

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

September 2023

Recommendation 1: Celebrate the council's achievements!	
What the peers said: There is a lot to be proud of in Rotherham. The council has undergone an impressive transformation and has many exemplary and commendable practices that other councils can learn from. These, as well as the external validations the council has received, should be more actively profiled and celebrated widely.	
Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Build on our current communications approach, ensuring that we celebrate achievements and good news stories and actively promote successful delivery of the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan commitments.	March 2024
Engage with our workforce to obtain their ideas for capturing our successes and sharing them. To kickstart this, we will hold a celebration event with the workforce and a focused Wider Leadership Team session to share the peer challenge feedback, celebrate the achievements and say thank you.	March 2024

Recommendation 2: Develop an externally facing compelling and positive narrative of place which will help to promote and market the borough and capitalise on Rotherham's assets.	
What the peers said: A strong, consistent and compelling outward focusing story about Rotherham told over and over again will help to market the borough, promote the place and its assets and inject confidence to attract inward investment as well as change perceptions of the town as a great place to live, work and visit.	
Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Hold an event to bring stakeholders together, to capture people's views to help update the Rotherham Story and have a positive place narrative for the borough.	November 2023
Develop an Inward Investment Plan to attract private sector investment in the borough.	March 2024
Alongside our partners, develop a plan to promote the success and achievement of key milestones in the Rotherham Plan.	March 2024

Work with colleagues to develop the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for South Yorkshire to strengthen Rotherham’s position and promote a coherent place narrative. We will also partner with the LVEP and emergent wider Yorkshire Destination Development Partnership to secure external funding.	March 2025
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Recommendation 3: Use the significant investments underway to expand and attract private sector investment at scale, maximising its potential and supporting a more inclusive economic future.

What the peers said: By diversifying investment sources, the council can not only mitigate the risk of a decline in activity if public funds were to diminish but also foster the growth of a more inclusive and mixed economy, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability for the borough.

Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Continue to focus on delivery of projects currently in the Place Based Investment Strategy to build investor confidence and create opportunities for private investment, including working with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA).	March 2026
Use the Place Based Investment Strategy to work with businesses and developers to identify opportunities to unlock or accelerate private sector investment.	December 2024
Building on the success of the Council’s housing development and acquisitions programme, engage with the wider sector to secure housing-led private investment particularly in areas of economic growth.	Ongoing

Recommendation 4: Develop effective pathways and mechanisms for local people, especially young people, to benefit from inclusive growth that can help to deliver improved health outcomes and address inequalities.

What the peers said: Facilitating local people to connect into growth opportunities through clear pathways to new skills, jobs and business opportunities will ensure that economic growth is inclusive and brings tangible social value.

Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Ensure that we have a consistent employment offer, supporting all ages with an additional focus on young people, which will bring together existing programmes including skills, employment pathways and access to employment under a distinct Council wide work programme. This will provide strategic and	March 2025

operational direction for the employment pathways, supporting the Council's delivery of an Inclusive Economy.	
Ensure that new business initiatives such as the new £5.4m incubation hub at Manvers and the South Yorkshire MCA new investment zone provides growth opportunities, aiming to incentivise local training, skills development and employment in those areas and whilst fostering entrepreneurship and economic diversity.	September 2024
Continue to embed the Council's Social Value Policy and commitment to the Real Living Wage, with the ambition to create more jobs and skills in the borough.	August 2024

Recommendation 5: Review performance management with a focus on demonstrating impact and an improvement in outcomes in delivering the council's ambition; and use the strong leadership, capacity and capability of the top-team to drive and deliver further organisational transformations and change across the borough at pace.

What the peers said: Streamline performance management and continue to work with scrutiny to ensure that the process of taking items to scrutiny before they reach Cabinet does not slow down decision-making. Furthermore, maximising the potential of the top-team to take on greater levels of corporate responsibility can drive and deliver future change and transformations at pace, whilst maintaining the strong foundations and good governance that has been put in place.

Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Develop an outcome-focussed Council Plan for 2025-29 and refreshed performance management framework that is informed by best practice. Performance reporting arrangements will also be reviewed to ensure there is a focus on evidencing outcomes and impacts, using case studies, and linking these to storytelling (as outlined in the actions under recommendation 1).	March 2025
Identification of opportunities for the top team to take on greater levels of corporate responsibility to drive transformation and change	January 2024
Support the Assistant Director Cohort to develop their collective capacity as a team	March 2024

Recommendation 6: Building on the Neighbourhood working model, develop a clearer and shared understanding of integrated locality working across the public sector and increase the pace of digital transformation across the organisation to deliver improved outcomes for residents and consistently improve the customer experience.

What the peers said: This will help to further modernise the organisation and improve efficiency and effectiveness. Digital transformation should lead to the discontinuing of parallel paper-based processes to avoid duplication, increase efficiency and improve the customer experience. Integrated locality working through increased co-design and co-production of solutions and services alongside partner organisations can deliver enhanced outcomes for residents through improved services and solutions which are tailored to their needs.	
Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Develop a clear vision and work programme for integrated locality working under the Thriving Neighbourhoods workstream, in line with the ambitions set out in the Council Plan and Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.	March 2024
Continue to deliver the Customer Service work programme to increase the ease of access to the number of services that can be accessed online and to drive further digital transformation	Ongoing work programme
Continue to deliver the Customer Experience Programme through the Customer Experience Board	Ongoing work programme

Recommendation 7: Continue to keep the medium-term financial strategy under review - testing assumptions and undertaking sensitivity analysis – and continue to report to Members on a regular basis.	
What the peers said: Using scenario planning and reviewing the medium-term financial strategy helps to identify options when there are uncertainties over future funding arrangements and volatility in the economy. This will enable the council to stress test demand-led budgets and assess risks to fully understand and reflect the impact of variables going forward. Continuing to keep Members updated on the fiscal health of the organisation and associated risks will ensure they maintain a strong grip on the budget.	
Actions we plan to take	Timescales for delivery
Continue to review and revise the MTFS working assumptions throughout the year along with continued formal reporting:	Ongoing
- MTFS update/position statement briefing to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board	November 2023
- MTFS update/position statement report to Cabinet	November 2023
- Budget and MTFS report to Cabinet and Council	February 2024
Continue to report finance updates to Cabinet on a regular basis in accordance with the constitution	Ongoing, with next report in September 2023