

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 21 September 2020

**Report Title**

Voluntary Sector Infrastructure

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

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide or Name of Ward  
Name of Ward

**Report Summary**

At their meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017, Cabinet and Commissioners gave approval to a review and renewed approach to the delivery of Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Services. This led to the award of a three-year service level agreement (SLA) with Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) running from April 2018 to March 2021.

The SLA has, within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, been prioritised to cover the following activity:-

- Supporting the move to North, South and Central community-based working and the evolving council approach to neighbourhood working by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough.

- Supporting the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal).
- Encouraging greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational levels across networks and partnerships in the Borough.
- Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners.
- Providing external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the Borough. and
- Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.

In doing so, the SLA brought together working with both VAR and Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA) into a single SLA.

This report makes recommendations for the next three-year Infrastructure SLA for the period April 2021 to March 2024, taking forward the commitments set out in the Rotherham Compact, building on experience gained through the current SLA, taking account of research on the impact of COVID 19, and setting out a aspirational strategic approach for the future of the voluntary and community sector in Rotherham.

The report also takes account of seeking to achieve “excellent” accreditation under the Equality Framework for Local Government and address the equalities implications arising from the COVID 19 emergency. This will be completed undertaking a review and course of action that will be set out in a further report to Cabinet. To this end, it is recommended that the equalities component of the current SLA be separated from the future VCS Infrastructure arrangements and incorporated into the equalities review.

The recommended approach will protect the services currently provided by REMA around increasing capacity of ethnic minority organisations for at least a year, whilst the Council undertakes a wider piece of work to improve equalities and consider how that grant funding might contribute to that. At the same time funding of the wider VCS infrastructure work will continue based on the remaining funding available.

## **Recommendations**

1. That approval be given to progress arrangements for VCS Infrastructure Services in Rotherham, including:-
  - a. Co-design with voluntary sector organisations for services to be delivered through a SLA for three years commencing from April 2021;
  - b. Invitation to bid and appointment of a VCS organisation to lead on the co-design process.
2. That as part of the Council’s work to review equalities in Rotherham, the future arrangements for working with and for support for REMA be excluded from the Infrastructure SLA and included in the review.

3. That the terms of the current SLA, so far as they apply to REMA, be extended for one year pending the review of equalities.

### **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Initial Equality Screening Assessment

#### **Background Papers**

Public Health England: Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups (16 June 2020)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/892376/COVID\\_stakeholder\\_engagement\\_synthesis\\_beyond\\_the\\_data.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892376/COVID_stakeholder_engagement_synthesis_beyond_the_data.pdf)

Public Health England: Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 (2 June 2020)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/892085/disparities\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf)

The Rotherham Compact

<https://www.varotherham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Rotherham-Compact-2017.pdf>

#### **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

#### **Council Approval Required**

No

#### **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Voluntary Sector Infrastructure

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Background</b>   |
| 1.1       | The current three-year service level agreement (SLA) for voluntary sector infrastructure services expires at the end of March 2021.   |
| 1.2       | This report makes recommendations for the next three-year Infrastructure SLA for the period April 2021 to March 2024, taking forward the commitments around co-design set out in the Rotherham Compact.   |
| 1.3       | The co-design will build on experience gained through the current SLA, taking account of research on the impact of COVID 19, and setting out an aspirational strategic approach for the future of the voluntary and community sector in Rotherham.  |
| 1.4       | The report also takes account of the Council's aspiration to achieve "excellent" accreditation under the Equality Framework for Local Government and address the equalities implications arising from the COVID 19 emergency. This will be completed undertaking a review and course of action that will be set out in a further report to Cabinet. To this end, it is recommended that the equalities component of the current SLA be separated from the future VCS Infrastructure arrangements and incorporated into the equalities review.   |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| 2.1       | Infrastructure services over the period of the current SLA have been designed to provide support that helps voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations across the Borough to become more effective and sustainable.   |
| 2.2       | The support is provided through information, advice, training facilities and help with networking, partnerships, advocacy and campaigning. It includes specific support for volunteering, supporting people to set up voluntary and community organisations or social enterprises, and bringing VCS groups/organisations together in networks and forums to inform and influence strategic planning.  |
| 2.3       | That within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, the grant funding agreement has been prioritised around the following activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the move to North, South and Central community-based working and the evolving council approach to neighbourhood working by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the Borough;</li> <li>• Supporting the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal);</li> </ul> |

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|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational levels across networks and partnerships in the Borough;</li> <li>• Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;</li> <li>• Providing external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the Borough; and</li> <li>• Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.</li> </ul> |
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|      | <u>Activity and Outputs</u>   |
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| 2.4  | Activity against outputs are agreed with both VAR and REMA as part of the SLA, which shows beneficiaries supported in 2019/20 of 418 individuals and 241 organisations. Individuals supported will include volunteers. These specific areas of activity come under three strategic aims as follows:   |
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| 2.5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Aim A) Capacity Building for VCS Organisations, VAR and REMA</li> <li>• Strategic Aim B) Active Citizenship and Social Capital, VAR</li> <li>• Strategic Aim C) Building Stronger Communities VAR and REMA</li> </ul>  |
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| 2.6  | Whilst the arrangements have worked well in relation to the service specification in the current SLA, changes in circumstances and learning from the COVID 19 emergency are likely to shift the focus for the coming three-year period.   |
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| 2.7  | Work commissioned at the South Yorkshire level is looking at the impact on the VCS from the COVID 19 emergency. The findings of this report will be important in shaping future infrastructure services.  |
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| 2.8  | The current SLA service specification is very input / output driven. In the context of a changed environment, there is the opportunity for a focus on strategic ambition for the VCS with more outcome driven benefits linking to reinforcing partnership working and grasping potential benefits from the South Yorkshire devolution agenda.   |
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| 2.9  | Engagement and promotion within the VCS covering strategic priorities including tackling inequalities and social value, among others, can be high level activity within a new SLA.  |
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|      | <u>COVID 19</u>   |
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| 2.10 | A combination of lessons learnt through the COVID 19 emergency, including research, findings and reports together with a renewed approach by the Council to the broader equalities agenda now requires a significant review of  |

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|      | policy and activity. The scope of this will need to include further understanding the impact of inequalities on Rotherham communities across all aspects of equalities and the development of enhanced and new policy interventions. Engaging with the VCS, and especially the role of organisations like REMA will be critical to this work.   |
| 2.11 | The Council is undertaking a learning exercise from the COVID 19 emergency in Rotherham including the working with the VCS. This is drawing out a range of issues that will help planning for the future including good practice.   |
| 2.12 | The learning from the COVID 19 emergency also includes work currently underway through a “South Yorkshire Community Sector Resilience Survey”. This has been commissioned by South Yorkshire’s Community Foundation and is being undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University. It will result in a report that may be significant for developing the future direction of working with the VCS in Rotherham.  |
| 2.13 | The work by VAR during the COVID 19 emergency at the high level is summarised as follows:   |
| 2.14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preparation for Action</b> including engagement with the Rotherham Community Hub and data bases and sharing information.</li> <li>• <b>Comms / Engagement and Information</b> including newsletter / Ebulletin, and partner engagement meetings.</li> <li>• <b>Practical support and advice to groups/organisations</b> including funding opportunities and advice around furlough.</li> <li>• <b>Volunteers support</b> working with the community Hub, volunteer signposting and volunteer expenses.</li> <li>• <b>Emergency food parcel and supplies co-ordination work (funded through Crisis Support SLA)</b> including co-ordination and support for new COVID 19 response groups.</li> </ul> |
|      | <u>Equalities</u>   |
| 2.15 | <p>The Council has a serious commitment to equalities and tackling inequalities through a range of measure across services. The COVID emergency has put equalities into the spotlight. Two reports by Public Health England show significant disparities for BAME groups impacted by COVID. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID 19, and</li> <li>• Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID 19 on BAME groups.</li> </ul> <p>The Council will examine local and sub-regional evidence on COVID related inequalities too.</p>  |
| 2.16 | The reports not only identify a disproportionate impact for BAME groups, but also a link across inequalities in general including deprivation. For the Council and partners including the VCS, learning from the Public Health  |

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|      | reports and addressing the inequalities aligns to a broader strategic approach to equalities in Rotherham.   |
| 2.17 | <p>The Council will seek “Excellent” accreditation under the Equality Framework for Local Government. This involves assessment of demonstrating due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</li> </ul> |
| 2.18 | <p>The Council’s aspiration to achieve Excellent under the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) commits to an assessment and course of action against the key lines of inquiry within the framework. It also contributes to the strategic direction around tackling inequalities and working with communities and voluntary organisations.</p>   |
| 2.19 | <p>The EFLG reflects the latest legislation affecting equality such as Gender Pay Gap reporting, GDPR, the changing context of the local government sector and equality in Britain and in response to other significant issues that might affect equality including the UK’s decision to leave the European Union.</p>   |
| 2.20 | <p>The equality framework is intended to help Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver accessible and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from protected characteristics.</li> <li>• Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving.</li> <li>• Provide equality of opportunity for all staff.</li> <li>• Meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.21 | <p>It seeks to do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the areas of activity that Councils need to be address to deliver good equality outcomes.</li> <li>• Helping Councils to understand how they can build equality into processes and practices</li> <li>• Supporting organisations to become inclusive employers.</li> <li>• Enabling Councils to informally self-assess their progress on the equality improvement journey and determine where and how they need to improve.</li> <li>• Providing the framework for an LGA Equality peer challenge.</li> </ul>                              |
| 2.22 | <p>The underlying principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EFLG is part of the LGA’s sector led improvement offer to the local government sector and as such engagement with the Framework is voluntary.</li> </ul>  |

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|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Framework can help with compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty which is a legal obligation of the Equality Act 2010. • The Framework references the nine legally protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. It also encourages Councils to consider other issues that might be affecting their staff such as caring responsibilities as well issues affecting communities such as socio-economic inequality and isolation including rural isolation</li> <li>• The EFLG is supportive of the EHRC’s six selected domains of equality measurement which it has identified as the areas of life that are important to people and that enable them to flourish. They are: Education, Work, Living standards, Health, Justice and personal security, and Participation</li> <li>• The modular design of the Framework reflects the fact that Councils come in all shapes and sizes with different resources, communities and priorities. It recognises that action on all equality issues at once is not always possible.</li> </ul> |
| 2.23 | <p>The Framework sets out four modules for improvement underpinned by a range of criteria and practical guidance that can help a Council plan, implement and deliver real equality outcomes for employees and the community. The four modules are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and working with your communities.</li> <li>• Leadership and Organisational Commitment.</li> <li>• Responsive Services and Customer Care.</li> <li>• Diverse and Engaged Workforce.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.24 | <p>A separate report will detail the full narrative for the future direction of equalities work picking up both learning from COVID and accreditation under the framework, including an indicative timetable through 2020/21.</p>  |
| 2.25 | <p>Whilst a strand of the equalities programme will engage the whole of the VCS, and be an important part of the “infrastructure” role, in view of the importance of REMA’s engagement in that work, it is recommended to work with them separately to the Infrastructure SLA as part of the work on equalities, given that the timescales are different.</p>  |
|      | <p><u>Rotherham Compact</u></p>  |
| 2.26 | <p>In its working with the VCS, the Council is committed to follow the processes and procedures agreed as the Rotherham Compact. This involves a co-design process following the appointment of a lead organisation. The co-design will work within the headline scope of the functions being commissioned and the available budget for grant provision.</p>   |
| 2.27 | <p>Specifically, the Rotherham Compact states “An underlying principle of effective commissioning for outcomes should be the commitment to embed genuine co-production into all commissioning activity. People’s energy, skills, interests, knowledge and life experiences should be harnessed to influence</p>  |



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|       | the support and services they receive. This includes active participation alongside commissioners of services in the shaping of, and design of new service delivery models. Co-production gives a collective sense of ownership and can connect residents to the statutory organisations and voluntary and community organisations with a common purpose.”  |
| 2.28  | The three-year grant and SLA will be entered into to using the Council’s standard SLA and conditions for VCS organisations.   |
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|       | <u>Looking ahead – Strategic aspiration</u>   |
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| 2.29  | Entering into a new co-design for VCS infrastructure provision offers the opportunity to review the strategic aspiration for the VCS in Rotherham. The developing policy agendas around devolution; the role of the VCS in partnership working; and supporting the voluntary sector to advance in a post COVID environment, all offer challenges and opportunities for infrastructure provision to bring new aspiration to developing and supporting the independence of the sector. This includes voluntary organisations being innovators in the community not as well as deliverers of services. This approach will raise the bar not only for the VCS generally, but also in the approach to tackling inequalities. |
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| 2.30  | Overall, the recommended approach to both VCS infrastructure and equalities will help to build a stronger civic society of collaboration across communities and sectors to the benefit of all.  |
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| 3.    | <b>Options considered and recommended proposal</b>  |
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| 3.1   | Whilst there is no statutory requirement to support infrastructure services in the VCS, a do-nothing option would not be aligned to the Council’s vision for Rotherham or strategic priorities. Therefore, a do-nothing option is not recommended.  |
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| 3.2   | Three options have been developed as set out below:   |
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| 3.3   | <u>Option One – Recommission with no changes to service specification or arrangements</u>   |
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| 3.3.1 | This option would seek a minimalistic approach to co-design, possibly seeking a revised set of actions to deliver against the same measures included in the current SLA. It would have little scope to draw on experience gained through delivery of the current SLA or learning from the COVID 19 emergency.   |
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| 3.4   | <u>Option two – Commission based on a review and refinement of the current infrastructure services within context of a refreshed strategic direction</u>  |
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| 3.4.1 | This option would review and refine the range of infrastructure support provided to the VCS. It would build on the experience of the current SLA to move provision on from input / output driven to focus on outcomes whilst still  |

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|       | collecting base data. This option would also seek to develop aspiration for the VCS in a strategic context of its role in society, high level policy priorities and partnership working. It would draw on the learning from the COVID 19 emergency, research and reports from national, sub-national and local levels. It would also engage in the role of the VCS in the devolution agenda.   |
| 3.5   | <u>Option three – As option two but to address equalities separately as part of a strategic review of equalities policy and action in Rotherham</u>  |
| 3.5.1 | This option takes account of the work that now needs to be undertaken on a strategic review of equalities policy and action, drawing on the experience of the COVID 19 emergency, the experiences of tackling inequalities locally and the aim to achieve an “excellent” accreditation for equalities in Rotherham.  |
| 3.5.2 | The required work for the strategic review of equalities cannot be completed in time for the three-year infrastructure SLA to commence in April 2021. Consequently, this option would afford maximum flexibility to scope and plan forward equalities activity in the VCS by removing the REMA functions from the new SLA and including them with developing the equalities strategic direction. A one-year SLA on the basis of the REMA functions in the current SLA would enable existing provision to continue during the period of review.   |
| 3.5.3 | The extension of the current SLA provisions for REMA would include agreeing outputs and outcomes covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Aim A) Capacity Building for VCS Organisations.</li> <li>• Strategic Aim C) Building Stronger Communities.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.5.4 | Specific provision by REMA under the current SLA strategic aims include: <p><u>Strategic Aim A</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering capacity building programme to front line organisations including start-up support, Constitutions, writing objectives, management committees, financial planning, risk management, specialist/professional training etc.</li> <li>• Encourage and facilitate collaboration for service delivery including the delivery of public service contracts.</li> <li>• Provide advice and support on engagement and recruitment of people in local VCS groups, activities/events.</li> <li>• Develop new group/new services to meet local needs and demand</li> <li>• Support BME groups with fundraising information &amp; opportunities.</li> <li>• Support BME groups with one to one bid writing.</li> <li>• Support BME groups to undertake funding searches.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategic Aim C</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Co-ordinated information, communications and consultation incorporating regular digital information flow via regular email bulletins, newsletters, social media and website. Work with locality co-ordinators to ensure groups are aware of the support given.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain the RECN &amp; Roma For, for BME communities to enable a diversity of views and experiences to be represented and</li> </ul> |

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|     | <p>communicated to the neighbourhood structures, the Council and the Rotherham Together Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the involvement of BME Communities in local decision-making arenas.</li> <li>• Collaborative Working with neighbourhood Officers on ward priorities.</li> <li>• Support local partners with community tension monitoring.</li> <li>• Highlight and address cohesion issues between communities and with statutory agencies as they arise; with particular focus on issues relating to hate crime and intercommunity tensions.</li> <li>• Deliver broad range of activities that promote common values to foster greater community cohesion by bringing people together.</li> <li>• Outreach and promotion to emerging communities and broader audiences.</li> </ul> |
| 3.6 | Option three is the recommended option because it provides for continued support whilst the strategic review of equalities is undertaken.   |
| 4.  | <b>Consultation on proposal</b>   |
| 4.1 | Consultation will be conducted in two stages.   |
| 4.2 | Stage one involves consultation with the VCS through VAR to finalise the strategic scope of provision that will form the basis of the co-design.  |
| 4.3 | Stage two will be dynamic consultation, integral to the co-design process. This will involve engagement of VCS organisations in determining priority activity to inform the workstreams of the service specification.   |
| 5.  | <b>Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision</b>  |
| 5.1 | All process, co-design and entering into the SLA need to be completed in time for commencement in April 2021.   |
| 5.2 | Invitations to bid to be the lead VCS organisation will be published at the start of October with the lead organisation having been appointed by the end of that month. The co-design process will be concluded, and a new SLA signed off by mid-February in time for arrangements to commence from April 2021.   |
| 5.3 | Specific activity including engagement in the broader equalities review will be the subject of discussions and agreement with REMA for the one-year SLA. These will be conducted through co-design in accordance with the provisions of the Rotherham compact. The co-design process will be concluded, and a new SLA signed off by mid-February in time for arrangements to commence from April 2021.  |
| 6.  | <b>Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)</b>  |

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| 6.1        | The current service level agreement for Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) is £0.179m for 2020/21, the final year of the 3-year contract. For 2020/21 this is split as follows, £0.126m for VAR and £0.053m for REMA.  |
| 6.2        | The budget for the Infrastructure SLA under the recommended option is set at £0.126m for each year 2021/22, 22/23 and 23/24.   |
| 6.3        | The budget for the one year SLA for REMA under the recommended option is £0.053m.  |
| 6.4        | As the proposed recommendation in this report is to provide grant funding arrangements, there are no direct procurement implications as grant agreements fall outside the scope of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Grant funding arrangements can be used to support activity being undertaken by an organisation but where the nature of the legal relationship created is to spend the money in accordance with the grant rather than a relationship whereby the Council can claim breach of contract for failure to deliver. |
| <b>7.</b>  | <b>Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)</b>   |
| 7.1        | The Council is required to operate in accordance with the relevant Best Value Statutory Guidance and the requirements of the Rotherham Compact in its relationship with and funding of the VCS.  |
| 7.2        | The Council has power to fund the VCS through various pieces of legislation including the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, and the Localism Act 2011. This Act provides the General Power of Competence which gives Councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.   |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Human Resources Advice and Implications</b>   |
| 8.1        | There are no direct human resource implications for the Council.   |
| 8.2        | If there were to be a change of employer for some VCS staff arising from the provisions of the new SLA, this would engage TUPE regulations for those staff and the VCS organisations concerned.  |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults</b>  |
| 9.1        | The Infrastructure SLA is not service specific but encompasses support for the VCS across all areas of activity. This includes VCS organisations that provide services and support for children and young people.  |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications</b>   |

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| 10.1 | <p>Equality forms part of the shared principles of the Rotherham Compact that will drive the co-design of future Infrastructure Services. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect: public and VCS organisations are accountable in different ways, but both need to be open and honest. Effective partnerships are built on mutual understanding and an appreciation of the differences between partners of the Compact.</li> <li>• Honesty: It is only through open communication that strong partnerships can be built and maintained. Full and frank discussions should be the basis for resolving difficulties.</li> <li>• Independence: The independence of the VCS is recognised and supported. This includes the right for voluntary and community organisations to campaign, to comment on and to challenge policy such as a ‘critical friend’ (whatever funding or other relationship may exist) and to determine and manage their own affairs.</li> <li>• Diversity: The public sector and the VCS value a thriving civil society, which allows different groups to have a voice and bring forward new ideas.</li> <li>• Equality: Fairness for everyone, regardless of their background, is a fundamental goal, and public sector and the VCS will work together to achieve this.</li> <li>• Citizen empowerment: By working together, the public sector and the VCS can help to improve conditions for communities and people, meeting their needs and reflecting their choices.</li> <li>• Volunteering: The energy and commitment of people giving their time for the public good contributes to a vibrant society and should be recognised and appreciated.</li> </ul> |
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| 10.2 | <p>The Rotherham Compact contains a section on equality. It states that “Equality for everyone, regardless of their background, is a core value shared by the public sector and the VCS. Over the last four decades, discrimination legislation and related policy have played an important role in helping to make Britain a more equal society. As both society itself and equality legislation continue to evolve, it is crucial that the public sector and the VCS work well together to achieve equality and fairness for everyone.”</p>   |
| 10.3 | <p>The proposals to separate the future arrangements with REMA to form part of the broader approach to equalities and tackling inequalities as part of learning from COVID and seeking “Excellent” accreditation under the equalities framework will enhance the future direction for equalities work in Rotherham.</p>   |
| 10.4 | <p>An Equalities Screening (Form A) has been completed alongside this report. It recognises the requirement to address equalities as part of the co-design for the service provision going forward. An Equalities Analysis (Form B) will be completed as part of that process.</p>  |
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| 11.  | <p><b>Implications for Ward Priorities</b></p>  |
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| 11.1  | The Infrastructure provision is Boroughwide but also works supporting VCS activity in neighbourhoods.  |
| 12.   | <b>Implications for Partners</b>   |
| 12.1  | The VCS are key strategic partners in the Rotherham Together Partnership. The recommendation of this report would reinforce the strategic role of the VCS in Rotherham and as part of the devolution agenda, adding value to partnership working |
| 13.   | <b>Risks and Mitigation</b>  |
| 13.1. | The principal risk is that no organisation comes forward to lead the co-design for future Infrastructure Provision, or to sign up and deliver under a SLA.   |
| 13.2  | Given that VAR is the umbrella body for the VCS in Rotherham, it is expected that they would want to lead on infrastructure support.   |
| 14.   | <b>Accountable Officers</b>  |
|       | Jackie Mould,<br>Head of Policy Performance & Improvement<br>Assistant Chief Executive's   |
|       | Steve Eling<br>Policy Officer<br>Assistant Chief Executive's   |

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

|  | <b>Named Officer</b> | <b>Date</b>                 |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chief Executive  | Sharon Kemp          | Click here to enter a date. |
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services<br>(S.151 Officer) | Named officer        | Click here to enter a date. |
| Head of Legal Services<br>(Monitoring Officer)                       | Named officer        | Click here to enter a date. |

Report Author: Jackie Mould,  
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Steve Eling  
Policy Officer  
Assistant Chief Executive's

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