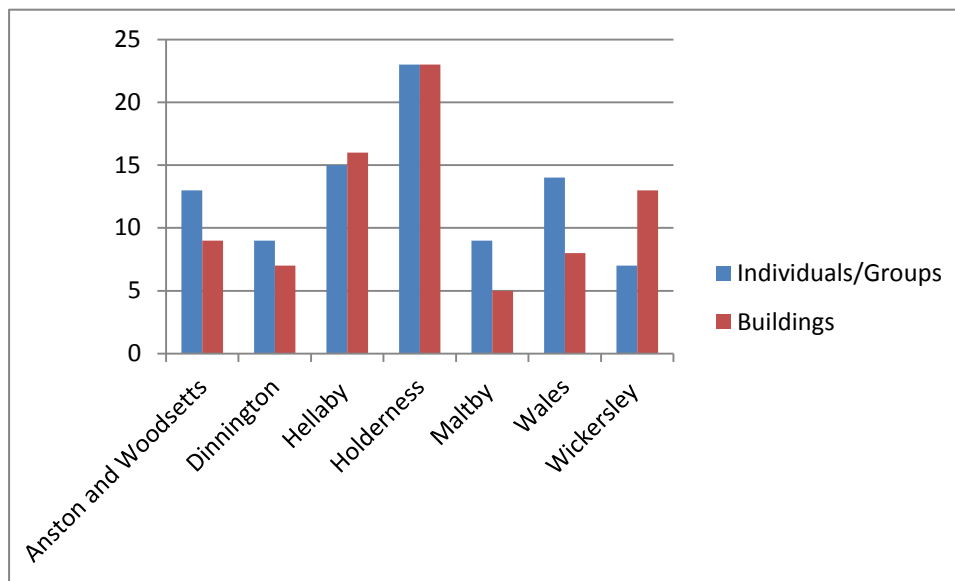


Figure 6: Community assets identified within ward plans from the South

Proportionate to the number of wards within the South, there were fewer individuals/groups and buildings identified within these ward plans than within ward plans from the North and Central area. However, this was impacted by Brinsworth and Catcliffe and Rother Vale not naming any specific community assets within the ward plans. Holderness was a significant outlier in the high number of assets listed, whilst Maltby and Dinnington identified much fewer.

Central

The number of assets identified in the different ward plans within the Central area is outlined in the graph below (see Figure 7 below.)

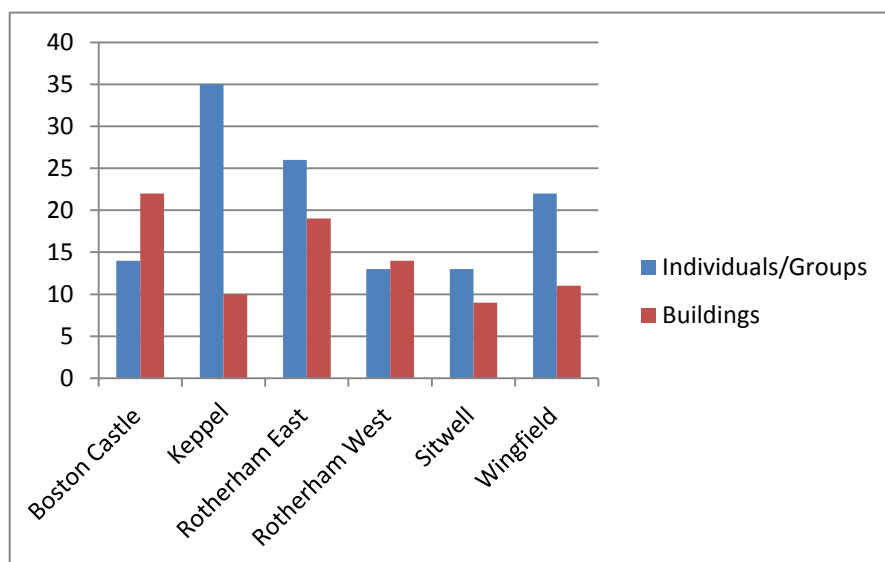


Figure 7: Community assets identified within ward plans from the Central

Ward plans within the Central area included the highest number of known community assets. However, there were significant outliers in this. Whilst the ward plan for Keppel identified a large number of individuals/groups, it also identified very few buildings. Furthermore, Sitwell listed very few community assets within either category.

North

The number of assets identified in the different ward plans within the Central area is outlined in the graph below (see Figure 8 below.)

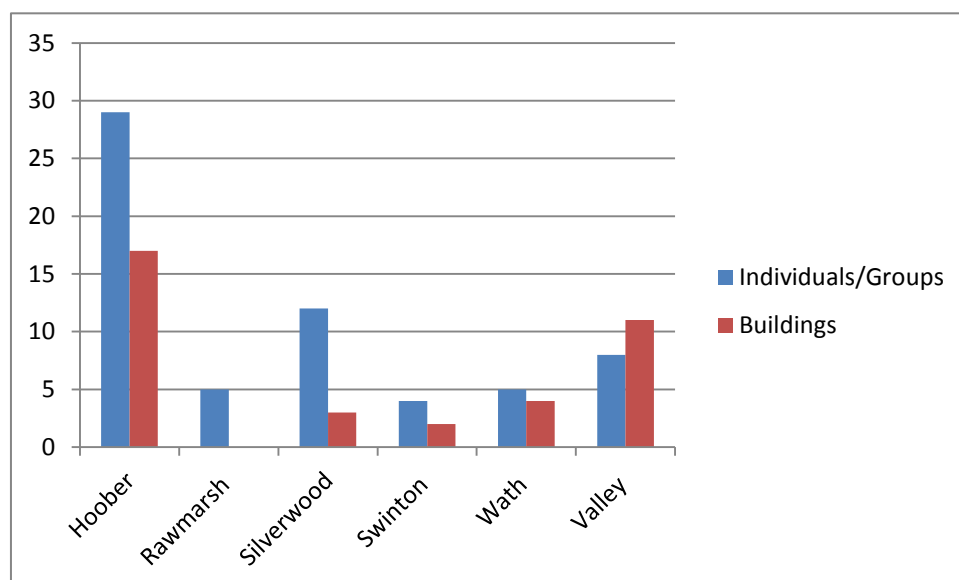


Figure 8: Community assets identified within ward plans from the North

Overall, the ward plans within the North identified the fewest numbers of individuals/groups and buildings out of all three areas. This is interesting considering that facilities emerged as a key theme within ward plans within the North. However, Hooper identified a large number of both individuals/groups and buildings.

Conclusion

There are certain trends that have emerged from the ward plans, which could inform the approach of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Programme. However, there are limitations to the information identified within the ward plans, and this report should therefore be understood in the context of the wider intelligence the Council has regarding neighbourhoods.

Name of Accountable Officer(s): Jackie Mould, Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement

Appendices to this report available upon request, these include:

- Outline of Themes within Ward Plans
- Outline of Community Assets Identified within Ward Plans